

When asked if they had had a good time at Castleton 98% said that they had and 97% said they would recommend Castleton to their friends.

'I would seriously recommend Castleton to my mates because some people need to break barriers. Life will challenge you in so many ways that you need that self-confidence to believe that whatever it takes, you'll eventually get through and the sun will shine. That's what Castleton did for me and I've learnt so much that I think others can do this'



Comments included:

'I loved it because I made friends as well as learning and having fun'.

Upon returning to school, the teachers were asked for their feedback. One of them said:

'One of our students has Aspergers Syndrome and a trait of this is that he cannot see anyone else's point of view and will not listen to anyone else's ideas. When he thinks he is right there is nothing you can do can change his mind, I saw a big change in him, both at the one day taster at Wakefield, but more so at the two days in Castleton. He listened and took on board other people's ideas and also helped others to complete their tasks. This is a huge thing for him, and I must say that so far he has brought all he learned back into school. I didn't tell anyone about his problems because he doesn't want to be seen to be different, so I am very grateful.'



Many different responses were given when participants were asked what they had learnt, including improved confidence, teamwork, communication skills, friendship with new people, determination, conquering fears and developing trust.

100 pupils from those that attended Castleton and Thornes Park have now been selected by the schools to attend two separate five-day courses in March and April 2007 at Ullswater in the Lake District.

Discussions have been held with schools to extend the Community Leadership Programme to provide mentoring in schools and to arrange events, especially for those pupils not selected for the Lake District. For example, a recruitment advice road show was arranged on 17 January 2007 at which all schools from the Wakefield side of the district were invited. Twelve students from Freeston Business and Enterprise College attended and were given a mock interview and given advice on completing job application forms.

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Community Leadership Programme



February 2007



The story so far ...

Wakefield and District Housing's (WDH's) Community Leadership programme was launched in April 2006 and has been set up with a clear objective – to ensure our communities are equipped with leaders for the future.

Over 1000 youngsters from across the Wakefield district will get the opportunity to participate in the initiative over the next five years.

We will work with young people on a wide range of Outward Bound activities to enable them to undertake life changing personal development and help them on a journey of self discovery to find their hidden skills and strengths.

Community Leadership plays a key part in WDH's vision to create confident communities through developing social enterprise. This will be achieved by:

- Developing community leaders and role models of the future, from the District's young people of today
- Enhancing sustainable living and respect for local communities
- Developing pathways into employment and training

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WDH worked in partnership with schools from across the district to select pupils who will benefit from team working, leadership and project skills, and showed:

- A positive attitude
- A willingness to work with others
- A need to boost confidence
- An interest in their local community
- The potential to become a leader
- They would benefit from the chance to excel in non-academic subjects/areas

After careful consideration 180 pupils were selected from 12 local schools:

- Wakefield City High
- St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic High School
- Freston Business and Enterprise College
- Minsthorpe Community College
- Hemsworth Arts and Community College
- Ossett High School
- The Kings School
- Knottingley High School and Sports College
- Outwood Grange High School
- Castleford High School
- Wakefield Cathedral School of the Arts.
- Airedale High School



The first group of youngsters who got the chance to take part in the programme did so on 2-3 November 2006 at Thornes Park, Wakefield. Pupils were put through their paces on a wide range of activities designed to test them mentally and physically, all of which were facilitated by Outward Bound trainers assisted by 18 WDH employees acting as mentors.

Each activity was carefully designed to encourage teamwork, communication, listening and leadership skills and by the end of the two days it was clear to see a big change in pupils' behaviour. Even those who were reluctant to mix with others at the start of the event could be seen with their new found friends by the end of it.

The statistics speak for themselves:

- 54% of attendees said meeting new friends was the best thing about the event
- 93% said they had a good time
- 86% said they'd recommend the programme to their friends



The second phase of the programme saw pupils heading to Castleton, Derbyshire, for a two day residential event on 4-5 and 6-7 December.

Activities were designed to build on the skills they had learnt at the previous event, and included rock climbing, abseiling, a night walk and weaselling (low level climbing or scrambling).



Again the event received fantastic feedback. Many of the participants said it had improved their confidence, teamwork, determination and communication skills, whilst allowing them to develop friendships with new people and enabling them to conquer fears and build trust.

But don't just take our word for it – here's what the participants said:

'I learnt how to trust people I don't know and to use teamwork to help other people'

'I learnt to do anything I want to'

'I learnt to appreciate everyone in a team as an individual'

'I can do things I am afraid of if I put my mind to it'



'I learnt how to trust people I did not know with my life'

'One of the best things was being pushed to do something that I didn't think I would be able to achieve on my own'

One comment made in response to the question - What was the worst thing about Castleton, was *'The weather was miserable, and my nails were in a right state!'*

