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HIGH FLYING STUDENTS SOARING TO SUCCESS IN YORKSHIRE



Barnsley students grow in confidence taking part in The Air League's Soaring to Success programme.

Gliding clubs across Yorkshire are working together to help create aspirations and strengthen life skills of hundreds of school and college students in an ambitious aviation and aerospace project.

Young people are flying high and taking the glider controls during air experience flights at Burn, York, Yorkshire and Wolds gliding clubs as part of The Air League's pioneering 'Soaring to Success' programme in collaboration with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

Ishpreet Sundal from The Air League says: "The Soaring to Success programme is an inspiring initiative that, for many, is a completely new and exciting challenge.

"Upon arrival to the gliding taster day sessions, the students typically felt apprehensive about taking to the skies but the look of achievement and excitement that filled their faces after their flights was truly priceless."

The project has also received the backing of 'I Know I Can', a youth scheme in Barnsley which is about building confidence, creating dreams, raising qualification levels and developing a real I Know I Can attitude.

For many of the young people, gliding provides the perfect environment to enhance their employability through developing transferrable personal skills for life including communication, teambuilding and leadership skills.

Gliding is also an ideal springboard for a career in aviation or aerospace whether as a pilot, engineer or other professional within Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths (STEM).

Pete Stratten, Chief Executive Officer of the British Gliding Association, added:

“Aerospace and aviation is one of the most exciting sectors of the British economy. It offers a range of technical and managerial challenges from designing and building complex equipment to managing large and intricate human enterprises. And in-between, flying and operating airlines and airfields.

“Gliding can provide a gateway to this amazing industry as the skills and knowledge of flying and the associated activities of working within a team, problem solving and communicating are embedded within the skills of learning to fly a glider.

The Wolds Gliding Club based at Pocklington and York Gliding Centre in Rufforth are looking forward to being involved in similar initiatives in the future.

“We have really enjoyed flying the students from Barnsley. They were engaged and engaging and it's been a privilege to introduce them to the world of gliding,” said Craig Scott from Wolds Gliding Club. “It was amazing to see how quickly they mastered the controls, especially since many of them had never been in an aircraft before.”

York Gliding Centre's Harry Southworth was also impressed by the infectious enthusiasm of the young flyers. He said: “The students' keenness to get involved in all gliding tasks such as radio communication, handling of aircraft, launching the gliders and asking endless questions about why we do things was truly inspirational. They were an amazing bunch of people who made the most of the experience.”

Dave Latimer is Chairman of both the BGA's Development Committee and Yorkshire Gliding Club at Sutton Bank. He added: "Having the youngsters on site was great! We are now in discussion with Barnsley Council and The Air League on how we can turn this into a regular activity to introduce young people to aviation and the associated STEM subjects."

For more information about gliding and to find your local gliding club, visit www.gliding.co.uk

Ends

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Soaring to Success in four steps

The Soaring to Success programme is being delivered in four stages:

Stage one saw nine schools attend Barnsley Football Club to complete an Introduction to Aviation and Aerospace which included a 'Build an Airline' workshop presented by British Airways; an 'Engine Build Challenge' hosted by Rolls Royce; a 'day in the life' presentation from three DHL pilots; and an employability and skills workshop challenging students to think about their dream jobs, strengths and weaknesses.

Stage two involved gliding taster days for 200 students, with 20 students being selected for an immersive gliding course as part of Stage 3.

The final stage see will see six students taking part in a powered flying weekend during August.

Schools involved in the Soaring to Success programme:

- Horizon Community College
- Kirk Balk Community College
- Penistone Grammar ALC
- Springwell Community Special School
- Holy Trinity
- The Dearne ALC
- Outwood Shafton
- Outwood Carlton
- Netherwood

Gliding - key facts

- The British Gliding Association (BGA) is the governing body for the sport of gliding in the UK and represents more than 80 gliding clubs stretching from the Highlands of Scotland to the south-west tip of Cornwall in England.
- A glider is an aircraft that doesn't need power to fly. Gliders fly by gliding gently down a slope causing air to flow over the wings, which generates a force that supports the weight of the glider. The steeper the slope, the faster the glider flies. By flying in rising air, for example a thermal, a glider can gain height.
- Using these invisible rising currents of air, known as 'lift', gliders can soar to great heights of up to 40,000ft, travel at average speeds of over 100mph and cover vast distances of more than 600 miles all within the UK.
- The longest distance ever flown in a glider in one flight is 3,008km, taking 15 hours and eight minutes at an average speed of almost 200km/h in South America.
- Gliding is an inclusive sport and enjoyed by people of all ages and physical abilities. Subject to completing the required training, you can fly a glider solo at age 14. There is no upper age limit with some glider pilots still flying in their early nineties.