

Careers Policy

Sept 2025

Opportunities, Aspirations, Knowledge, Success



Intent

At The Oaks, we are dedicated to preparing our students for their futures through a robust and inclusive careers education programme. Our aim is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and guidance necessary to make informed decisions about their education, training, and employment pathways. We seek to ensure that all students can make connections between their learning, the world of work, and the array of available career opportunities in order to achieve their career aspirations.

Our policy aligns with the statutory duty to provide impartial careers guidance as outlined in the Department for Education's Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers (2025) document.

Our careers programme is designed to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance, ensuring that we provide the following essential elements:

1. **A Stable Careers Programme:** A well-structured careers policy that outlines our approach to careers education.
2. **Learning from Career and Labour Market Information:** Ensuring students understand labour market trends and expectations.
3. **Addressing the Needs of Each Student:** Tailoring careers guidance to meet the individual needs of students.
4. **Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers:** Integrating career readiness with the academic curriculum.
5. **Encounters with Employers and Employees:** Facilitating experiences with a variety of employers.
6. **Experiences of Workplaces:** Offering students the opportunity to experience real work environments.
7. **Encounters with Further and Higher Education:** Providing information on further education opportunities.
8. **Personal Guidance:** Ensuring access to one-on-one guidance with trained careers professionals.

9. Implementation

Meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks

Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme

Careers education is embedded across the curriculum, enabling students to understand the relationship between academic subjects and career opportunities. It is also taught in

isolation through Career lessons once a week where students have the opportunity to work towards a qualification in Employability skills with NCFE.

This qualification is suitable for students' aged pre-16 and above and aims to develop and enhance skills required for the working environment. It is a nested qualification which allows students to complete units within the same level to gain credits towards an award or a certificate:

- Award = 6 credits
- Certificate = 15 credits

Due to the nature of our setting at 'The Oaks', the length of time that students are enrolled is varied. To ensure clear progression for students who remain with us over a longer period, whilst ensuring all students are provided with an opportunity to gain a qualification, our Careers Curriculum is organised into yearly cycles.

When students join The Oaks, the Careers teacher assigns them to an appropriate qualification level, based upon their assessment levels in the core subjects. Students can begin a qualification during any cycle -the curriculum is designed to ensure they can access learning and make meaningful progress regardless of their start time.

At the end of each cycle, students can earn enough credits to achieve an **Award** at their level. If they continue into the next cycle, they may either:

- **Remain at the same level**, working towards a **Certificate**, or
- **Progress to a higher level**, if appropriate, based on academic improvement, age, or engagement with school. In this case, they begin working toward a further Award at the new level.

Within each qualification level, all students are required to complete the mandatory unit *Understanding Mindset* to achieve the qualification. Students who remain at the same level for a new cycle must complete an **alternative** to the *Growth Mindset* unit, as it will have already been completed in the previous cycle. If they are moving onto a different qualification level, students will need to complete the module again at that associated level.

Curriculum Map

Cycle	Level	Autumn	Spring	Summer
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A	NCFE Entry Level 3 Employability Skills	Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits	Following instructions Group B Unit 14 1 credit Understanding conflict at work Group B Unit 17 1 credit	Working in a team Group B Unit 16 2 credits
	NCFE Level 1 Employability Skills	Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits	Following instructions Group B Unit 19 1 credit Working with colleagues Group C Unit 23 1 credit	Working in a team Group B Unit 22 2 credits
	NCFE Level 2 Employability Skills	Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits	Following instructions Group B Unit 22 1 credit Dealing with conflict Group B Unit 26 1 credit	Working in a team Group B Unit 25 2 credits
B	NCFE Entry Level 3 Employability Skills	*Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits <i>Or</i> Behaving appropriately at work Group B Unit 5 1 credit Goal and target setting Group B Unit 8 1 credit	Work awareness Group B Unit 6 2 credits	Deciding on the right job for you Group B Unit 22 1 credit Looking for work Group B Unit 23 1 credit
	NCFE Level 1 Employability Skills	*Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits <i>Or</i> Understanding motivation Group B Unit 3 1 credit Setting yourself targets Group B Unit 6 1 credit	Business and customer awareness Group B Unit 5 2 credits	Writing a CV Group B Unit 33 2 credits Job and training search skills Group B Unit 30 1 credit
	NCFE Level 2 Employability Skills	*Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits <i>Or</i> Understanding motivation Group B Unit 5 1 credit Setting yourself targets Group B Unit 9 1 credit	Business and customer awareness Group B Unit 2 2 credits	Presenting yourself Group B Unit 13 2 credits Job search skills Group B Unit 32 1 credit

