

West Lakes Academy Careers Plan
(2025 - 2026)



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1. Introduction

At West Lakes Academy we are committed to delivering high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for all of our students. We understand that all young people need to prepare themselves for progression through learning and education into adulthood. Our aim is to equip our students with the knowledge and skills to enable them to make effective choices, understand their career and progression routes, and enable them to manage smooth transitions on to the next stage of either learning or employment.

At key milestones throughout the students' education we will provide support, advice and guidance to ensure realistic and informed decisions are made to help them to progress to higher education, apprenticeships, and the world of work.

We provide impartial advice and ensure the advice given is in the best interest of the student. Career education has never been more important for young people. They are bombarded with complex choices which need considering and planning such as; What KS4 subjects do I take? Do I choose vocational or academic subjects or a mixture of both? Which extracurricular activities would enhance my CV? And, of course, which career would I find interesting, is achievable and would suit my lifestyle?

Each year group follows a careers education program which aims to raise aspirations and provide students with a better understanding of the pathways they need to follow to help them to achieve their goals. Students will investigate careers during curriculum time and tutor time, with a whole school initiative known as Exploring Careers.

Throughout the year visiting speakers, further education providers and local employers from different organisations will attend the academy to provide the students with inspiration, advice and inform them of professions and careers that they might not have experienced or considered previously. Students take part in a wide range of careers activities such as, enterprise events, industry days, STEM activities and university visits for first-hand experience of further and higher education. In addition to these activities there are a wide range of free resources that students can take advantage of. These can be found in a number of different formats, e.g., online, booklets and prospectuses, in the careers section of the library.

West Lakes Academy is committed to providing a planned programme of activities, careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for all students in years 7-13, regardless of students' culture and ethnicity, background or ability. All students will benefit from the planned events and activities to help them make informed decisions in preparation for life, work and as responsible adults, making a valuable contribution to society and their communities.

2. Document Purpose

This document outlines West Lakes Academy's Career Plan for March 2026 - September 2026. This document will be reviewed and revised before the start of each academic year accordingly.

3. Gatsby Benchmarks

In 2014 the Gatsby Foundation published Good Career Guidance, a report by Sir John Holman, which used international evidence to define what world-class careers guidance for young people looked like. The critical elements of good careers guidance were developed into a framework of eight benchmarks. The benchmarks provide a shared understanding of, and common language for, careers guidance.

Taken from -

<https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/2025-07/1995%20-%20Gatsby%20BM%20Schools%20and%20specialist%20provision%20settings%20Toolkit%20v9.pdf>

Below is a table of the academy's progress towards completing the Gatsby Benchmarks, this will be updated every term. Please be aware that the criteria was redeveloped in September 2025 and so percentages were impacted nationally.

Bench mark	March 2018 (Starting Point)	July 2021	July 2022	July 2023	July 2024	July 2025	December 2025	March 2025
1	35%	100%	100%	82%	100%	100%	54%	
2	50%	100%	100%	80%	80%	100%	85%	
3	71%	90%	72%	63%	90%	63%	50%	
4	100%	75%	50%	62%	93%	100%	33%	
5	0%	100%	100%	75%	100%	100%	88%	
6	0%	87%	100%	100%	100%	100%	63%	
7	83%	83%	95%	79%	83%	100%	63%	
8	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	77%	

4. Academy Careers Development Plan

Careers Development Plan (February 2026)

Gatsby Benchmark	Area for Development	Targets/description of activity to be completed	Responsibility	Target date	Success Criteria	Completed Date
1. A stable careers programme	1.2 Careers program is underpinned by learning outcomes	Outcomes to be attached to each event taking place in the academy	Careers Lead with support of staff who have organised events	March 2026	Careers program has outcomes attached to each event in a central location (Unifrog?)	Ongoing
	Careers program is linked to the whole school development program	Governor audit highlighting links to be made to the whole academy development program	Sandra Lee (Careers Governor)	January 2026	Report completed and fed back to Head Teacher and Governors	January 2026
		Meeting with Head Teacher to discuss links to whole school development program	Stephen Grant and Siobhain Walter	March 2026		
	1.3.1 Information about careers program is communicated in different ways to enable different groups to engage with it	Audit of the website to be completed supported by Cumbria careers hub	Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead) with support of ... (Enterprising Cumbria)	January 2026	Audit completed with next steps plan produced	Completed Feb 2026
	Website updated following audit for all audiences - students, parents, staff, employers		Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead) with support of Laura Lithgow	March 2026	Clearly defined areas on website for each user - students, parents, staff, employers	Ongoing
Current information to suit all parties relevant to their needs						
1.4 Careers program communicated in different formats making it accessible to users with different needs						
1.6 Feedback from all parties to inform careers program	Students voice Parental voice Employer feedback	Any leader of any activity provided in the academy	July 2026	Overview of positives and areas to develop for each event. Any program delivered will	Ongoing	

