

press release

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St Cyres School wins national investment competition

- St Cyres School from Penarth makes an impressive 39.3% profit in national Shares4Schools competition
- The team of Year 12 students outperformed the FTSE 100 by 34.2%
- Gavin Oldham, chief executive of The Share Centre, calls for financial education in schools

A team of Year 12 students at St Cyres School have beaten 72 schools to become the national winners of Shares4Schools, a national investment competition run by retail stock broker, The Share Centre. The team won by just £12.47 making a 39.3% profit on their £1500 initial investment in eight months.

Commenting on the team's success, Gavin Oldham, chief executive of The Share Centre said:

"It's been a challenging year to produce good results, with the FTSE100 rising just 5.1% since the competition started. With just 17 schools making a net gain over the period, this has been a real tussle for first place with St Cyres winning by a whisker. Over 500 Year 12 students have taken part and I congratulate them all. I'm confident that the experience gained by taking part in Shares4schools will help these students in whatever career they choose."

Commenting on their success the winning team said:

"We are delighted to win the competition, we have really enjoyed finding out about how the stock market works and it has opened our eyes to how much a share price can change in such a short period of time. Being a small team of two meant we had a lot more responsibility in monitoring the market, researching new companies to invest in and making decisions, and we both had to be in agreement for decisions to buy or sell."

Nick Raynor, investment adviser at The Share Centre, comments on St Cyres' investments:

"The team's investments were predominantly in the mining and oil sectors which proved to be very volatile at the beginning of the year. It was interesting to see their change in tact from investing in smaller, higher risk companies to a FTSE 100 blue chip company towards the end of the competition. The team's stroke of genius was investing in Kenmare Resources which gave the majority of the returns.

Gavin Oldham, chief executive of The Share Centre, is also calling for financial education in schools:

"Schools throughout the UK are a casualty of the budget cuts for financial education. Over 4000 secondary schools and large numbers of primary schools have benefitted over the past 2 – 3 years from the necessary expert support to teachers that cost less than £10m per annum.

Although the Consumer Finance Education Board has proposed a £60m annual levy on the Financial Services industry to improve adult financial capability, nothing has yet been provided for financial education in schools.

Oldham continues "If HM Treasury cannot instruct the CFEB to allocate £10m of the levy to cover this we believe there should be a separate levy in place. This would be just 3% of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme levy and would be spread across the banking and investment industries. For The Share Centre this could be less than £3,000.

"The Financial Services industry needs more confident and knowledgeable consumers of its services so it is therefore in their interest to encourage better financial capability, especially of young people."

---Ends---

Note to Editors

The leaderboard

School	Location	Value	Gain
1	St Cyres School	Penarth	£2,089.89 +39.3%
2	Q3 Academy	Birmingham	£2,077.42 +38.5%
3	Tarbert Academy	Argyll, Scotl...	£1,967.64 +31.2%
4	Woodbridge High School	Woodford Gree...	£1,926.17 +28.4%
5	Hutton Grammar	Preston	£1,843.52 +22.9%

	<u>School</u>			
6	Castle Rushen H S	Castletown, I...	£1,702.07	+13.5%
7	Marine Academy Plymouth...	Plymouth	£1,577.01	+5.1%
8	Tomlinscote School & S...	Frimley	£1,575.49	+5.0%
9	Brighton College	Brighton	£1,567.77	+4.5%
10	Rivington & Blackrod H...	Bolton	£1,567.13	+4.5%

Registrations for the 2011/12 competition are now being accepted via the website www.shares4schools.org until 30 September. Schools that register before August will be considered for one of many sponsorships, each worth £750 from The Share Centre. This will help successful registrants towards raising the £1,500 needed to take part in the competition

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About Shares4Schools:

Shares4Schools is a competition organised by The Share Centre, a leading retail stockbroker. Established in 2003 and endorsed by pfeg, this unique competition brings Economics and Business Studies to life as students invest real money in the stock market. The competition is open to schools throughout the UK, with teams of students competing in regional and national leagues.

How does it work?

Each team must raise an investment pot of £1,500 to invest in the stock market, with the aim of achieving the highest fund value over the period from October to June. Schools are encouraged to raise the initial investment pot through sponsorship from local businesses, funding from the Enterprise Initiative Fund and their PTA.

In addition to promoting and administering the competition, The Share Centre offers a limited number of sponsorships of £750 which schools can apply for when registering their interest in the competition.

All participating schools retain the proceeds of their investment fund to use at their discretion, and the team with the highest value fund at the end of the competition will be recognised at a special ceremony in London.

Shares4Schools can be used as part of broad lesson plans or with just a smaller group. It is designed to be self-sufficient, enabling teachers to give as much or as little direction as they feel appropriate. For regulatory reasons, the dealing account is in the name of two authorised representatives of the school, one of whom will carry out the investment decisions: these can be teachers, parents or any other nominated adult. So whilst the competition delivers a broad range of learning experiences, it is not a drain on valuable teaching time.

About trading:

The Shares4Schools trading account is based on The Share Centre's successful Investment Club service.

Funds are invested in the school's name through an online dealing account provided by The Share Centre. The value and make-up of the investment portfolio is visible 24/7 via the Shares4Schools website, using 15 minute delayed prices from the London Stock Exchange. The portfolio value goes to make up the league table, so changes in the values of investments are quickly reflected in the team's league position. To reflect realism, dealing costs are payable as normal, although The Share Centre will, at the end of the competition, donate to the school the total of its dealing charges.

About The Share Centre:

The Share Centre Ltd was formed in 1991 to provide low-cost share services for private investors. The Share Centre's range of services includes buying and selling shares (by Internet, telephone and post), provision of regular valuations, Investment Advice and Individual Saving Accounts. For more details contact 0800 800 008, or visit www.share.com