



Apprenticeships.

Helping your business grow.

Apprentices
are dedicated,
motivated,
ambitious and
make things
happen!

Lancashire-based nursery group, Rosy Apple Childcare T/A Little Achievers Nurseries, is upholding its status of being the UK's top apprentice employer and recently recruited its 22nd apprentice into the business.

The group, which operates five nurseries across the county, won the Medium Employer of the Year category at last year's National Apprenticeship Awards and has supported Apprenticeships for eight years.

The group is managed by North West Apprenticeship Ambassador, Sharon Alexander, who said: "When I took over the group in 2003 I had big plans to grow the workforce from within. As a former apprentice myself, I knew the benefits of working and learning at the same time and made a conscious decision to introduce Apprenticeships into a new training and development programme."

Rosy Apple Childcare offers Apprenticeships in Childcare, Business Administration, Catering and Accountancy and training is delivered in conjunction with local provider Runshaw Business Centre.

Sharon continues: "We recruited our first apprentice through Runshaw Business Centre, which has been delivering training to our childcare apprentices for a number of years,

but we also work with a number of other providers to ensure that our employees are getting the best out of their Apprenticeship, because they all specialise in different areas.

"What I love about our apprentices is the vibrancy and creativity they bring to the business. The dedicated training that they are receiving enables them to keep up-to-date with trends and this, in-turn, gives the business a competitive edge."

"Young people are often overlooked when recruitment takes place, but I am delighted to say that our apprentices have proved themselves to be an excellent business resource and their knowledge, dedication and commitment has been highly valuable in the current economic climate."

Simon Jordan, Apprenticeship manager at Runshaw Business Centre, added: "Many apprentices have become junior managers at Rosy Apple, which has supported the growth of the rapidly expanding organisation. Sharon has worked hard to develop a staff training forum to enable apprentices to develop their leadership skills through a mentoring programme and this just shows how much can be achieved through investing in workforce development."

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Little Acorns Nursery
Nursery

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Nursery grow their own.

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Little Acorns Day Nursery, in Clayton-le-Woods, recruited its first apprentice in 2004 and after working her way up through the ranks, Sarah Quinn, now holds the position of manager.

Former apprentice, Sarah, 22, is currently studying towards a foundation degree in Early Years and Childcare at Runshaw Business Centre, where she completed her Apprenticeships, and her academic journey has seen her complete NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Childcare.

"I started my first Apprenticeship at the age of 16 because I didn't want to go to college full-time, so doing a qualification via work-based learning was the perfect choice for me. I went to college on day release where I would learn the theory side of the qualification and then would put what I'd learnt into practise in the workplace," Sarah commented.

Sarah learnt on-the-job for three years and was promoted to the position of supervisor in 2007. Two years later, Sarah was promoted to deputy manager and subsequently manager.

She continued: "I definitely wouldn't have moved up the ranks as quickly as I have without my Apprenticeships. The nursery is like my second home and I feel confident in the knowledge and responsibilities of my role. Apprenticeships are a great way to get ahead and I'd recommend them to anyone who wants to forge a career in something they enjoy doing."

Sarah is supervised by managing director, Jennie Bracewell, who employs more than 70 staff across four nursery branches. Three apprentices are currently employed within the group and Jennie has made a commitment to ensure all staff hold, or are working towards, a Level 3 qualification.

"Sarah has been fantastic. She's everything I could want out of an employee, and more. She is a great role model to our other apprentices and has shown them what they can aspire to," Jennie said.

"We have excellent staff retention rates and I would say that this is partly attributable to the levels of commitment displayed from Sarah and other apprentices, which are a great example to the rest of the workforce. They have a different outlook and bring fresh ideas to the table, which is really valuable. Not only that, but the up-to-date skills and knowledge the apprentices are developing at Runshaw Business Centre help the business to stay ahead of the game."

Little Acorns Day Nursery is just one of hundreds of businesses in Lancashire working with Runshaw Business Centre to develop the skills of its workforce. Runshaw Business Centre is one of the North West's leading training and development providers and is located within the Runshaw College campus in Chorley.

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Business centre manager, Adrian Roscoe, joined Runshaw Business Centre, shortly before Sarah started her first Apprenticeship and commented: "Little Acorns has experienced how valuable it can be to employ apprentices and we are delighted with how Sarah has progressed through the ranks.

"Her dedication and commitment are admirable and she is a great example of how Apprenticeships can help employers to mould a skilled and knowledgeable employee. We wish Sarah all the best with her future career and hope to continue working with Little Acorns in the years to come."

Runshaw Business Centre has extensive experience in helping people and organisations and is renowned for its succession and retention rates. Apprenticeships available at the centre include accounting, business administration, catering and hospitality, customer service, childcare, information technology, hairdressing and team leading.

Adrian, along with his team, are working hard to quash employers' misconceptions of Apprenticeships and is urging employers to consider employing an apprentice or recruiting existing members of staff onto an Apprenticeship.

"What many employers don't understand is that Apprenticeships are suitable for both new and existing employees and can be a

very cost-effective way to increase resource in the workplace. There are so many different frameworks available now that apprentices can study in a number of different areas, and not just those relevant to blue collar trades," Adrian added.

"As belts and budgets continue to be tightened, we are finding that increased numbers of employers are looking for ways to stay ahead of the competition and improving customer service is an area where businesses can really add value. A key to achieving customer service excellence is through training and developing your staff and Apprenticeships are increasingly becoming the key to a more skilled, motivated, productive and dedicated workforce."

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The team at Chorley accountancy firm, Abrams Ashton, is celebrating after reaching a ten year anniversary of supporting Apprenticeships and recruiting its fifteenth apprentice.

Jo Ecob, director at Abrams Ashton, oversees the firm's staff development programme and believes that Apprenticeships are a viable and valuable recruitment option.

She says: "We have always been committed to training our staff and were keen to explore how Apprenticeships would fit in to our staff development programme.

"We went to our local training provider, Runshaw Business Centre, and they explained how Apprenticeships could help our employees to progress to AAT qualifications, which are vital in the financial field. So we recruited our first apprentice and here we are now, ten years on and fifteen apprentices later!

"With the help of the staff at Runshaw we have been able to find employees who are keen to progress within the financial services industry and provide them with the on-the-job training and work experience they need to get ahead.

"Apprenticeships have a direct relevance to every day life in an accountancy firm and our apprentices have learnt and developed the knowledge and skills needed for a professional career in accountancy."

Recently recruited apprentice, Angela Davis, 19, from Croston, decided to undertake an Apprenticeship in accountancy as an alternative to going to university. "I've always liked maths and wanted to learn more, but didn't want to get in any debt from going to university. I knew people who were doing an Apprenticeship, so I thought it would be a good way for me to learn more and earn a wage at the same time," Angela said.

"I didn't have any relevant experience, but the Apprenticeship has been a great insight into being an accountant - I wouldn't be able to do half as much as I am now if I wasn't working in the industry. It's going brilliantly and I can't wait to one day be a certified accountant."

Adrian Roscoe, business centre manager at Runshaw Business Centre, concluded: "This is a great example of how Apprenticeships can work for both a business and an individual and we hope to be working with Abrams Ashton for many years to come."

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