



QUALITY IN CAREERS WEBSITE ©

CEIAG Case Study: *Oaks Park High School (Newbury Park, Ilford)*

The School/College

Oaks Park High School is a large, mixed 11–18 comprehensive community school serving a vibrant and diverse community in the London Borough of Redbridge. Situated in Newbury Park, the school is at the heart of the local community and is committed to ensuring that every pupil, regardless of background or circumstance, is supported to achieve their potential and develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and character needed for future success.

The school first opened its doors in September 2001, with an initial intake of 180 pupils. In May and June 2006, the first cohort of pupils took their GCSE examinations, and the Sixth Form opened in September of the same year. Oaks Park is now one of the largest schools in Redbridge, with approximately 1,500 pupils in the main school and 300 students in the Sixth Form in 2026.

In January 2016, the £13 million Craig Foster Building opened, providing specialist facilities for science, drama and media studies, as well as additional learning and social spaces for sixth form students. The school offers a broad and ambitious curriculum designed to prepare pupils for further education, higher education, employment, apprenticeships and adult life.

Oaks Park is an extremely diverse school. In 2026, approximately 49.92% of pupils were recorded as having English as an additional language, considerably higher than the national average of approximately 22%. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average, at 12.9%. Approximately 25% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school also hosts the Borough's visual impairment and hearing impairment resource provision and therefore has a comparatively high number of pupils who are visually impaired or Deaf.

This diversity is central to the school's identity and informs its approach to inclusion, personal development and careers education. Oaks Park is committed to ensuring that pupils with SEND, pupils with EAL, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with sensory impairments and those facing other barriers receive appropriate adaptations, guidance and opportunities. Careers information, advice and guidance are presented in accessible

formats, and workplace experiences, employer encounters and personal guidance are tailored where necessary to enable all pupils to participate meaningfully.

Oaks Park is proud to be a community comprehensive school and its child-centred philosophy places the development and achievement of every pupil at the centre of school life. The school's ambition is not only that every child should achieve their potential, but also that every child should believe that success is possible for them.

Traditional values underpin the school's work. Pupils are expected to demonstrate high standards of behaviour, show respect for themselves and others, and take responsibility for the wider world around them. Positive relationships, personal responsibility and pride in all aspects of school life are regarded as essential features of the Oaks Park community.

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, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

Oaks Park High School takes a whole-school approach to careers education, with staff contributing through the pastoral system, curriculum and wider enrichment programme. The Careers and CEIAG team coordinates and monitors delivery.

Mrs Salise Hassan (Deputy Headteacher and Careers Leader) leads the school's careers education, information, advice and guidance programme. She works with curriculum and pastoral staff, employers, education and training providers, governors and the wider careers team to provide a coherent and inclusive programme from Year 7 to Year 13.

The careers programme equips pupils with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make informed decisions about education, training and employment. It aims to raise aspirations, broaden horizons, provide impartial guidance, develop employability and enterprise skills, challenge stereotypes and ensure pupils understand the full range of academic, technical, vocational and apprenticeship pathways.

Careers learning is delivered through tutor time, curriculum subjects, personal development, assemblies, workshops, visits, careers fairs, employer encounters and work experience. The principle that *"every teacher is a careers teacher"* ensures pupils understand how their subjects, skills and qualifications connect to future opportunities.

Through the programme, pupils develop:

- self-awareness and understanding of their strengths, interests and values;
- knowledge of careers, labour market opportunities and progression pathways;
- informed decision-making at key transition points;
- employability, application and interview skills;
- workplace awareness and professional confidence;
- understanding of equality of opportunity and the ability to challenge stereotypes;
- and

- confidence to identify clear and achievable next steps.

Pupils in Years 7–13 have access to careers resources, impartial careers advice, staff guidance, employer and provider encounters, university and college visits, and information about technical education and apprenticeships. Year 10 and Year 12 pupils also undertake a week of work experience to develop employability skills and workplace understanding.

The school works with a wide range of employers, universities and careers organisations, including Prospects, Careers Accelerator, The Talent Foundry, InvestIN, Solutions for the Planet, Young Reporters Scheme, PwC, Future Frontiers, Oxford Brookes University, Unifrog, CGI and The Hill Group. Employer links have also included AXA XL and Ford, Deloitte and HMRC, alongside higher education links with institutions including Oxford, Cambridge and UCL.

These relationships provide pupils with employer encounters, mentoring, workplace experience and insight into further and higher education, apprenticeships and employment, while supporting the school's statutory requirement to provide Years 7 –13 with encounters with technical education and apprenticeship providers.

Student and Parental/Carer voice

Oaks Park High School places regular evaluation at the centre of its careers programme. Student feedback is gathered following careers activities and encounters so that the school can assess the relevance, quality and impact of the provision. Each careers event is evaluated, with students considering the usefulness of the experience in supporting their future career decisions. This provides direct evidence of student voice and enables the Careers Team to identify strengths and areas requiring further development.

The school also seeks regular parent/carers feedback through its established communication and consultation processes, particularly at key transition and decision-making points. Feedback from students and parents/carers is considered alongside destinations data, LMI data and information from staff, careers advisers, employers, and education and training providers to inform the annual review and development of the careers programme.

Student impact is achieved through a progressive and inclusive careers programme from Year 7 to Year 13, with provision sequenced around key transition points to develop students' career knowledge, employability skills, aspirations and confidence in making informed decisions.

