



Quality in Careers >>>>

QUALITY IN CAREERS WEBSITE ©

CEIAG Case Study:

Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form, Staffordshire

The School

Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form is a large, mixed 11-18 school situated in the Staffordshire village of Blythe Bridge. The school serves the surrounding semi-rural villages of the Staffordshire Moorlands and students from neighbouring south-east Stoke-on-Trent.

The school was built in 1964 and officially opened as Blythe Secondary Modern School the following year. The school was later renamed Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form. In September 2021, the average number of students in each year group 7 – 11 was 180, with 110 students in the Sixth Form.

Driven by values of “*pride, respect and kindness*”, the culture and ethos of Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form ensure that students build the habits of heart and mind that allow their learning to thrive. The school aims to ensure staff and students have a positive attitude to all learning experiences and are self-respecting, generous, and thoughtful. The school provides a high-quality, inclusive education to all students resulting in a school community who believe in what they want to achieve.

There is a high expectation that students will gain the well-developed knowledge and skills that come from hard work and hard thinking, preparing them for success at school and in later life. Students are encouraged to become expert learners through self-regulation, understanding their own learning and being aware of their own progress. There is a culture of planning for the highest aspirations and taking great pride in achievements. The school aims to ensure that all stakeholders work relentlessly together to allow learning to thrive inside and outside the classroom so that students can become helpful, kind and dedicated members of the school and wider community.

Throughout the challenges of the COVID19 pandemic, students and parents have applauded the school for the broad range of high-quality virtual resources that were made available to them to ensure they remained engaged with all aspects of CEIAG planning, particularly at key transition stages. This included student videos of what to expect from GCSE subjects along with a virtual GCSE options evening for Year 9, TEAMS meetings with parents, remote careers meetings with

the external careers adviser, virtual work experiences and the use of social media platforms to disseminate careers information and develop employer contacts.

The Assistant Head & Careers Leader says:

“The school works hard to ensure that all students have positive attitudes to learning, and are all helpful, kind and dedicated members of the school and wider community who care about each other”.

Careers education and guidance

Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form ensures all students have equal opportunity access to careers information, experiences, and guidance so they can make mature and informed decisions about their future pathways. The school works with the local community and the local employer network to inspire students, encourage them to aim high, fulfil their potential and leave school prepared for their next step.

The school is committed to providing a planned and progressive programme of careers education, information, advice, and guidance to all students from Year 7 to Year 13 to help prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of life. The careers programme enables students to increase their knowledge and understanding of skills relevant to life in a rapidly changing world and sustain employability throughout their working lives.

As an Assistant Head, the Careers Leader is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and has their and the governing body’s full support. They both believe the careers programme has been greatly improved and strengthened since his appointment in 2019. A passion for careers is palpable throughout the school and Ofsted feedback (May 2022) said *“the enthusiasm and leadership from the Careers Leader is infectious!”*

The school commissions an external level 7 professionally qualified Careers Adviser who provides independent and impartial careers guidance to students from Year 9 to Year 13, supporting them to make realistic decisions at key transition points. Whilst this work is largely delivered in-person at school, provision is also in place for virtual and ongoing support.

Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form is proud to have successfully completed the accreditation of the national quality award – the **Quality in Careers Standard** - in July 2022 especially considering the need to adapt the careers programme during the pandemic and some of the ongoing challenges the school continues to face.

The Assistant Head & Careers Leader says:

“Fully meeting the Quality in Careers Standard recognises the exceptional quality of the school’s careers education, information, advice, and guidance provision for all students. It acknowledges Blythe Bridge High School & Sixth Form as an exemplar of best practice in delivering the knowledge and providing the skills needed for a successful life beyond school.

This could be continuing in further or higher education (academic or vocational), progressing onto an apprenticeship, employment, or taking a gap year”.

Whilst having its own further education provision, the school has always fully complied with the Baker Clause by inviting external organisations to deliver assemblies on their Post 16 and Post 18 offer as well as encouraging students to attend advice sessions at other colleges, universities, and training providers. The school also runs parent/carer workshops in collaboration with “Higher Horizons”.

