



PensMeadowSchool

Living, Growing, Learning

Careers Programme

SEPTEMBER 2025

NEXT REVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 2026

Esther Richmond AHT



Disclaimer

Pens Meadow School makes every effort to ensure that the information in this document is accurate and up-to-date. If errors are brought to our attention, we will correct them as soon as practicable.

The copyright of these materials is held by Pens Meadow School. However, educational settings that work with children and young people are granted permission to use all or part of the materials for not-for-profit use, providing the school's copyright is acknowledged and we are informed of its use.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Aims and purpose	2
3. Statutory requirements and recommendations.....	3
4. Careers Provision at Pens Meadow	3
5. Providers Access Policy Statement.....	4
6. Connexions	5
7. Transition	6
8. Study Programmes.....	6
9. Pens Meadow Study Programme	7
10. Impact and Effectiveness.....	8

1. Introduction

“Good career guidance can have a profound impact on social mobility, as it ensures that each and every young person, whatever their needs, background or ambitions, knows the options open to them to fulfil their potential.”¹

Provision development, including Careers Programme is the responsibility of Esther Richmond, the assistant headteacher (erichmond@pens-meadow.dudley.sch.uk)

At Pens Meadow School we recognise that it is important to enable our pupils and students’ personal development through careers, employability and enterprise education, as well as learning about careers and the world of work and developing your career management and employability skills. Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) forms an integral part of student life at Pens Meadow School. We want to encourage all students to consider a broad range of careers and pathways that are right for them and use contacts from the world of work and further education to help them understand where different choices can lead them in the future.

Our duty is to secure independent careers guidance for all year 7-14 pupils. It is intended to expand advice and guidance, so they are inspired and motivated to fulfil their potential. We help every student develop high aspirations and consider a broad and ambitious range of careers. Inspiring every pupil through more real-life contacts with the world of work can help them understand where different choices can take them in the future.

Through close collaboration with partners like Connexions and Black Country Careers Hub, we provide face-to-face advice and guidance to build confidence and motivation. This includes consideration of the role that careers professionals can play in supporting pupils as one element of a varied careers programme. All students attending Pens Meadow School have an Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP). As part of the consultation towards these documents we fulfil the requirement to work with local authorities to identify vulnerable young people, including those with special educational needs and those at risk of not participating Post-16, and the services that are available to support them.

Our careers curriculum is designed and regularly reviewed to meet the differing needs and requirements of our pupils. This is developed throughout pupils’ time at school and is always supportive of their abilities, strengths and skills.

2. Aims and purpose

- Prepare pupils for the transition to life after Pens Meadow
- Support pupils in making informed decisions which are appropriate for them
- Provide pupils with well-rounded experiences
- Develop personal characteristics such as social skills, communication, independence and resilience
- Inspire and motivate pupils to develop themselves as individuals and live as independently as is possible

¹ <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/good-career-guidance-perspectives-from-the-send-sector.pdf>

3. Statutory requirements and recommendations

The careers provision at Pens Meadow is in line with the statutory guidance developed by the Department for Education, which refers to Section 42A and 45A of the Education Act 1997.

We provide independent careers guidance from Years 7 -14 and that this guidance should:

- be impartial
- include information on a range of pathways, including apprenticeships
- be adapted to the needs of the pupil

In addition, the school is compliant with the careers guidance that the government set out for delivery from August 2022: 'Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (updated in January 2023).' This states that all schools must give education and training providers the opportunity to talk to students about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships. Further information relating to this is set out later in this document, under Provider Access.

