



Careers Programme

FEBRUARY 2026

NEXT REVIEW DATE: FEBRUARY 2027

Staff Responsible: Mrs A Croft



Disclaimer

Old park School regularly review this document to ensure information is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. As new information develops this document will change over time.

The copyright of the original of these materials is held by Old Park School. Educational settings that work with children and young people are granted permission to use all or part of the materials for not for profit use. Old Park school have developed and added to the original materials as provided by Penns Meadow school.

1. Introduction

“Good career guidance can have a profound impact on social mobility, as it ensures that each and every young person, whatever their needs, background or ambitions, knows the options open to them to fulfil their potential.”¹

Provision development, including Careers Programme is the responsibility of nominated staff within each class group under the direction of the Assistant headteacher, Mrs Amy Croft.

Contact details are:

acroft@old-park..dudley.sch.uk

¹ <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/good-career-guidance-perspectives-from-the-send-sector.pdf>



The careers programme is designed to build upon student’s experiences over time, whilst adhering to the requirements of the Gatsby Benchmarks. In some instances, these Benchmarks have been met in the most relevant way available to our students, as whilst we aim for aspirational outcomes for all learners, it is important to ensure that realistic targets and opportunities are presented to our young people and their families. The specific annual coverage of the programme is arranged by age as follows:

| Phase | Activity/ event and Gatsby Benchmarks addressed |
|--|--|
| Lower and Middle (Key Stages 1 and 2) | <p><u>Throughout academic year:</u></p> <p><i>Curriculum links</i></p> <p><i>Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers</i></p> <p>In terms of our setting, ‘Careers’ and ‘Career path’ refers to the future destination of the learner, not necessarily paid employment. In order to meet this requirement in a meaningful way for our students we include suitable statements on relevant STEM based Medium Term Sequences of Learning: MTSLs (Science, Maths, Computing and Design & Technology) to indicate opportunities to share with students how people use the skills being learned to either support them in a job/ career role, or in the case of most of our students, to maximise their independence and opportunities in later life.</p> <p><i>Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and Employees</i></p> <p>During their time in Lower and Middle Phases, students will be introduced to relevant jobs and workplaces based in the school setting itself. These encounters will be linked to PHSE and the concept of ‘people who help us’. Alongside employees they have direct interaction with such as catering staff, health professionals, the site team and therapists, this will also include commissioned services such as a dance instructor, music tutor, and theatre group. There are also planned opportunities for local services such as the fire service to make visits to the school to share their role with students. These experiences provide the scaffolding needed to begin to consider workplaces and job roles beyond the students’ immediate experience during the following Phases.</p> <p>Class staff have worked together to generate a list of potential suitable activities linking their termly themes to the Career’s programme objectives (see ‘Work-based learning: curriculum theme links’)</p> <p><i>EHCP reviews</i></p> <p><i>Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student</i></p> <p>Every student at Old Park school has an EHCP, which is reviewed and updated annually. As part of this process parents/carers, familiar school staff, external professionals and the students themselves have the opportunity to consider the changing skills, interests and barriers experienced by the young person, and to put in place steps to maximise their potential achievement and success. For the students, this means that familiar staff will either advocate for, or communicate with, the student to ascertain their own wishes and feelings for the future, and</p> |



| | |
|------------------------|--|
| | <p>suggest ambitious but achievable goals as part of an introduction to personal guidance and to champion student voice in decision making about the future. Personalised communication systems and staff training to ensure effective and consistent advocacy and interpretation are currently being finalised and will be in place by the end of the current academic year.</p> <p>This process provides scaffolding towards meeting ‘Benchmark 8: Personal guidance’ as the students progress through the school.</p> <p><u>Annual activities:</u></p> <p><i>Careers, PfA and Transition event</i> <i>Benchmark 2: Learning from Career and Labour Market Information</i> <i>Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student</i></p> <p>Once each year we host an event during which a variety of groups/ organisations are invited to attend as stallholders. These include local education, training and social care providers for learners Post 19; local authority and disability service representatives including SENDIAS, Connexions, and financial agencies such as the DWP.</p> <p>Families and carers of all students in Lower and Middle Phase are invited to attend to gain an impression of what the future may hold for their child, and seek advice and guidance regarding the local offer, which represents our ‘Labour Market’ in terms of realistic opportunities Post 19. The presence of the Connexions advisors and Dudley Disability Service can also provide early signposting for families in terms of the specific support they and their child may need when considering future options. In this was we begin to address the needs of each student early on into their school career.</p> |
| Upper (Key Stage 3) | <p><u>Throughout academic year:</u></p> <p><i>Curriculum links</i> <i>Preparation for, and Early EQUALEX Work Experience, Employer encounters and Workplace visits</i> <i>Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers</i> <i>Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and Employees</i> <i>Benchmark 6: Work Experience and other experiences of the workplace</i></p> <p>In terms of our setting, ‘Careers’ and ‘Career path’ refers to the future destination of the learner, not necessarily paid employment. In order to meet this requirement in a meaningful way for our students we include suitable statements on relevant STEM based Medium Term Sequences of Learning: MTSLs (Science, Maths, Computing and Design & Technology) to indicate opportunities to share with students how people use the skills being learned to either support them in a job/ career role, or in the case of most of our students, to maximise their independence and opportunities in later life.</p> <p>As part of our thematic curriculum all classes will engage in at least one Work based learning themed day each term linked to their theme. Over the course of their time</p> |



