



# Parents' Guide

## *Pathways & Careers*

Dear Parents and Carers,

The information in this guide will help you to support your child with making important decisions about their futures, both for the Year 9 pathways process and the post-16 applications that students will make during Year 11.

In addition to our PSHE Curriculum and the career related activities planned as part of our Academy Careers Programme, we offer a drop-in careers service with our independent Careers Adviser, Denise Sillitto. Denise can also be contacted on the following email:

[denise.sillitto1@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:denise.sillitto1@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Alternatively, students can speak to me anytime as our Academy Careers Leader and you can contact me directly on the following email:

[claire.woolley@toa.set.org](mailto:claire.woolley@toa.set.org)

The information in this booklet will give you an idea of the different pathways and opportunities available to your child and contains links to useful websites for you to visit for additional information. The information provided can also be found on the careers page of our Academy website.

[Careers - The Orme Academy](#)

We hope that you find this information useful, please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything else that we can do to help.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs C Woolley  
*Assistant Principal*

# GCSE Qualifications

GCSEs in England have been reformed to keep pace with universities' and employers' demands. They are based on new and more demanding subject content but are still suitable for the same wide range of abilities. The grade scale which was introduced between 2017-2020 has more higher grades compared to the old A\* to G grades, to give sixth forms, colleges, universities, and employers the opportunity to better distinguish between students of different abilities. GCSE results will be reported on the grade scale which runs from 9 (the highest grade) to 1 (the lowest grade). The table below compares old GCSE letter grades to the number system now used.

Current grading system	Old grading system
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	C
4	
3	D
2	E
1	F
U	G
U	U

- 9 is higher than an old A\*
- 8 is between and A\* and A
- 7 is equal to an A
- 6 is equivalent to a high B
- 5 is between a B and C (strong pass)
- 4 is equal to a grade C (standard pass)
- 3 is in between a D and E
- 2 is between an E and F
- 1 is a G
- U refers to an ungraded paper

For further information, please visit the [gov.uk website GCSE 9 to 1 grades: a brief guide for parents - The Ofqual blog](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-grades-a-brief-guide-for-parents-the-ofqual-blog).

The grading was designed so that there are comparable points at key grades. The bottom of a grade 7 is comparable to the bottom of the old grade A, the bottom of a new grade 4 is comparable to the bottom of the old grade C, and the bottom of the new grade 1 is comparable to the bottom of the old grade G. If employers, universities, and others have previously set entry requirements of at least a grade C, then the equivalent now would be to require at least grade 4.

The Government requires every student to achieve **a grade 4 or above in Maths and English**. Students need to re-sit the qualification at their chosen college or training provider after leaving school. Achieving lower grades in Maths and English may limit the range of post 16 qualifications available to them.

The changes to the GCSEs were designed to make the qualifications more challenging with coursework and controlled assessment disappearing from most subjects, apart from practical ones such as art. Most exams will be taken at the end of the two-year course rather than on completion of modules.

In addition to Maths, English and Science, which are the core subjects that are compulsory for all students to study, The Orme Academy will be offering a range of GCSE's for the students to study. Please see the Pathways Booklet on our Academy website for subject specific information.

[The Orme Academy KS4 Pathways Information \(link to website\)](#)

# KS4 Vocational Qualifications

To support our Academy ethos of '*Empowering Learners for Life*' we have a broad and balanced curriculum offer to meet the needs of all students. In addition to the traditional GCSE subjects, we also deliver a range of vocational qualifications. Vocational qualifications offer a mix of practical and theoretical learning that is directly related to a specific area of employment. These work-related courses can be a good option if you have a job sector in mind or if you would like to gain employability skills linked to a particular type of work. The courses that are most commonly available in schools for students in Years 10 and 11 include BTEC qualifications and OCR Cambridge Nationals.

BTECs and OCR Cambridge Nationals are vocational qualifications designed to give students the skills they need to move on to higher education or to go straight into employment. By applying learning to real-life situations, these qualifications offer a more practical approach than traditional courses. Students have to undertake a number of units for which they present evidence based on real-life work and studies. This allows them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge in practical situations.

Please visit the Career Pilot website for further information. [Careerpilot : Get information : Vocational qualifications : What are vocational qualifications?](#)

The vocational qualifications offered for September 2026 are Creative iMedia, Health and Social Care, Hospitality and Catering, Sport and Performing Arts. Please see the Pathways Booklet on our Academy website for further details about each qualification.