C	NCFE Entry Level 3 Employability Skills	*Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits <i>Or</i> Your responsibilities as an employee Group B Unit 4 1 credit Making progress Group B Unit 9 1 credit	Completing an application form Group B Unit 24 1 credit Getting ready for interviews Group B Unit 25 1 credit	Rights and entitlements at work Group B Unit 2 1 credit Getting to a destination safely and on time Group B Unit 7 1 credit
	NCFE Level 1 Employability Skills	*Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits <i>Or</i> Developing assertiveness Group B Unit 11 1 credit How to keep improving Group B Unit 9 1 credit	Job application skills Group B Unit 31 1 credit Interview skills Group B Unit 32 1 credit	Dealing with your first days at work Group B Unit 4 1 credit Introduction to independence Group B Unit 12 1 credit
	NCFE Level 2 Employability Skills	*Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits <i>Or</i> How to keep improving Group B Unit 8 2 credits	Job application skills Group B Unit 33 1 credit Interview skills Group B Unit 34 1 credit	Dealing with your first days at work Group B Unit 3 1 credit Understanding risk Group B Unit 18 1 credit
D	NCFE Entry Level 3 Employability Skills	*Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits <i>Or</i> Prioritising tasks Group B Unit 10 1 credit Managing your time Group B Unit 11 1 credit	Understanding money at work Group B Unit 21 2 credits	Health and safety in places of work Group B Unit 26 2 credits
	NCFE Level 1 Employability Skills	*Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits <i>Or</i> Managing your time Group B Unit 7 2 credits	Understanding personal finance Group B Unit 20 2 credits	Being safe and healthy at work Group B Unit 34 2 credits
	NCFE Level 2 Employability Skills	*Understanding mindset Group A Unit 1 2 credits <i>Or</i> Understanding work principles Group B Unit 6 1 credit	Planning a budget Group B Unit 24 2 credits	Health, safety and security in the workplace Group B Unit 35 2 credits

		Managing your time Group B Unit 10 1 credit		
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Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information

All students, parents and carers, teachers and staff who support students have access to good-quality, up-to-date information about future pathways, study options and labour market opportunities. All students have the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information.

- During each key stage or programme of study, all students access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options or next steps.
- Parents and carers are supported to use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their support of the students in their care.

We utilise the government's [Skills for Careers website](#) and the [National Careers Service](#) to provide information about skills, training options and careers. The website guides users through the government's skills offer including higher and technical education, apprenticeships and supported internships.

Labour market information

Labour market information (LMI) provides the knowledge and understanding of how the labour market functions. LMI is crucial for making sense of changing economic circumstances. We use LMI to help students understand:

- what jobs and skills employers are looking for
- wage rates
- skills gaps
- future trends, including growth-driving sectors

We use the following platforms to access and interpret local LMI, and LMI for the region a student is relocating back to:

- [Skills England](#) identifies where skills gaps exist by providing data and research to help understand current and emerging skills gaps

- the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) provides information on people in work and out of work
- [ONS local indicators](#) has information on local factors including employment rate and weekly gross pay
- [ONS labour market overview](#) provides information on employment rates
- [National Careers Service \(Explore careers\)](#) provides information at an occupational level including salary, entry requirements and skills

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student

Students have different careers guidance needs at different stages. Our careers programme helps students to navigate their career journey and address any barriers to career progression. In addition, opportunities are tailored to the needs of each learner:

- We actively seek to challenge misconceptions and stereotypical thinking, showcasing a diverse range of role models and raise aspirations.
- We keep systematic records of the participation of students in all aspects of their careers programme, including the individual advice given to each learner, and any subsequent agreed decisions.
- Students have access to these records and use them ahead of any key transition points to support their next steps and career development.
- We collect, maintain and use accurate data for each learner on their aspirations, intended and immediate education, and training or employment destinations, to inform personalised support.

Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

At minimum, we ensure students know the importance and labour market value of achieving a good standard in maths and English. However, our aim is to embed careers into all curriculum subjects so there are more opportunities for students to explore where their education could take them. This helps students to identify the essential skills they are developing and how the skills can help potential pathways to future careers.

Linking curriculum learning with careers is the responsibility of all staff and teachers play an active role in highlighting the progression routes for their subject, and the relevance of knowledge and skills developed in their subject for a wide range of future career paths. Career exploration will help every student see future opportunities to thrive as individuals and to contribute to economic growth.

Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

We help students develop the confidence to compete in the labour market by providing opportunities to gain the practical know-how and attributes that are relevant for employment.