Students receive information and experiences relating to academic, technical and apprenticeship pathways, employer encounters, work experience and independent careers guidance, alongside activities that develop employability skills. Unifrog is used to support students in exploring pathways and recording their skills, competencies and work-related experiences.

The impact of provision is monitored through both quantitative and qualitative evidence, including student evaluations, participation and engagement, careers guidance outcomes, progression information, NEET figures and intended, actual and sustained destination data.

The school also uses Compass+ to evaluate provision against the Gatsby Benchmarks and reviews the careers programme annually. Oaks Park High School is 100% compliant with all eight Gatsby Benchmarks, providing a strong external framework for evaluating the quality and breadth of careers provision. This creates a clear cycle of plan, deliver, evaluate and improve.

Destination data provides strong evidence of impact. The most recent DfE destinations data (2023-24) shows that 99% of Year 11 students had a known destination six months after leaving the school, demonstrating highly successful post-16 transitions, including for vulnerable and disadvantaged students. At post-18, 98% of Year 13 students had a known destination, with students progressing to a broad range of higher education, apprenticeships and employment opportunities. Current sixth-form outcomes also show that 90% of UCAS applicants progress to university, with 18% securing places at Russell Group institutions, alongside students progressing to competitive degree apprenticeships with organisations including Amazon, Sky, Deloitte and HMRC.

Work experience and employer engagement further strengthen student outcomes. Year 10 students are supported to secure self-placement work experience, with additional workplace opportunities available in Year 12, helping students develop employability skills and make informed decisions about future pathways.

The impact of the school's careers provision was independently reinforced by **Ofsted** in April 2025, which found that the school's *"well-planned careers programme"* prepares pupils *"extremely well to take their next steps."* Inspectors also noted that pupils access a *"high-quality careers programme"* from their first year and that older pupils receive *"impartial careers advice"*, alongside work experience and support with post-16 and post-18 pathways. This builds on the 2019 inspection, when Ofsted reported that the school had been *"recognised for its work in careers education"* and highlighted the *"good-quality support, advice and guidance"* available to pupils when making choices.

The school continues to evaluate and strengthen its provision through stakeholder voice, destination evidence, 100% Gatsby Benchmark compliance, annual self-evaluation and external quality assurance. This systematic approach ensures that careers education remains responsive to student need and to changes in the local, national and global labour market, while providing clear evidence of successful transitions and sustained student outcomes.

Student and parent/carer voice is integral to the ongoing development of the careers programme rather than being treated solely as an end-of-event evaluation. Feedback and evaluation evidence are reviewed by the Careers Team alongside destination information, participation records, Gatsby Benchmark performance and identified student needs. The findings are used to inform the annual careers development plan, future activities, employer and provider engagement and targeted provision for particular cohorts or individual students.

Student voice helps the school understand whether activities have increased knowledge of pathways, challenged misconceptions, raised aspirations and improved students' confidence

and career readiness. Parent/carer voice contributes to understanding the information and support families require to help young people make informed decisions at key transition points.

The evaluation process also supports an inclusive approach. Feedback, participation and destination information can be analysed to identify whether particular groups—including disadvantaged students, students with SEND, students at risk of becoming NEET and those facing other barriers—are accessing and benefiting from careers provision equally. Where gaps are identified, the programme can be adapted and targeted support provided.

Quality Assurance

The national **Quality in Careers Standard** (assessed and awarded by **Investor in Careers** as a Licensed Awarding Body) provides the school with independent, externally validated recognition of the high quality of its careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) provision for all students. It evidences that students are equipped with the knowledge, skills and experiences needed to make informed decisions about their next steps, whether into employment, apprenticeships or technical routes, a gap year, or further and higher education.

The school is currently undergoing reaccreditation for 2026 and has held the Quality in Careers award since 2015.

Mrs Hassan said: *“Achieving the **Quality in Careers Standard** has been a highly positive and developmental experience for our school, strengthening both the quality and visibility of our careers provision while giving us a clear, externally validated benchmark of excellence.*

*The process was highly supportive and developmental, with regular contact from our assessor and the **Investor in Careers** team providing clear guidance, practical resources and constructive challenge. This enabled us to sharpen our strategic approach, strengthen quality assurance, and further embed careers across the curriculum so that it is experienced as a whole-school priority.*

The benefits have been clear and measurable. The Standard helped us to further align our careers programme to the updated Gatsby Benchmarks and DfE statutory guidance, embedding careers across the curriculum and strengthening our whole-school approach. Independent assessment confirmed the quality of our provision, giving staff, governors, parents and partners confidence that our careers education is robust, inclusive and impactful.”

The Quality in Careers assessor’s report highlighted a *“very clear strategic direction”* for CEIAG, a *“strong commitment to the delivery of high quality CEIAG,”* and robust quality control processes with a clear focus on continuous improvement. It also praised the school’s *“excellent progress in disseminating CEIAG across the curriculum,”* the *“excellent example”* of the Careers Road Map, and the school’s strong employer engagement and whole-school ethos that *“every teacher is a careers teacher.”*

The assessor's report recognised that students benefit from a wide range of meaningful encounters, high-quality labour market information, impartial guidance, and targeted support for vulnerable learners. It also noted the school's strong evaluation processes and commitment to ongoing improvement, confirming that the Standard is not just an award, but a valuable framework for sustaining and developing excellent careers provision.

Mrs Hassan concluded: *"Overall, the **Quality in Careers Standard** has not only recognised the quality of what we already do; it has given us a clear roadmap for continuous improvement, raised the profile of careers across the school, and ensured that every student leaves us with the knowledge, skills and confidence to take control of their future".*

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