[The Orme Academy - KS4 Pathways \(link to website for current information\)](#)

# Labour Market Information (LMI)

## What is Labour Market Information?

Labour Market Information (LMI) is a useful tool to help research future jobs in the local area, understand the skills needed for certain roles and the demand for future employment. LMI helps to break down the complex 'world of work' – ranging from descriptions of different careers, their entry routes, promotional prospects, salaries paid, skills and qualifications needed, etc. Crucially for young people, LMI also covers future demand – what kinds of jobs will be in demand after leaving school and what kinds of skills will be needed.

## Why is Labour Market Information Important to Young People?

*'It is vital, in an environment where new industries are emerging and many of the most important jobs of the future don't yet exist, that individuals have access to high-quality labour market information and earnings data to underpin their choices'. Anne Milton MP*

## Explore different occupations using Careerometer\*

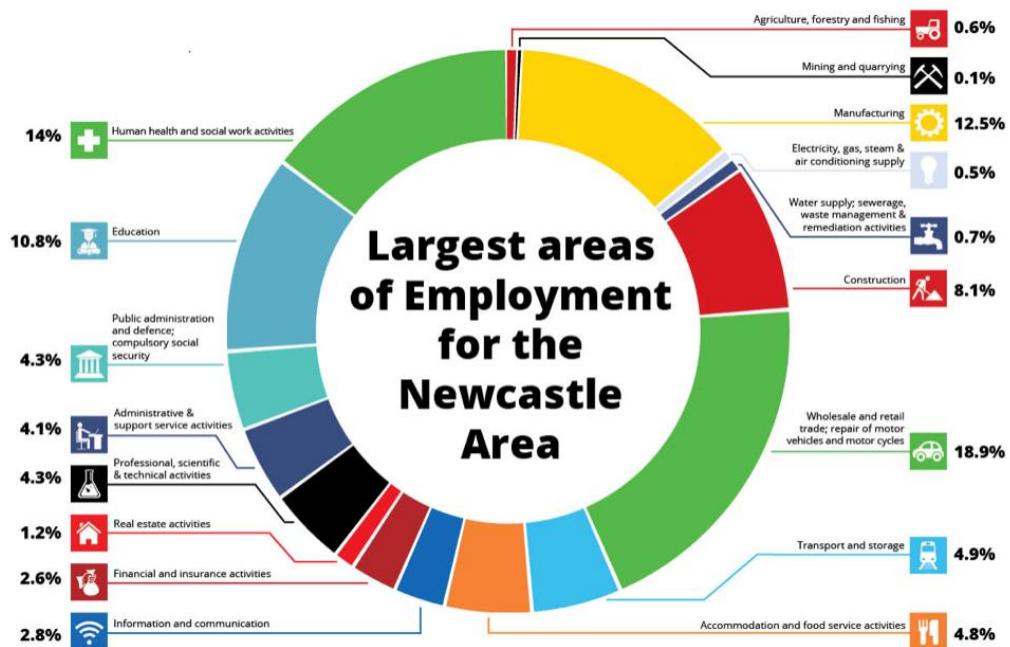
\*Please visit our Academy website to access this (follow the link below)

[Labour Market Information \(LMI\) - The Orme Academy](#)

Careerometer can be used to explore and compare key information about occupations, help you learn about different occupations and identify potential careers. It provides access to a selection of UK headline data relating to pay, weekly hours of work and future employment prospects for different occupations, as well as description of the occupation. Simply type in the title of the job you are interested in and the widget provides a series of options from which you can select the most relevant to you. You can then look up another two occupations and compare. You can also select 'display the UK average' and compare the information with the occupation you have selected.

Civil engineers	Legal professionals n.e.c.
Weekly Pay <b>£790</b>	Annual Pay <b>£41,080</b>
Hours/Week <b>38h</b>	Hourly Pay <b>£21</b>
<b>Workforce Change (projected)</b>	<b>Workforce Change (projected)</b>
Growth <b>4.2%</b>	Replacement <b>39.6%</b>
The workforce is projected to grow by 4.2% over the period to 2027, creating 3,600 jobs. In the same period, 39.6% of the workforce is projected to retire, creating 34,700 job openings.	
You might find this job in Architectural & related Civil engineering Construction Specialised construction Head offices, etc	
<a href="#">More info</a>	<a href="#">Clear card</a>
<a href="#">More info</a>	<a href="#">Clear card</a>

Please follow the link to view the [Career Ready LMI Assembly](#) that has been delivered to our Year 9 students.

