

Heckmondwike Grammar School

Policy: Careers Strategy

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The Careers Strategy for Heckmondwike Grammar School – 2025/26

Introduction

Providing outstanding careers education, advice, information and guidance (CEIAG) in a meaningful and structured way is integral in enabling students to make informed decisions about their own career pathways. In addition, CEIAG is an integral aspect of a student's personal development and is, as such, excellent preparation for when students leave the school.

Vision, ethos and values

The school's ethos of 'nil sine labore' meaning nothing without work encapsulates not only the expectations of all stakeholders that hard work delivers high results, but that work in its alternate meaning in the context of careers is equally as valid.

CEIAG at HGS sits within the Personal Development framework and it is incumbent on schools to promote careers education in all aspects of school life. We have a statutory duty to develop CEIAG but more importantly we have a moral duty to promote the levels of understanding of the ways people make decisions about their career choices and ensure we have informed, empowered and emboldened students to be able to make those decisions.

The fourth report of session from the House of Commons Education Committee suggests a need for more schools to focus on meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks as part of an enhanced Careers Strategy from the DfE. The report also recommended that Ofsted uphold a strong focus on CEIAG provision in recognition of the contribution CEIAG has in a student's personal development.¹

Meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks is just the beginning of the process, and we regard meeting them as a sound measure of our provision, but we believe this as a minimum level of entitlement. The impact and effectiveness of our careers input is measured through our quality assurance processes as well as through reaccreditation of the Quality in Careers Mark which was awarded in June 2024, confirming the school's achievement at securing all Gatsby Benchmarks.

The 2022 Ofsted report for the school identified many positive aspects of our careers provision but also highlighted the fact that we need to ensure that students know about and understand the full range of options available, including non-traditional routes. Student voice and feedback expressed the desire to have careers information, which is meaningful, timely and tailored to students' needs across a wider variety of pathways. This has continued to be a focus of the CEIAG strategy.

¹ House of Commons Education Committee 'Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance' Fourth Report of Session 2022-23 published 29 June 2023

CEIAG at Heckmondwike Grammar School

Careers education starts in Year 7 and continues throughout a student's time at Heckmondwike Grammar School. We want students to be able to explore aspects of careers education in their curriculum subjects, through discussions in form tutor time, through participation in events organised by the Careers Team such as employer encounters, fairs and visits as well as two opportunities to engage in work experience.

The impact of CEIAG contributes to the school's quality assurance processes for Ofsted in the areas of Personal Development and Leadership and Management.

This strategy document aims to fulfil the following:

- Give strategic direction to careers education at Heckmondwike Grammar School.
- Underpin the CEIAG which takes place routinely at HGS.
- Articulate the vision for careers education which addresses the needs of all students in a structured and age-appropriate fashion.
- Underpin the work of all members of staff at HGS who have a role in CEIAG; and
- Enable the school to more than meet its statutory obligations relating to CEIAG and therefore meet external measures including Gatsby Benchmarks and ongoing Quality in Careers accreditation, which is due or renewal in 2024.

Strategic outcomes for CEIAG at Heckmondwike Grammar School

1. Provide careers opportunities for all students in Years 7-13 that are age-appropriate and that reflect the needs of the students, the school and the career development requirements of the students.
2. Build on creating a successful and meaningful work experience programme for students in Years 10 and 12.
3. Continue to develop Pathways for students in 6 areas so that CEIAG can be provided which is tailored to students' aspirations and career development
4. Provide meaningful curriculum input across all Key Stages and in all subjects so that careers education is progressive and integral to all subject areas, including PSHE and the tutorial period, so that students can articulate their understanding of and pathways through the careers programmes and are able to make meaningful and informed decisions about careers choices
5. Benchmark progress and achievement in Careers education through meeting fully and exceeding the Gatsby Benchmarks, continuing the embedded success in achieving the full Quality in Careers accreditation.

Careers in the Curriculum at HGS

The careers programme is planned so that delivery of all aspects of the programme meet not only statutory minimum requirements for guidance opportunities and labour market information (LMI), encounters with employers at all Key Stages and opportunities for students to undertake work experience, but also enhance careers education in the taught and wider curriculum.