4. Careers Provision at Pens Meadow

- Pens Meadow Provision – refer to further provision documentation
- All pupils at Pens Meadow School take part in world of work activities through taking responsibilities for class jobs and visits to various places of work
- Visitors in school and offsite visits support pupils in developing their understanding of a range of different post 19 pathways
- All pupils from Year 7 have access to careers advice, including guidance from our Connexions advisor
- Pupils have access, through school arranged or facilitated events, to relevant careers events hosted in various locations

Key Stage 3

- Pupils learn about different trades and jobs
- Pupils have regular opportunities to apply their learning
- Pupils visit various places of work
- Pupils engage in transition to Post 14 provision
- Pupils have at least two encounters with education or training providers

Key Stage 4

- Pupil pathways onto accredited and vocational courses are planned and prepared for in KS4
- Pupils take part in work experience activities
- Pupils take part in Enterprise projects across the school year
- Projects are a key part of the KS4 curriculum
- Pupils take part in next steps events
- Pupils have at least two encounters with education or training providers

Key Stage 5

- One-to-one meetings with families, the school team and Connexions Advisor in Years 12 to 14 informs individual routes into Post 19 provision and appropriate and meaningful work-related learning opportunities
- Curriculum and provision are designed to maximise opportunities for students to access world of work as well as prepare them for college provision after leaving Pens Meadow School
- The overall organisation of work-related learning is undertaken by lead post 16 staff who liaises with the whole team to ensure the most relevant and engaging opportunities are taken. Families are informed and communicated with throughout the process and a work experience agreement form and work experience information form are completed. All pupils on placement are covered by the employers' insurance and places of work are risk assessed by school staff.
- Pupils have at least two encounters with education or training providers

5. Providers Access Policy Statement

Introduction

This policy statement sets out the school's arrangements for managing the access of providers to pupils at the school for the purpose of giving them information about the provider's education or training offer. This complies with the school's legal obligations under Section 42B of the Education Act 1997.

Pupil entitlement

All pupils in years 8-13 are entitled:

- to find out about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships opportunities, as part of a careers programme which provides information on the full range of education and training options available at each transition point
- to hear from a range of local providers about the opportunities they offer, including technical education and apprenticeships – through options events, assemblies and group discussions and taster events
- to understand how to make applications for the full range of academic and technical courses.

The updated provider access legislation (from January 2023) specifies schools must provide at least six encounters for all their students:

- Two encounters for pupils during the 'first key phase' (Year 8 or 9) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend
- Two encounters for pupils during the 'second key phase' (Year 10 or 11) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend
- Two encounters for pupils during the 'third key phase' (Year 12 or 13) that are mandatory for the school to put on but optional for pupils to attend

Management of provider access requests

Procedure:

A provider wishing to request access should contact Esther Richmond, Assistant Headteacher, Telephone: 01384 987222; Email: erichmond@pens-meadow.dudley.sch.uk

Opportunities for access

A number of events, integrated into the school careers programme, will offer providers an opportunity to come into school to speak to pupils and/or their parents/carers.

Premises and facilities

The school will make the main hall, classrooms or meeting spaces available for discussions between the provider and students, as appropriate to the activity. The school will also make available AV and other specialist equipment to support provider presentations. This will all be discussed and agreed in advance of the visit with the Careers Leader or a member of their team.

Providers are welcome to leave a copy of their prospectus or other relevant course literature with Esther Richmond, Assistant Headteacher. This will be made available to pupils and families as appropriate.

6. Connexions

The governing body must ensure that the independent careers guidance provided:

- Is presented in an impartial manner
- Includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways
- Is guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given.
- At Pens Meadow School Impartial Careers Advice and Guidance is provided by Connexions. This is through targeted support. The school is allocated a named Personal Assistant. This PA fulfils the role in several ways;
 - Attending annual reviews
 - Working with school and families to agree short term priorities for employment, community inclusion, independent living and health pathways. If other support agencies are involved, their input is included. This is documented in the EHCP
 - Working with school and families to determine long term outcomes for adult life in the areas of employment, community inclusion, independent living and health pathways. These are documented in the EHCP.
 - Visiting families to build relationships and understanding of individual student need
 - Visiting school to observe students and gain understanding of needs, abilities and aspirations
 - Supporting school staff to develop an understanding of local options for our student population
 - Supporting students to access the connexions website
 - Supporting families to visit a range of educational options which may be available after school
 - Supporting families to apply for post school options

We are required to provide information to students about the financial support that may be available to help them stay in education Post-16. At Pens Meadow, this is through the provision of an EHCP.