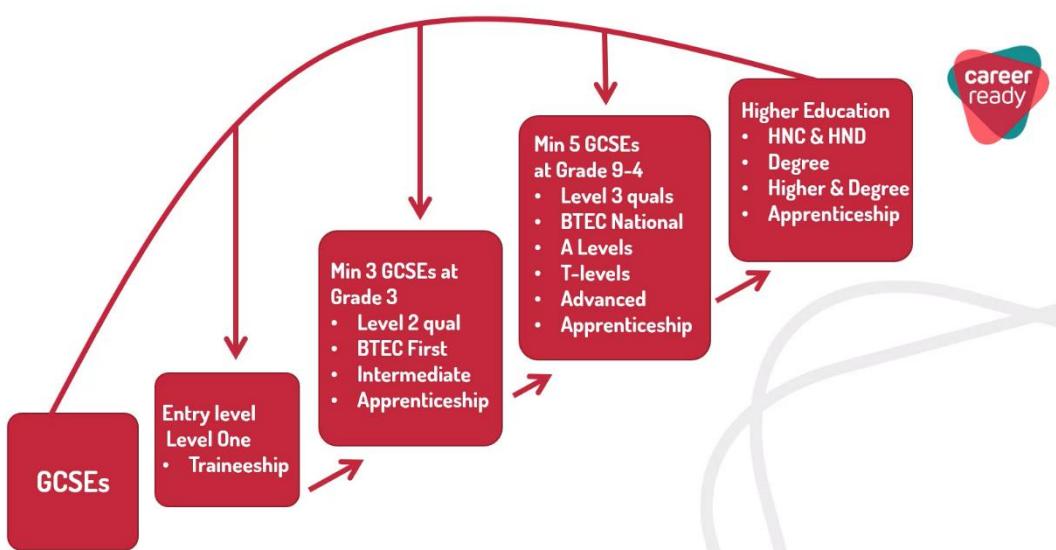


# Post 16 Pathways

Young people must stay in some form of education or training until the age of 18. There are many options available, so it is important to be aware of the different pathways available in order to select the most appropriate. Please refer to the post 16 pathways section of our Academy website for further details. [Post 16 Pathways - The Orme Academy](#)

All students will receive at least one 1:1 careers guidance meeting in Year 11 with our independent Careers Adviser, Janet Kemp. So that students can make informed decisions about their futures, representatives from local colleges and training providers will be invited into our Academy to deliver assemblies and workshops as part of the Living in the Wider World element of our PSHE programme.

There are many different pathways available for students once they leave school, please view the [Career Ready video](#) that we deliver to Year 11 students so that they are aware of all of their options. The different pathways are also shown in the picture below.



## A Levels

**Description:** Study a subject you took at GCSE in greater depth or choose a new one like economics, law or psychology. You could take 3 broad subjects you are interested in to keep your career options open or choose ones you need for a specific career.

**Duration:** 2 years

**Assessment:** Mostly exams at the end of the course

**Level of study:** 3

**Entry requirements:** Typically 5 GCSEs Grade 9-5 (including English and maths), some subjects have additional entry requirements (many require grade 6 in certain subjects)

**Work experience:** Usually 1 week during year 12

**Leads to:** University/college, higher and degree apprenticeships, work

**Find out more:** [UCAS Information about A levels](#)

## T Levels

**Description:** Designed in partnership with employers to give you the skills and knowledge to get on in the workplace. Combines classroom learning with industry placements to prepare you for skilled work or higher level study. 1 T Level is the equivalent of 3 A levels.

**Duration:** 2 years

**Assessment:** Exams, projects and practical assignments

**Level of study:** 3

**Entry requirements:** Course dependent

**Work experience:** At least 45 days on industry placement

**Leads to:** University/college, higher and degree apprenticeships, work

**Find out more:** [Gov.uk information about T Levels](#)

Please follow the link to view the [Ask Apprenticeships T Levels webinar](#).

## Technical and vocational qualifications

**Description:** Qualifications which teach you how to do tasks specifically related to the industry and role you want to be involved in.

**Duration:** Course dependent

**Assessment:** Can include coursework, skills tests and exams

**Level of study:** 1+

**Entry requirements:** Course dependent

**Work experience:** Course dependent

**Leads to:** Apprenticeship, work, college or university

**Find out more:** Speak to your local provider or talk to an adviser

## Applied qualifications

**Description:** Qualifications that give you a broad overview of working in a specific sector, like business, media, engineering, leisure or science and technology. A mix of classroom-based learning with the chance to get some practical skills.

**Duration:** Course dependent

**Assessment:** Course dependent (coursework and exams)

**Level of study:** 3

**Entry requirements:** Yes, course dependent

**Work experience:** Course dependent

**Leads to:** University/college, apprenticeship, work

**Find out more:** [Information about applied qualifications](#)

## Traineeships

**Description:** A course that includes a work placement that will get you ready for an apprenticeship or a job. You'll get work experience and some help to apply for your next steps. You can also improve your maths and English skills.

