

Weston Secondary School's Careers Strategy Policy 2025-2026

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Introduction

Good careers guidance will enable all students to make the right choices to set them on the path to rewarding future careers by developing the skills, confidence and inspiration to be successful beyond school. At Weston Secondary School, promoting a career development culture is part of our mission in supporting the aspirations of our students and to ensure that they gain the necessary skills, knowledge and experience that they need to make progress and succeed in learning, work and employment. Our expectation is that all students leave Weston Secondary School with high **Aspirations**, and the **Belief** that they can **Achieve**, as they develop and plan appropriate next steps for their futures.

We believe that effective careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) not only contributes to the wellbeing of our students but also to the wellbeing of their families, the communities in which they belong, wider society, businesses and the economy.

In line with this, an excellent careers programme ensures that students aims and aspirations are the best that they can be.

Students leaving Weston Secondary School will “have acquired and developed the employability skills and experience which businesses and higher institutions value”.

Purpose and Intent

Legislation that refers to the guidance within this Careers Strategy Policy includes:

- DfE Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (May 2025)
- The Education (Careers Guidance in Schools) act 2022
- Section 42A, 42B, 45 & 45A of the Education Act 1997
- Section 72 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- Schedule 4 (15) of the School Information (England) Regulations 2008

The September 2025 'Careers Guidance and access for education and training providers' states that High-quality careers guidance helps:

- ***Young people make informed choices about their futures, so they can develop their interests and potential, and follow the path that is right for them to progress into work***
- ***Break down barriers to opportunity***
- ***Improve skills needed for success in work***
- ***Improve national productivity and grow the economy***

“High quality careers education and guidance in school or college is critical to young people’s futures. It helps them to prepare for the workplace by providing a clear understanding of the world of work including the routes to jobs and careers that they find engaging and rewarding. It supports them to acquire the self-development and careers management skills they need to achieve positive employment destinations. This helps students to choose their pathways, improve their life opportunities and contribute to a productive and successful economy”.

At Weston Secondary School we are passionate about preparing all our young people to be ready for their post 16 next steps and believe that preparing them, involves providing the tools and experiences they need to make informed career and employment choices. We aim to achieve this through the delivery of activities and opportunities from year 7 through to 11 that will develop an understanding of the world of work and the employability skills and experience that businesses and higher institutions value.

We are committed to providing our students with a careers programme that raises aspirations and provides variety in careers education, information and guidance. By considering the individual interest, skills and attributes of our students using a range of pathways to assist their learning journey we aim to make a tailored career experience designed for the individual.

At Weston Secondary School we will address the above intent as stated by the following priorities:

- To have a careers programme that provides information about careers education, training, guidance and information alongside the skills and attitudes needed
- Help with career management and planning KS4 and post-16 options that will support making 'informed choice'
- Supporting individual aspirations, improving attainment and ensuring positive and appropriate destinations
- To support inclusion, challenge stereotypes and promote equality of opportunity
- Developing students career management and enterprise skills including key employability skills associated with leadership, organisation, resilience, initiative and communication
- To contribute to the economic prosperity of individuals and communities by ensuring those employability skills are embedded by year 11
- Meeting the needs of specific groups including young carers, looked after children and children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Access to appropriate, up to date and impartial information, resources, help and guidance so that students are able to undertake career exploration, identify the values that are important to them and to consider the skills and qualities needed for particular jobs and careers
- To ensure that students get the support they need to make well-informed decisions through careers education, information, advice and guidance
- Collaborate with parents/carers, alumni, further education, higher education, community, and business partners to meet students career development needs

Strategy

At Weston Secondary School we will address the above intent as follows:

- Ensure that careers is at the heart of education and leadership so that careers guidance is both a whole-staff and a whole-institution endeavour
- Ensure that the trust is actively involved in shaping the careers strategy policy through its committee

- Appoint a senior member of staff to lead the development, implementation and evaluation of the school's careers provision with the support of other key post holders
- Advise and report to the senior leadership and governors on curriculum, staffing and resource requirements for the development and implementation of the school's careers provision
- Ensure that this policy is kept updated and is added to our school website so that parents, carers, employers, educational providers and students have access
- Promote positive working relationships with employers and educational establishments including further and higher education providers to ensure that students are able to make informed choice about their future
- Identify a Senior Leader with Admin Support to manage the day-to-day running of the careers programme
- Provide independent careers guidance from a registered and qualified partner who meets the standards set by the Career Development Institute
- Involve stakeholders in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the careers programme and review annually
- Set out clearly the contribution expected of all staff including Heads of Departments, Faculty leads, teachers and tutors for student's career planning and learning
- Compliance with the 'Baker Clause' and provide opportunities for a range of education and training providers to access all students in years 7-11 to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships (Careers Provider Access Statement)
- Work towards achieving career [Gatsby Benchmarks](#) as designed by Sir John Holman, who developed a framework of improved careers provision. He developed eight benchmarks. Our careers programme is written with the benchmarks in mind.

