



Quality in Careers >>>>

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CEIAG Case Study: focussing upon Middleton Technology School

As part of the Great Academies Education Trust – Greater Manchester

The Multi-Academy Trust

Great Academies Education Trust is a medium-sized MAT with four schools. Three in Tameside and one in Rochdale. Three are secondary schools, one is a primary school. In Autumn Term 2020, with the arrival of a Director of Education for the Trust, there was a recognition that there could be even more collaboration and focus on further improving the quality of careers education and guidance across the Trust.

One of the Trust's secondary schools had already received several commendations for the quality of its careers education and guidance and for students' next steps in training, education, and employment (**Middleton Technology School** in Rochdale: see more detail below).

The Director of Education for the Trust says:

*“Through regular collaboration and discussion the Trust has agreed that, as part of its on-going work to improve careers provision, our three secondary schools would go through the national external accreditation programme (the **Quality in Careers Standard**) as a way of auditing and further developing their careers education and guidance, including working on a quality award for our primary school”.*

Over the course of Autumn, Spring and Summer terms 2021-2022 the Trust's careers leads worked closely with the chosen Awarding Body for the Quality in Careers Standard - Positive Steps - and shared support, advice, and guidance with each other as they continued to make good progress towards the final stages of the accreditation process.

Alongside this the Trust established a partnership with Warwick University to provide regular external support and challenge to ensure that its provision for children and young people is “as good as it can possibly be”. This is bringing greater collaboration and pooling of ideas as the Trust strives to ensure all pupils are students are fully equipped and ready for their next stages.

Career education and guidance: focussing upon Middleton Technology School

Within the Trust, Middleton Technology School (MTS) is proud to have completed a further successful reaccreditation of the national **Quality in Careers Standard** in June 2022, particularly considering the need to adapt the programme during the COVID-19 pandemic. MTS has held this award in its various guises for over 10 years – initially as the then-named “Inspiring IAG Award”, latterly as the single national **Quality in Careers Standard**.

The Trust’s Director of Education says:

“The award offers the school external quality assurance to the quality of its careers education, information, advice, and guidance provision for all our students, as we provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to move on from school to make informed sustained post 16/18 choices to begin the journey for a meaningful and successful life.

The school has always embraced ways of offering our students means of engaging with external providers, employers and organisations about possible Post 16 and Post 18 pathways ensuring full compliance with the Baker Clause. Employer engagement is very good, with local and national organisations providing up-to-date information about the labour market and opportunities within their sectors”.

Middleton Technology School provides a comprehensive careers education and guidance programme for students in every year group and of all abilities, and at the vital transition periods between each Key Stage. Students are offered positive encounters with a range of employers through a combination of workplace visits and safaris, presentations in school and ‘market place’ careers fairs. All Year 10 students undertake one-week’s Work Experience, with mock interviews and real-life work-related activities within the curriculum via the school’s subject area ‘*Careers Champions*’ and the STEM Coordinator. The school’s Enterprise Adviser provides support to these ventures and provides feedback on their impact.

The school contracts with a professionally qualified independent careers adviser from Positive Steps and receives extra professional support for its most vulnerable students. Some of these interventions took place remotely during school closures in COVID19-time, but they have now resumed face-to-face. MTS’s careers coordinator is about to commence a Level 6 Careers Guidance qualification to supplement the work of the contracted adviser.

With the backing of the senior leadership team and governors, the MTS careers programme continues to develop and embrace new resources, establishing innovative ways to ensure high quality.

The MTS careers programme is closely linked with the school’s “Life Education” programme and general curriculum which are closely implemented in line with the 2021 six-point CDI “Career Development Framework” framework and the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

Shortly, MTS will be entering its fifth year in association with the Greater Manchester Careers & Enterprise Company Hub which offers extra support and guidance for its careers provision.

Monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating the MTS careers programme takes place regularly and will be extended to cover all stakeholders. 2021 saw MTS’s outstanding trend of below 2% NEETs at both 16 and 18 continue indicating the impact of the quality of the information, advice, and guidance students receive in their MTS career.

The school makes good use of the Compass self-assessment tool and in the latest self-assessment (July 2022) was achieving 5 fully met Gatsby Benchmarks, while the other 3 were at 90% which MTS believes is as a direct result of the pandemic.

The school will take part in its **Quality in Careers** annual review with Positive Steps in June 2023, and the Trust's Director of Education says:

"We aim to provide evidence to our external assessor that we fully meet all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks now providers, universities and employers are returning to normality. Students in Y10-11 record and evidence their careers and work-related learning, via Positive Steps action plans and using the XELLO platform, this is to roll out to KS3 students next academic year".

Measuring the impact

The Bridge Greater Manchester Enterprise Co-ordinator has supported the school in working towards meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks and the Compass self-assessment tool has been used to evaluate and develop provision.

Destinations data is collected and analysed to meet the needs of individuals and groups. The impartial and independent Careers Advisers provide comprehensive progression plans detailing how students have been supported and their goals. The annual Activity Survey produced by Positive Steps also details destinations for Year 11 students each year. The school works to follow the Government's good practice guide for destinations.

The **Quality in Careers Standard** external assessments confirm the veracity of the school's self-assessments, with student voice adding evidence of the impact on their career-related learning from the school's overall careers provision (see more below).

Careers Quality

In June 2022, the school was re-assessed and re-accredited using the revised national framework for what had become the single national award - the **Quality in Careers Standard** through the Licensed Awarding Body – Positive Steps (Inspiring IAG).

An extract from the assessor's feedback:

"Middleton Technology School emphasises a whole school commitment to Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance.

Dedicated individuals drive the careers agenda with passion and enthusiasm.

With strong leadership from SMT, the school has made excellent progress since their initial accreditation, particularly around embedding careers in the curriculum and developing a careers programme which clearly addresses the CDI Framework."

The Trust's Director of Education concludes:

"The re-accreditation process offered the objective, evaluation of progress and a reassurance of the quality of our CEIAG offer and helped to identify areas for further development which informed an action plan to ensure the school meets the Careers Statutory guidance.

This includes the termly meetings within the TRUST group to focus on enrichment priorities and share good practice.

This is enhanced further by attendance from Bridge GM Enterprise Co-Ordinator, Positive Steps (the Awarding Body) and the Warwick University researcher.

The Service Level Agreement with the external careers provider is annually reviewed and meetings are held termly to ensure the service is meeting the needs of our school and its students.

The termly Operational Plan with the external careers company also provides further scope for impact measurement and evaluation.

Due to the Quality in Careers award and enrichment focus the school has now become more rigorous in continuous quality improvement and reviews of its careers provision and remains fully committed to this”.

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