

Barr Beacon School's Careers Plan 2025-2026

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Aims and Objectives

At Barr Beacon School we work in partnership with a wide range of employers and education providers to offer an inspiring, supportive and motivational careers programme for everyone. We aim to give every pupil the best chance at progressing onto their chosen career pathway, through careers events that showcase the full range of options available, and by helping pupils to navigate that choice with well-informed, up-to-date and impartial advice and guidance.

We offer careers activities to meet everyone's individual needs and allow our pupils to broaden their horizons by meeting new and inspiring people who help us to bring together a careers programme that raises aspirations, challenges stereotypical thinking and promotes equality and diversity.

We take a whole school approach to careers education, with careers support being embedded into the whole curriculum and school journey. The Careers Leader is responsible for the strategic leadership of the whole careers programme, including planning, organising and running all events and activities and evaluating careers provision annually. They are supported with this by a line manager who sits on the Senior Leadership Team. All teachers are responsible for the delivering careers learning in lessons, with the support of their Department Lead in scheduling and embedding careers lessons into curriculum plans. Pastoral staff keep in regular contact with the Careers Leader and Adviser to ensure the individual needs of pupils are catered for; these include the SENDCO, PP Lead, Heads of Houses, Head of Sixth Form, Wellbeing Hub staff and Safeguarding Lead.

The careers programme at Barr Beacon School goes beyond helping pupils to figure out what their next steps should be; it helps pupils to recognise their own strengths and interests and to continually develop the essential employability and life skills to make successful applications to their chosen pathways. Our Skills 4 Life approach and extra/super-curricular opportunities help pupils to see the value in everything they do and empowers them to thrive in the workplace.

Barr Beacon School has been recognised for its excellent work within careers. In 2025 we achieved the **Gold National Quality in Careers Standard** and since 2018 we have supported the **West Midlands Careers Hub**. We go further than simply helping our own pupils and have built strong partnerships with local schools to share best practice and improve careers education for every child in the West Midlands.

Below is the plan for our Careers Programme, mapped to the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Careers Guidance (<https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>).

How we achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks

Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme

- Barr Beacon School will measure and assess the impact of its own careers programme using the Gatsby Benchmarks, Compass+ tool, as well as using our own internal tracking systems. We regularly evaluate our programme using opinions of providers, pupils, staff and parents.
- The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Parent Advisory Board support the careers programme, with the Careers Leader being line managed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team to promote and champion the programme in weekly leadership meetings.
- The careers programme is tailored to the needs of all pupils, with carefully monitoring of pupil aspirations and collaborative work with pastoral colleagues.
- The careers programme is strategically planned and sequenced appropriately to ensure all pupils receive effective support and the right time.
- Learning outcomes will underpin the careers programme.
- Our School Development Plan is linked with the Careers Plan.
- Parents and Carers are engaged in the careers programme through regular communication via school letters and the termly school Newsletter. Parents and Carers can also request individual support. Virtual Parent/Carer advice evenings will be offered in the summer term of Year 10 and 12 to help with next steps transitions.
- Pupils engage with the career programme through a wide range of activities and are informed of its aims and opportunities in assemblies and via the pupil Briefing Sheet.
- Resources have been allocated to enhance the careers activities we can provide.
- A dedicated area of the school's website details useful and up-to-date information for use by pupils, parents and teachers.
- Our Provider Access Policy is also published on our website for the benefit of employers and educational establishments.

Benchmark 2: Learning from careers and labour market information

- Pupils will be informed of updated LMI information through their PSHE lessons, annually through assemblies and in their individual careers interviews.
- A dedicated LMI section on the school website is regularly updated.
- LMI is included in careers displays in school.
- Staff will be kept up-to-date in annual CPD careers sessions.
- Employers visiting the school and trips to providers help to contribute to the delivery of LMI information.
- LMI information will be disseminated to parents at key pathway evenings and through the school's website.
- Pupils will be signposted to trusted online sources of LMI through their PSHE sessions, personal interviews or on our webpage.
- Action Plans from careers meetings, with tailored information about careers, will be emailed to the parents/carers of pupils with SEND. All parents/carers can request this information.