Intent

- All students have access to careers advice at appropriate stages in their school journey;
- The school provides staged, planned and age-appropriate encounters with employers and further and higher education providers which are meaningful;
- Work experience opportunities for Years 10 and 12 are scheduled. This is an allocated week for Year 12 and as part of the enrichment programme in Year 12.
- Appropriate careers information and advice is provided to students through interviews with the school's Careers Advisers;
- Opportunities for careers-based exploration within curriculum subjects are identified, explored and undertaken;
- Six Pathway routes are identified for students to undertake at, initially, Key Stage 5;
- Inform students of progression opportunities and routes so that students have the necessary skills and information to make informed decisions;
- A planned enrichment programme for KS5 students which link to students' personal development and careers education;
- Curriculum time is devoted to careers education through PSHE and tutorial sessions delivering opportunities at appropriate points at all key stages;
- The schools fulfils its obligations with respect to statutory obligations including Provider Access legislation, which cover the 'Baker' clause, Gatsby benchmarking and obligations for safeguarding and Health and Safety legislation for students on Work Experience and on further and higher education visits and encounters with employers and other providers; and
- Student destinations are tracked for at least 3 years following leaving Heckmondwike Grammar School.

Implement

- A planned careers programme of events, activities, visits and encounters is published on the school calendar so that students can experience careers education at appropriate stages throughout their schooling in all key stages;
- Regular, age-appropriate careers advice, information and guidance sessions are provided to students by the school's careers advisers;
- External providers are engaged to run mock interviews with students;
- Subject leaders identify opportunities to develop careers links in their subject schemes of work so that teachers make links to subject input and careers opportunities;
- One week in the school calendar is devoted to external work experience for Years 10;
- Students undertake sessions on the Unifrog platform to promote independent learning in careers education;
- Students in Year 12 participate in an annual 2-day progression event hosted by the school at which representatives attend from a range of further and higher education providers and employers. Year 10 students are also invited to attend the Careers Fair session.
- The Pathway programme responds to students' aspirations for a range of potential destinations, covering academic and vocational routes in a broad variety of disciplines; and

- Student destinations are tracked through making obtaining students' contact information (subject to GDPR) when they leave HGS at the end of KS4 or KS5 and maintaining those contacts (where consent is given) so that a database of alumni is created.

Impact

- Quality assurance through student voice, learning walks and regular line-management conversations show that careers in the curriculum is planned and effective;
- The school fully meets the Gatsby Benchmarks;
- Student and Parent feedback through a range of routes, including students voice and questionnaires indicate positive engagement with CEIAG opportunities including careers guidance interviews, careers events, employer talks, mock interviews, attendance at school-hosted progression events, visits to further and higher education establishments;
- Employer feedback on Unifrog and through staff phone calls following Work Experience evidences the high degree of engagement shown by students;
- Take-up of Pathway initiatives is positive and results in meaningful personal statements for university, apprenticeship and employment opportunities; and
- The school's Quality in Careers accreditation is approved.

Exploring the decision-making process

Students make decisions about career pathways in many ways and for a variety of reasons. Evidence from research and from cohorts of students at Heckmondwike Grammar School suggest that the decision-making process for students is driven mainly by one or more of the following factors²:

- personal aspirations
- family influences
- knowledge or understanding of a particular career
- external factors

Students use these (and other) factors in making decisions which may differ from other institutions. Understanding the cohort of students and how they make decisions can help shape CEIAG given to students and how they access and record information. It is therefore important that careers education and guidance sessions take opportunities to challenge, inform and shape the decision-making process.

The Gatsby Benchmarks

The impact of CEIAG in a setting is measured through coverage of the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks. The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), an arm of the DfE which promotes careers education in schools and colleges, outline the reasons for the establishment of the benchmarks:

² Careers Leader Training (CDI, March 2023)

The Gatsby Benchmarks were developed on behalf of the Gatsby Foundation by Sir John Holman. They define what world class careers provision in education looks like and provide a clear framework for organising the careers provision. The benchmarks are enshrined in statutory guidance, and it is the school's responsibility to oversee the implementation of the benchmarks.³

There are 8 benchmarks and schools tailor their CEIAG provision to ensure coverage. Regular termly audits ensure that progress is mapped using the Compass+ audit tool.

