

Vision and Purpose

1. At Portland School, we believe that our most fundamental function is to prepare our young people for what comes next in their lives, and for helping them to develop the skills to become as independent as they possibly can be into adulthood.
2. For a majority of our pupils we believe that this can and should include moving into paid employment in adulthood, and we intend our Careers programme to inspire and prepare our pupils to achieve that goal
3. Through the Careers programme set out in the appendices to this document, and with the support of the Careers service and other important partner agencies and local businesses, we intend to foster and develop a philosophy of aspiration amongst our staff, our pupils and their families to the point where we all start from an expectation of employment for all of our pupils
4. Further to developing an aspiration of employment, we also believe that developing the skills identified by employers as being desirable in the job market has a positive effect on the general wellbeing of each individual. Skills and attributes such as resilience, working well with others and the understanding of our own strengths all contribute to a positive self-image and more secure mental health.

Local and National Expectations

5. We are committed to meeting the requirements and expectations laid out in the Governments' career strategy (Dec 2017) by giving due regard to the DfE statutory guidance on Careers Education (October 2018)
These requirements are:
 - To ensure that pupils are provided with independent careers guidance from year 8 to 11
 - To ensure that there are opportunities for employers and education and training advisors to have access to pupils from year 8 for the purpose of informing them in regard to qualifications and apprenticeships
 - To publish a policy statement for provider access on the school website
 - To use the Gatsby Benchmarks and comply with them in full where appropriate by 2020
 - To build in the opportunity for our pupils to meet with or visit at least one employer or place of work each year from year 7 upwards, where this is appropriate

- To appoint a named Careers leader to lead the careers programme
- To publish details of our careers programme for access by young people and their carers

Challenges

6. All pupils who attend Portland School and specialist College have an Education Health and Care Plan which outlines their primary need of SEMH (Social, Emotional & Mental Health).
7. A significant number of our pupils live in houses where no adult is in employment. We understand that the reasons for this can be complex, but we are also mindful that,

“Children who grow up with workless parents are more likely to be workless themselves as adults, in comparison to children who grow up with working parents”

(Gregg et al, 2017; Schoon et al, 2012).

‘People with special educational needs are seven times less likely to work than their mainstream peers,’ (www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/july-2015/aged-16-64)

‘People with special educational needs are more likely to work in part-time, poorly paid employment,’ www.memcap.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/what-we-campaigne-about/employment-and-training

We believe that breaking the cycle of worklessness, where it does exist, is of the utmost importance and can impact positively, not only on our pupils, but on generations of their families to come.

8. “We know that all young people face challenges in finding employment, but for the 14% of young people with special educational needs and disabilities, finding a job is even more complicated. Many of them face unique challenges in progressing from school to further learning and the workplace.”

- *Claudia Harris (Foreword to the SEND Gatsby Benchmark Toolkit- 2019)*

Current priorities:

9. Our careers strategy is informed by these current priorities:

- Supporting and developing individual aspirations, improving attainment and ensuring positive destinations
- Meeting the needs of specific groups including looked after children, young carers, and children from economically-deprived backgrounds
- Developing learner's career aspirations and skills, especially those associated with perseverance, self-reliance, resilience, independence, problem-solving, engagement and employability
- Improving young people's opportunities for a working life by helping them to identify the values that are important to them such as contributing to the wellbeing of others through their paid or voluntary work; achieving their own personal best and recognising their place in the community
- Developing the use of a range of resources to meet young people's career development needs in conjunction with face-to-face support
- Working with parents/carers, alumni and education, community and business partners to meet student's career development needs

Strategy

10. In order to meet the objectives of this policy we will ensure that;

- The Careers programme in school will be guided by a named member of the Governing body, who will assume a strategic interest and encourage employer engagement. It will also have the backing to deliver Careers Guidance across all eight Gatsby Benchmarks, of a named member of the Senior Leadership Team, and will be led on a daily basis by a named Careers Leader.
- In collaboration with the skills builder partnership, staff throughout the school will use all eight skills areas of: listening, presenting, problem solving, creativity, staying positive, aiming high, leadership and teamwork to identify the building blocks of employability skills, explicitly teach them and assess pupil progress against them.
- Independent careers advice is commissioned which provides pupils with unbiased understanding of the career choices available to them.
- Pupils have the opportunity to develop their independence through inclusion in the Travel Training programme where appropriate.
- The careers leader and where appropriate the SLT lead will liaise with representatives of the Careers and Enterprise Company, The Careers Hub and the school's Enterprise Advisor to ensure best practice and most up to date advice with regard to LEP priorities.
- Pupil understanding of the world of work develops by exposing them to a significantly increased number of carefully planned, meaningful employer contacts in their time at school, beyond the 1 contact per year (in KS2 and 3) mandated by the Gatsby Benchmarks.

