

Students learn about appliance of science!

SIXTH form students from Stanwell School in Penarth had a taste of science in action, when they visited Cardiff Medicentre.

Based in the grounds of the University of Wales Hospital, the Medicentre is a purpose-built incubator for promising early-stage life sciences companies.

The 23 students were given a tutorial in medical business innovation, and met a number of the tenants at the facility – such as Dr Chris Pepper, a Haematology expert and former pupil of St Cyres.

They also heard about some of the most successful businesses nurtured there, like laboratory testing company Tricho-Tech, which was acquired for £11.25m, and healthcare consultancy Cardiff Research Consortium, which was bought by outsourcing giant Capita Group plc for £11.6m.

Dr Mark Bowman, director of innovation at the Medicentre, said: “We were really keen to give these



SCIENCE IN ACTION: Students from Stanwell were given a tutorial in medical business innovation when they visited Cardiff Medicentre. Pictures: Betina Skovbro Photography.

students an insight into how scientists can become successful business people.

“The life sciences sector contributes £1.3bn to the Welsh economy each year, employing 15,000 people, and it’s a hugely exciting field in which to be involved.

“Interest in science subjects at school is on the up, with Stanwell reporting something of a science renaissance, and over the last couple of years it has introduced extra A-level options

in Human Biology as well as Applied Science, a more accessible science-based subject.

“As the economy looks set to become increasingly reliant on small businesses like the ones based at Cardiff Medicentre, those co-ordinating the Young Innovators programme are hoping that these budding scientists from Stanwell will soon be running companies of their own.”

Science teacher and head of Year 12 at Stanwell,

Matthew Gershenson, led the trip.

“It’s a good opportunity for them to see how the theory of what they learn in the classroom can be translated into practical and professional terms,” he said.

“Hopefully it will inspire them and give them some idea of what is available out there.”

Seventeen-year-old Madison Ramsden said the trip had opened her eyes to possible job options.

“The idea of starting your own company is a scary one, but there is nothing to say that the people who have companies here aren’t looking to employ young and enthusiastic individuals,” she said.

Dr Bowman added: “With youth entrepreneurship now a key policy objective in Wales, we think we have given the students an appreciation of the hard work and dedication that is involved in setting up a new life sciences company, and of the opportunities these sorts of businesses can present.”