The 8 Gatsby Benchmarks are:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from careers and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each student
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Roles and Responsibilities

The school values the importance of CEIAG for all students and in order to achieve the aims of this strategy has invested heavily in staffing and structures in the following ways:

1. The Assistant Headteacher for Personal Development is also the named Careers Leader for the school. They will undertake the level 6 Careers Leadership award through the Careers Development Institute. This means that strategic leadership for CEIAG is placed at senior leadership level. In addition, the Governing Board of the school has identified a Governor to be the link to Careers.
2. The school employs two full-time Careers Advisers who are level 7 qualified.
3. Six Pathways leaders have been recruited to lead the development of careers advice and education: Oxbridge, Apprenticeship & Employment, Medical, STEM, Humanities & Arts and Business, Economics & Finance.
4. Work Experience for all students in Years 10 and 12 was relaunched in 2022 and continues successfully.
5. The curriculum has been remodelled to build in dedicated PSHE input at all Key Stages as follows and to allow for bespoke careers tutorial sessions for students at key points in their schooling.
6. The school has access to advice and guidance from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority through the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (the LEP) and has direct links to Enterprise Advisers as well as to our allocated Enterprise Coordinator at the LEP.
7. Access to online packages including Unifrog and Compass+ enable the school to identify need and personalise the experiences for students.

³ <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/careers-leaders/gatsby-benchmarks/>

In detail, the roles and responsibilities are as follows:

Senior Leadership Team:

- The Assistant Headteacher for Personal Development has overall responsibility for the leadership and strategic direction for CEIAG which includes providing SLT and the Governing Board with regular updates through executive summaries and liaising with the link Governor for CEIAG. The AHT is the named Careers Leader for the school and also has overall strategic leadership of PSHE, supported by the Subject Leader for PSHE.
- The Deputy Headteacher responsible for Teaching and Learning has overall responsibility for the strategic implementation of Careers input in curriculum areas and for the quality assurance of this provision through line-management quality assurance.
- The Assistant Headteacher responsible for CPD and Student Voice has responsibility for integrating staff training opportunities relating to CEIAG into the overall CPD calendar and for gauging impact of careers provision through regular student voice opportunities.

The Assistant Headteacher responsible for KS5 has the strategic overview of all matters relating to Sixth Form provision, including overseeing the Pathway Programme and Pathway Leaders, as well as Co-ordination of the UCAS process for Sixth Form as part of CEIAG and of FE encounters.

Careers Advisers

The Careers Advisers devise and implement an effective careers programme for students in all Key Stages, including Work Experience and the Co-ordination of the UCAS process for Sixth Form as part of CEIAG and of FE encounters.

Middle Leaders, to include Subject Leaders, Heads of Year, KS5 Achievement Leaders and Pathway Leaders

- Devise and implement careers opportunities at appropriate times through curriculum delivery
- Quality assure the provision of form tutor input relating to CEIAG
- Provide opportunities to students for next phase applications (employment, apprenticeship, further education, higher education) and support students to develop these applications
- Identify opportunities in which students can take part thus assisting in the development of their understanding of CEIAG.

Form Tutors and Subject Teachers

- Deliver input relating to CEIAG in their subject areas and in tutorial sessions
- Promote discussions which deepen understanding of CEIAG

Students

- Undertake to engage actively in careers education opportunities, including those in lessons, form times, assemblies, whole-school sessions, remote sessions, Work Experience.
- Seek out opportunities to develop their understanding of careers and their own career pathway

Parents/Carers

- Support their children in making informed decisions about career pathways and in encouraging participation in the school's wider curriculum including HE visits, Work Experience and employer encounters.

The Careers Programme at HGS

The careers programme which is published on the school calendar is planned by the Careers Advisers and shows the opportunities afforded to students from Year 7 through to Year 13. This is also mapped to the Gatsby Benchmarks. The opportunities are not limited to the planned curriculum; this is the minimum offer for all students.

Heckmondwike Grammar School is committed to providing a comprehensive and dynamic careers education and guidance program that prepares students for a rapidly changing world. Our aim is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed decisions about their future pathways and to inspire them to reach their full potential.

Strategic Goals

1. **Awareness and Exploration:** Introduce students to a wide range of career opportunities and help them understand the skills and qualifications required for different roles.
2. **Skills Development:** Foster key employability skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and resilience.
3. **Informed Decision Making:** Ensure students can make informed choices about their educational and career paths through access to relevant information and experiences.
4. **Work Experience:** Provide opportunities for students to gain practical experience in the workplace.
5. **Individual Support:** Offer tailored advice and support to help students achieve their personal career goals.

Breakdown of Expectations by Year Group

Year 7: Introduction to Careers

- **Objective:** To begin exploring the world of work and understand the importance of education in achieving career goals.
- **Activities:**
 - Introduction to careers during PSHE and tutorial lessons.
 - Guest speakers from various professions.
 - Classroom discussions on different job roles and industries.
 - Visit to a local business or workplace.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Basic understanding of different types of jobs.
 - Awareness of how subjects studied in school relate to future careers.

