

# Stock Exchange Challenge



Edinburgh, the Lothians, Borders and Central Scotland schoolchildren experienced the excitement of the trading room floor today – thanks to Skills Development Scotland's Stock Market Challenge event – but it was James Gillespie's High School who came out as the overall winner.

The initiative, delivered through the collaboration of Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and Standard Life, saw 25 schools taking part in the competition.

The South East of Scotland competition took place in the University of Edinburgh's Pollock Halls.

The competition, delivered by SDS, teaches young people how financial markets work and encourages them to develop key skills such as communication, problem-solving, decision making, teambuilding and negotiation. It also helps them develop their applied maths skills and their understanding of business and economics.

Working in small teams, the S3 pupils were challenged to use their skills in managing a portfolio of shares and foreign currencies. The participating teams made their investment decisions by interpreting and analysing information from the financial markets and took part in simulated live trading over a two-hour period. After a frantic final round of trading the team with the highest portfolio at the closing bell was named the winner.

Scottish Government Minister for Skills and Learning Dr. Alasdair Allan said: "Having met some successful young players of the stock market at the launch of re:Think earlier this autumn, I have seen for myself the value of training our young people in the skills needed to succeed in the financial

sector.

“Congratulations to this year’s pupils. I hope to see them take up careers and successfully play the stock market for real in the coming years!”

James Gillespie High stormed the trading floor and came out on top finishing with an exceptionally well-managed fund of £75,500. The runners up Firrhill High, from Midlothian were not far behind and made an impressive profit of £71,100.

Employees from sponsors, Standard Life participated as “traders” at the event, making the whole experience even more accessible. Participating schools also got a free year-long licence for the Stock Market Challenge online resource.

John Gill, UK Chief Risk Officer at Standard Life, said: “Our congratulations go to James Gillespie High and all those who took part in this year’s Stock Market Challenge. By joining in the competition, pupils gain a first hand insight into how the stock markets work, the very real challenge of financial risk and the finance industry itself. We’re delighted to be sponsoring this initiative which we hope encourages pupils to become more financially aware and think a little more about how they are going to manage their finances and invest for a secure future when they get older. This is something that Standard Life fully supports. It may also encourage some pupils to consider a career in the finance industry here in Scotland.

Skills Development Scotland’s Sector Manager for Financial Services, Ian Hanson said: “This year’s Stock Market Challenge has been a great success for the pupils, who worked hard and showed terrific enthusiasm on the trading floor.”

“The competition is a fantastic way to help educate pupils about the financial markets in an enjoyable setting. This year’s challenge comes at a time when the diverse range of careers within the sector are being promoted, via the

Financial Services Skills Gateway and on online websites such as re:think.”

“However, it has also provided them with a chance to learn skills such as working together with peers to benefit their team, while also improving and developing their communication and decision making abilities. “