

The Cheadle Hulme High School Series

This series of case studies aims to provide schools and colleges with a better understanding of how to develop their careers strategy in a structured, effective manner.

Our careers journey

Cheadle Hulme High School is in Stockport and is part of the Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership. Case study two of this series provides a deep dive into how to create the vision and careers strategy that informs the schools careers programme. The aim is to share a structured approach to how you might engage senior leaders in school in the consultations to develop the strategy and build a whole school approach to careers provision. For more information about this – or any other questions, please contact Louis Garbutt at Louis.Garbutt@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Creating the vision

Liz Perkins (Enterprise Adviser) and Louis Garbutt (Enterprise Coordinator) set up a visioning workshop with the aim of engaging key stakeholders and ensuring they were emotionally invested in developing a careers strategy. They wanted to identify what the school's values and wider objectives were and articulate what a robust careers programme should achieve for students, staff, parents and employers.



Additional benefits of the workshop included:

- Introducing stakeholders to their Enterprise Adviser and Enterprise Coordinator (raising the prestige of the approach John was taking);
- Educating stakeholders on the background and context of the workshops (Gatsby Benchmarks new Ofsted framework, Compass results) and
- Utilising the management consultancy skills of their Enterprise Adviser (allowing the EA to add significant value at a strategic level).

A structured approach:

In case study one, it was noted that the workshop structure included:

- **Introduction:** introductions are made, and the aims and purpose of the workshop is shared.
- **Context:** the current landscape of careers policy is explained by the Enterprise Coordinator, including the Gatsby Benchmarks, Ofsted and the 'journey so far' of the school since it joined the network.
- **AEM – Audience, Emotion and Motivation:** a strategic approach used at News UK is described to help inform the workshop, with the Enterprise Adviser describing how this could be used in a school setting.
- **Stirring the emotions:** a series of questions are asked to foster an emotional response to careers education from the stakeholders, reflecting on their own experiences in comparison to those of young people today.

- **School values and objectives:** stakeholders are asked to identify what values the school embodies, whether the school has a vision and what the current priorities are amongst senior leadership (incorporating the school improvement plan).
- **What should our careers provision achieve:** stakeholders are asked to describe (through ‘blue-sky thinking’) what they would want their school’s careers programme to achieve for students, staff, parents and employers.

The main takeaways

Stirring the emotions

What Liz, Louis, John and the wider group were able to learn from the workshop, through the discussions that took place, was that experiences that they had of careers education growing up such as, “there were limited interventions”, “students mostly took advice from their families who had limited knowledge themselves”, “people would fall into careers due to lack of advice”, still rang true for students today. Although there was an acknowledgement careers provision at the school did offer students some good provision and opportunities, there was a need for the school to find solutions to historic challenges and patterns in careers education.

School values and objectives

By focussing on the school’s values and current priorities, the group was able to immediately elevate the discussion on careers to a strategic level, dissecting how a robust careers strategy and programme could benefit those wider objectives.

For example, ‘Academic Aspiration’ and ‘Leadership and Service’ were identified values of the school which led to a conclusion that enterprise competitions, challenging stereotypes through careers and increasing employer encounters could not only embody these values but drive them.

What should our careers provision achieve?

The group was asked to recognise that there are four key stakeholders who should engage with the school’s careers programme: students, staff, parents, employers. Through acknowledging this and then taking part in reflective ‘blue-sky thinking’ around what they wanted their programme to achieve for these stakeholders, the group was able to start building a vision that would feed their eventual school careers strategy.

For students, the group agreed that careers needs to happen through the curriculum as well as outside of it. Teachers need mechanisms to share best practice between departments but to also build careers into their schemes of work. Parents should be offered advice and guidance to support their children, but they should also be asked to contribute to the programme as employers. Employers need to be used directly to offer insight into Greater Manchester as a labour market and to ensure students are clear on the opportunities and skills gaps in the region.



There have been clear lessons that I have learnt as an Enterprise Adviser working with a Careers Leader in a school. Namely, that a Careers Leader can feel isolated when tasked with developing a careers strategy. This is why it is vital to garner support from colleagues in the school, especially the Headteacher, although this can take time.

Lessons From Liz

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