SEND Employer Engagement Project (Running until August 2020)

11. Funding, secured through the successful ***Opportunity Area*** bid, will be used to provide Stoke Special Schools with an 'Employer Engagement Coordinator'. The coordinator's role will include:
 - Actively seeking new contact with local business and both building and maintaining effective relationships in order to facilitate tailored work experience placements.
 - Working with Careers Leads in school to create bespoke work-experience placements for key stage 4pupils, taking into account the individual interests as well as needs to effectively match pupils with employers.
 - Acting as a main point of first contact for employers.
 - Working with schools to engage and inform parents in regard to the opportunities available to their children.

12. A second strand of the ***Opportunity Area*** funding goes directly to schools and is ring-fenced to allow schools to send staff out to work experience placements where needed. By using school staff who know and understand each pupil and their needs well, we will support the pupil in their new environment, support the employers to better understand how they can support workers with additional needs in the future and help calm the fears of employers that placements may take up disproportionate amounts of their time.

Appendix A – The Careers Pathway

Pupils at Portland School & Specialist College engage in subject based learning, and vocational learning packages supported by local, independent Alternative Provision Providers in the City.

Formal Careers Package which includes:

- Individual, impartial careers advice from the Careers Hub
- Introduction to Travel Training
- Visits to places of work
- Work experience placements supported by a Teaching Assistant (short term)

Introduction to Essential Employment Skills which include:

- The skills Builder Framework which also forms the basis for assessment and focusses on 8 essential skills
- Listening
- Presenting
- Creativity
- Staying Positive
- Aiming High
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Problem Solving

Pupils leave Portland School & Specialist College at the end of Year 11 and transition to a number of Key Stage 5 provisions

Appendix B – Cohort breakdown and destination data

	Reaseheath Agricultural College Stoke on Trent College	Newcastle College	City of Stoke on Trent 6 th Form College	S.O.T City Council Parks and Gardens	Independent 6 th Form Provider	PM Training	MARTEC	S.O.T College	NEET
2016 -2017	2			1	1	1		1	
2017 – 2018		1	1		1			2	1
2018 – 2019	1	1				1	2	2	2

Appendix C – Key terms and programme explained

Term of Programme	Explanation	Who it applies to
The Gatsby Benchmarks	This is a set of guidelines which the Government recognise as best practice. As a school we can see how closely we are meeting each guideline and take steps to improve in any areas we fall back on.	The benchmarks apply across the school.
Travel Training	To support our pupils in becoming as independent as possible, key staff will work with them in either very small groups or one to one. With staff, pupils will use public transport of various kinds, sometimes with a view to developing general understanding, and sometimes to practice specific routes for example, from home to college and back.	Travel Training will happen in Year 10 and 11. Pupils will be included in the programme following discussion with parents and carers.
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership. The LEP works with local businesses and feeds into careers programmes by helping us to understand where there might be jobs for our young people.	Advice to school.
Employer contacts	We use this term to refer to those times where our pupils either visit places of work or meet employers elsewhere, for example at trade-fairs. Often this will include a chance to ask questions or find out more about jobs that and employer offers.	Pupils undertake these types of visits throughout school, but the number of these increases throughout key stage 4.
The Skills-BUILDER Programme	This is a programme which offers staff a way of focusing on, and assessing progress in those skills which employers find useful in their employees. The skills are broken down into the 8 areas listed in appendix A.	All pupils who are working at/or towards subject specific levels.
NEET	Term used to describe young people who are 'Not in Education, Employment or Training'. Schools and Local Authorities work hard to ensure that this number is as low as possible.	
Opportunity Area	The opportunity Area programme aims to help more children and young people achieve their full potential through targeted funding in 12 areas facing the biggest challenges to social mobility. Each area is working in partnership with local nurseries, school, businesses and charities to overcome the barriers that hold children and young people back.	Funding received by Watermill School will be used by all of the special schools in Stoke on Trent to fund a one year pilot project to allow us to work with year 7 to 11 on employability education.

	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-area-programme-research-and-analysis	
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