		<p>Teacher feedback</p> <p>All of the above to be collected regularly to inform the program in going forward.</p> <p>Mock interview feedback gathered and implemented in the development of next year's event.</p> <p>Work experience feedback gathered from parents, employers, teachers and students and a plan developed for the delivery of the work experience events in future years.</p> <p>Teacher voice gathered on their confidence in delivering careers information Completion of the FSQ all year groups</p>	<p>Vicky Ritson (Inspira) Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead)</p> <p>Christine Buchanan (admin support for WEX) Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead)</p> <p>Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead) SLT</p> <p>Year Leads Tutor teams Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead)</p>	<p>Feb 2026</p> <p>March 2026</p> <p>April 2026</p> <p>February 2026</p>	<p>be developed following the feedback delivered.</p> <p>Positive impacts will be highlighted in our careers newsletter</p> <p>You said, we did actions to be shared with feedback parties accordingly</p> <p>Appropriate training/CPD to be organised</p> <p>Completed FSQ allowing us to develop the tutor careers program to suit the needs of our individual students</p> <p>Development of activities to suit the individual needs of our students</p>	<p>Started but ongoing due to distribution difficulties, works alongside Compass+ for support</p>
2. Learning from careers and labour market information	2.5 Actively encourage and support parents and carers to have careers conversations with young people in their care	<p>Regular relevant social media posts sign posting parents and carers to discussion topics. Half termly</p> <p>Could complete a survey on parents' evenings.</p> <p>Department homework tasks around careers discussions</p>	<p>Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead)</p> <p>Laura Lithgow</p> <p>Year Leads</p> <p>Curriculum Leaders/teachers</p>	<p>February 2026</p> <p>July 2026</p> <p>July 2026</p>	<p>Parents are receiving guidance and support regularly in different formats encouraging careers discussions with their child.</p> <p>Varied homework tasks are evidenced on schemes of work involving</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

		Parent newsletters updated termly	Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead) Curriculum Leaders/teacher Laura Lithgow	April 2026	parents/carers contributions. Students can confidently identify these activities Parent newsletter available on website providing access to discussion topics and signposting discussion topics	
3. Addressing the needs of each young person	3.4 Systematically track individual advice, encounters which students themselves can access	Launch CPD with staff to access Unifrog and record encounters that have taken place	Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead)	January 2026	Staff can confidently access Unifrog and log interactions that have taken place	January 2026
		Relaunch Unifrog with students during tutor sessions. Build a program of Unifrog sessions for students to develop their confidence with unifrog.	Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead) Year Leads Tutors	February 2026	Tutor sessions have taken place supporting students in accessing their Unifrog accounts and completing the Unifrog 101 course	February 2026
		Individual Inspira Interviews uploaded onto Unifrog for students to refer back to at any stage	Christine Buchanan	April 2026	All individual Inspira interviews have been uploaded onto students individual Unifrog accounts	Ongoing
	3.5 Intended destinations data gathered and maintained	Unifrog destinations data task to be set for all Year 11 and 13 students	Year Leads Head of Sixth form	April 2026	A clear list of student intended destinations will be available.	
		Inspira destinations data form to be completed once received	Year 11 and 13 Year Leads	TBC	Students at risk of NEET interventions can be put into place	
4. Linking Curriculum learning to careers	4.2 and 4.3 Evidence of delivery in subject areas	Subject Leaders to feedback to inform next Compass review	Subject Leaders	19th March 2026	Completed Compass review provided as fully informative report	
5. Encounters with employers and employees						

