

Careers Strategy September 2025-26



Our vision for Carlton Digby's Career Strategy

At Carlton Digby, our motto is “Together We Achieve.” We strive to support our young people in leaving school fully prepared for adulthood. Beyond merely obtaining the necessary qualifications, we want our young people to feel a sense of belonging within the community and to access the services available to them, whether that means pursuing paid employment, engaging in voluntary work, attending day services, or continuing their education.

The National Careers Strategy highlights the low levels of workplace inclusion for individuals with special needs and aims to address this issue. We welcome this focus and are committed to actively preparing our young people for future careers where appropriate, increasing their aspirations, building connections with local employers, and enhancing employability through a high-quality, innovative programme.

We also recognise that our young people have diverse abilities, needs, ambitions, and plans for life after Carlton Digby, and we aim to prepare them for these realities. Our careers programme is designed to be inclusive and relevant to all young people, focusing on the development of employability skills that encompass essential life skills such as effective communication, building healthy relationships, and fostering greater independence. These skills represent vital life goals for all our young people, regardless of whether they will transition into paid employment or independent living. By prioritising employability skills, we enrich the learning experience and fulfil Carlton Digby's vision for all our young people.

Overview of Carlton Digby's Career Strategy in relation to the Policy

The Careers Education and Guidance Policy at Carlton Digby has been designed to reflect the school's aims and current initiatives in careers education, aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks. This structured programme supports young people in understanding their interests, strengths, and areas for development in the context of work and lifelong learning. It includes a range of planned activities that use work-related scenarios to build valuable knowledge, skills, and insights, including learning from direct experiences of work, learning about work and workplace practices, and acquiring essential work skills. These skills are integrated with life skills and independent living skills, acknowledging that a successful transition to adulthood can look different for each young person.

Young people explore various career paths, training opportunities, apprenticeships, and volunteering options, while also investigating further education possibilities. They gain insight into what adulthood could look like for them in the near future and as they grow older. The goal is to ensure that when students leave Carlton Digby, they are well-prepared for adulthood—whether through employment, volunteering, further education, or active participation in the community—empowered with autonomy and a sense of ownership over their future.

Gatsby Benchmarks

This policy is written in conjunction with the requirements for the Gatsby Benchmarks:

- Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme
- Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information
- Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil
- Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers
- Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees
- Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces
- Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education
- Benchmark 8: Personal guidance

The focus of Careers Education and Guidance at Carlton Digby is to support informed choices around careers and life pathways, raise aspirations, and equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes tailored to their individual strengths and needs. The goal is to provide a foundation for lifelong learning and empowering each young person to navigate future opportunities and make meaningful contributions in ways that align with their unique abilities and aspirations.

Work experience is a key component of the educational programme at Carlton Digby, providing all young people in Years 10–13 with opportunities for external or internal work experience activities. These experiences are carefully planned and monitored by the work experience coordinator to ensure they meet the specific needs of each young person and provide meaningful insight into the world of work.

The work experience process is regularly reviewed and evaluated by staff and young people. Most external placements are supported by a member of the support staff, with the level of support tailored to each individual. Employers are encouraged to evaluate the placements and provide feedback to the work experience coordinator, which is securely retained for three years after a young person leaves school. This feedback helps to improve future practices and is incorporated into each young person's annual review process.

Other focused events include enterprise activities, whole-school "World of Work" days, and transition fairs held at the school. These events involve colleges, apprenticeship providers, supported internships, and local businesses, fully meeting the requirements of the Baker Clause.

Careers education is integrated into PSHE sessions, as outlined in the PSHE long-term planning overview, and is embedded throughout the curriculum. This is overseen by the careers lead and individual subject leaders.

The careers programme at Carlton Digby is designed to meet the needs of all young people, with differentiated outcomes, resources, and learning styles to ensure its relevance to each young person's stage of career learning and development.

