



QUALITY IN CAREERS WEBSITE ©

## CEIAG Case Study: Waterhead Academy, Greater Manchester

### The School

Waterhead Academy is a 11-16 Academy located in Oldham, Greater Manchester and is part of the South Pennine Academies Trust. There are approximately 1200 students on roll.

The Academy has an ethos based on positive relationships and a culture of mutual respect which enables it to provide a safe, stimulating and challenging learning environment so that every student has the best possible opportunities to succeed, excel and become independent and aspirational learners.

The Academy's key core values of Respect, Ambition and Determination underpin everything it does. It is committed to:

- Providing a safe, caring and stimulating learning environment that is at the heart of the local community
- Developing successful, resilient and ambitious students who contribute fully to the Academy and the wider community
- Inspiring confident young people with an aspirational attitude to *'be the best and to become the leaders of tomorrow'*
- Celebrating the principles of high achievement, respect and the inclusion of all students
- Providing a broad and balanced curriculum to prepare students to participate in a fast challenging and demanding world

### Career Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

The CEIAG team consists of Mr Neil Wilson (Assistant Principal-Personal Development), Miss Daniela Petrillo (Positive Steps Careers adviser), Anna Short (Enterprise Adviser) and Mrs Helen Stevenson (the appointed CEIAG link governor).

Waterhead Academy is committed to delivering a broad and balanced CEIAG program throughout all year groups. The objectives of its CEIAG programme are to:

- Provide students with the necessary skills and attributes to enable them to make informed decisions about their preferred post 16 education, training or employment pathways.
- Ensure that every young person receives a range of CEIAG curriculum opportunities throughout KS3 and KS4.

- Establish strong and effective links with a range of employers, higher education establishments and training providers.
- Implement a comprehensive CEIAG strategy that contributes to motivating and raising the aspirations of students.
- Equip students with the required knowledge and understanding to recognise and challenge stereotyping and encourage them to promote equality and diversity within society.

The Academy has a long-standing and successful partnership with Positive Steps Ltd (the matrix Standard accredited organisation that provides the statutory careers information, advice and guidance service in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside).

Positive Steps provides the Academy with access to a suite of careers resources along with the expertise of a highly qualified and impartial Careers Adviser. The successful partnership between the Academy and Positive Steps has contributed to the Academy achieving consistently low NEET figures that are below the respective local and national averages. The annual Service Delivery Agreement is aligned with supporting the Academy in working towards achieving all of the Gatsby Benchmarks and enables systems and processes to be regularly reviewed.

The curriculum offer utilises a range of delivery methods including visiting guest speakers, assemblies, bespoke CEIAG workshops, workplace visits and employer led curriculum learning. The breadth of the curriculum offer ensures maximum impact and is of most benefit to the young people who attend the Academy. All CEIAG student experiences are recorded and analysed through the CEIAG spread-sheet tracker that underpins each individual student's progress in relation to them achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Waterhead Academy is committed to working collaboratively and sharing best practice. The Academy was appointed as the Bridge Greater Manchester lead cluster school for the borough of Oldham, has been awarded PIXL Edge Ambassador Status and Neil Wilson is also an appointed Careers SLE who supports schools locally and nationally with planning and reviewing their CEIAG programme of study.

The Academy is one of only a few schools nationally to be awarded official Partnership Status with the Speakers for Schools National Charity and has benefitted from hosting a range of high-profile professionals to present to students about their respective career pathways. Visitors who have presented to students in conjunction with the Speakers for Schools programme include Alice Rawsthorn OBE - Design Critic and Author, Sir Ian Powell - Chairman of Capita, Mike Blair and Baroness Natalie Bennett - Peer & former Leader of the Green Party of England.

Students at the Academy are provided with the opportunity to participate in a range of careers-based activities to enhance their future career aspirations. These include:

- Presentations from external speakers from a range of professions.
- Participate in the year 10 hybrid work-sector encounter programme.
- Opportunities to attend a range of local college 'taster' days and apprenticeship fairs.
- Mock interviews and CV workshops delivered by Academy staff in conjunction with its external employment and educational partners.
- Opportunities to meet and discuss future career aspirations with external providers during year 7-11 consultation evenings.

## Student and Parental/Carer voice

Students along with their parents/carers are integral to the planning and evaluation of CEIAG provision at the Academy. This is achieved through:

- Students have opportunities to review CEIAG provision throughout the academic year during whole school student voice surveys.
- Parents/carers are invited to complete the annual CEIAG questionnaire.
- Each individual subject area has appointed student ambassadors who support with departmental CEIAG planning and reviews.
- The Positive Steps Careers Team facilitates 'Impact of Guidance' questionnaires with year 11 students to further support with the quality assurance process.

## Quality Assurance

Waterhead Academy has historically been recognised for its outstanding CEIAG provision through a number of nationally recognised organisations. Below is summary of the Academy's external validations commencing with the most recent **Quality in Careers Standard Award** reassessment that was published in March 2024. The Assessment report included:

- *"The Careers Leader is dynamic, passionately committed and well supported by senior management and the Governors.*
- *Staff work collaboratively to ensure that CEIAG remains a key focus for the school.*
- *Career learning is planned and sequenced so that students develop their knowledge and skills in a logical progression.*
- *The school ensures that its students receive accurate, impartial information and post-16 and post-18 pathways are given parity of esteem.*
- *There is a commitment to reflection and continuous improvement in the quality of the school's CEIAG provision.*
- *Careers is embedded well across the curriculum and there is a whole school ethos to CEIAG, which facilitates broader career exploration and aspirations.*
- *There is a strong approach to engaging with employers and the community, exemplified by the growing number of work-placed visits and activities.*
- *The school networks well with other schools locally and regionally which helps to inform its own provision and share practice between others.*
- *The school aims to meet the individual needs and aspirations of students, tailoring activities to match.*
- *The NHS Cadet programme is an excellent example of innovative opportunities offered to its students.*
- *Students are very positive about the CEIAG that is delivered.*
- *There is good investment in individual careers guidance and a strong partnership with Positive Steps."*

It was back in July 2020 that the Academy was re-assessed and reaccredited using the revised framework for what had then become the single national award, the **Quality in Careers Standard** through the Licensed Awarding Body – Positive Steps (Inspiring IAG). Comments from the Assessor at that time included:

- *“Strong committed and motivated Careers Leader in Neil Wilson who continues to strive for the best provision for the students whilst ensuring adherence to statutory requirements.*
- *Commitment from everyone in the school towards holistic, joined up careers provision.*
- *Plethora of opportunities for employer encounters for students both within the career’s curriculum and within the wider subject area.*
- *Impressive progress around identifying and encouraging recognition of CEIAG across the curriculum.*
- *Sound working partnership with Positive Steps including adviser with a very good relationship at the school and whose role is well understood by staff, students and parents.”*

The 2019 **OFSTED** report identified CEIAG provision as a strength of the Academy: *“Leadership of CEIAG is strong. During their time in school, students benefit from a very effective CEIAG programme that comprises a range of events, speakers and visits, as well as help and guidance for individual pupils. This contributes to the high proportion of pupils who progress to further education, training or employment.”* (Waterhead Academy, Ofsted Report, 2019)

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***(p) Quality In Careers: case study- updated June 2024***