



The School

Oaks Park High School is a large mixed 11 to 18 comprehensive community school serving a vibrant and diverse community in the London Borough of Redbridge. The school is a high performing inclusive school that sits at the heart of the local community in Newbury Park.

The school first opened its doors in September 2001, with an initial intake of 180 students. In May/June 2006 the school saw the first cohort of students take their GCSE examinations and the Sixth Form opened in the September of that same year. Oaks Park is now one of the largest schools in Redbridge. There are (2022) approximately 1,500 students in the main school and 400 in the Sixth Form. In January 2016, the £13 million Craig Foster building was opened, hosting facilities for science, drama, and media studies, and creating new spaces for sixth form students.

It is an extremely diverse school, with the majority of its students being from Indian and Pakistani heritage. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or education, health, and care (EHC) plan is higher than the national average at 1.5%. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals at any time during the past 6 years (FSM6) is above average at 25%. Within the Borough, Oaks Park is the Visually Impaired (VI) resource, thus there are a comparatively high number of VI students on roll.

Oaks Park High School is proud to be a community comprehensive school that takes most of the students in its catchment area and many from beyond.

At Oaks Park, its child-centered philosophy puts every child achieving their potential as the ambition for the school, but most importantly strives to enable every child to believe that success is for everyone. Traditional values underpin everything that the school does. Students are expected to display the highest standards of behaviour at all times and show respect for themselves, others, and the world around them. Developing positive relationships and taking pride in all aspects of school life are essential ingredients that make Oaks Park High School special.

Despite the challenges of the COVID19 pandemic, the school has been widely recognised and applauded for its work in ensuring students embraced remote learning and remained engaged with tasks and activities throughout the national school lockdowns, and with their on-going work to support students who are self-isolating. This includes ensuring students, at key transition stages in particular, continue to receive quality careers information, advice, and guidance.

There is a strong emphasis on the importance of careers education. The key motto within the school is *'every teacher is a careers teacher.'* The school has invested in the development of careers by funding a large team, regular staff training and vast opportunities for students.

Careers Education & Guidance

Oaks Park High School is especially proud to have completed a further successful reaccreditation of the national quality award in May 2021, particularly in light of the need to adapt the programme during the pandemic, including on-line activities, which took place prior to the assessment.

The Quality in Careers Standard (assessed and awarded by CSW Group as the Licensed Awarding Body) provides the school with recognition of the high quality of its careers education, information, advice, and guidance provision for all students, providing them with the knowledge and skills needed when they move on from the school.

This could be into employment, on an apprenticeship or technical course, embracing a gap year, or to continue study within further and higher education. The school has always invited in external organisations to speak to students about possible Post-16 and Post-18 pathways, albeit some held virtually during the lockdown, ensuring full compliance with the "Baker Clause". Employer engagement is particularly good, with local and national organisations providing up-to-date information about the labour market and opportunities within their sector. Each year the school has over 50 exhibitors attending its careers fair, which for the past two academic years it has managed to maintain as a virtual format utilising the technological systems in place at the school. Over 1,200 students attend the careers fair, meaning that a large number of students are able to have meaningful encounters with a wide variety of different employers, educational institutions, and independent training providers. This level of careers education and guidance was recognised by the Quality in Careers assessor as a key component of the careers calendar at the school.

Oaks Park High School provides a comprehensive careers education and guidance programme for students in every year group and of all abilities, incorporating aspects of work-related learning, enterprise education, option choices and LMI (labour market information). This includes positive encounters with a range of employers through a combination of workplace visits, presentations in school and drop down days that provide students with meaningful encounters.

These include a close working relationship with "Solutions for the Planet" to offer the Big Ideas competition for all students in Year 8, a NatWest Enterprise Day with Year 9 students, utilising the skills of our Enterprise Advisers from AXA XL and Ford to offer mentoring and careers workshops for students and supporting students with finding self-placement opportunities in Year 10 and 12.

This is alongside a now well integrated and established Lecture Series and Careers Cafe programme, which invites speakers from a range of industries into school to deliver workshops and talks with the students. This diverse programme enables students to have an

employer encounter each year during their time at the school and provides them with the opportunity to explore a range of different career opportunities during their 7 years with the school.

