Dockleaf Project NVQ Diploma – Christina Rowlands

Twenty-one year old Christina Rowlands initially started working at Pembroke Dock Community School on a voluntary basis, following a work experience placement whilst in the Sixth Form of her secondary school (Pembroke School). This placement proved so successful that Christina came into school, when her timetable permitted, whilst balancing her studies in Art and Food Technology with voluntary work in the school. This positive experience convinced Christina that working in a school was the way forward, for her future employment and whilst she was carrying out her work experience, a member of staff alerted her to the Dockleaf Project and the opportunities for further study that this provided. Eager to learn new skills and keen to gain further qualifications, Christina undertook her Level 2 NVQ Diploma and has found this course very helpful, particularly with regards to gaining a greater understanding of First Aid, Safeguarding, supporting groups and how to deal with behaviours. She has also recently completed her Level 3 NVQ and really enjoyed her experiences of both Diplomas, having been placed with a variety of age groups, working with children throughout Early Years and Year 1, in many different settings, although she specifically enjoyed carrying out activities with the children which focuses upon their Creative Development, due to her own interest in art! She also worked 1:1 with a child who presented with behaviour issues, used various strategies to support him and, working alongside his class teacher, made reward charts and other resources. She had responsibilities during outdoor play and lunchtime supervisory duties, working with groups in maths, literacy and topic.

When completing both Diplomas, Christina found her college tutors very supportive and helpful, as they were always available for advice and guidance whenever she needed assistance. Her tutor visited the school every month and went through the work required, to make sure everything was fully understood. Christina didn’t experience any difficulties in keeping her file up to date and had adequate time to undertake all her work and research. She found the unit relating to First Aid very useful, specifically with regards to how incidents should be recorded. Many other units benefitted her practice in the classroom, particularly in supporting maths and literacy, which highlighted the need to note any areas which the children were struggling with, in order to target this area for improvement within the next session.
She especially enjoyed the practical aspects of the courses, working alongside the children in creative activities, e.g. making dinosaurs from paper plates! Her tutor always gave feedback after any observations and provided suggestions for further improvement.

She found the professional discussions slightly challenging, as the need for ‘on the spot’ contributions was rather difficult, but having access to her notes and the questions beforehand enabled her to speak more fluently.

Through undertaking both the Level 2 & 3 Diplomas, Christina has gained in confidence, through the observations and feedback of her tutor and believes that attending this course has enhanced her classroom practice, by gaining new skills and she feels better equipped to deal with the classroom environment. She has also considered gaining further qualifications, e.g. Higher Level Teaching Assistant. She would definitely recommend the Dockleaf Project to anyone considering this qualification, as it is very useful and they can learn new skills to use in the class setting – ‘go for it!’

Christina was happy with the support provided, both by Pembroke Dock Community School and her college.

If you have been inspired by Christina’s journey and wish to find out how you could also work towards achieving National Vocational Qualifications then please call into Pembroke Dock Community School and ask to speak with Mrs Amanda Edwards, Deputy Headteacher.