Employability Whole School Overview

Semi-formal 2 and Semi-formal PFA	
Aim	<p>To prepare young people for adulthood with a focus on employability and promoting independent living and access to the community.</p> <p>Work experience, complemented by work in the community and activities within school, will be targeted at developing the range of skills needed in any workplace. This will be on an individual basis responding to specific challenges a young person is learning to overcome, or to the boundaries within which they must operate. In later years, the curriculum focuses on areas that a young person has identified as an interest in relation to the career they wish to pursue.</p>
Work Experience	<p>Semi-formal PFA: The structure of workplace experience for these young people aligns closely with that of their peers in the mainstream education system. However, we provide enhanced support to facilitate their transition into new environments. Employers will receive comprehensive briefings to equip them with the tools necessary to support young people effectively, ensuring a successful placement. This approach will be tailored on an individual basis, where possible and appropriate. Group visits to workplaces will include meaningful interactions with employees and employers, complemented by reflective classroom teaching to reinforce the learning experience. Typically work experience will take place for an extended period, up to 35 sessions throughout the year.</p> <p>Semi-formal stage 2: Young people are initially closely supported by a school staff member and a confident workplace staff with whom they have had the opportunity to get to know and trust. The young person will have a clear repetitive task to perform working alongside the supporting adult, who would be adequately equipped to help. Completion of the task is not the main aim- we are aiming to develop broader work based and personal skills. This ensures that young people have a meaningful role contributing to the success of a broader task or event, from which we hope they gain self-confidence, an idea of the value of teamwork, and practice workplace skills. Typically work experience will take place for up to 15 sessions a year.</p>
In-school enterprise experience	<p>Carlton Digby excels in delivering high-quality enterprise experiences and events, such as internal markets, coffee mornings, and supporting the running of the school. We will continue to develop this programme with a particular emphasis on engaging local employers. This collaboration will create</p>

	meaningful contacts for young people, provide opportunities for them to demonstrate their employability skills, and strengthen ties between the school and the local business community, ultimately fostering future opportunities. Reflections from these experiences will be integrated into classroom teaching to enhance young people's' learning journeys.
In-school learning	Our curriculum has been adapted to incorporate careers and employability skills throughout all subjects. Additionally, specific careers lessons have been embedded into the PSHE programme. Business representatives are invited to speak at the school to inspire young people, raise aspirations, and challenge gender stereotypes. Each young person receives coaching in CV writing and interview skills, along with opportunities for practice interviews with unfamiliar adults to build their confidence and prepare them for future employment.
Careers and transition information and guidance	We provide high-quality transition guidance through college visits and open transition mornings. Young people participate in "World of Work" days which features a variety of activities designed to facilitate access to employment. This initiative aims to raise realistic aspirations while informing young people and their families about work, volunteering, and further education opportunities. Throughout their time at school, each young person has access to an appropriately trained and impartial careers advisor. Relevant careers information and resources will be readily available within the school environment.

Pre-formal, Informal Stage 1 and Semi-formal stage 1	
Aim	For young people to develop confidence and purposeful life-skills. This builds on prior learning; understanding of teamwork and provide inclusion, whilst broadening horizons beyond school and home. Employability skills will be included in their curriculum e.g. problem-solving, teamwork, confident communication as well as specific work-based skills e.g. interviews and completing application forms etc.
Work Experience	Typically, young people within this phase of their school careers will not access external work experience.
In-school enterprise experience	Events and enterprise days are ideal opportunities for young people to develop employability skills within a safe environment supported by adults who understand their needs. Such events remain a core part of our strategy. There is a focus on reflective learning in the classroom, linking these experiences to the workplace. We use such occasions as opportunities to develop

	strategic links with local employers who may be able to provide supervised workplace participation experiences.
In-school learning	The curriculum includes enhanced workplace understanding and employability skills. Young people have the opportunity to engage in meaningful exchanges with those from the world of work (employers and employees etc.) coming into the school throughout the school year, linked to their classroom learning. Careers is, as always, embedded across the school
Careers and transition information and guidance	It is essential that discussions regarding the next steps after school are ongoing and inclusive of both parents and young people. Parents and carers will be invited to participate in transition events at the school, where they can engage in conversations with the careers lead about potential future options. These discussions will also include sharing experiences from other young people who have previously left Carlton Digby, providing valuable insights into the possibilities that lie ahead.

