

# Bournemouth & Poole College

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## Student Story

### Skies the Limit for Abbey!

Somebody should have warned Abbey Davies to fasten her seat belt because 2011 was going to be an amazing year for her - and for the young woman from Corfe Mullen it just gets better and better.

She is only 21 but already she's flying high as one of Richard Branson's famous 'ladies in red'.

For Abbey it seems like only yesterday she walked out of The Bournemouth & Poole College with a clutch of A-levels and a qualification from The College's six month course in Tourism and Leisure.

She didn't know it then, but these were her ticket to a career with Virgin Atlantic as cabin crew member and a dream job cruising the jetstream.

Just off a long haul flight from Las Vegas, Abbey has to pinch herself to make sure its all been real. But looking at the iconic John Rocca designed post box red uniform she is wearing and red shoes 'to die for', it is all very real indeed.

She says: "It's hard to describe what wearing that outfit has on the people around you. "You can feel their gaze and they approach you fully expecting you to know the answer to any question or be able to solve any little problem they have. "

Her mum Tracy has to be thanked for helping her reach for the skies for a career. It was a case of "what should I do now" when I came out of college with A-levels.

"Mum suggested I apply for aviation cabin crew training but at first I didn't get a response from various airlines. I tried another on-line application with Virgin Atlantic and was invited along for a face-to-face interview.

"It was the most relaxed job interview I have ever been to, more like a conversation with friends."

Next day Abbey was cruising at 30,000ft, almost literally, when the e-mail arrived offering her a place on the training course at Crawley. Ecstatic screams rang out in the Davies household. "I had to read the e-mail at least 500 times and even when the welcome pack arrived, I couldn't quite believe it.

Last autumn she embarked on the intensive five week Virgin Atlantic course on safety, service and aviation medicine the many aspects of the job the public never sees.

She said: " I try not to forget I have so much to thank the tutors on the Tourism and Leisure course at my college. I can't praise them enough. They gave me the confidence to succeed. The course made me feel comfortable with the jargon of the aviation industry. Abbey is a modest person though. At the ceremony to present her with her wings, she was also voted star pupil on the course by her peers.

"I suppose my colleagues thought I was the course 'geek', " she chuckled. She soon took possession of that red uniform, (two of everything and three blouses) and she found herself on the 'rosta' for the first time.

Her maiden flight for Virgin Atlantic was a dream start too with a service to Orlando USA over two nights. Why was it such a dream assignment?

"Well, Orlando is home for Universal Studios and as it was out of season and my new colleagues and I found the Islands of Adventure and The Wizarding World of Harry Potter more or less deserted on our time off."

Says Abbey: "Looking back it was all a complete blur. I remember thinking this doesn't feel like a job at all"

Abbey is pragmatic. She knows the lifestyle can be demanding physically as well as mentally and knows one day she might have to work groundside but until then this is one lady in red cleared for take-off and already soaring high.

