

Sawtry Village Academy

Careers Strategy

2026-27



Sawtry Village
Academy

Introduction

Careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is an essential part of the support we offer to students at Sawtry Village academy. Effective careers support can help to prepare young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life; it can help them to make decisions and manage transitions as learners and workers. As options for young people become more varied and complex, it is vital that we support them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to make informed choices for their future. We recognise the importance of this, and it underpins our vision for CEIAG at Sawtry Village Academy.

Objectives

- To deliver high quality careers education that meets and often exceeds, the provision required for the 8 benchmarks for good career guidance as identified by the Gatsby Foundation
- To maintain 'The Quality in Careers Standard' accreditation, the nationally recognised award for CEIAG in English Secondary Schools. This was achieved in 2023 and is due for re-accreditation shortly in September 2026.

Careers Guidance

Careers guidance must include information on all 16-18 education or training options, including Apprenticeships and T-Levels. Most people spend many years of their life in a working environment, and it is important to equip our students with the necessary skills for them to career plan and know how and where to access impartial and unbiased information.

Sawtry Village Academy has built strong links with outside agencies and is working to foster further links with universities and colleges and local businesses which contribute to:

- Raising aspirations and increasing motivation – helping young people to identify educational and occupational goals
- Demonstrating the relevance of the knowledge and the skills learnt in subjects to future opportunities in learning and working
- Developing the skills for effective learning – reviewing achievements, setting targets, planning and taking action
- Demonstrating the links between living, learning and earning
- Improving literacy – developing information and communication skills
- Improving progression
- Reducing NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training)
- Careers work also supports strategies for student's personal and social development by:
 - ✓ Building self-confidence and self-reliance
 - ✓ Promoting positive and informed attitudes to learning
 - ✓ Promoting leadership, organisation, resilience and initiative
 - ✓ Developing good communication skills

We have a well-developed and effective work experience program for year 10 students and 99% of students make progress into further education, employment or training.

Our work experience program

Work experience takes place at the end of year 10, and students are encouraged to find their own work placements for a week, with guidance from the CEIAG team. The opportunity for students to have a meaningful

experience of the workplace is hugely important, raising their aspirations and giving them greater insight into what life is like after school. This work experience is vital in:

- Students spending an extended period in a setting unfamiliar to them
- Students gaining and developing skills such as team working, independence, using their initiative and improving their communication skills
- Helping clarify their choices for their Post 16 destinations.

Unifrog

“We bring all the available information into one comprehensive, user-friendly platform that helps students make the best choices, and submit the strongest applications”. (Unifrog website)

Students are introduced to Unifrog in Year 7, where they start to explore potential career ideas based on their interests, strengths and aspirations. Unifrog will document the journey a student takes throughout their time at SVA and will help them make the best applications for University or explore apprenticeships at the end of their school journey.

The number of encounters our students have with employers and Universities

Every 2 years we host a careers fair at the school, and all year groups from 8-13 attend. A wide range of local businesses attend alongside colleges and further educational establishments.

Significant time is spent in Year 8 looking at Guided Pathways, ensuring students access the best route through KS4 in order to access careers of choice. Disadvantaged students have access to a trained careers advisor to help them to start thinking about the future plans.

In KS4 students have access to a dedicated careers advisor for advice and guidance and often access visits to off-site careers events. We explore opportunities for sixth form study at SVA by holding taster days, and signpost opportunities to attend open days at local colleges.

We have been proud to work with local business eg attending a day event championing women in construction through Urban & Civic, and bringing employers into school to inspire students wishing to pursue potential careers.

At KS4 and 5 we take students to visit Universities across the region and beyond. In KS5 we assist with UCAS applications to ensure students get the best chance with their options. We have a work shadowing week in Year 12 and work closely with our ever increasing alumni, and apprenticeship providers in the local area.

Throughout all years a comprehensive PSHE programme also delivers advice and guidance in structured lessons, giving students the chance to explore different pathways

Gatsby Foundation 8 Benchmarks

The Gatsby Foundation was set up to work in areas that the trustees of the foundation are passionate about. One of these is Education and as part of that good careers guidance in schools. In 2013 the foundation commissioned Sir John Holman, a Professor of Chemistry at the University of York, senior education adviser and former headteacher, with setting out what career guidance in England would be like were it good by international standards. His report identified 8 benchmarks that schools should work towards to improve and deliver high quality CEIAG provision.

Current analysis against the Gatsby Foundation benchmarks

The Gatsby Foundation provide a tool that allows us to see how the provision of CEIAG at Sawtry Village Academy compares against these benchmarks.

There is not yet a published national 2025/26 benchmark-by-benchmark dataset

Revised Gatsby Benchmarks were introduced for implementation from **September 2025**, so **2025/26 is the first academic year measured against the new framework**.

Figures will be updated when available.

Gatsby Benchmark	Detail	Current Attainment	National comparison
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.	100%	
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 labour market opportunities. Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents and carers may require different or additional information. All pupils will need the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information.	100%	
3 - Addressing the needs of each young person	Pupils have different careers guidance needs at different stages. Careers programmes should help pupils navigate their concerns about any barriers to career progression. In addition, opportunities should be tailored to the needs of each pupil, including any additional needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, young people with SEND and those who are absent.	95%	
4 - Linking curriculum learning to careers	As part of the school's programme of careers education, all teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. Subject teachers should highlight the progression routes for their subject and the relevance of the knowledge and skills developed in their subject for a wide range of career pathways.	94%	
5 - Encounters with employers and employees	Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment opportunities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, and could include pupils' own part-time employment where it exists.	100%	
6 – Experiences of workplaces	Every learner should have first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.	100%	
7 - Encounters with further and higher education	All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including academic, technical and vocational routes. This should incorporate learning in schools, colleges, independent training providers (ITPs), universities and in the workplace.	94%	
8 - Personal guidance	Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance meetings with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These meetings should be available for all pupils whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be scheduled to meet their individual needs. The careers leader should work closely with the careers adviser, SEND coordinator and other key staff to ensure personal guidance is effective and embedded in the careers programme	85%	

Areas for further development

- Develop further the knowledge of the wider staff in the College around the Gatsby Benchmarks
- Develop a clearer understanding of how KS3 students can have more experiences of the workplace
- Consider how parental engagement with careers could be developed further, by working closely with the Meridian trust CEIAG committee
- Enhance further the links with other education providers and the Local Authority
- Develop the use of Unifrog to track interactions and to collect student feedback
- Develop further the Sawtry alumni network so they, and their expertise, can form part of the careers provision and 'give back' to the college