6. Experiences of workplaces	6.1 Key Stage 3 to have 1 meaningful experience of a work place	Year 7 and 8 to have completed a shadow an adult to work day	Year 7 and 8 Year Leads Year 7 and 8 tutors Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead)	Post Easter holidays	Year 7 and 8 students have completed 1 meaningful experience of a work place. Reflection diaries will be produced and displayed.	
7. Encounters with further and higher education						
8. Personal Guidance	8.4 Personal guidance support and how to access it is communicated to students effectively	Tutor time activity - Unifrog how to access careers interview (Inspira Interview)	Year Lead Tutor teams	May 2026	Both tutors and students can access students interview feedback and confidently support with next steps.	
	8.5 Personal guidance support and how to access it is communicated effectively to parents including on our website	Meeting with Inspira to discuss options around sharing information with parents Parents section on website updated with information on the personal guidance opportunities our students receive and how parents can access this information	Inspira Siobhain Walter (Careers Lead) Laura Lithgow	April 2026	Parents can access information about personal guidance students have received. Parents know where to access additional help and support around discussions about future options with their child.	March 2026

5. Careers Activities

Date	Careers Activity	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
Sept 2025	BAE Systems Education Programme	x	x					
Nov 2025	CV Workshop				x			
March 2026	World of Work Day			x				
Feb 2026	Work Ready Day (Mock interviews) Year 10				x			
Jan 2026	Work Ready Day (Mock interviews) Year 13							x
March onward	Work Experience Opportunities				x	x	x	x
Jan 2026	UCAS Day						x	
	University Open Day – Carlisle Trip						x	x
Through out the year	Dream Placement						x	x
Jan 2026	Apprenticeship Day						x	x
March 2026	National Careers Week	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Feb 2026	National Apprenticeship week	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Through out the Year	Assembly Career Guest Speakers	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sept onward	Independent Careers Interview					x	x	
October 2025	Oxford Uni Liaison Officer workshops						x	x
Nov 2025	UCLAN Student Finance Workshops						x	x

Nov 2025	CNC Assembly							X	X
Nov 2025	Newcastle University Trip							X	X
Dec 2025	RAF Assembly							X	X
Dec 2025	Atkins Assembly							X	X
Jan 2026	UCLAN Medical assembly							X	X
Jan 2026	UCLAN Medical detailed session							X	X
Jan 2026	Gen 2 Assembly							X	X
Jan 2026	UCLAN Application Process								X
Feb 2026	UCLAN Medical Students								X
Dec 2025	UCLAN Nursing							X	X
Dec 2025	Bank of England - Financial services							X	X

6. Roles and Responsibilities

To maintain and run an effective Careers Service several groups and individuals within the Academy are identified along with their roles and responsibilities in order to provide support and guidance to the service.

Drive Team responsibilities

- Ensure there is a named member of SLT who has primary responsibility for Careers provision
- Ensure the Academy meets and exceeds the statutory careers requirements

SLT responsibilities

- Ensure the annual Careers Plan is completed and signed off.
- Ensure that the agreed careers objectives are understood and implemented across the academy.
- Ensure the Careers Leader is prepared for OFSTED inspections.
- Ensure the Academy meets and exceeds the statutory careers requirements.
- Provide support to the Careers Leader and ensure that the agreed resources are made available during the year.
- Review progress and achievements versus the careers plan and make adjustments as necessary.
- Recruit, retain and support the careers leader.

Middle Leader with overall responsibility for careers provision

- Ensure the careers programme is adequately resourced to deliver the agreed careers plan.
- Work closely with the Careers and Enterprise Adviser to maintain a strong link with local employers and to continuously improve on the careers service provided at the Academy.
- Act as the 'careers champion' to ensure that whole academy acceptance of the careers plan is achieved!
- Complete a minimum of 1 days' work experience in a local business to understand how the school could best serve its business community.
- Audit current teaching practices in terms of careers delivery.
- Prepare and deliver the careers plan.
- Report progress to the SLT team.
- Bring any problems that you are unable to resolve to the attention of the SLT.
- Ensure you engage with all your stakeholders including, Local Authority, Local Colleges and Universities, SLT, teachers, support staff, students, parents, local businesses and guest speakers.
- Put systems in place to ensure that you deliver measurable year on year improvements to the careers programme.
- Be the Academy focal point on all matters relating to careers education and training and ensure the SLT are kept informed of industry or legislative changes which may impact their responsibilities.