Informal PFA	
Aim	To empower all young people to be fully prepared for the next stage of their lives by providing experiences in diverse environments and opportunities for a varied and balanced curriculum. This curriculum focuses on preparation for adulthood, fostering independence, and promoting autonomy.
Experience of Work and Community Environments	The programme consists of one-to-one -supported trips and visits, with the impact of these experiences evaluated to allow for development in communication and acceptance of new situations and experiences. Each young person will have the opportunity to engage in a variety of work and community environments.
In-school enterprise experience	This programme will involve participation in group activities related to enterprise projects taking place within the school. The aim is to enhance communication skills, promote collaboration, and encourage participation in various activities. As with all learning opportunities, each young person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) targets will be incorporated into this process.

In-school learning	Young people will have opportunities for meaningful exchanges with individuals who support their transition into school throughout the academic year, linking these interactions to their classroom learning and workplace participation experiences.
Careers and transition information and guidance	Each young person will participate in “World of Work” days and transition events held at school incorporating suitable next steps providers such as colleges and day services. Individual transition initiative aims to support professionals who will be working with our students in the future, helping them to understand their needs. All young people, along with their parents or carers, will have access to a Careers Advisor who will provide ongoing support throughout their educational journey.

Careers Strategy Leadership & Management and whole school approach

The careers education programme is managed by the careers education team which consists of the careers leader, an external Enterprise Advisor, the work experience coordinator, and 2 supporting TA’s. The team also works with Gedling Council, The East Midlands Combined County Authority and leads a working party around careers with other local special schools.


The careers lead, with the support of the work experience coordinator, will be responsible for planning, co-ordinating, and tracking all activities to ensure fulfilment of the strategic objectives of the programme. They will also be responsible for evaluating its effectiveness with input from the class teachers, subject leaders and other stakeholders. At Carlton Digby, all staff contribute in some way to the careers education programme.

The careers’ Governor has the responsibility to monitor progress, ensure the careers programme meets OFSTED requirements, and appropriate action is taken where necessary.

Finance

The provisional budget for 25/26 £600. Below are planned activities:

Task / Objective	Funding required <small>(only numbers in these columns)</small>			Actions to be taken	Planned Impact
	Autumn	Spring	Summer		
Ensure all school leavers are prepared to leave Summer 2026 (6 leavers)			£50	Support all parents to visits/ apply for college/ day services through meetings, supporting visits (if unable to attend without support), meeting and prevising advice and guidance.	Pupils and parents are aware of what next steps are and future options. Pupils go on to successful placements and do not become NEET.
Provide transport for those unable to attend without parental support.				Support all parents to visits/ apply for college/ day services through meetings, supporting visits (if unable to attend without support), meeting and prevising advice and guidance.	Pupils and parents are aware of what next steps are and future options. Pupils go on to successful placements and do not become NEET.
Offer a transition event for parents and young people. (January 26) Provide refreshments for event.		£25		Support/ work with Ashlea to run a join transition event (venue TBC) to engage parents in post school options.	Pupils and parents are aware of what next steps are and future options. Pupils go on to successful placements and do not become NEET.
Employees to attend coffee and cake in the work of work event in school. (November 25) Provide refreshments for event.	£25			Meet with different employers/ people in employment and organise event without school.	Pupils are able to learn more about the world of work options, greater confidence talking to visitors and learning more about their likes/ dislikes.
Ensure we achieve 100% on Gatsby Benchmarks				Plan/ prepare and monitor the PFA / WOW/ Careers program being delivered within school to ensure it meets needs.	School are recognised by OFSTED as meeting the minimal standards. Pupils are accessing activities that are transferable into adulthood.
Ensure all pupils that require a 1:1 CIAG session have access.				Revisit/ recap on all pupils in year 12/13 and ensure all pupils in year 9 and 10 access a 1:1 CIAG session.	School are recognised by OFSTED as meeting the minimal standards. Each pupil have an action plan that is shared with parents so next steps are identified.