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil

- Our Careers Programme is designed to support our pupils into the career pathway of their choice. Each student will have tailored advice and support at key transition points.
- We aim to raise the aspirations of all of our pupils, encouraging them to consider a range of pathways at post 16 that will help them to access Higher Education, Apprenticeships and Degree Apprenticeships at post 18.
- We challenge career stereotypes through our PSHE programmes and setting examples through our visiting employers, including our Alumni.
- The school keeps an accurate record of all of our pupils' careers experiences using Compass+ and uses this to tailor and target future support. We also use globalbridge to help our pupils access a record of these experiences.
- A detailed database with all pupil's career aspirations allows us to carefully target our invites for careers activities but most are open to all who choose to sign up.
- Our Alumni Network is continually growing so that we can track the destinations of our pupils and use this to inform and evaluate our careers programme.
- Our SEND and disadvantaged pupils receive targeted support from our Careers Adviser and extra support where needed; for example in sourcing supportive workplace experience opportunities.
- The school actively works with universities and organisations that support underrepresented groups to access higher level learning. A dedicated member of leadership, leading on Pupil Premium activity, supports this.
- Intended and Final Destinations are collated by the Careers Leader with the support of the Careers Adviser, who reports these to the local authority. The Careers Leader and Senior Leadership Team use the destinations data to evaluate the careers programme and School Development Plan.
- The Wellbeing Hub supports vulnerable groups at key transitions.
- The Careers Adviser keeps accurate records of individual careers advice and these are shared with pupils and kept securely on pupil files.
- Pupil planners include information on accessing careers support and employability skills.
- Records of careers support will be shared with new education providers if pupils change providers during their time at school.
- At key transition points, pupils will be provided with a record of their participation in careers and cultural capital activities to support applications for their next steps. Tutors and our Careers Adviser will support pupils to make best use of this information.

Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

- We have a whole school approach to careers where careers staff, teachers and pastoral staff help to support our pupils as they navigate their career pathways.
- Career learning will be incorporated into all subjects for all year groups. This includes learning on progression routes and how the subject applies to careers and future pathways. Opportunities to gain employability skills will also be signposted in lessons to help pupils feel more prepared for the workplace.
- Each department has a dedicated careers display.
- Subject departments are encouraged to develop links with local employers and universities and use these to create new opportunities for pupils within lessons or for educational visits to work places or higher education providers.
- An annual CPD session for all teaching staff is dedicated to careers.

- Each year group has a series of PSHE lessons dedicated to Careers, which are tailored to the different stages of their career learning.
- STEM activities will form a large part of the careers programme in general but targeted activities will be organised by the STEM lead.
- Heads of House promote and recognise achievements that can contribute to pupil's future applications or showcase their developing skillset, within weekly assemblies and via the school newsletter.

Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

- We have built up a strong network of local and national employers, many of whom regularly return to support the school each year. We continually work to expand this network to give our pupils access to a wide variety of external speakers.
- All pupils attend our annual Careers Fair where they meet a range of employers every year.
- Pupils have opportunities to take part in events with employers throughout the year, including trips, assemblies and workshops.
- We have built up a strong Alumni Network which allows us to create a variety of encounters for our pupils and enriches the delivery of our careers programme.
- Barr Beacon School work closely with the Careers and Enterprise Company to engage with their programmes and create new opportunities for our pupils. The school works in partnership with the Enterprise Adviser Network.
- Opportunities for employers to work closely with teachers on projects within the curriculum are growing.
- The purpose of these encounters is shared with employers and pupils, involves two-way interaction and often allow pupils time to reflect on the knowledge or skills they have gained. The encounters will be underpinned by learning outcomes.

Benchmark 6: Experience of workplaces

- Year 12 students take part in a full week of work experience. Students who cannot secure a placement are supported with a varied work placement in school and virtually.
- Year 9 pupils have the opportunity to take part in a Work Experience Day. Pupils who cannot take part in an activity outside of school have a special employer led work experience day in school.
- Experiences have a clear shared purpose with the pupil and employer, allow pupils to perform tasks set by the employer and gain feedback about their work and include opportunities for the pupil to reflect on the skills and knowledge gained.
- Personalised support will be provided where needed for SEND and disadvantaged pupils in accessing and succeeding with their placement.
- Any pupil who wishes to gain voluntary work is also encouraged and supported to do this in their spare time. Opportunities are regularly advertised.
- Older pupils who wish to complete work experience in the school holidays are supported to do so.
- Pupils in Years 10-13 are also sent virtual work experience opportunities to take part in.
- Our structured placements include preparatory sessions with pupils to ensure they get the most out of the experience.
- We value the opportunity for our pupils to not only experience the workplace through work experience but also to develop essential confidence, communication, perseverance and resilience skills when trying to source these placements.
- Year 7 and 8 pupils take on the job role of Duty Monitor for a day in school.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take on leading roles within school that give them a taste of a working dynamic e.g. Prefects, School Council, Cadets.
- Visits to employers are arranged where possible for small groups.

Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education

- The school has built up contacts with a full range of local and national providers and uses these contacts to help inform our pupils of all of the options available to them.
- All pupils attend our annual Careers Fair with a full range of options presented: universities, colleges, sixth form colleges, apprenticeships, employment, independent training providers, studio schools and technical education providers.
- Various visiting speakers, taster lectures, trips and projects are arranged throughout the year.
- We have partnerships with many universities and take part in their various outreach projects.
- PSHE sessions and assemblies help pupils to explore all of their options, including T levels, apprenticeships, traineeships and technical qualifications.
- Parents are kept informed through letters, texts, the school website and at events for key transitions.
- We try to secure university visits for pupils early in Key Stage 3 and then again in Year 12, to help raise their aspirations.
- We raise awareness of apprenticeships and Degree apprenticeships regularly and work closely with businesses and Young Professionals to keep our pupils informed.
- Year 12 pupils are also encouraged to attend Open Days in the summer term and are granted 3 authorised absences to allow for this.
- Year 11 pupils take part in Next Steps Week to help them make their final crucial decisions. This includes advice sessions from the range of options ahead of them and a taster day at either the Sixth Form or a local College.
- Sixth Form students will attend an additional careers fair in Birmingham to reach an even wider range of university and apprenticeship providers.
- We also work very closely with a number of universities and organisations who have tailored Access Schemes and projects to help pupils along their way to university, such as the Sutton Trust, Social Mobility Foundation, Pathways to Birmingham, Aston Pathways, Realising Opportunities and Exeter Scholars.
- Summer Schools are also widely advertised and encouraged amongst our Year 12 and 10 pupils.
- Year 9 pupils and parents are given up-to-date information as part of their Pathways Programme when selecting GCSE options.
- The school fully complies with provider Access Legislation, giving all pupils the opportunity to learn from a range of providers at our annual careers fair and with supplementary assemblies.

