



**The Quality in Careers Standard National Quality Award for Careers Education,
Information, Advice and Guidance Provision Assessor Report.**

Learning Provider: Carmel College, St Helens.
Named Contact: Jo Billington, Careers Manager.
Assessor: Kath Wyke, Assessor, Career Connect.

Final Assessment Visit – 2.7.24

Joanne Billington – Careers Manager
Julie Saunders – Work Experience Coordinator
Liz Walls – Assistant Principal
Sam Johnstone – Pastoral Director
Keiron O’Sullivan – University of Liverpool
Group of Students

Carmel College is a Catholic sixth-form college located in St Helens, Merseyside. The college accepts students from all faiths and backgrounds who meet their entry requirements. The college provides 16 to 19 study programmes, mainly through A-level programmes, with a small amount of vocational provision. There are approximately 2,000 students enrolled at the college. The vast majority of students are on programmes at level 3, with a few studying an art foundation course at level 4. A small number of students with high needs are enrolled on foundation courses at entry level and level 1. Approximately 2/3 of students progress on to higher education destinations.

Commentary:

Through the submission of a comprehensive portfolio of evidence, the detailed final assessment visit to the College and the latest Compass Self-Assessment report Carmel College have demonstrated that they are fully meeting all the accreditation criteria incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks for the Quality in Careers Standard.

GB1 and QC Requirements: A Stable (structured) Careers Programme

Carmel College have provided up to date and relevant evidence for the BM1 criterion; this includes a comprehensive Careers Programme which is signed off by SLT and Governors. The Careers Programme has benefitted from an online evaluation and monitoring process which has included the views of students, employers, tutors, and parents/carers. There is also evidence of Learning Walks. Whilst reviewing the Careers programme the Careers Team have taken account of trends in Destination Data, the needs of learners and what is happening in the Labour Market, locally, regionally, and nationally.

Evidence provided confirms the College’s commitment to providing high quality CEIAG for the students: Provider Access Legislation is adhered to and the relevant policies: Careers and Equality and Diversity Policy are shared with staff and published on the College’s new website along with information for students, tutors, employers, and parents/carers.

The Management Chart clearly outlines roles and responsibilities, demonstrating a coordinated approach to CEIAG across the College. There is a link Governor with responsibility for Careers and is well briefed by Liz Wall, Careers SLT lead and Joanne Billington, Careers Manager, on her responsibilities and how she can continue to support the College effectively. Katheryn White is the Enterprise Coordinator based with the LCR Careers Hub. There is commitment for Careers from the Board of Governors who receive regular reports on Careers provision and destinations of students who have left the College (evidence provided in the portfolio). The SLT lead for Careers, Liz Wall line manages Joanne Billington; they meet regularly. Joanne Billington the Careers Manager completed the accredited Careers Leaders Qualification in 2022. The College benefits from several fully qualified Careers Advisers who hold a Level 6 qualification.

A Careers Management Structure is available in the portfolio showing clear lines of accountability through to the SLT.

There are up to date and relevant CEIAG resources appropriate to the needs of the students who have access to online College systems. Jo works closely with Julie Saunders, the Work Experience Coordinator.

The Careers Programme is separated in to 2 distinct programmes – High Achievers (Based on a Grades points average) and the Tutorial Programme. There is a defined budget for Careers activities.

Programmes are delivered by personal tutors:

- 10 Personal Tutors – 5 for each year group.
- 1 Qualified: Year 12: is L4 qualified and Year 13 working towards L6.

There is evidence of CDP for all staff involved in the delivery of CEIAG at the College and a recent Audit of Careers delivery across the curriculum is completed on an annual basis to further inform the Careers Programme review processes. All staff receive LMI and UCAS update sessions as part of their CPD to assist in the delivery of CEIAG through the curriculum. There is an effective system to identify staff training needs, a PDR system and staff booking form process. There is evidence in the portfolio of careers lessons with clear learning objectives and outcomes, schemes of work are available in the evidence portfolio, these schemes of work are updated every year as part of the wider Careers Programme review processes. The CEIAG programme is mapped against the Gatsby benchmarks. There is evidence of evaluation by students, parents and staff providing feedback on the CEIAG provision.