Gatsby Benchmarks and Key Themes

1. A stable Career Programme
2. Learning from Career and Labour Market Information (LMI)
3. Addressing the Needs of Each Pupil
4. Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers
5. Encounters with Employers and Employees
6. Experiences of Workplaces
7. Encounter with Further and Higher Education
8. Personal Guidance

Career guidance is at the heart of Weston Secondary School and is aligned to our core values of Aspire, Believe and Achieve. Woven through our application of the benchmarks is an emphasis on the importance of tailoring our activities to the needs of our students paying particular attention to inclusion and any support that may be needed by our disadvantaged or vulnerable young people and those with Special educational needs.

We aim to provide meaningful encounters that promote a variety of encounters and experiences, ensuring where required, that our students have time to prepare and reflect.

Our aim is to ensure that all of our students can explore future pathways equitably whilst recognising that this information can help inform their decision making. Our data collection continues to focus on aspirations and intended destinations.

We recognise that parents and carers are one of the biggest influences on our young people's career decision making. We aim to embed parent and carer engagement into our planning by sharing our careers programme as well as sharing information about career and post-16 opportunities.

Gatsby Benchmark 1: A Stable Career Programme

Benchmark 1 provides the foundation for careers provision across our school and is aligned to our vision, priorities and to school improvement.

Developing a progressive careers programme shaped and driven by a strategic careers plan, enables our students to make well informed decisions about education, training, apprenticeship & employment opportunities and supports them to cope with challenging labour market conditions.

- There is a clear programme of career education and guidance (Careers Programme 2025-26) that is published on the website and is accessible to students, parents, teachers, governors, employers and other agencies. The programme is shared explicitly with parents and carers as a key influencer of our students career decisions
- The careers programme has the explicit backing of the senior management team and is coordinated and evaluated by the Director of Careers Education
- Providers of technical (including higher technical) education, vocational education and apprenticeships are given the opportunity to engage with students and their parents so that all routes at 16 are fully understood and so that students can make informed decisions at key transition points (Careers Provider Access Statement)
- The programme is evaluated using feedback from students, parents, carers and other staff who support our students. The programme is tailored to the needs of students and sequenced appropriately underpinned by the school vision and values

Gatsby Benchmark 2: Learning from Career and Labour Market Information (LMI)

Benchmark 2 focuses on up-to-date career and labour market information which is information about pathways, opportunities and growth areas.

Providing detailed information about all pathways, relevant courses, opportunities, labour market understanding and supporting students to make useful networks strengthens students' capacity to make informed decision and positive transitions.

- Students access information during each Key Stage about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options in PSHE lessons, assemblies and through independent guidance
- Staff contribute to CEIAG through their role as tutors and subject teachers
- Students have access to CEIAG through 1:1 independent career meetings
- There is access for all students, parents and staff to relevant CEIAG and labour market information that is publicised on the school website

Gatsby Benchmark 3: Addressing the Needs of Each Pupil

Benchmark 3 recognises that young people require different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support should be tailored to the needs of each pupil

- The school aims to secure activities and external speakers across all year groups seeking to challenge misconceptions, stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations. These include a variety of employers, further and higher education establishments and ex-students
- To employ a Careers Advisor with relevant qualifications
- To employ a Careers Advisor who makes regular use of employment information to support students in making informed choices
- To employ a Careers Advisor who keeps a systematic record of individual advice given to each student that aims to support KS4 options and post-16 pathways which is right for them as an individual
- Collect data on student aspirations, intended and immediate education, and or training destinations to inform personalised support
- Annual destination data for education, training and employment is provided by Southampton City Council. This data is used to review the careers provision and inform development and continuous improvement
- To keep a record of student participation in all aspects of their careers programme and to provide access to support next steps and career development where appropriate
- Keep a record of long term destinations data

Gatsby Benchmark 4: Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers

Benchmark 4 involves subject staff linking curriculum with careers providing relevance and a rationale to learning concepts, lessons and blocks of learning. Students feel more engaged in their learning when they perceive the relevance of what they are studying to their own and other people's lives. Subject teachers highlight the progression routes for their subject and the relevance of the knowledge and skill developed.