in Key Stage 3 this will provide each student with a minimum of 9 days of work-based learning activity. (Government guidance is for 5 days during Key Stage 3). Class staff have worked together to generate a list of potential suitable activities for these days based on each theme (see 'Work-based learning: curriculum theme links'). These activities may include for example: an appropriate visitor; an offsite visit to a workplace; or an onsite Work Experience day (A task is set by an 'employer', is completed by the class and feedback is given between the class and employer to assess success.)

Offsite learning- workplace visits

Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and Employees

For students in the Upper Phase, each year they will have at least one opportunity to meet with Employers and employees as part of their offsite learning linked to the curriculum. These will be based around familiar venues, such as the local shopping centre, and outdoor adventure play area. During these identified visits, employers will be requested to greet the visiting students, and provide a summary of their role and that of employees at their workplace, ideally with a short tour and chance to interact with other colleagues as appropriate. They will then go on to use the site/ facilities in the role of clients/ customers as appropriate. The focus for Upper Phase is to begin to build links between understanding of who and what is needed for people to access and use these local facilities.

EHCP reviews

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student

Benchmark 8: Personal guidance

Every student at Old Park school has an EHCP, which is reviewed and updated annually. As part of this process parents/carers, familiar school staff, external professionals and the students themselves have the opportunity to consider the changing skills, interests and barriers experienced by the young person, and to put in place steps to maximise their potential achievement and success. For the students, this means that familiar staff will either advocate for, or communicate with, the student to ascertain their own wishes and feelings for the future, and suggest ambitious but achievable goals as part of an introduction to personal guidance and to champion student voice in decision making about the future. Personalised communication systems and staff training to ensure effective and consistent advocacy and interpretation are currently being finalised and will be in place by the end of the current academic year.

Annual events:

Careers, PFA and Transition event

Benchmark 2: Learning from Career and Labour Market Information

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student

Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and employees

Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education

Once each year we host an event during which a variety of groups/ organisations are invited to attend as stallholders. These include local education, training and



| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| | <p>social care providers for learners Post 19; local authority and disability service representatives including SENDIAS, Connexions, and financial agencies such as the DWP.</p> <p>As students enter Upper Phase (specifically those of Key Stage 3 age), along with families being invited as in previous years, the students themselves begin to attend the event in person each Autumn, in order for staff and families to begin to make introductions. Students have the opportunity to engage and interact with relevant Post 19 provision, representing current Labour Market Information suited to their particular skills, interests and needs. Feedback from students and familiar staff supporting them is then collated and added to their own specific career profile, allowing us to build a picture over time and informing future advice and guidance, addressing the needs of each pupil, and preparing for personal guidance in the future. For learners in Upper Phase (Years 7-9 inclusive), this event provides an opportunity for us to meet our requirements in line with the Baker clause, as each year every student will have the opportunity to meet with a potential future provider with relevance to their own specific needs; whether that be education, training, employment, or socially focused.</p> |
| <p>Senior Phase (Key Stage 4)</p> | <p><u>Throughout year:</u></p> <p><i>Curriculum links</i> <i>Preparation for, and Early EQUALEX Work Experience, Employer encounters and Workplace visits</i> <i>Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers</i> <i>Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and Employees</i> <i>Benchmark 6: Work Experience and other experiences of the workplace</i></p> <p>In terms of our setting, 'Careers' and 'Career path' refers to the future destination of the learner, not necessarily paid employment. In order to meet this requirement in a meaningful way for our students we include suitable statements on relevant STEM based Medium Term Sequences of Learning: MTSLs (Science, Maths, Computing and Design & Technology) to indicate opportunities to share with students how people use the skills being learned to either support them in a job/ career role, or in the case of most of our students, to maximise their independence and opportunities in later life.</p> <p>As part of our thematic curriculum all classes will engage in at least one Work based learning themed day each term linked to their theme. Over the course of their time in Key Stage 4 this will provide each student with a minimum of 6 days of work-based learning activity. (Government guidance is for 5 days during Key Stage 4). Class staff have worked together to generate a list of potential suitable activities for these days based on each theme (see 'Work-based learning: curriculum theme links'). These activities may include for example: an appropriate visitor; an offsite visit to a workplace; or an onsite Work Experience day (A task is set by an 'employer', is completed by the class and feedback is given between the class and employer to assess success.)</p> <p><i>Offsite learning- workplace visits</i> <i>Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and Employees</i></p> |