The college provides information for parents via their website and a series of talks for parents via webinars, including talks on the UCAS process and higher level apprenticeships, both these talks were attended by over 200 parents and feedback from parents was very positive.

At the assessment visit students were able to talk confidently about the support they have received from the college to prepare them for progression, they had all taken part in a range of activities and had clear aims for when they leave college. All the students were aware of the progression routes open to them, including university, apprenticeships and employment. The students also confirmed their use of the Unifrog Careers resource and were positive about how this has helped support their own research into progression routes.

Strengths:

The commitment to Career Development for students is evident, there is clear commitment from SLT, the Board of Governors, the Careers Manager and the wider CEIAG Team. CEIAG provision is well resourced and benefits from a regular review process to ensure that it is relevant and effective to the needs of all stakeholders. The College has recently produced the Carmel College Accountability Plan which details how the curriculum contributes towards meeting national, regional, and local skills needs. In addition, the Careers Manager has mapped how the College responds to Gatsby. The College has also provided their Sixth Sense Report which provides an analysis of A level retention, progress and destinations and their NEET Strategy.

Carmel College took part in an Ofsted CEIAG Research Project in May 2024: this included a series of interviews and focus groups to examine how CEIAG works in collaboration, the management of CEIAG, Transition Support and the effectiveness of CEIAG.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio and the latest Compass SEF, the assessor is confident that Carmel College has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 1.

SUGGESTED ACTION: Still developing the Careers area of the new website. There is a new Link Governor for Careers – Joanne Billington will schedule regular meetings.

GB2: Learning from Careers and the Labour Market

The CEIAG programme provides clear evidence that the following areas are covered:

- *Personal Effectiveness*
- *Career Readiness*
- *Career exploration and development*
- *Employability and enterprise skills*
- *Career management*

The College has a wide ranging and inclusive CEIAG programme in place for students covering all the areas detailed above. The College encourages all students to access Unifrog which serves to support the effective delivery of CEIAG including LMI. Students also have access to the LCR Combined Authority BeMore website, at the assessment visit the students confirmed their use of these web-based support systems. The College are a member of the Liverpool City Region Careers Hub and the Careers Leader attends regular inputs around the local labour market and the growth areas in the city region and is also an active member of the LCR FE Community of Practice. The Careers Hub also provides resources to support the delivery of LMI linked Careers activities in school e.g. information on apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships, T levels etc. LCR BeMore portal provides a variety of LMI short films and support. The College have an Enterprise Adviser via the Careers Hub. All staff receive annual CPD on LMI and the careers programme is supported by a range of speakers both virtual and in person. There is an annual Universities and Employers Fair in the Spring at the College with representation from over 50 local employers and universities. The visiting speakers are provided with evaluation forms to further inform future events.

Student benefit from a wide range of resources to support their own Careers research/pathways. The College is fully compliant with Provider Access Legislation (January 2023), there is evidence of the wide range of visitors, including providers.

Strengths:

A comprehensive CEIAG programme which is regularly monitored. Students engage well with Uni-Frog and the range of CEIAG mechanisms the College provides. The College are fully committed to involvement with the LCR Careers Hub. The College also use Alumni using past students visits effectively to engage with current learners.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio and the latest Compass SEF the assessor is confident that Carmel College has fully achieved this benchmark.

SUGGESTED ACTION: No areas for development – the College should ensure that they are linked with a new Enterprise Adviser when one becomes available to further enhance the employer links.

