

Sutton House Academy - Careers Update

Sutton House Academy has now in place a clear vision and path with regard supporting pupils around careers and employability. There is definite progress when compared to a similar period last year, as Sutton House did not have such a strategy. In taking on the Gatsby benchmarks, the Academy is now able to ensure that there is a dedicated approach to support our pupils. Similarly, Sutton House had not been working under the Gatsby banner this time last year.

The PSHE curriculum has learning units specifically about careers and employability embedded throughout the KS3/4 syllabus. Pupils from year 7 onward have lessons, activities and opportunities dedicated to addressing careers, in preparation for further education and ultimately the workplace. Across the wider curriculum, subject teachers are now more aware of making links in their lessons to aspects of careers.

The Academy together with the Connections Careers Information and Advice Officer have adopted a more partnered approach and this has already paid dividends. When matched against the similar period of the last academic year, it is evident that year 11 pupils have had multiple 1 to 1 sessions and discussions in terms of their career choices and plans. The support work has extended to year 11 pupils who are currently receiving off-site provision as well. This has resulted in the fact that more of the year 11 pupils are receiving the career guidance and information sessions as compared to a similar period last year. Another indicator of the success of the personalised support has been that this outreach programme has seen the year 10 pupils having 1 to 1 engagement with the careers officer. Again, this had not been happening at the Academy this time last year.

Sutton House Academy together with the local authority are working closely than before and have planned an event for year 11 pupils on 16 January 2020, whereby pupils can access more information and advice about careers and the workplace for an entire morning. Once this has taken off, it is planned to unroll this initiative for the year 10 pupils. This approach of working with pupils in small groups and involving third party agencies is part of the broader strategy which sees a major shift when matched against a similar period last year. It is this partnership that also planning and seeking ways to bring local employers and enterprises into school and take pupils out into the workplace, as part of the support to pupils on careers matters. Letters have already been sent to parents and carers encouraging them to explore work placement opportunities for the year 10 pupils. Sutton House is also looking at ways to see how it offer similar work placements at the Academy itself. Again, when compared to this time last year, there was none of this in place.

Together with the Transitions team at Southend borough, we have had a successful 'drop in' session with our year 10 and 11 pupils, discussing the opportunities for them in terms of work and college options. The pupils have been very favourable to this approach and we will have these sessions on a regular basis. The plan is to secure work placements within local business houses so that our pupils get 'tasters' into their possible careers. Our pupils attended the Careers Fair hosted by neighbouring Victory Park Academy. Pupils and parents / carers were able to engage with the different organisations and agencies about the different pathways to learning and employment. There were also business enterprises offering information and advice on job opportunities.

All of the support around careers at Sutton House Academy are in line with meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks. It is this approach that will continue to ensure that pupils receive the information, advice and guidance that they deserve. More significantly, this level of support in terms of careers and employability places Sutton House Academy in good stead to drastically reduce last year's 37.5% of NEET pupils in the current academic year.