We also ensure that young people understand that the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund has been set up to support those in financial hardship, and that they can apply for this through school.

7. Transition

Continuing in education may not be a realistic option for some of our students. If college is a possible next step, it is likely to be successful if the right support is secured and everyone involved has a clear understanding of the student's needs. It may also be a part of a package of support, surrounding the student which may include social care or health input and provision.

We take our responsibility to prepare our students for the next stage of their adult life very seriously, and as such, have a team of staff to support this. This includes two transition staff; a teacher and HLTA and the family support team; our family outreach team also play a vital role in this transition period. In addition to this, we work closely with the transition social care team, initially through annual reviews of EHCP to ensure our students' needs are fully understood and appropriate provision can be planned.

During the last year at Pens Meadow, the school team organise and facilitate transition meetings with all agencies involved with our students. Central to this process are our students and families. The wider group may include connexions; social care; health professionals; F.E. professionals; private providers; voluntary sector; therapists, or others. We support our families to investigate available opportunities and decide preferences. Throughout all of this, the students are involved in as meaningful a way as possible, attending meetings if appropriate and visiting options for future placements. Once a decision has been reached, we support our students and future placements with transition. This can be over the course of the year, or as long or short as is deemed appropriate. It will also take various formats as transition is planned and delivered on an individual basis.

8. Study Programmes

All pupils aged 16 to 19, whether doing academic or vocational studies or a mix of both, are already expected to be following a study programme tailored to their prior attainment by age 16 and future education and career aspirations. A core principle of study programmes is that they support and encourage progression to the next level of education or employment. Schools with post-16 pupils, should ensure that pupils are aware of progression routes they can pursue after the study programme they are following. At Pens Meadow, this is through an individual approach, working with each student and their family.

Advice from '16-19 study programmes' (DfE July 2022) states that; the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can vary widely, but the study programme principles still apply. Students should follow a programme that stretches them, prepares them for adulthood, and supports their progression into work or further study. For students with SEND who have a learning difficulty assessment (LDA) or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, a study programme can apply up to the age of 25. Institutions, in discussion with the student, need to assess what type of programme is most suitable given their career aspirations.

While some students with SEND should be on study programmes which help them achieve stretching qualifications, others will benefit from a study programme which concentrates on high quality work experience and other non-qualification activities to help them prepare for employment and adult life more generally, rather than on qualifications. As part of their study programme, students should be supported to find routes through to employment, building on work experience, and independent living. Young people with a special educational needs (SEN) statement, LDA or EHC plan, can undertake supported internships which aim to prepare them for employment through extended work placements with employers.

Study programmes should always include English and Maths, but at an appropriate level. Some students with SEND will be able to work towards achieving GCSE grade C or above, whereas others may qualify for exemption from the condition of funding. More information about this exemption can be found in the EFA condition of funding guidance.

Students are encouraged to take part in other meaningful non-qualification activity alongside work experience. Such activities should again be planned and organised by the provider and may include enrichment activity to build character (as recognised by the DfE character awards), tutorials, study skills, leadership, team-work or self-management skills and activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award or volunteering. Individual opportunities for students at Pens Meadow are arranged after discussions in pathways meetings. They may include work related learning within school, on either site, independent travel training, community access opportunities or supported work related learning offsite, at social business partnerships or with voluntary organisations.

All study programmes reflect the student's longer term aims and aspirations and support them to achieve their goals. In accordance with expectations, all students nearing their planned leaving date are encouraged and supported to apply for and, where possible, secure an apprenticeship, further learning or employment.