Benchmark 8: Personal guidance

- Every pupil will have had at least one meeting with our Careers Adviser by the end of Year 11. Pupils do not just simply have discussions about their chosen pathway during these meetings but can also request application support, mock interviews and CV/personal statement advice.
- Every student will have had at least one meeting with our Careers Leader in Year 13. Students receive extensive tailored UCAS and Apprenticeship application support.
- These sessions often occur much more than once and are impartial and conducted by staff with professional careers qualifications, who work to standards required by the CDI Code of Ethics.

- Although pupils can request support at any stage, these careers guidance meetings are timed to meet the needs of pupils when significant options decisions are being made. Year 9 pupils are encouraged to request support during their Options window, guidance meetings begin in the Spring term of Year 10 and run through to the Autumn of Year 11 to support Post-16 options and Sixth Form students have support throughout Year 12 and focused application meetings in the Autumn of Year 13. Meetings in the Sixth Form are scheduled outside of lesson time, in independent study periods, to minimise learning impact. Key Stage 4 meetings are paused during busy mock periods for the pupils' benefit.
- Every pupil and their parents/carers have the opportunity to book a Careers Interview on request. Reminders of how to do this are featured in assemblies, on pupil briefing sheets and in the school newsletter.
- There is also a drop in every Wednesday afternoon at 3.10pm.
- Pupils in Year 11 and Sixth Form will be given further application and personal statement support by their tutor.
- The Careers Leader and Adviser work closely with the Senior Leadership Team, pastoral staff, tutors, teachers, SEND staff and other support staff to ensure personal guidance is targeted effectively.
- TA record of Year 11 and 13 pupils' Intended Destinations is monitored by the Careers Leader and Careers Adviser to target advice for those in most need.
- All pupils in Year 11 will have mock interviews in preparation for their post 16 applications. Sixth Form students will have additional mock interviews and assessment centre preparation, as required, for their apprenticeship and university course applications.

Benchmark 9: Opportunities for skills development

The Matrix Academy Trust believes the Gatsby Benchmarks do not go far enough. We believe granting pupils opportunities to develop their skillset and enhance their future CVs, goes hand in hand with excellent careers provision. Internally, we refer to this as 'Benchmark 9'.

- All pupils will be offered the chance to take on leading roles in school, such as School Council, Anti-Bullying Committee, Sixth Form Subject Ambassadors, Cadets, etc.
- The school will offer a range of extra-curricular clubs and opportunities to help pupils develop their skills, including Duke of Edinburgh.
- As well as creating extra-curricular opportunities, the school recognises the importance of super-curricular activities for university progression and will raise awareness of this in Key Stage 4 and 5 and introduce super-curricular logs for Sixth Form students.
- The school will help pupils develop self-awareness by feeding skills audits into PSHE sessions and using a career platform tool: globalbridge.

Our Planned Activities for 2025-2026

Key Stage	Planned Activities
Key Stage 3	Careers Fair
	Careers PSHE lessons

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LMI updates in assemblies and PSHE Globalbridge Computer Room Session Targeted and optional career specific trips, speakers and events University Visit Guess My Job Assembly Work Experience Day in Year 9 Options Advice in Year 9 Apprenticeship, T Level and Technical Route awareness assembly
Key Stage 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers Fair Careers PSHE lessons LMI updates in assemblies and PSHE Globalbridge Computer Room Session Targeted and optional career specific trips, speakers and events Guidance assemblies on Post 16 Choices, Interview Preparation and Wages Personal Guidance Meeting Year 11 Next Steps Assemblies Mock Interviews Next Steps Application Support Year 10 Virtual Parent Advice Evening
Key Stage 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers Fair Careers PSHE lessons LMI updates in assemblies and PSHE Globalbridge Computer Room Session Targeted and optional career specific trips, speakers and events University Open Day Visit Apprenticeship Careers Fair Visit Summer Future Planning Focus Regular Guidance Assemblies from Universities, Apprenticeship Providers and the Careers Leader Year 12 Work Experience Week Year 12 Virtual Parent Advice Evening UCAS and Apprenticeship Application Support Mock Interviews and Mock Assessment Centres