GB3: Addressing the needs of each student:

The College has provided a range of evidence to illustrate how they ensure the needs of all students are met. The Careers Manager and the Careers Team prioritises access to Careers Guidance interviews to ensure that students with additional needs or are at risk of becoming NEET have early access to one-to-one guidance support. There is a Work Experience Coordinator who supports students with Pathway plans. SEND Students are supported with transition and visits to learning providers and contact with the local authority SEND Team, particularly around applications to specialist provision.

The College works hard to raise the aspirations of all students; most students apply to university and that is their destination; however, there is clear evidence of support for apprenticeship routes, T levels and employment. The group of students confirmed this at the final assessment visit, all of them were aware of the range of progression routes open to them.

The discussion with the Pastoral Director Sam Johnstone at the final assessment visit confirmed the support provided for

students who are identified as having difficulties. The students receive 2 x 1:1 interviews per year with their PAT and these focus on wellbeing, performance and attainment and their careers aspirations.

Destination Data is used effectively to identify trends. Analysis identifies university visits in the future (broad and wide). Social Mobility is an important consideration at Carmel College and students are engaged with a wide range of programmes.

The College as an Equality and Diversity policy in place, and there are data sharing agreements in place to ensure relevant information on vulnerable students is shared with partners and providers. All students have access to a fully qualified Careers Adviser for a one-to-one interview and are provided with a written record of the discussion/action plan.

Strengths: The Careers Team provides support for all students, the activities, and services they provide are very visible to students; their work is embedded in all support processes across the College. This includes attendance at review meetings for vulnerable learners.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio, the detailed assessment visit and the latest Compass SEF, the assessor is confident that Carmel College has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 3.

SUGGESTED ACTION: None.

GB 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers:

This is well evidenced in the portfolio. The College also use employer encounters to challenge stereotyping and raise aspirations. CPD on the delivery of Careers via subjects is evidenced in the portfolio and tutors have completed an Audit to monitor and identify any gaps in knowledge. Tutors can access LMI resources to ensure they are aware of the local opportunity structure and areas of growth. At the assessment visit the students were able to talk about how the curriculum they were studying was linked to Careers.

Strengths: The curriculum areas that have careers built into them use a range of visiting speakers and employer visits to support their subject teaching; they record all external visits on the College systems and tutors receive prompts if they haven't completed this process.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio, assessment meetings and the latest COMPASS SEF, the assessor is confident that Carmel College has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 4.

SUGGESTED ACTION: Continue the Curriculum Audit process to further inform developments, share practice and identify any gaps. The college have identified that they need to increase the knowledge of Department Heads on apprenticeships and this is being prioritised for next year.

GB 5: Encounters with Employers and Employees:

There is a wide range of evidence that the College are meeting this benchmark with a range of employer and employee encounters included as part of the CEIAG programme for students. The programme includes an annual Universities and Employers Fair and the annual Careers Fair, which includes a range of local employer representatives and education pathway representatives. The College positively promotes work experience opportunities for students. At the assessment visit the conversation with the Work Experience coordinator confirmed the colleges commitment to ensuring that students have a range of meaningful encounters with employers and employees link to their areas of study. There is a wide range of opportunities to find out about a range of routes/sectors. At the assessment visit the Students confirmed their attendance at a range of employer events including the Careers Fair, mock interviews, and external employer events. All Curriculum areas have careers and employer encounters built into them, in addition to employer visits and contact with positive role models. As part of the assessment visit the assessor spoke with Keiran O'Sullivan from the University of Liverpool – he is head of recruitment and supports the Careers Department as a critical friend.

Strengths: The College has an effective relationship with employers and students engage well with employer encounter

activities; this is evidenced in the portfolio. The College demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that a range of encounters are experienced by students.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio, assessment meetings and the latest COMPASS SEF, the assessor is confident that Carmel College has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 5.

SUGGESTED ACTION: No areas for development, the College prepares students well to take part in activities and to ensure they get the maximum benefit from the opportunities with employers.

