

Working In Grangeton

Grangeton in Derbyshire isn't actually a real town, but it has most things that you might expect to find in one. When a new head teacher took over at the Grange Primary School, he found that both students and staff had become demotivated and disinterested. He knew that the school needed something special, and Grangeton certainly is. Grangeton has businesses and services like any other town, but these are all run by and for the school's students, five days a week, every week of the school year. There is a town council and a mayor, who is elected each year from the Year 6 students. The council makes all the important decisions on how the town is run, just like in any normal town. So, what can you find in Grangeton? There is a newspaper, a museum, and two shops. A café opens on two mornings a week, but it is a Parisian café, and French is the only language that customers can use when ordering food there. There is another reason for Grangeton, apart from motivating the students. Although they are only primary students, with a maximum age of eleven, the school believes that they are the right age to gain some early work experience. Normally, students have to wait until they are fourteen before getting any work-related experience, and even then, it depends on the school. The students of Grange School are too young to work for companies, so they don't have to leave the school premises to run their own businesses. The school also invites guests to talk to the students and help them. The BBC helped them set up a TV and radio station, and local politicians talked to them about democracy and decision-making. The school can find the time to do all this because the work the students are doing is closely related to the school's education curriculum. As well as practising a foreign language in the café, the students use Maths when running their businesses, English when writing their newspaper, and even History in special projects, such as when the council voted that the shops should sell food from different past times. Grangeton is now considered a great success and a model for involving children's creativity in the learning process. Even people who you may expect to be critical of such non-traditional education methods are unable to find fault with what the students do.