Year 8: Exploring Interests and Skills

- **Objective:** To help students identify their interests and skills and how these can influence career choices.
- **Activities:**
 - Skills and interests assessment workshops.
 - Detailed sessions on GCSE options and their implications for future careers.
 - Career-related projects and presentations, including the Careers Carousel.

- Participation in a careers fair.
- Introduction to online career resources.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Identified personal interests and skills.
 - Informed GCSE subject choices aligned with career interests.
 - Initial ideas about potential career paths.

Year 9: Understanding Pathways

- **Objective:** To provide detailed information on different educational and career pathways, aiding students in making informed subject choices.
- **Activities:**
 - Talks from professionals and alumni about their career journeys.
 - Enterprise Day.
 - Introduction to apprenticeships and vocational training.
 - Further interactions with the Pathway Groups.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Increased confidence in their ability to plan and make decisions about their future.
 - Enhanced understanding of different career paths and qualifications.

Year 10: Preparation and Planning

- **Objective:** To start practical preparations for future career choices, including work experience and further education options.
- **Activities:**
 - CV writing and interview skills workshops.
 - Work experience placements, with preparation including a mock interview by an external employer.
 - Visits to colleges, universities, and training providers.
 - Career action plan development.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Completed work experience.
 - Developed a personal career action plan.
 - Improved understanding of post-16 options.

Year 11: Decision Making

- **Objective:** To finalise decisions regarding post-16 education and training, ensuring students are ready for the next step.
- **Activities:**
 - One-on-one career guidance interviews.
 - Support with applications for sixth form, college, or apprenticeships.
 - Mock interviews with external professionals.
 - Workshops on managing transitions.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Completed applications for post-16 pathways.
 - Enhanced decision-making skills regarding future education and careers.

Year 12: Deepening Engagement

- **Objective:** To deepen students' engagement with their chosen career paths and begin preparing for post-18 options.
- **Activities:**
 - University and apprenticeship application support.
 - Attendance at career fairs and university open days.
 - Networking opportunities with industry professionals.
 - Extended work placements or internships.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Developed a clear plan for post-18 education or training.
 - Expanded professional network.

Year 13: Transition and Execution

- **Objective:** To ensure students are fully prepared for the transition to higher education, apprenticeships, or the workforce.
- **Activities:**
 - Finalizing university, apprenticeship, or job applications.
 - Interview preparation and practice.
 - Financial literacy workshops focusing on managing finances in university or work.
 - Alumni mentoring programs.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Successfully secured a place at university, an apprenticeship, or a job.
 - Well-prepared for the financial and practical aspects of post-18 life.

Implementation and Monitoring

- **Leadership:** Careers Leader and Careers Team responsible for implementing the strategy.
- **Collaboration:** Regular collaboration with teachers, parents, alumni, and local businesses.
- **Evaluation:** Annual review of the careers program through student feedback, destination data, and external evaluations.
- **Resources:** Investment in careers resources, including access to online career platforms and a dedicated careers library.

By following this structured approach, Heckmondwike Grammar School aims to empower students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to navigate their future career paths successfully.

Careers Curriculum

The explicit Careers Curriculum Programme is designed to compliment the overall strategy, providing lesson support to enhance the offer. The purpose of the scheme is to support pupil aspirations and understanding of Post 16 options and future employment. The programme includes explicit lessons on skill development (character) and future career goals (aspirations). As part of the introduction curriculum there are some overlapping lessons in KS3.

	Lesson Overview
Year 7	A series of lessons dedicated to building the character and aspirations of pupils. This includes reflecting on strengths and weaknesses and setting goals for the year. The unit provides opportunities for pupils to develop new skills and build their aspirations towards success and achievements. Pupils' work is recorded in their personal development booklet to review. Careers Recognising personal identity, strengths and weaknesses, effort levels using employability skills as a reference. Pupils start to enquire about future aspirations at school, identifying how they link to skill and setting small SMART goals which are reviewed throughout the year. Post 16/18 pathways are introduced. Other: Pupils are introduced to the world of careers under units <i>Diversity</i> and <i>Digital Literacy</i>.
Year 8	A series of lessons dedicated to building the character and aspirations of pupils. This includes reflecting on strengths and weaknesses and setting goals for the year. The unit provides opportunities for pupils to develop new skills and build their aspirations towards success and achievements. Pupils' work is recorded in their personal development booklet to review. Careers Recognising personal identity, strengths and weaknesses, effort levels using employability skills as a reference. Pupils start to enquire about future aspirations at school, identifying how they link to skill and setting small SMART goals which are reviewed throughout the year. Pupils investigate LMI and link careers to post 16 choices. Year 8 pupils chose their options for GCSE so recognise skills for employment routes. Other: Pupils are introduced to the world of careers under units <i>Human Rights & the Law</i> and <i>Finance</i>.
Year 9	A series of lessons which focuses on the idea of employment and their next options. This includes employability routes and post 16 options. Lessons also encourage pupils to think about opportunities available to them to build their world and expand on their skills. Careers Pupils look at planning a positive future, based around want and needs. They start to build a bigger picture of life outside of school, focusing on what employment means and what routes are available to build an aspirational career. Pupils are provided opportunities throughout the year to review what they need to do to achieve what they aspire, whilst provided support within the school