9. Pens Meadow Study Programme

In preparing our students for the next stage of their adult life we include the following, in accordance with the 'Careers guidance and access for education and training providers '(DfE August 2022). We also take account of the Gatsby Benchmark Standards. Progress towards the benchmarks is reviewed every term, with the results published on the school website.

- Providing access to a range of activities that inspire young people, including employer talks, careers fairs, motivational speakers, colleges and university visits, coaches and mentors. High quality mentoring can be an important part of delivering against the duty as it develops the character and confidence needed to build a successful career. This is done as appropriate to the needs of our students.
- Building strong links with employers who can help to boost young people's attitudes and employability skills, inform pupils about the range of roles and opportunities available and help them understand how to make this a reality. Although paid employment is not a likely option for many of our students, voluntary work may well be part of adult options

- Offering high quality work experience that properly reflects individuals' studies and strengths and supports the academic curriculum. All students have personal pathways meetings with their keyworker during which they discuss their targets in relation to key skills, vocational and work experience pathways.
- Widening access to advice on options available Post-16, for example, apprenticeships, entrepreneurialism or other vocational routes. This should also include giving other Post-16 providers opportunities to engage with pupils on school premises. This is delivered as relevant to our student population, working with local colleges and other providers, usually on an individual student level.
- Consciously working to prevent all forms of stereotyping in the advice and guidance they provide, to ensure that boys and girls from all backgrounds and diversity groups consider the widest possible range of careers, including those that are often portrayed as primarily for one or other of the sexes.
- Creating a learning environment which allows and encourages pupils to tackle real life challenges which require them to manage risk and to develop their decision making, team building and problem-solving skills. Having high expectations of all pupils. Facilitating access to a range of inspirational role models can instil resilience, goal setting, hard work and social confidence in pupils, encouraging them to overcome barriers to success. All students at Pens Meadow have individual targets and are supported by a wide range of staff to work towards aspirational but realistic future options.
- Having a clear focus on the enterprise skills, experience and qualifications that employers want can support preparation for work and help students gain confidence.
- However, Pens Meadow School's overall strategy for advice and guidance recognises that our students will need additional support before they are ready to make decisions about their next steps.

10. Impact and Effectiveness

At Pens Meadow, due to the effective transition planning process, students do move on to future options. These include;

- Local colleges
- Independent Specialist Providers
- Social Care funded private providers
- Social Care personal budget
- Health funded provision
- Voluntary work

Generally, a 'package' of support, including one or more of the above is achieved. There is a lack of suitable provision for our young people leaving us. Pens Meadow works pro-actively to secure the best available solutions for our families. Our family outreach team carry out a tracking project, gaining information about the success of future placements. Our Deputy Headteacher engages in Preparation for Adulthood steering group in Local Authority and is a member of various subgroups that include Complex Post 19, Education and Employment, as well as Community Inclusion.



Leavers Provision

2019 - 20	4 Dudley ADT
16 students	3 Dudley Aspire
	2 QAC
	1 Glasshouse
	1 Pengwern
	2 Victoria College
	1 Halesowen College
2020 – 21	5 Dudley College
12 Students	1 Glasshouse
	2 Unicorn Centre
	3 Social Care Provision
	1 Havering 24hrs provision
	1 awaiting appeal
2021 – 22	2 Dudley College
8 Students	2 Glasshouse
	2 Victoria College
	1 Quest – social care provision
	1 Queen Alexandra College
2022 – 23	3 Dudley College
7 Students	1 Glasshouse College
	1 Ready4Life
	1 Queen Alexandra College
	1 Unicorn Centre
2023 – 24	2 Dudley College
16 Students	1 Queen Victoria College
	6 Social Care
	2 Queen Alexandra College
	1 Bilston College
	3 Awaiting Appeal
	1 Supported at home
2024 – 25	1 Dudley College
5 Students	1 Queen Victoria College
	2 Adult Social Care
	1 Ready 4 Life