



QUALITY IN CAREERS WEBSITE ©

CEIAG Case Study: Thomas Gainsborough School, Sudbury, Suffolk

### The School/College

Thomas Gainsborough School (TGS) is proud to be a thriving and ambitious 11–18 school in the heart of Suffolk, serving its community with a strong commitment to academic excellence, personal development and inclusive education.

Rooted in its mission “*Excellence: for each, for all*” the school believes that every young person deserves a personalised, aspirational and inclusive education. The school is dedicated to nurturing each student’s strengths, developing their confidence and character, and equipping them with the knowledge, skills and values they need to thrive—both in school and in life beyond.

The school community is united by three guiding pillars:

- **Culture** – *We broaden horizons and enrich lives through diverse experiences that build cultural capital, spark ambition and develop a strong sense of identity.*
- **Character** – *We instil the values of resilience, curiosity and integrity, helping students to grow into confident, responsible and principled individuals.*
- **Currency** – *We are relentless in our pursuit of academic excellence, ensuring every student leaves with the qualifications and learning needed for future success.*

These pillars are underpinned by the core values that define the school community: respect, resilience, honesty, happiness, confidence and positivity. Together, these values shape a welcoming, inclusive environment where every student is known, supported and challenged to be their very best.

The school is proud of the strong foundations already in place and is excited to continue working together—with students, families, staff, governors and our wider partnership—to ensure this remains a school everyone is proud of. A place where excellence is not just something aimed for, but something lived every day.

In 2013 Thomas Gainsborough School (TGS) became an 11 to 18 school and converted to an academy, joining the Unity Schools Partnership in January 2014. The Trust is a partnership of schools located on the Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire borders.

TGS is located near Sudbury in Suffolk, in a rural setting. The school is a larger than average secondary school, currently 1,596 students. The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium is below national average (27%) at 19% . The vast majority of students are White British and speak English as their first language. The proportion of students identified with SEN is slightly above average (17.6%) at 19%.

The school's last Ofsted Inspection in 2024 was "Outstanding" in three out of the five categories (behaviour, personal development and Sixth Form) and "Good" in quality of education and leadership.

### **Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)**

Mentioned specifically in the Ofsted report - *"The highly successful careers education, advice and guidance programme is fundamental to the opportunities pupils have to be successful in their next stage of their education or employment"* - Careers provision is a high priority at Thomas Gainsborough School.

The new Head Teacher in 2025 continues to invest in two members of full time staff who work together to provide a full and varied careers service for the students.

The school's Careers Adviser and Lead (Mrs Osborne) is Level 6 CIAG and Careers Leader trained and a registered CDI Careers professional.

The full-time work experience co-ordinator and careers administrator, as well as arranging work experience for Year 10 and 12 students, carries out extensive administrative tasks involved with our record of achievement folders, regular career events throughout the academic years and more.

The majority of Year 10 and 12 students have at least one 1:1 careers guidance meeting with the careers advisor either before, during or after school. TGS offers a wide range of activities which form the school's strategic careers plan which is mapped to the Gatsby Benchmarks and has a weekly careers newsletter packed with information about careers activities both inside and outside of the school. This year the programme will have a specific focus on skills using *skillsbuilder.org* as a framework and for resources.

### **Learner and Parental/Carer voice**

Staff, students and teachers are asked to give anonymous feedback in a Google form in order to identify gaps and to help the TGS target areas of improvements as well as the future skills questionnaire sent out to key year groups throughout their time at the school.

## Quality Assurance

The update to the Gatsby Benchmarks, modern work experience and the **Quality in Careers Standard** revised national criteria has seen the school's current careers provision under the microscope and assessed for any gaps. With a renewed focus on inclusivity, a whole school approach to careers, impact, meaningful and varied employer encounters and tracking and destinations, the school believes that it is more important than ever that its overall careers provision is assessed independently and by experienced knowledgeable professionals.

The school was last assessed by Complete Careers in Dec 2024 and reaccredited through the **Quality in Careers Standard**. The school was additionally presented with Complete Careers' own "Gold Award" in recognition of its long-term commitment to quality, its first assessment being in 2018. Complete Careers, whilst acknowledging where the school was meeting the new criteria and guidelines more importantly supported the school to highlight where there was still have work to do to help fill those gaps. The Careers Lead concludes *"We found the process thorough and professional and believe it to be a truly valuable experience ensuring we continue to build and improve our provision in this shifting landscape"*.

### CONTACT DETAILS:

**Name and title:** Mrs Katy Osborne, Careers Advisor and Lead

**Email:** enquiries@tgschool.net

**Tel:** 01787 375232 ext 274

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