Pupils given opportunities to have real work place encounters.		£150	£150	Offer 2 x trips a year to Silver, Teal and Red classes to access work places. Additional MSA's required to support visits.	Pupils are engaged, in a better place to learn and have more opportunities when they leave school.
Ensure Careers leader is feeding into EHCP and a clear record is kept.				Develop the future planning document so that it feeds into the EHCP process. Careers adviser to feed into this.	A clear record is kept to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks and to ensure all information is shared with parents and carers. More opportunities for the pupils.
Silver class to design some grab and go boxes for lower school around careers	£200			Enterprise activity: Plan, prepare and monitor different boxes to introduce pupils to different roles e.g. a police, shop worker etc	Pupils within lower school are able to engage in activities related to the world of work to introduce topics early. Engaging for pupils and allows for curiosity.
Total amount requested (highlight number, right click, press 'update field')	225	175	200		
Total amount approved by HT	£ 600			03.10.25	
Please do not include lists of resources on this plan (see next page).					

Planning Cycle

Careers is embedded into the PSHE curriculum and can clearly be identified within the long term and medium term overviews.

Stakeholder Communication

Stakeholder Communication will be critical to ensure effectiveness of the programme. The stakeholders are young people, teachers, parents, employers, transition workers and post 18 providers.

There will an initial assessment of barriers to communication for the young person to form a structured plan for working in collaboration, in a tailored way, with each group of stakeholders.

The Careers strategy will be evaluated regularly from feedback from all stakeholders. Feedback mechanisms will be part of the careers programme delivery plan.

The Careers strategy and policy will be publicly available and be on the school website.

We want the young people themselves to be excited about the programme and use it to raise their aspirations. Information will be disseminated to students in a variety of formats.

Staff Development Plan

The careers lead has accessed training that was partially funded by the Careers and Enterprise Company and partially funded by the school and has a level 6 diploma in careers advice and guidance. The school is heavily invested in this approach.

All staff have had an introduction to what careers means to special schools as a part of a staff meeting and updates regularly via whole school briefings. Teachers were able to recognise the career related skills that they were providing already. Developing this further will mean these skills and activities being identified at a planning level.

All staff need an overview of the careers strategy and how this related to the class or phase they are based in:

- They will need to understand the roles and responsibilities of individuals as identified in the careers strategy
- Careers, employability and transition is identified on medium term planning and can be recorded.
- They will need to know how they can support activities where the aim is linked to the careers objectives.
- That the schools aim is to maximise young people's independence and staff to be aware what this will look like for individual pupils.
- That they are involved in a continuous rolling programme of careers related activities that will feed into transition planning
- That staff are trained in travel training programmes to support young people accessing work placements

- Staff will be supporting young people in work placements, both internal and external. The level of support will be different dependent on individuals.
- Training around risk assessing work placements .

Partnerships

A strategic relationship is being built with a number of key local employers willing to actively support our strategy in all areas.

We will continue to grow strong links with organisations and schemes such as Gedling Borough council and through initiatives introduced by the Career hubs.

Our Enterprise Advisor will provide knowledge to build links with the local business community and advise on best methods to publicise the school and the opportunities for businesses to become involved with their local community.

Evaluation

We will evaluate through lesson planning moderation and feedback from our young people and other stakeholders. Evidence will be available through learning walks, EHCP moderation, individual transition plan evaluations and student views through the student council. It will also include work experience recording sheets and accreditation units in Employability (as appropriate). This feeds in the report that the careers lead will feedbacks to SLT on an annual basis.

Inputs into impact measurements will include young people, teachers, employers, parents, and longitudinal information gathered after the student leaves Carlton Digby.

Results will be considered as part of the performance assessment and CPD of staff involved in delivery of the programme.

The measurable strategy objectives for the year 2024/25 will be:

Every young person will have the opportunity to participate in a career-related project or event such as World of Work days where they have meaningful interactions with employers at school or in the community.

Review Date: November 2027

This strategy was developed and is being reviewed annually through discussions with staff; young people, parents, governors and other external agencies.

