

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council – EAL team

Host project

The EAL (English as Additional Language) team forms part of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The EAL team aims to support EAL children in English language acquisition. Its target groups are the Ethnic minority children who do not speak English as a first language. Many of these children do not speak English and are facing difficulty of Learning English through the process of immersion. In addition they have the added burden of understanding subjects taught under the National Curriculum. The EAL team assists and supports these children in English Language acquisition.

Merthyr Tydfil has regularly hosted EVS volunteers since 2005 and the volunteers have increasingly become a valuable part of the team and assisting in Primary and Secondary schools.

Having already hosted EVS volunteers, we do feel it is of benefit to the local community and the EAL team to do so. The volunteers brings new ideas, skills and experiences; provide a different perspective to local and global issues; and help to create an atmosphere of diversity.

Project outline

Merthyr Tydfil is situated in the Heads of the Valleys Region and is the smallest local authority in Wales. Merthyr Tydfil has a population of approximately 54,600. Merthyr Tydfil is facing considerable economic and social challenges including: high levels of economic inactivity; low educational attainment and skill levels; low quality jobs and opportunities; and high incidences of long term health problems. Merthyr Tydfil has benefitted over the last few years from a large number of migrant workers moving into the area. Currently, there are 372 children whose first language is not English. These children are spread over 26 of our schools, and between them they bring with them a rich mix of 29 different languages. The EVS volunteers will be working with these children and assisting them in English language acquisition.

Main tasks

The EVS volunteers' role is to support pupils in schools in Merthyr Tydfil by providing individual and in-classroom support to help these children to develop their English language skills. The volunteer will gain vast experience working in the schools as he or she will be primarily classroom based. The volunteer will provide classroom support to students on a one to one basis or by working in small groups but he or she will be constantly under the supervision of a qualified staff member. Volunteers will be encouraged to develop his or her 'own 'special interest' project, through discussions with the pupils, the local community, or other staff members and with support of the supervisor.

Required skills

The EAL team is looking for volunteers with an interest in working with children and young people from a varied background. Experience of working with young people and basic teaching experience may be useful but are not a requirement. The project hosted by Merthyr Tydfil are open to all young people, regardless of background, competences and experience.

Practical conditions

The volunteers will live with a host family in Merthyr Tydfil. The volunteer will have his or her own bedroom and will share kitchen, bathroom and living room. An amount of approximately £250 will be paid once a month for food, pocket money.

Things you should know

This project really demands a lot of initiative and self-motivation and flexibility as the volunteer will be working in different schools each day and the timetable might change frequently. The volunteer will be working between 30 – 35 hours a week and have two consecutive days off each week. The volunteer should be aware that he or she is working in a school and will be given holiday/ leave during the general school holidays.