	Other: Pupils also complete a unit of work around <i>Finance</i>. This involves pupils learning about bank accounts, payment systems (wages and salaries), as well as budgeting.
Year 10	Pupils prepare for their work experience placement. This is organised to allow time for pupils to understand procedure and expectations as well as develop their own understanding of aspirations and career goals. Furthermore, pupils gain experience of writing personal letters and CVs, as well as developing necessary communication skills for interviews, with a focus on sourcing a placement to replicated real employment situations. The career programme is supported by assembly workshops and tutor sessions. Careers Pupils are introduced to work experience and gather an understanding of the expectations and options available. Pupils review why WEX is important and the opportunity this presents. During these sessions, they will review their own goals and aspirations and apply them to an employability setting which matches their strengths and weaknesses. Tutor sessions Pupils are guided through UniFrog systems, so they are confident in the processes in securing a work experience placement. This is supplemented with an information workbook to guide learning and inform pupil/parents. Other: Pupils look at the laws of employment under the unit <i>Discrimination</i>.
Year 11	Pupils prepare their applications for post 16. The programme is delivered in the careers curriculum, along with supportive assemblies and tutorial sessions. Careers Supporting the plans with the careers teams, including UniFrog sessions and post 16 assembly presentations, pupils review the post 16 options available, whilst applying their own knowledge and skill to the routes applicable. Pupils also build an understanding of themselves to apply to interviews, as well as developing interview skills and knowledge of expectations. Other: Pupils focus on their future plans in the PSHE scheme, applying to their life in school and later adult life.
Year 12	Pupils prepare for their work experience placement. This is organised to allow time for pupils to understand procedure and expectations as well as develop their own understanding of aspirations and career goals. Furthermore, pupils gain experience of writing personal letters and CVs, as well as developing necessary communication skills for interviews. The career programme is supported by assembly workshops and tutor sessions. Further lessons in the curriculum introduce pupils to post 18 options with drop down focused sessions on different routes. This is supported by extracurricular experiences using the Pathways Tutors. Careers Pupils are guided through UniFrog systems, so they are confident in the processes in securing a work experience placement. This is supplemented with an information workbook to guide learning and inform pupil/parents. The pathways lesson are overseen by the Sixth Form Aspirations Leader. These are designed to provide pupils with an objective view of options after Year 13, with equal sessions weighted to all choices.



	Other: Pupils focus on the law and development of the economy under units <i>Human Rights & the Law</i> and <i>Finance</i> .
Year 13	Pupils use the careers sessions to explore and finalise post 18 options. The unit builds on the work from Year 12. Tutors are crucial in guiding UCAS applications and decisions for after Sixth Form. This is guided by the Sixth Form Aspirations Leader who directs the programme providing one to one advice for all involved. Latter lessons focus on preparing for the future. Careers As well as focused lessons on post 18 applications, pupils use the latter lessons to prepare for life after Sixth Form, including finance (covering student finance) and clearance, so pupils have an understanding of the options available. Other: Pupils focus on life after school through units <i>finance</i> and <i>the future</i>. These units focus on wages, taxes and the law.

Auditing CEIAG at HGS

The school makes use of the audit tool Compass+ to evidence the impact of CEIAG and undertakes termly reviews to monitor progress. Events and activities, and participation in these events can be recorded against individual students, which builds a picture of CEIAG provision.

In addition, a database of student destinations and evidence of annual contacts is also kept on Compass+. This process, which is undertaken annually, aims to track student destinations when they leave the school at the end of KS4 and KS5. The school is obliged to keep records of student destinations for at least 3 years, subject to consent given under GDPR legislation.

Linked documents

- Careers Policy
- Provider Access Statement
- Work Experience Policy
- Safeguarding Policy