

## Benefits of Language Learning assembly



During Careers Week, High School had the opportunity to hear first-hand how important learning a language is as a life skill and for a whole range of careers.

Rachel Boyd studied German at Nottingham University, which then enabled her to secure a summer internship with Bosch in Germany. This in turn led to her being selected to work for the Investment banking company, Goldman Sachs. This was a huge achievement considering the highly competitive application process. She was later told that one of the main factors for recruiting her was the fact that she had foreign language skills and crucially had experience of cultural differences and expectations, which forms an important part of establishing effective working personal relationships. Rachel rose to the position of Managing Director of Human Resources at this prestigious investment banking company.

Rachel also explained the wider benefits of language learning in a very engaging, clear and personal way. People who have learnt a foreign language are analytical and logical as they have to work with the patterns and details of linguistic structures and apply them in new contexts. They are creative, good at problem solving and are able to be more empathetic as they literally have to adopt a new way of speaking and relating to others, having deepened their understanding of the experiences, way of life and viewpoint of those from other countries and cultures.

If you study a language at university, you are expected to spend the third year in a country where the language is spoken. These skills and experiences are transferrable and are highly valued in all work places. Rachel also referred to scientific research using brain mapping techniques which proves how flipping from one language to another aids cognitive versatility and creativity.

Listening to Rachel, I was in danger of feeling rather pleased with myself as I am fluent in Spanish and French, have a working knowledge of German and I have lived in France, Spain and Peru. My colleagues in the MFL department are also fluent in two languages and have lived abroad. However, far more important is that our pupils at Gateways all have the chance to learn one or more foreign languages and a language is deemed to be a core subject at GCSE, unlike many schools. Rachel emphasised the point that when she was in charge of recruiting, a candidate with language skills was chosen over one with no language when there was no other differential in terms of their skills, qualities and experience. In her view, studying a language alongside science subjects is of great benefit as the communication skills alone are an integral part of careers in medicine, law and business to name but a few. If pupils have not opted to do a language at A Level, it is possible to continue or take up a new language at university or in the workplace, often as a subsidiary subject or skill.

Rachel decided to leave Goldman Sachs 18 months ago and has set up her own business as an executive coach and now works alongside senior business men and women to help them maximise their leadership potential within the businesses they run. She has also made two series of podcasts called What's the Next Step? with well known people in business, which is aimed at helping people weigh the options when contemplating their next career move. She is very happy for any of us to contact her.

Here are the details of her website and podcasts:

**Coaching Website:** [www.rachelboydcoaching.com](http://www.rachelboydcoaching.com)

**Career Podcast:** What's the Next Step? - Season 2 launched on the day of our assembly

- Apple Podcasts: <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/whats-the-next-step/id1705538675>
- Instagram: @whatsthenextstepodcast

A huge thank you to Rachel for giving her time to come and talk to us, share her story, and encourage us all to value language learning!

Mrs Fiona Wilson

# High School & Sixth Form