Every student will have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace through a range of enrichment opportunities, including visiting speakers.

Every year we ensure that KS3 and KS4 students participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer and at least two in KS5; one being related to their chosen career pathway.

These encounters give students the opportunity to learn:

- what work is like
- what skills are valued in the workplace
- what the recruitment processes involves
- what it takes to be successful

A meaningful encounter will:

- have a clear purpose, which is shared with the employer and student
- be underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the student
- have opportunities for two-way interactions between the student and the employer
- be followed by time for the student to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through the encounter

Visiting speakers should reflect:

- different levels of seniority within an organisation
- individuals who have followed a variety of pathways into employment, including technical and academic routes
- the enterprise and employability skills, experience, and qualifications that employers want

Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces

Work experience serves as a bridge between academic learning and the practical demands of the professional world, preparing students for successful careers. We have a structured work experience programme which ensures that all students have multiple, meaningful and

varied workplace experiences. Our work experience programme places students onto a pathway, based on their age, which aligns with the government's vision to guarantee 2 weeks' worth of work experience for every student between Year 7 and Year 11 and at least one further such experience by age 18.

Pathway	Key Stage	Work Experience
1	KS3	A minimum of 5 days work experience activities in years 7 to 9
2	KS4	A minimum of 5 days work experience placement(s) in years 10 to 11.
3	KS5	A half or full day a week throughout the year related to chosen career.

Work experience activities in Pathway 1 (years 7 to 9)

Work experience activities in years 7 to 9 will consist of multiple, varied and meaningful employer-led activities to explore different industries and careers and involve active engagement with a diverse range of employers, including small and medium sized enterprises. Activities will include:

- multi-day work visits involving employer-set tasks or projects
- work shadowing
- in-person or virtual employer talks in the workplace, including technical demonstrations or tours of working premises.

These will be undertaken individually or as part of a group or class-based activity. Some or all of the activities will be in person, with virtual activities contributing but not replacing in person.

Work experience placement(s) in Pathway 2 (years 10 to 11)

Work experience placement(s) in years 10 to 11 will allow students to experience a real working environment and begin to develop work-based skills and behaviours.

Students will be free to undertake their 5 days' worth of work experience placement(s) in years 10 to 11 with more than one employer, irrespective of sector, and be able to spread their placement time across a number of days or weeks at any point during the year 10 to 11 curriculum. This will support students who are undecided on their careers interests, by offering scope to try more employers and sectors.

We aim for these work experience placement(s) to be in-person, but acknowledge that in exceptional circumstances meaningful hybrid or virtual approaches may be impactful in removing barriers to access.

To ensure these experiences are 'meaningful' they:

- Have a clear purpose, which is shared with the employer and the student.
- Are underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the student.
- Involve extensive two-way interactions between the student and employees.
- Include opportunities for students to meet a range of different people from the workplace.
- Include opportunities for students to perform a task set by the employer or to produce a piece of work relevant to that workplace.
- Include the employer providing feedback to the student about their work.
- Are followed by opportunities for the student to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through their experience

All work placements and visits will be risk assessed in accordance with our Educational Visits policy and take into consideration the most up-to-date individual student risk assessments. However, the placement provider (employer) has primary responsibility for the health and safety of students and is expected to manage any significant risks. The Career Lead will check the employer has risk management arrangements in place, along with appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each student.

Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education

All students are educated on the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including academic, technical and vocational routes. Opportunities are provided without any bias or favouritism towards a particular route. The focus is on the individual learner and what is best for them.

- Between the ages of 11 and 16, every student will have meaningful encounters with a range of providers of learning and training that may form the next stage of their

career. This will include, as appropriate, sixth forms, colleges, FE colleges, universities and ITPs.

- By the age of 18, all students who are considering applying to higher education will have at least 2 visits to higher education providers.
- During years 8 to 13, all students will have at least 6 opportunities to meet providers of technical education or apprenticeships. This includes 2 meaningful encounters with 2 different providers within each key stage to meet the legal requirement of the provider access legislation.

A meaningful encounter gives the student the opportunity to explore what it is like to learn, develop and succeed in that environment. This includes the opportunity to meet both staff and students/trainees.

A meaningful encounter will:

- have a clear purpose, which is shared with the provider and the student
- be underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the student
- involve a two-way interaction between the student and the provider
- include information about the provider, such as their recruitment and selection processes, the qualifications that provider offers and the careers these could lead to
- describe what learning or training with the provider is like
- be followed by opportunities for the student to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through the encounter

Benchmark 8: Personal guidance

All students receive a 1:1 meeting with a qualified Careers adviser each term. The role of the Careers adviser is to guide students towards informed decisions about their future education, training, and career paths. They provide personalised advice, information, and support to help students explore various options, develop essential skills, and overcome barriers to achieving their career goals.