**Location:** You'll spend a minimum of 70 hours in a work placement with the rest of your time in college or a training centre

**Duration:** 6 weeks to 1 year

**Entry requirements:** You need to be aged between 16 to 24 or up to 25 with an Education Health and Care Plan with no higher than a level 3 qualification

**Qualifications:** English, maths, digital and work-related qualifications

**Leads to:** Apprenticeship, further education, work

**Find out more:** ask your local college or training provider or speak to Janet Kemp (careers adviser)

## Apprenticeships

**Description:** Intermediate, advanced higher and degree apprenticeships combine practical on-the-job skills training with off-the-job learning. You'll get training that is relevant to your job and be paid a salary. Start at a level to suit you, with support if you have special needs or a disability.

**Location:** You'll spend 80% of your time in the workplace and 20% off-the-job with some study in a college or training centre

**Duration:** A minimum of 1 year

**Entry requirements:** Will be dependent on the industry, job role and apprenticeship level

**Qualifications:** apprenticeship certificate, diploma, degree and masters depending on level

**Leads to:** Work, next level of apprenticeship, further education, higher education

**Find out more:** [Gov.uk information about Apprenticeships](#)

Please follow the link to view the [Ask About Apprenticeships video](#).

Please follow the link to access the [Ask Apprenticeships monthly Parent and Carer Packs](#).

## The levels of apprenticeships



Please follow the link to view more apprenticeship information. [Become an apprentice: How apprenticeships work - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The following link will take you directly to the government website to search and apply for live apprenticeship vacancies.

[Find an apprenticeship - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). We recommend that you create an account to receive email updates when apprenticeships matching your search criteria are added. Please speak to Mrs Woolley if you need any support with this.

Higher Horizons have created some useful presentations to further explain apprenticeships.

[Home - Higher Horizons](#)

# Post 16 Colleges and Training Providers

As part of our extensive Careers Education Programme, we work with all local colleges and training providers. They join us to deliver assemblies and workshops to inform the students of the pathways available to them and to develop crucial employability skills. Please see the links below to our career partners to find out more information about what they offer.

## **College / Sixth Forms**

[NSCG | Two Campuses, One Destination](#) – Newcastle College

[Reaseheath College - leading land-based college](#) – Reaseheath College

[Home - City of Stoke-on-Trent College Sixth Form College \(stokesfc.ac.uk\)](#) – Stoke 6<sup>th</sup> Form College

[Home - Stoke-on-Trent College :Stoke-on-Trent College \(stokecoll.ac.uk\)](#) – Stoke-on-Trent College

[St Joseph's College \(stjosephstrentvale.com\)](#) – St Joseph's College

[Cheshire College – South & West – Crewe, Ellesmere Port & Chester Campuses \(ccsw.ac.uk\)](#) – South Cheshire College

## **Apprenticeship and Training Providers**

College opportunities:

[NSCG | Apprenticeships](#) – Newcastle College Apprenticeships

[Apprenticeships - Reaseheath College](#) – Reaseheath College Apprenticeships

[Apprenticeships at Stoke on Trent College - Stoke-on-Trent College :Stoke-on-Trent College \(stoke-coll.ac.uk\)](#) – Stoke-on-Trent College Apprenticeships

Training providers:

[Apprenticeships & Vocational Courses in Staffordshire | Martec Training](#) – Martec Training

[eQuality Training - eQuality Training](#) – Equality Training

[Traineeships and Apprenticeships in Wolverhampton | Juniper Training](#) – Juniper Training

Armed Forces:

[Browse Army Roles - Find Your Perfect Fit - British Army Jobs \(mod.uk\)](#) – Army Careers

[What Does It Take To Be A Royal Marine? Royal Navy Jobs \(mod.uk\)](#) – Royal Navy

# University Studies

Any student thinking of going to university needs to consider their KS5 pathway. Some university courses have specific entry requirements, so research is needed to ensure that the decision making in Year 11 allows progression to the chosen university or degree. The links below will help you to make those informed decisions.

[Higher Horizons+](#) are part of the Uni Connect Programme, funded by the Government to deliver free and impartial higher education outreach to schools and colleges across Staffordshire. They have resources available for students, parents and carers, which include, the benefits of university, tips on your UCAS application and personal statement, and the facts about student finance.

The [Russell Group](#) is a collection of the twenty-four highest ranking universities in the UK. They maintain the very best research, an outstanding teaching and learning experience and unrivalled links with local and national business and the public sector.

[UCAS](#) support young people making post-16 choices, as well as those applying for undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

## Local Universities

- [University of Chester](#)
- [University of Derby](#)
- [Keele University](#)
- [Manchester Metropolitan University](#)
- [Staffordshire University](#)
- [University of Wolverhampton](#)