Moving on from the introduction to the concept of external workplaces and people's roles in the local area in familiar settings, students will continue to engage with employers and employees in a wider variety of sites, reflecting their own personal skills and interests where reasonably practicable. These focussed visits will act as scaffolding to the Offsite and Onsite Work Experience and Work Related Learning opportunities also offered when students reach Key Stage 5.

EHCP reviews, incorporating Connexions and Guidance interviews

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student

Benchmark 8: Personal guidance

Every student at Old Park school has an EHCP, which is reviewed and updated annually. As part of this process parents/carers, familiar school staff, external professionals and the students themselves have the opportunity to consider the changing skills, interests and barriers experienced by the young person, and to put in place steps to maximise their potential achievement and success. For the students, this means that familiar staff will either advocate for, or communicate with, the student to ascertain their own wishes and feelings for the future, and suggest ambitious but achievable goals as part of an introduction to personal guidance and to champion student voice in decision making about the future. For students in the Senior Phase, during Key Stage 4 these will be introduced with the support of familiar school staff, then Connexions advisors will join these conversations and subsequent EHCP reviews and their capacity allows- typically in Years 11 and 14.

Personalised communication systems and staff training to ensure effective and consistent advocacy and interpretation are currently being finalised and will be in place by the end of the current academic year.

Annual events:

Careers, PfA and Transition event

Benchmark 2: Learning from Career and Labour Market Information

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student

Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and employees

Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education

Once per year we host an event during which a variety of groups/ organisations are invited to attend as stallholders. These include local education, training and social care providers for learners Post 19; local authority and disability service representatives including SENDIAS, Connexions, and financial agencies such as the DWP.

As in previous years, families and carers of all students are invited to attend and meet with stallholders. As in Upper Phase, all students are also supported to engage with stallholders relevant to their specific interests and needs, with introductions being made to any relevant attending education, training, and social care provision. Based on their own and familiar staff feedback following these interactions, students and families can then expect informed and tailored guidance in regards to the suitable opportunities available to them Post 19. This networking also informs the Transition visit timetable in the Spring Term for key Stage 5 students (see below).



| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>For learners in the Senior Phase, this event provides an opportunity for us to meet our requirements in line with the Baker clause, as each year every student will have the opportunity to meet with a potential future provider with relevance to their own specific needs; whether that be education, training, employment, or socially focused.</p> |
| <p>Post 16 Phase (Key Stage 5)</p> | <p><u>Throughout year:</u></p> <p><i>Curriculum links</i> <i>Preparation for, and Early EQUALEX Work Experience, Employer encounters and Workplace visits</i> <i>Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers</i> <i>Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and Employees</i> <i>Benchmark 6: Work Experience and other experiences of the workplace</i></p> <p>In terms of our setting, 'Careers' and 'Career path' refers to the future destination of the learner, not necessarily paid employment. In order to meet this requirement in a meaningful way for our students we include suitable statements on relevant STEM based Medium Term Sequences of Learning: MTSLs (Science, Maths, Computing and Design & Technology) to indicate opportunities to share with students how people use the skills being learned to either support them in a job/ career role, or in the case of most of our students, to maximise their independence and opportunities in later life.</p> <p>As part of our thematic curriculum all classes will engage in at least one Work based learning themed day each term linked to their theme. Over the course of their time in Key Stage 5 this will provide each student with a minimum of 6 days of work-based learning activity.</p> <p>Class staff have worked together to generate a list of potential suitable activities for these days based on each theme (see 'Work-based learning: curriculum theme links'). These activities may include for example: an appropriate visitor; an offsite visit to a workplace; or an onsite Work Experience day (A task is set by an 'employer', is completed by the class and feedback is given between the class and employer to assess success.)</p> <p><i>Offsite learning- workplace visits</i> <i>Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and Employees</i></p> <p>Moving on from the introduction to the concept of external workplaces and people's roles in the local area in familiar settings, students will continue to engage with employers and employees in a wider variety of sites, reflecting their own personal skills and interests where reasonably practicable. These focussed visits will act as scaffolding to the Offsite and Onsite Work Experience and Work Related Learning opportunities also offered when students reach Key Stage 5.</p> <p><i>EHCP reviews, incorporating Connexions and Guidance interviews</i> <i>Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student</i> <i>Benchmark 8: Personal guidance</i></p> |