GB 6: Experiences of the Workplace:

There is a dedicated Work Experience Coordinator, Julie Saunders who works closely with Jo Billington, the Careers Manager. Students are encouraged to seek out work experience opportunities and support is provided for self-sourced placements. The College provides a wide range of opportunities for students to take part in employer visits where possible. All experiences of the workplace are recorded and inform student profiles. Students undertaking vocational subjects all take part in work experience and the college is ensuring that students who are studying the new T Levels from September will have work experience built into their study programme. Examples include Spanish students going on work experience in Spain, and medics and vets link to work placements.

Strengths: The College positively encourage and support students with work experience opportunities.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio, assessment meetings and the latest COMPASS SEF, the assessor is confident that Carmel College has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 6.

SUGGESTED ACTION: the college Work Experience Coordinator confirmed that the college want to increase the visibility of employability skills, and they are hoping to develop an Employability Hub and are currently working with the Student Council to develop this.

GB 7: Encounters with Further and Higher Education:

The College have a wide range of evidence to demonstrate that they are meeting this benchmark, they provide a range of local colleges and university visits and speakers.

Uni-Frog system provides a seamless interface with UCAS for students applying to university. The SENCO confirmed that pupils with an EHCP are supported to visit local colleges to support their progression from school to specialist provision where appropriate. The school has well established links to local, regional, and national universities and they provide access to speakers (both virtual and in person). Students are well supported with university visits and comprehensive support for applications to universities. The College also provides students with information about apprenticeships and Higher and Degree apprenticeships and T levels as part of the CEIAG programme.

Strengths: The support provided to students to access encounters with the HE sector, through visits, and speakers from local universities is exceptional. It helps to raise the aspirations of all students and prepares them well for their future pathways. The college has very close links with local Universities, particularly with the University of Liverpool and Keiran O'Sullivan head of recruitment acts as a critical friend to the Careers Department. All of the students who spoke to the assessor talked in depth about how well they were supported in applying to HE, and all of them had taken part in various visits to universities and specific Departments. The students were also able to talk confidently about Degree apprenticeships and some had taken part in a session in Manchester linked to law.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio, assessment meetings and the latest COMPASS SEF, the assessor is confident that Carmel College has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 7.

SUGGESTED ACTION: No areas for development. Continue to involve local colleges and universities in a range of activities to support the CEIAG programme.

GB 8: Personal Guidance:

Carmel College benefits from several level 6 Careers Guidance qualified staff, led by Jo Billington, the Careers Manager.

Jo also works closely with Julie Saunders, the Work Experience Coordinator who has almost completed her level 6 Guidance qualification with Career Connect. also works with Laura Grigsby, the Enterprise Coordinator, from Elevate EBP, part of the LCR Careers Hub.

All students have access to a guidance interview with a Careers Adviser and are provided with an individual Action Plan, student records are kept on Uni-Frog. The Careers Team work with SEND students who are prioritised for guidance interviews. The Careers Manager, Jo Billington takes an active role in the LCR Careers Hub and attends events and sharing of good practice across the Hub. The Careers Manager ensures that students can provide feedback on their guidance interview experiences to further inform and improve the student experience.

Strengths: The Careers Team are committed to providing excellent CEIAG across the College. Jo and her team have developed effective, accessible, and embedded CEIAG for all students.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio, assessment meetings and the latest COMPASS SEF, the assessor is confident that Carmel College has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 8.

SUGGESTED ACTION: Continue to access any funded training via the Careers and Enterprise Company for the Careers Team.

Further Comments from Career Connect as a Licensed Awarding Body for the Quality in Careers Standard.

The College takes the delivery of comprehensive CEIAG very seriously, there is clear commitment from the SLT and Governors. Students are well supported and have access to an enriched programme that includes activities and experiences provided through a range of employer and FE, and HE encounters. The College continue to provide dedicated support to all students. The College is commitment to the provision of high quality CEIAG.

Signed: Kath Wyke

Career Connect Date: Thursday 20th June 2024.

Final Assessment: 2.7.24

Final Assessor: Diane Sproson

