



The Quality in Careers Standard >>>

CEIAG Case Study: THE DISCOVERY ACADEMY, Stoke on Trent

November 2017

The Academy

The Discovery Academy opened in 2013 in a brand-new purpose build establishment. It is the amalgamation of 2 local High schools- Edensor and Mitchell. The Academy encourages its students to 'Expect Excellence' and is part of the College Academies Trust. It is based in Stoke-on-Trent and does not have 6th form provision although is part of a college-led Multi-Academy Trust.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

The Academy signed up for the then-named Stoke on Trent CEIAG Quality Award early in its newly established venture. The Careers Coordinator at this time felt that, due to the amalgamation of the 2 schools with different approaches to CEIAG, the chance to bring these approaches together into a coherent programme would be needed.

The Careers Adviser in the school (who was provided under contract by Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority Careers Service - a **matrix** accredited advice and guidance provider) was aware of this support need; but was also aware that there was extensive work already taking place with post- 16 providers and employers.

So, the Careers Adviser suggested that the Academy may wish to try to achieve the Stoke-on-Trent CEIAG Quality Award (as it was called at the time of assessment taking place which was prior to the Stoke team becoming a Licensed Awarding Body for the national **Quality in Careers Standard**) as a means of going through a process of self-assessment leading to external assessment of provision in a supported way of then moving this forward and improving the CEIAG curriculum.

The Employer Liaison and Careers Co-coordinator at the Academy began by completing a self-assessment of CEIAG policies and provision and felt confident that the Academy could evidence the eight quality objectives required to achieve the local Award through the support of the LA consultant and working together. Preparing for the Award assessment took approximately eighteen months and the Stoke Award Team provided a 'critical friend'/ LA consultant who helped the school to define which pieces of evidence to include, supported them to develop existing provision and gave them tools to use to enhance current provision, such as the CDI Framework to map existing careers education Schemes of Work. It was felt through the self-assessment that although there was much happening for the students, but

what was missing was strategic direction, an evaluation and review system and a coordinated approach. At around the same time the school bought a careers education package from the local authority to supplement its existing offer.

By the time the Academy was ready for external assessment, the Award Assessment Panel found that there was a greatly improved approach to careers education and guidance, now being a regular agenda item on the Board of Governors and having a clear CEIAG policy endorsed by the senior management team, through to the feedback from students and parents about their views of work experience, college taster days and careers events. The careers programme now takes place from years 7-11 and includes a whole school approach.

The externally-commissioned Careers Adviser is fully qualified to level 6 in careers guidance and is well established and integrated into the school, having a designated area and access to students to offer face- to- face guidance both on a 1-1 basis and in groups. The Careers Adviser also supports and complements the careers education programme, offering group sessions and visits.

The Academy has been able to demonstrate a significant and progressive reduction in Year 11 leavers Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) over the last 5 years (the school was initially based over the 2 school sites in 2012).

The CEIAG Quality Award Experience

The Academy team advises that the whole experience of working towards what is now the **Quality in Careers Standard** helped to highlight the extensive range of careers-related activity that takes place and map this to ensure consistency, develop links with external providers and embed careers delivery. It has highlighted the importance of involving parents and carers; which is an area that the Academy always wanted to improve on. There is now a better website offer to students and parents.

Due to the amalgamation of 2 different schools with different approaches to CEIAG, the Award process not only helped the new Academy to be clear about what was already in place and what worked well, but also to make sense of what was not fully in place and where gaps existed in meeting both statutory duties and the robust requirements for Award accreditation. The Academy knew that there would need to be improvements and through using the Award process as a development tool, with the support of the LA consultant, the Academy was able to make these changes.

The CEIAG programme now takes place on 2 weekly cycles during tutor time. This is in place for the whole Academy. Specific events for key transition points also complement this approach so that extra support can be gained for the cohort.

Holding the award has also ensured that students are offered a quality-assured careers education and guidance programme that is not only compliant with statutory guidance but also meets the **national requirements of the Quality in Careers Standard**. The Academy is confident that this gives reassurance to students and parents that they will receive

information, advice and guidance of the highest standards to assist with their next steps whether it be education, employment or training.

Monitoring and Review of CEIAG

The whole careers provision is now regularly reviewed to ensure pupils and students are getting the best possible programme to meet their needs and to comply with current developments within the CEIAG sector.

The Service Level Agreement with the Local Authority Careers Team is annually reviewed and meetings are held termly to ensure the service is meeting the needs of the Academy and its students.

The Academy has now become more rigorous in continuous quality improvement reviews of its careers provision, seeking evaluation and feedback from external events attended (employer visits, FE/HE visits et al) and those that the Academy organises to take place on site (such as employer engagement sessions) to ensure that the students and visitors feel that these are not only worthwhile but can potentially be improved year on year.

Academy Contact:

Darren Owen, Employer liaison and Careers Coordinator

The Discovery Academy

dowen1@thediscoveryacademy.co.uk

[\(p\) Quality in Careers Consortium](#)

[November 2017](#)