

Thames Valley School

Careers Strategy & Action Plan

Academic Year 25/26

Purpose

This strategy outlines our whole school approach to delivering careers guidance to all students throughout their journey at Thames Valley School.

Our careers curriculum uses the Gatsby Benchmarks to ensure high-quality careers education for all students and compliance with legal duties. Within **Appendix 1** you can view how we aim to meet each Benchmark.

The efficacy of the careers curriculum is monitored by the Careers Lead and Senior Leadership Team utilising feedback from all stakeholders, e.g. students, parents, staff, external visitors and the Trust in order to make improvements as and when necessary.

Aims & Objectives

As a school, we intend to:

- Enable pupils to manage the transition from school to adult and working life effectively, developing knowledge and understanding of the world, employment and career opportunities.
- Provide impartial advice and guidance of different options available.
- Provide learning opportunities appropriate to the student's stage of career learning, planning and development.
- Provide opportunities across the curriculum to develop transferrable life and social skills.
- Promote equality, social mobility and challenge stereotypes through purposeful interactions with a range of familiar adults, as well as employers

We aim for our students to:

- Build confidence in their identity
- Recognise their interests and abilities
- Develop soft and transferable skills across the curriculum
- Access opportunities to practice and generalise skills
- Understand the benefits of a work-life balance and how this impacts mental health and wellbeing
- Develop their resilience and learn to manage setbacks
- Make their own choices, given information about a full range of post-16 education and training opportunities.

At Thames Valley School, we take a whole school approach to careers through our school curriculum. This is provided through an integrated and holistic approach. Throughout their journey at Thames Valley School, students receive the following careers related support and are provided with opportunities to participate within related activities.

Whole School

- Life skills lessons - work related tasks/topics, personal safety, problem solving, handling money
- Tutor time activities
- National careers week
- Themed curriculum events each academic year such as British Science Week
- Careers lessons which incorporate development of soft skills
- Industry specific visits and guest speakers - throughout the year
- Person centered planning sessions through key workers
- Quality of Life
- PSHE Lessons
- Cross - curriculum links - subject teachers build careers education and guidance into subjects across the curriculum
- Whole school assemblies

Key Stage 3

- UniFrog - a specially designed profiling tool enabling pupils from the age of 11 to identify their core interests and make informed decisions about their next steps after school
- Skills Builder framework - Breaking down 8 skills (listening, speaking, problem solving, creativity, adapting, planning, leadership and teamwork) into a sequence of steps, supporting pupils personal development. It takes soft skills and puts rigor behind them.
 - Community and workplace visits
 - Preparation for Adulthood
 - Tailored group work sessions with carers advisors
 - Employer encounters across curriculum lessons
 - Personal Development lessons
 - GCSE / Qualification Options Evenings and resources

Key Stage 4

- UniFrog -As pupils enter Key Stage 4 more options become available on the platform. Pupils will be able to create their CV, review post 16 intentions, research current apprenticeships, access the careers and subject library, take part in virtual work experiences and choose mini courses in career options such as Engineering, medicine and criminology.
- 1:1 career guidance with a career's advisor - where information is gathered about the pupil's interests, likes and dislikes. Future Smart Careers then create a report and signpost the various different provisions available in their local authority
- Community and workplace visits
- Where appropriate pupils will have the opportunity to attend a weeks work experience
- Post-16 options parents meetings
- Transition support as required
- Post-16 visits to a range of destinations

Delivery

All staff contribute to the delivery of careers education at Thames Valley School, providing opportunities to learn or practice work-related skills. This allows students to generalise their learning across the curriculum.

We have a recognised Careers Lead who is responsible for leading the planning and implementation of our careers education that achieves the Gatsby Benchmarks, with the support of the senior leadership team, transdisciplinary team and teaching staff.

A collaborative approach is used in planning stages, ensuring that all stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to the process. A support network built around the child by parents, staff, the local authority and other services is vital to ensuring informed decisions are made and successful transitions occur.

