

# BUSINESS LANGUAGE CHAMPIONS

a project supported by the DfES through CILT

Inspiring young people  
to embrace language  
learning



## Case Study

### Airport business champions language learning at Hounslow school

BAA Heathrow 

BAA, Heathrow – Lampton School, Hounslow



*"The project has helped the students involved to become more confident in their learning and has helped them see the relevance of languages in the community in which they live."* Lynne Mahmoud, Head of MFL

*"At BAA we found it very useful to work with Lampton School on a specific, targeted skills-related agenda. At Heathrow over 60 million international passengers pass through our airport each year, so language skills are very important for us, and the Business Language Champions project was a great opportunity for students to see first hand what work at the airport entails."* Christine Mills, BAA Learning Resources Manager

BAA brands itself as the world's leading airport company – and Heathrow is the world's busiest airport. Around 90 airlines have made it their base, and it serves over 180 destinations in over 90 countries. Leaving the international picture aside for a moment however, the airport and the work of BAA has a very significant impact on the local economy and environment – and with this in mind, BAA was keen to join the pilot Business Language Champions (BLC) programme by pairing up with Lampton School in Hounslow.

Two BAA information assistants delivered talks at the school in February 2006 where year 9 pupils learned all about this local business and why languages and culture are so important in dealing with customers every day. This was followed up in March by visits to Terminal 4 by 32 year 10 students – where they saw how BAA staff at the information desk used language skills over the phone, face-to-face and on email – in dealing with tricky enquiries, lost passengers and colleagues from airports, airlines and suppliers around the globe.

BAA learned from the students too – who set about the task of creating foreign language leaflets to make Heathrow's visitors feel even more at home on arrival. Students also provided ideas about improving signage for non-English speaking airport users. Materials from CILT's Languages Work campaign helped students – and employees – learn more about how languages can further their career.

Staff at BAA agreed that it is crucial for students to understand how languages can benefit them in their working life – while they are still learning.

Following their linkage with Lampton School, BAA employees were involved in presentations to over 30 West London language teachers, Education Business Partnerships, and other employers, explaining how their experiences benefited both employees and students. It is hoped that this can be just the first of many new connections created by Business Language Champions between West

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London schools and internationally-focused businesses in the area.



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