Every student at Old Park school has an EHCP, which is reviewed and updated annually. As part of this process parents/carers, familiar school staff, external professionals and the students themselves have the opportunity to consider the changing skills, interests and barriers experienced by the young person, and to put in place steps to maximise their potential achievement and success. For the students, this means that familiar staff will either advocate for, or communicate with, the student to ascertain their own wishes and feelings for the future, and suggest ambitious but achievable goals as part of an introduction to personal guidance and to champion student voice in decision making about the future. For students in the Senior Phase, during Key Stage 4 these will be introduced with the support of familiar school staff, then Connexions advisors will join these conversations and subsequent EHCP reviews and their capacity allows- typically in Years 11 and 14.

Personalised communication systems and staff training to ensure effective and consistent advocacy and interpretation are currently being finalised and will be in place by the end of the current academic year.

Annual events:

Careers, PfA and Transition event

Benchmark 2: Learning from Career and Labour Market Information

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student

Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and employees

Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education

Once each year we host an event during which a variety of groups/ organisations are invited to attend as stallholders. These include local education, training and social care providers for learners Post 19; local authority and disability service representatives including SENDIAS, Connexions, and financial agencies such as the DWP.

As in previous years, families and carers of all students are invited to attend and meet with stallholders. As in Upper and Senior Phases, all students are also supported to engage with stallholders relevant to their specific interests and needs, with introductions being made to any relevant attending education, training, and social care provision. Based on their own and familiar staff feedback following these interactions, students and families can then expect informed and tailored guidance in regards to the suitable opportunities available to them Post 19. This networking also informs the Transition visit planning for Key Stage 5 students.

For learners in Post 16, this event provides an opportunity for us to meet our requirements in line with the Baker clause, as each year every student will have the opportunity to meet with a potential future provider with relevance to their own specific needs; whether that be education, training, employment, or socially focused.

Transition visits

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student

Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and employees (as applicable)

Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education (as applicable)

Benchmark 8: Personal guidance



Students in Key Stage 5 all have the opportunity to meet with relevant potential destinations and providers, in line with their own aspirational outcomes. These may include: day centres, colleges, training providers or workplaces. Over the course of the term each potential provider is invited to visit the school to meet the group for which they may be suitable, then a following date is arranged for these students to visit the site at which the provider is based. All encounters are supported by familiar staff, in order to gain an accurate reflection of student's responses, feelings and level of engagement with each provider. This will all support in building a picture of suitable next steps and to inform future planning, particularly during guidance interviews and EHCP reviews.

Work Experience (Offsite)

Benchmark 6: Work Experience and other experiences of the workplace

We currently make use of access to two offsite Work Experience placements for students in the Post 16 phase, with plans to expand our offer to include a wider variety of placements to accommodate a range of students. The placements are attended by small groups of students (currently those with an identified primary need of SLD and some students with ASD). Students attend the placement consistently each week for a term. Our current offer includes:

The Emily Jordan Foundation Project

An organisation offered three different workplace environments and training for individuals with SEN, located at Steven's park in Quarry Bank. A plant nursery and small-scale plant sale centre; a cycle repair workshop; and a recycling and piece work group. Students have the opportunity to try each area, before being placed more consistently into the one which best matches their own skills and interests for the subsequent sessions.

Merry Hill

Small groups of students have engaged with work experience as part of block placements working with the site, maintenance and hospitality teams at the Intu Merry Hill shopping centre.

Forest School maintenance

For some of our students with more complex ASD, we have taken the opportunity to team up with Pens Meadow school to make use of their Forest School area, joining a group of their own Key Sage 5 students to support with Forest School maintenance tasks under the direction of their Forest School lead. Pupils currently attend weekly sessions to support with cleaning, tidying and any light building/development work in the area.

Individual transition

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student

Benchmark 5: Encounters with Employers and employees (as applicable)

Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education (as applicable)

Benchmark 8: Personal guidance

During this Key Stage students have the opportunity to make more regular, focussed visits to their future destinations, in order for the transition to be as



| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>effective as possible. This may at times be supported by families, or by school staff as appropriate. Destination staff are also invited into school as needed to meet with and begin to form relationships with the students prior to their departure from Old Park.</p> |
|--|--|