Head of Sixth Form responsibilities

- Ensure all Y12 students have prepared draft CVs and/or personal statements.
- Organise and deliver appropriate activities and work experiences.
- Support the students with their individual career action plans, paying particular attention to those in the NEET risk group.
- Work with the senior lead for careers education to ensure students make a smooth transition to year 12 and are supported onto the right pathway.
- Organise work experience

- Organise the individual Inspira interviews.
 - To track all activities and engagement through Unifrog

Heads of Year responsibilities

- Take responsibility for careers education, information advice and guidance for their respective year groups, ensuring all students participate in year group CEIAG activities.
- Disseminate all CEIAG information to form tutors and ensuring all year students receive any advice needed.
- Support the Lead in Careers with delivery of activities and aspects of the program to ensure its effectiveness to all students during tutor and assembly times.
- Organise regular employer engagement assemblies and report these through Unifrog and social media.
 - To track all activities and engagement through Unifrog

Teachers, form tutors and teaching support staff responsibilities

- Ensure you are familiar with the school careers plan and its objectives.
- Ensure that career readiness and careers education are embedded in your term and lesson plans.
- Review your lesson plans in relation to linking to current jobs and career pathways.
- Monitor the effectiveness of your embedded activities and improve as necessary.
- Feedback specific student needs (or opportunities) to the Careers Leader
 - To track all activities and engagement through Unifrog

Administrative and support staff responsibilities

- Support the careers leader in delivering the careers plan and achieving its objectives.
- Contribute towards the development of an atmosphere (within the academy) of learning, confidence and ambition.
- Explore and adopt measures which enable you to deliver your services efficiently.
- Support communications and planning of work experience opportunities.
 - To track all activities, including items such as student interviews and work experience through Unifrog

7. Information and Self Help

Further information and links will be made available on the academy website careers information pages and regularly updated to support legislation and opportunities.

All students will be registered on our online Unifrog platform which students are encouraged to keep up to date with every year in the academy and share progress with parents at home.

Unifrog will be used to support our Exploring Careers tutor times. Students will be encouraged to regularly visit our online resources and will be provided with guidance on the use of the resources where necessary.

Resource	Description
https://www.inspira.org.uk/	Information about the Labour market in Cumbria, what support is available
https://www.unifrog.org/sign-in	Student platform
https://education.careershubcumbria.co.uk/	Your go to resource to helping your child navigate their future choices
https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/	For young people aged 13-16. CV Builder, job profiles and lots more.
https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/	Supports parents, educators and employers in everything about apprenticeships and T Levels
https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/	Provide information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work
https://icould.com/	Features films of real people talking about their careers and the route they took
https://www.futuresforall.org/	Support in accessing real-world experiences, hear from inspirational speakers, and discover new opportunities.
https://www.careersbox.co.uk/	Free online library of careers related films, news and information
https://www.ucas.com/	Information about university courses and applications
https://www.successatschool.org/	Information about careers sectors, Apprenticeships, Universities and much more information and advice
https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/	Find friendly and supportive discussions on everything from GCSEs to Uni life, from A-

	levels to UCAS applications.
https://www.u-explore.com/page/home-page	An employer-led digital platform for young people to develop skills, explore careers, and engage in virtual work experiences.
https://www.gov.uk/education/further-and-higher-education-skills-and-vocational-training	University and college qualifications. Apprenticeships, traineeships and internships. Funding for further education providers.
https://higherin.com/	Supports students aged 14 - 24+ to find their dream apprenticeship, placement, internship and graduate role all in one place
https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/	Information, advice and guidance on careers in the NHS
https://notgoingtouni.co.uk/	Aims to help young people make informed decisions showing opportunities outside of traditional university
https://www.goconstruct.org/	Information about careers in the construction industry
https://barclayslifeskills.com/	To learn about life skills, interview skills, application and CV writing
https://www.kingstrust.org.uk/	Get free support to develop the skills and confidence you need to find a job or start a business.
https://www.applytouni.com/	Information about applying to university
https://www.how2become.com/	Career interviews and assessments made easy.