Further to this, the Quality in Careers assessor highlighted the “excellent curriculum provision” that the school had in place to support students in understanding the labour market and identifying key skills required for careers. The school has a Gatsby Benchmark Working Party made up of representatives from each department to ensure that careers is regularly integrated into the curriculum as per Gatsby Benchmark 4.

The school conducts a departmental audit each year to identify good practice and support departments with implementing careers education. In addition, the pastoral programme regularly has careers features integrated into each year group, and the school has recently begun the “Skills Builder” programme with Key Stage 3. Its Year 6 open evening, Year 8 options evening and Sixth Form open evening all have careers featured in each departmental presentation. This highlights the school’s commitment to every teacher being a careers teacher and able to support young people in making informed decisions about their future.

The school contracts with a professionally qualified independent careers adviser using the Prospects service. This adviser meets with all students in Year 8, 10 and 12 to explore career options with them and to support them at key transition points within their educational journey at Oaks Park High School. Each student is provided with an action plan which is uploaded to the school’s MIS in order to support them in refining their career choices and in expanding their horizons as they make judgements about their next steps.

In addition, to support students with “SEND” and “LAC”, the school also has a contract with the local authority to provide specialised support for our vulnerable learners. This involves a specialist careers advisor attending monthly to meet with these students and support their career development. This is alongside this careers advisor attending annual reviews and supporting the completion of “Personal Education Plans”. In addition, all Year 11 students have an Advice and Guidance Meeting with a senior member of school staff to map out their Post-16 journey. This provides expert advice to students on the local education context and supports them in making decisions about next steps after completing their Level 2 qualifications.

Students in the Sixth Form are well supported as they make their applications to University, apply for Higher Level Apprenticeships or other non-University post-18 pathways, as are SEND students, who are supported by their internal additional needs team and external providers. Each Year 13 student had a progression meeting with a specially trained member of the Sixth Form team in the Autumn term to support their applications for post-18 pathways.

Measuring the impact

Oaks Park School has held the previously-named Career Mark quality award - and now the national **Quality in Careers Standard** - accreditation for the past 11 years.

Monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating the careers programme takes place regularly and the exceptionally low number of NEETs and positive transitions for students illustrate the impact the programme is making. For example, the most recent data for Year 11 students highlights that 99% of students had a known destination 6 months after leaving the school. This shows figures far higher than the national averages, particularly for the school's most vulnerable and disadvantaged students. In addition, the school's Year 13 destination data shows that 98% of students have a known destination at the end of the year. Students now go into a diverse range of fields and educational/ employment opportunities. This includes over 25% of students attending Russell Group universities, and an increasing number of students moving onto Degree Apprenticeships with leading firms such as Sky and BT.

The school continues to offer support for students to find a self-placement work experience for all year 10 students and an additional week for year 12 students. As a result, students are successful in gaining apprenticeships and other career opportunities when they move on after school. Views are sought from all stakeholders and the programme evolves year on year to consider the needs of students and the local, national, and global jobs market. This continued during the COVID-19 pandemic, with virtual work experience being a key component of this. Due to the school's programme of supporting students with this interaction, each year over 95% of students in Year 10 and 12 complete a self-placement with a work placement.

The school actively promotes the National Citizen Programme. This enables students to develop their skills further and provides opportunities for them to work within their community, having a direct positive impact. The school also participates in an external partnership with the LEAN East Network, who support in monitoring our programme. The school has regularly been identified as a leading school for careers provision in the area and have delivered borough wide training to support other schools in implementing the Gatsby Benchmarks due to its recognised excellent practice within this area.

The school uses the Compass self-assessment tool and is further developing methods for students to record and evidence their careers and work-related learning, using the Unifrog and Compass+ platforms. Whilst the school is naturally pleased to have been externally assessed as being 'awarded the **Quality in Careers Standard** - fully meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks,' it will continue to evaluate its provision to ensure further progression, with the aim of meeting the ever-changing needs of all its young people – and retaining its Quality in Careers accreditation every three years.

The high priority that the school places on careers education, information, advice, and guidance is evident through its recent success in claiming the London Enterprise Award for the best whole school careers programme in London. A video was made as a press release from the London Mayor's office in celebration of those who achieved the Award. The school's careers leader and Headteacher both feature in this video.

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