

Meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks in a Gloucestershire 11-16 school

Joyce Rendell

Thomas Keble School

At Thomas Keble School we have worked hard over the last six years to transform Careers Education which, in 2014, was recognised by Ofsted as 'outstanding'. By so doing we have managed to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks and the Careers strategy vision through the Careers Mark Quality Award which has been awarded to us twice. The entire careers programme has been mapped against the Gatsby Benchmarks to show how we achieve them. I have outlined our programme which may be helpful to those of you hoping to build on your own school careers programme with Gatsby in mind.

We have focused on a curriculum for Yrs 7-11 with our careers education embedded into the tutorial work. I devise the schemes of work and produce all of the materials for tutors to use with their tutor groups. We regularly evaluate our work through both staff voice and student voice and respond positively to ensure that we meet the needs of all students.

To ensure that all staff realise the importance of Careers Education and their own responsibilities towards careers, whole staff training has been held as part of CPD. From the small beginnings of a staff working party who designed a range of careers materials we now have departments who run their own careers events such as the PE department who hold annual 'Careers in Sport' sessions with a host of different providers talking to students about the opportunities that are open to them in sport and how to achieve these aspirations. Our Modern languages department hold an event with local businesses encouraging students to consider the importance of languages before they make their GCSE choices. Other departments embed careers into their lessons with reference to a range of jobs linked to their subject as well as visiting speakers and theatre groups who talk about their jobs. A whole school audit has been completed which maps careers within the school curriculum.

We make every effort to enhance the Careers Education with additional activities to ensure that careers education remains foremost in the minds of all students. Our employer networks are crucial and, although we are 11-16 school with 750 students we have over 150+ employers who support us with events.

We hold annual Careers Week activities, with the help of our Careers Ambassadors from Year 9, whereby a host of local employers visit the school during the week, set up their stalls. All KS4 students are given the opportunity to chat in depth to employers during their lessons. This is followed up with KS3 students being given the opportunity to chat to the employers during lunch time. Alongside this I lead KS3 and KS4 assemblies based on careers as well as the latest LMI information. Careers Week is a highly successful event and we end with an Apprenticeship Fair targeting Year 9 as an introduction to their options procedure. As part of Careers Week Yr 7 invite local employers/employees into school and hold their own '**Name that Job**'.

Drop down days are invaluable and help us to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks. We have Year 8 who work on '**The Real Game-The Next Generation**' which we have designed ourselves based on the more widely known version but ensuring that it meets the needs of all students. Year 9 have careers lessons leading up to and during the option procedure including a visit to our local

and very large **Ambitions Fair** which targets all Yr 9 students within the local area. This is followed up with impartial advice to Year 9 from the Careers Adviser.

In Yr 10 we hold a day entitled '**Ask the Professional**' whereby a large number of employers are happy to be asked lots of prepared questions by the students within a speed dating arrangement. This is followed up by a **Post 16 Evening** event whereby many Post 16 providers from near and far, come into school for students and their parents to chat to. Four workshops run throughout the evening for parents to opt into. At the end of Year 10 students are given '**Taster Days**' at local colleges/6th form centres prior to their week of **Work Experience** which is organised by themselves and could be anywhere in the world.

At the beginning of Yr 11 we hold a '**Life after Thomas Keble**' day with mock interviews for all, the opportunity to write a professional CV and personal statement, the chance to find out about how to make college and apprenticeship applications and the opportunity to find out from Santander how to manage money after the age of 16. Pre and post evaluations are completed for each event by students and staff which helps us to plan for the future. All local Post 16 providers then speak in a number of assemblies about what they are able to offer Post 16. In addition students are issued with a very informative booklet outlining all the local providers and their Open Days. This is also made available through our website. Destination data is important to us and we carefully track applications made to colleges as well as the final destinations. These records are maintained to help us work with past students and follow their years after leaving us.

The role of the Careers Adviser is vital within our careers programme to provide personal and impartial guidance to satisfy one of the benchmarks. Our Careers Advisor visits for one whole day each week to conduct interviews with students primarily in Yr 11 but with additional drop in sessions for anyone who wants impartial advice. In addition the Advisor is an integral part of the careers team taking part in each drop down day as well as helping to plan and resource the day.

I am also lucky enough to be able to work with the school receptionist who coordinates all the local employers who come into school as well as the work experience programme for all Yr 10 students as well as the drop in sessions held during lunch times with our larger local employers. A team of people is vital to help a school achieve the Gatsby benchmarks.

It is vital that we address the needs of each student. We achieve this with a range of different strategies such as special careers adviser 1-1 meetings with a TA in attendance, taking students to the local college to introduce them to the new surroundings and plan for them to do a series of lessons there, making sure that our pupil premium students are organised on suitable courses after they leave us and have additional 1-1 meetings. Consequently for the past four years we have 0% NEET.

To enable such a comprehensive careers programme to take place it is vital that the school management team are supportive of the range of events that take place and recognise that the Gatsby benchmarks are the basic framework around which to build as well as being 'equality of opportunity' (*The Rt Hon Anne Milton MP*). Governors are kept fully informed of all D of E publications and how careers education is thriving within the Gatsby benchmarks. We are now viewed as a leader of Careers education within Gloucestershire.

Joyce Rendell

jrendell@thomaskeble.gloucs.sch.uk