Teaching staff plan, deliver and support career exploration during lessons, providing information about how their subjects link to different career pathways.

The Transdisciplinary Team provide opportunities to develop soft skills, through individual, group and whole class sessions. This entails providing opportunities for open discussion alongside planned teaching delivered during tutor times, personal development, life skills and quality of life sessions.

Alongside the curriculum delivered in school, it is important to develop appropriate and effective partnerships with relevant individuals/organisations to provide holistic careers education and guidance.

These partnerships involve matching the needs of the individual student to meaningful and relevant encounters with individuals/organisations.

As part of this, Thames Valley School commissions external, qualified and independent careers advice, which allows development of career action plans to aid learners in their career planning and decision making.

Parents are an important part of the school community and are vital to their child's successful transition to the next stage of their education/career journey. As such, parents are included and involved in the process through annual reviews, coffee mornings and other school events, support to arrange and attend visits to further education provisions/workplaces, as well as being provided with access to careers information, advice and guidance.

Appendix 1: The Gatsby Benchmarks

Benchmark	Summary	How we meet this
1. A stable careers programme	Every school should have an embedded programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, employers and other agencies.	<p>At Thames Valley School, Careers Education is an exciting part of our curriculum, delivered through tailored lessons across three half terms. Our programme is crafted using resources from Unifrog, the PSHE Association, Jigsaw, and Skills Builder, while also incorporating the Autistic Education Trust's preparation for adulthood outcomes.</p> <p>A summary of our careers programme is:</p> <p>Year 7: Discover the diverse world of employment and essential job skills.</p> <p>Year 8: Explore work-life behaviours and challenge gender stereotypes.</p> <p>Year 9: Dive into finance and labour market information.</p> <p>Year 10: Master the art of CV writing and explore post-16 choices.</p> <p>Year 11: Hone your interview skills and navigate post-16 options.</p> <p>We keep everyone in the loop by publishing our careers programme in the school's Newsflash, ensuring that all are aware of the exciting topics being taught.</p>
2. Learning from career and Labour market information	All pupils, parents and carers, teachers and staff who support pupils should have access to good-quality, up-to-date information about future pathways, study options and	<p>We provide opportunities for students to access the 'Careers library', which contains current local and national LMI data. This could be during lessons or on a 1:1.</p> <p>The school has access to an Enterprise Adviser as part of our collaboration with the Berkshire Careers Hub. The advisor will be able to source information relevant to LMI.</p>

	<p>labour market opportunities. All pupils will need the support of an informed advisor to make the best use of available information.</p>	<p>Through Unifrog we offer a Parent Pack to introduce the platform to parents. During parent evenings and events, parents and carers have the opportunity to meet with the schools careers lead to discuss the support for their child.</p> <p>Key lessons will support the teaching about labour market opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 7 Different types of employment and employment skills • Year 8 Work life behaviours and gender stereotypes • Year 9 Finance and labour market information • Year 10 CV writing workshop and post-16 choices • Year 11 Budgeting and interview skills <p>Pupils will have the opportunity to attend career fairs where they will be able to meet local employers and apprentice providers to find out about careers/current opportunities</p>
<p>3. Addressing the needs of each young person</p>	<p>Pupils have different careers guidance needs at different stages. Careers programmes should help pupils navigate their concerns about any barriers to career progression.</p>	<p>Key lessons will help pupils challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations include:</p> <p>Year 7: Exploring possibilities: dream jobs</p> <p>Year 8: Creating the life you want</p> <p>Year 9: Taking control of your career journey</p> <p>Year 10: What type of career is best for me</p> <p>Year 11: What are my employability skills</p> <p>Pupils have access to impartial and qualified careers advisors.</p> <p>Pupils in Year 9 – 11 participate in 1:1 meeting with their key worker to discuss their</p>