Depending on a student's age and stage the Careers adviser will:

- Help students understand different pathways, including apprenticeships, technical qualifications, and academic routes.
- Offer impartial advice to help students make realistic and informed decisions about their next steps.
- Equip students with the skills needed to navigate career choices, such as CV writing, interview skills, and decision-making.

- Support students in overcoming challenges they may face in pursuing their chosen paths.

In addition to the Careers Adviser a member of the senior leadership team will lead Careers across the school.

The role of the Career Lead is to:

- Build connections with employers, independent training providers and further education providers to create opportunities for students.
- Provide information about Post 16 options and support students in their applications.
- Establish partnerships with local businesses for work experience and apprenticeships.
- Organise workplace visits, career talks, and other events to expose students to different industries and professions.
- Host career fairs and workshops featuring a diverse range of industries.
- Involve alumni in sharing their career journeys.
- Support the School's Careers Programme by tracking the Gatsby Benchmarks for good career guidance, which include a stable careers programme, learning from labour market information, and providing personalized guidance.
- Support teachers to incorporate careers-related activities into the curriculum, access relevant labour market information and offer tailored careers advice for their specific subject.
- Track progress towards the Gatsby Benchmarks for good career guidance and identify areas for improvement.
- Collect and analyse feedback from students, parents, carers and employers.
- Conduct regular reviews of the careers programme in line with Ofsted's criteria for outstanding careers provision.
- Monitor student destinations post-school to evaluate success.

Impact

Our careers provision will enhance students' career readiness by improving their understanding of career options, increasing their confidence in decision-making, and fostering a stronger connection between their learning and future goals. This impact is measured through various means, including student feedback, teacher observations, and tracking outcomes like further education, apprenticeships, or employment.

Impact of a Successful Careers Programme:

- Increased Awareness and Understanding:

Students gain a better understanding of different career paths, including those requiring vocational training or apprenticeships, and how their skills and interests align with those options.

- Enhanced Decision-Making Skills:

Students develop the ability to assess their strengths and weaknesses, explore different opportunities, and make informed decisions about their future.

- Improved Motivation and Engagement:

When students see the relevance of their learning to their future goals, they become more motivated to acquire the necessary skills and qualifications.

- Positive Post-Secondary Outcomes:

A successful careers programme contributes to students transitioning smoothly into further education, apprenticeships, or employment.

- Reduced NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training):

By providing guidance and support, careers programmes can help reduce the number of young people who are NEET.

How Success is Measured:

- Student Feedback:

Surveys and questionnaires gather student perspectives on the programme's effectiveness, including their understanding of career options, confidence in decision-making, and the relevance of the information provided.

- Teacher and Staff Feedback:

Teachers and staff involved in delivering the programme provide feedback on student progress, improvements in career decision-making, and the integration of career-related skills into the curriculum.

- Progression and Outcomes:

Tracking students' destinations (further education, apprenticeships, or employment) provides a direct link between the careers programme and successful transitions.

- Gatsby Benchmarks:

We use the Gatsby Benchmarks as a framework for evaluating our careers provision and identifying areas for improvement.

- Internal and External Evaluations:

We conduct internal reviews, including learning walks and curriculum reviews, and also participate in external evaluations, such as Compass evaluations with the [Careers and Enterprise Company](#).

- Stakeholder Feedback:

Feedback from parents, employers, and training providers also contributes to the evaluation process.

This Careers Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective in meeting the needs of our students.

Appendix: Previous Contacts

Company / Work Placement	Contact name	Role	Email
Aico	Jane Pritchard	Communtiy Liaison	jane.pritchard@aico.co.uk
Shingler Group	Holly Tarbuck	Marketing & PR Executive	holly.tarbuck@shinglergroup.co.uk
Muller	Emma Bone	Communtiy Liaison	Emma.Bone@muller.co.uk
The Army	Sergeant Dave Evans	Careers Advisor	david.evans608@mod.gov.uk
Shrewsbury Colleges Group	Lindsey Harper	Schools Liason Coordinator	lindseyh@shrewsbury.ac.uk
Paveaways	Sabrina Davies	Training & Welfare Manager	sabrina.davies@paveaways.co.uk
Royal Navy	Alex Heath	Careers Adviser	Alexander.Heath126@mod.gov.uk
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Nerdy Cafe	Katie Petrovic	Owner	Katie@nerdyshrewsbury.co.uk
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