The Careers Leader has developed an extensive network of business contacts and has been able to provide positive encounters for students with a broad range of employers through guest speaker assemblies, workplace visits and work experience placements. The school works closely with the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) and its Enterprise Adviser to provide students with local and national labour market information (LMI) in order to develop work-related learning activities and provide enterprise education including self-awareness, confidence building, interview techniques and employability skills.

Sixth Form students are supported to research the information needed to explore all the Post 18 pathways open to them and are encouraged to look for work-related experiences relevant to their interests.

The annual Careers Fair has a purposeful mix of universities, employers and apprenticeship providers and covers all options. Approximately 80% of leavers currently go on to higher education and are well-supported in their UCAS applications. Students looking at non-university options are equally well-supported with real-world experiences to prepare them for the workplace.

The careers programme has been developed to incorporate the national DfE Statutory Guidance - ‘Careers guidance and inspiration in schools’ - , the Career Development Institute’s new six-point CDI Framework and the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

Three key priorities within the overall careers programme continue to be:

- **Learning from career and labour market information** – by further increasing parental engagement and involvement in sharing personal experiences of their career and where it sits in the (local) labour market.
- **Encounters with employers and employees** - through evaluating existing employer partnerships to ensure they are still relevant.
- **Experiences of workplaces** - through building and developing new, local business links.

Measuring the impact

The latest Ofsted Report, May 2022, concluded:

“Pupils at Blythe Bridge do well socially and academically. Leaders promote the school’s culture and ethos, including the values of pride, respect, and kindness effectively in all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils develop into respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society”.

All of the school’s careers education and guidance activities are evaluated. Feedback is sought from all stakeholders to ensure the careers programme covers relevant topics, information is accurate, and improvements can be made where necessary.

The school offers one week of work experience for all Year 10 and Year 12 students. Year 13 students are also encouraged to take up additional work placements where this underpins career

choice. Students in all year groups are supported in entering competitions that inspire and raise aspirations.

The school has “Career Champions” in every subject. Careers education is actively embedded in the curriculum and teachers make careers links between their subject and the world of work. This is also illustrated visually through “Career Signposts” for every subject and on careers boards in every department.

Ofsted, in May 2022, also noted:

“Leaders provide pupils with highly effective careers education, advice, and guidance. This starts in Year 7. Pupils have many experiences linked to the world of work. This includes external speakers coming in to speak to pupils from a range of jobs, apprenticeships, and further education. Consequently, all pupils sustain a place in education, employment, or training”.

The Careers Leader is passionate about delivering effective, high quality careers learning. He is very keen to support other Careers Leaders in developing their careers education and guidance strategy and to act in a mentoring capacity to schools wishing to pursue and achieve the **Quality in Careers Standard** for themselves.

Careers Quality

The Careers Leader has achieved the level 7 postgraduate award in Careers Leadership with the University of Warwick and has been awarded ‘Careers Champion’ status by the CEC for his inspirational leadership in embedding careers in the curriculum and ensuring students receive the quality CEIAG they deserve. Having been invited to apply for the Skills Builder

The school participates in an external partnership with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP and is part of a regional Careers Hub.

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 “Frog” and the Entrust “CareerSpace” platforms.

The Careers Leader started “Skills Builder” training in September 2022 which will further support and enhance the school’s careers strategy.

The school is delighted to have been externally assessed by the Entrust as the Licensed Awarding Body and achieving the national **Quality in Careers Standard** - assessed as ‘fully meeting all the accreditation criteria incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks’.

The Assistant Head & Careers Leader concludes:

*“Moving forward we will continue to evaluate our provision and bring on board more stakeholders to ensure further development and progression. We aim to continue delivering a careers education and guidance programme that prepares all of our students for the future and we aim to retain our **Quality in Careers Standard** accreditation every three years”.*

CONTACT DETAILS: Matthew Goodwin, Assistant Head & Careers Leader

M.Goodwin@bb-hs.co.uk Tel: 01782 392519

October 2022

© Quality in Careers 2022