		<p>choices for the next stage of their academic journey. This is tailored to each pupil based on their requirements and aspirations.</p> <p>At Thames Valley School our Quality of Life framework is delivered through weekly Life Skills lessons and keyworker sessions, these consider the wider skills pupils need to develop in order to access their future goals.</p> <p>Yearly annual reviews consider the 'Preparation for Adulthood' outcomes pupils are developing as they work towards life after school.</p> <p>Use the Psychometric testing tools to build a picture of students' needs.</p>
<p>4. Linking curriculum learning to careers</p>	<p>As part of the school's programme of careers, all teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. Subject teachers should highlight the progression routes for their subjects and relevance of the knowledge and skills developed in their subject for a wide range of career pathways.</p>	<p>All subject departments have specific resources that link their subject to careers. This is also referenced when supporting our pupils to choose their 'options' as they move into KS4 and post 16.</p> <p>We host themed subject events throughout the year, ensuring we link these subjects back to careers within that field.</p> <p>Each academic year pupils undertake an enterprise unit expanding their understanding of the world of work.</p> <p>All staff will have had training on Unifrog and have access to the careers library to support their subject and engaging discussions with pupils.</p> <p>All teachers understand their role in embedding careers in their subject, and they can link curriculum learning to careers confidently in their everyday teaching.</p>

<p>5. Encounters with employers and employees</p>	<p>Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace.</p>	<p>Speakers for Schools is an organization with strong ties to our school, offering students workshops, virtual employee encounters, and assemblies.</p> <p>When students go on offsite trips, we often include a Q&A session in the itinerary, giving them the chance to learn about the work, employment, and valued skills in that workplace.</p> <p>With the launch of Unifrog, students can sign up for upcoming webinars hosted by employers, providing even more opportunities to connect with the world of work.</p> <p>Supported by our school's career governor, TVS is building valuable links with businesses that support career initiatives, including Thames Water and Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK).</p> <p>Throughout the academic year, students will have the chance to participate in career days, especially during Careers Week in the Spring term.</p> <p>Mock interviews are integrated into various parts of the curriculum, such as English, Life Skills, PSHE, and key worker sessions, ensuring students are well-prepared for their future careers.</p>
<p>6. Experiences of workplaces</p>	<p>Every pupil should have firsthand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and</p>	<p>We are currently establishing links with Thames Water and Morgan Lovell to provide a range of opportunities for our pupils.</p>

	<p>expand their networks.</p>	<p>Year 10 pupils will have the chance to participate in a week-long work experience during the summer term, where appropriate.</p> <p>To ensure they are well-prepared, pupils will attend key lessons focused on work experience preparation and will create a work journal to document and reflect on their experiences.</p>
<p>7. Encounters with further and higher education</p>	<p>All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including academic, technical, and vocational routes.</p>	<p>Opportunities for college Open Days are identified and promoted in the school's newsletter.</p> <p>Year 10 and 11 pupils will be supported in visiting local college providers and participating in transition visits.</p> <p>Local colleges will be invited to TVS to meet with pupils and assist them with their interview process.</p> <p>Where applicable, TVS staff can support pupils with their college applications and interviews.</p> <p>Year 11 pupils will have learning opportunities during their careers lessons on 'Post 16 Choices, Choices' and 'Decision Making: Choosing Your Post 16 Pathway.'</p> <p>Pupils can also attend the online University Fair to hear directly from, and interact with, a range of universities.</p>
<p>8. Personal Guidance</p>	<p>Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance meetings with a careers advisor.</p>	<p>KS4 pupils have 1:1 career advises with a qualified advisor.</p> <p>All Year 8 pupils participate in an options awareness session with either their key worker or form tutor before selecting their</p>

		<p>GCSE/Foundation options. TVS also hosts a Year 8 options evening for parents/carers to attend so all are informed and supporting the pupils.</p> <p>Life skills and career lessons provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their future plans and intentions.</p> <p>Key worker sessions and the Quality of Life framework focus on the 'preparation for adulthood' that pupils need to become successful citizens.</p> <p>From Year 9 onwards, pupils' annual reviews consider the individualized support they require to effectively prepare for their next steps. These reviews are created collaboratively with pupils, parents, and staff.</p>
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