- Early Career Teachers (ECT) receive training on Gatsby Benchmarks and linking curriculum learning to careers
- Subject leaders take responsibility to make curriculum links to learning and signposting subject relevance with specific employability skills and relatable career related opportunities
- Development of Curriculum Learning to Careers as part of ongoing staff development for teachers and staff who support students
- All subjects promote opportunities to learn about links into different careers
- Careers forms an integral part of our school's ongoing staff development programme for teachers and all staff who support young people

Gatsby Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and Employees

Benchmark 5 considers the meaningful encounters to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace through a range of enrichment activities.

- Students have the opportunity for regular encounters with employers and employees through mock interviews, workshops, activities, visiting guest speakers and work experience
- The school participates in events such as Business Speed Networking, Interview Preparation and Get Inspired
- Every year, students participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer
- Students own part-time employment, where it exists can be taken into account as an encounter with both employers and employees

Gatsby Benchmark 6: Experiences of Workplaces

Benchmark 6 recognises the importance of first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help students in their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks. This helps create social capital for young people and experiences of the workplace gives them the opportunity to develop essential skills.

- Block work experience placements in the summer term of year 10 in collaboration with EBP south offering various work experience pathways
- Subject specific trips and visits arranged and coordinated by departments

Gatsby Benchmark 7: Encounters with Further and Higher Education

Benchmark 7 provides students with the opportunity to learn more about the full range of opportunities that are available to them. This includes both technical and academic routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace

- Students throughout school have access encounters with Further Education establishments through assemblies, visits that support key transition points and external taster day and visits
- Students throughout school have access to encounters with Higher Education establishments especially in key stage 4. Students have access to assemblies, workshops and offsite visits
- There are visits to Itchen Sixth Form College, South Hants College Group, Southampton Solent University and Southampton University for years 9-11
- Apprenticeship providers come into school to speak to students, in line with the schools Careers Provider Access Statement and provider access legislation

Gatsby Benchmark 8: Personal Guidance

Gatsby benchmark 8 promotes opportunities for guidance meetings with a qualified Careers Adviser available whenever significant study or career choices are being made.

Every student should have at least one such meeting by the age of 16.

Providing structural personal guidance enables students to focus on their future dreams and to set goals to achieve them.

- The Careers Advisor offers one to one meetings for students in Key Stage 4 prioritising their needs and supporting their transitional plans
- The Careers Advisor offers group meetings for students with similar plans and careers aspirations
- The Career Advisor provides drop-in sessions for students in key stage 3, provides tutor drop-in sessions and attendance at key student transition points
- Information about personal guidance support and how to access it is communicated to students, parents and carers through the school website

Meaningful Encounters

The updated Gatsby Benchmarks 5, 6 and 7 stipulates that all young people should participate in meaningful encounters and experiences. These meaningful encounters aim to provide opportunity to learn about what work is like, what skills are valued in the workplace, their recruitment process and what it takes to be successful. Our meaningful encounters are designed to:

- Have a clear purpose, which is shared with our students (5, 6 & 7)
- Have two-way interaction opportunities between our students and the employer (5, 6 & 7)
- Be underpinned by appropriate learning outcomes (5,6 &7)
- Have an opportunity to reflect on the knowledge and skills gained through the encounter (5, 6 & 7)
- Include opportunities for young people to meet a range of different people from the workplace (6)
- Include opportunities for young people to perform a task set by an employer and to receive feedback (6)
- Include information about the provider, recruitment and selection process, qualifications and careers and what learning or training with the provider is like (7)

Monitoring review and Evaluation

CEIAG is monitored and evaluated annually through discussion with key staff and students and appropriate observation of activities by the Headteacher. Where required this information will be shared with the Governing Body. In addition to this:

- Partnership agreements are reviewed annually
- The programme is reviewed annually by the Director Careers Education to ensure alignment of the school improvement plan (SIP) and is used to ensure that the careers programme supports whole school aims
- The review will support changes and improvements to the programme and towards future action planning
- Tracking of student's activities
- The careers programme will be evaluated using feedback from students, parents, staff, employers, employers and colleges
- Display destination data for previous cohorts on the school website
- Completion of Compass (The Careers and Enterprise Company Gatsby Benchmark tracking tool)

Equality and Diversity

CEIAG is provided and available to all students and provision is made to allow all students to access the curriculum. Students are encouraged to follow career paths that suit their interests, skills and strengths and extra provision is made to target particular groups. All students are provided with opportunities that challenge career related stereotypes promoting diversity and equality.