

Kepier Academy: A Whole-School Commitment to Outstanding Career Guidance – A Case Study

Kepier Academy is a co-educational secondary school for learners aged 11–16, located in Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne & Wear, and part of the Eden Learning Trust. Serving over 1,100 pupils, the Academy places equal value on academic achievement and personal development.

While exam results matter, Kepier’s ethos is rooted in preparing young people for life—building confidence, ambition, and the ability to make informed decisions about their future. The curriculum is intentionally broad and aspirational, offering rich opportunities both inside and beyond the classroom. Learners experience a wide range of subjects across arts, sciences, humanities, technical and creative pathways, with careers education embedded as a core feature throughout.

Good career outcomes are central to the school’s mission. Learners are supported to develop self-awareness, explore opportunities, make ambitious choices, and grow in confidence. The Senior Leadership Team provides strong strategic backing, including a dedicated budget, ensuring the careers programme is well-resourced and impactful.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

Kepier’s careers programme is led by a committed and skilled team:

- **Adam Warkman** – Careers Lead and Deputy Head Teacher
- **Christine Stobbart** – Careers Governor
- **G Bolt** – Wider Programme Co-ordinator
- **Lucy Mirley** – PSHCE Lead
- **Danielle Wilson** – CareerWave Career Adviser

The school is an active member of the Northeast Combined Authority Careers Hub and works closely with an appointed Enterprise Adviser.

The programme is progressive, developmental, and aligned to the CDI Framework, helping learners understand themselves, explore opportunities, and build the skills

needed to manage their own career journey. Kepier also benefits from a long-standing partnership with CareerWave Ltd, ensuring access to high-quality, impartial one-to-one guidance delivered by a qualified Careers Adviser.

From Year 7 onwards, learners engage in a wide range of careers-focused activities, including:

- **Dedicated careers lessons** delivered in tutor time once per half term
- **Careers content within PSHCE**
- **Career of the Week**
- **Thriving Thursday** exploring post-16 pathways, LMI and sector insights
- **Subject-led visits** to colleges, training providers, and universities
- **Employer encounters** including Careers Fairs, BBC roadshows, Club Nissan, NHS, Science Clubs, Women in Science, and sector-specific trips
- **Engagement with My Big Career** supporting disadvantaged learners
- **Personalised one-to-one guidance**
- **Access to alumni** who share their journeys and raise aspirations

This breadth ensures every learner has meaningful exposure to the world of work, further education, and future pathways.

Measuring Impact

Impact measurement is embedded in Kepier's careers practice. The school participates in a peer-to-peer review programme with two regional schools through the Northeast Combined Authority, strengthening quality and accountability.

A baseline of learners' career understanding is established using the Future Skills Questionnaire, with data from FSQ and Compass+ used annually to refine and enhance the programme. Learner voice is central, with structured evaluation applied to all activities—from mock interviews to large-scale events.

Learner feedback

- *"I do loads of careers in my subject lessons."*
- *"The teachers and careers week helped me understand what I need in the future."*
- *"I feel career confident because the school sets up lots of activities and you can sign up for stuff outside of lessons."*
- *"I recently had a mock interview and got feedback from the employers. I got so much from it."*

Parent and carer feedback

- *“I am 100% confident that my child is 100% confident in their career management skills.”*
- *“The Synergy database has been a game changer for parents—it’s a brilliant way to keep up to date.”*
- *“I’ve noticed differences in my child since joining Kepier—they can do things independently thanks to the careers support.”*

Quality Assurance

In 2026, Kepier Academy achieved the national Quality in Careers Standard, awarded by the Licensed Awarding Body CareerWave Ltd. Evidence demonstrated that staff and stakeholders share a strong sense of collective responsibility for learners’ career development.

The assessment review highlighted:

- ***Strong strategic leadership and governance***, supported by a well-developed three-year Careers Strategy
- ***Clear accountability*** and a dedicated careers budget
- ***Excellent communication***, including a high-quality careers website, social media presence, and regular newsletters
- ***Alignment to the Gatsby Benchmarks and CDI learning outcomes***
- ***Robust monitoring and evaluation***, using Compass+, FSQ, surveys, and peer review
- ***High-quality impartial guidance***, including external qualified advisers
- ***Strong employer engagement*** and partnerships with FE and HE providers
- ***A clear commitment to inclusion***, with targeted support for disadvantaged learners, SEND pupils, and those at risk of NEET
- ***Effective external partnerships***, including Together for Children and My Big Career
- ***Planned development of workplace experiences*** to further strengthen provision

Kepier’s careers programme demonstrates a whole-school culture where aspiration, opportunity, and guidance are embedded into everyday practice.

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