



WESTACRE MIDDLE SCHOOL

CAREERS

STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

September 2026 – August 2027

Next review: July 2027

OUR VISION

Every pupil understands themselves, explores future possibilities and leaves Westacre with confidence and ambition for their next steps.

A clear, inclusive and progressive careers programme for Years 5–7

CAREERS AT WESTACRE

AT A GLANCE

WHO?

Years 5–7

Statutory careers guidance applies from Year 7.

WHY?

Raise aspirations

Challenge stereotypes and connect learning with future possibilities.

KEY CONTACTS

Careers leads:

Mrs A Barker-Miles and Mrs K Bullard

01905 772795 | office@westacre.worcs.sch.uk

WHAT?

Careers learning

Subjects, PSHE, visitors, events, enterprise and trips.

HOW?

Progressive programme

Built around the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

HOW WE CHECK

Review & feedback

Pupil voice, feedback, curriculum audits and annual Gatsby/Compass review.

THE EIGHT GATSBY BENCHMARKS

1

Stable programme

3

Needs of each young person

5

Employers & employees

7

Further & higher education

2

Career & labour market information

4

Curriculum links

6

Workplace experiences

8

Personal guidance

Careers learning • Aspiration • Opportunity • Future possibilities

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1. Introduction

At Westacre Middle School, we recognise the important role that careers education plays in helping pupils understand the opportunities available to them and prepare for their next steps.

The world of education, training and work is continually changing. New technologies, developing industries and a wide range of pathways mean that our pupils will need the knowledge, skills and confidence to make informed choices and adapt throughout their lives.

Our aim is to provide a high-quality careers programme that raises aspirations, broadens horizons and helps every pupil understand the links between their learning, their interests and the world of work.

We take a whole-school approach to careers education, ensuring that careers learning is embedded across the curriculum and throughout school life. Pupils have opportunities to learn about different careers and pathways, meet employers and other education and training providers, and develop the skills they will need for future transitions.

Our careers provision is planned and reviewed using the eight updated Gatsby Benchmarks. The revised Benchmarks retain the established eight areas while placing greater emphasis on leadership, inclusion, engagement with parents and carers, meaningful experiences and stronger links between careers and the curriculum.

Through this approach, we aim to ensure that every pupil can develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to make informed decisions about their future.

KEY POINT

The statutory careers guidance duty applies from Year 7. Westacre also provides age-appropriate careers learning in Years 5 and 6 so that pupils build strong foundations before future choices need to be made.

Pupil Outcomes

When pupils leave Westacre, we aim for them to:

- recognise their own strengths, interests and developing skills
- be aware of a wide range of careers and employment sectors
- understand that future pathways can include academic, technical, vocational and apprenticeship routes
- understand that the world of work changes and that new opportunities and careers continue to develop
- challenge stereotypes and understand that opportunities should be open to everyone
- make links between their learning in school and future opportunities
- understand the importance of STEM and wider transferable skills
- communicate confidently with adults, including employers and visitors
- recognise positive workplace skills and behaviours, including teamwork, reliability and problem-solving

2. Purpose and aims

Our aims:

Westacre Middle School is committed to helping pupils develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to explore future possibilities and prepare for the next stages of their education and, ultimately, the world of work.

Our careers programme is progressive, inclusive and age-appropriate. Careers learning is embedded across school life through curriculum subjects, PSHE, assemblies, visits, employer encounters, projects and dedicated careers activities.

Our careers programme aims to:

- raise aspirations and broaden pupils' horizons
- provide meaningful and age-appropriate experiences of careers and the world of work
- make clear links between curriculum learning, pupils' interests and future opportunities
- introduce pupils to the range of education and training pathways available to them;
- challenge stereotypes and promote equality of opportunity
- ensure all pupils can access and benefit from careers education, with appropriate support to meet individual needs
- work with parents and carers, employers, education and training providers, and the Worcestershire Careers Hub to enrich pupils' careers learning
- provide a progressive programme that is regularly reviewed and developed using feedback from pupils and the wider school community.

Through this approach, we aim to raise aspirations, broaden horizons and give every pupil a positive foundation for making informed decisions about their future.

3. Careers leadership and responsibilities

Strategic Careers Leaders

The school has named Careers Leaders who coordinate the careers programme and provide both the Headteacher and the governing body with regular updates on the Careers Strategy at Westacre Middle School. They also work closely with the Worcestershire Careers Hub, our assigned Enterprise Adviser and local employers to deliver the strategy.

CAREERS LEADERS	Mrs A Barker-Miles and Mrs K Bullard Telephone: 01905 772795 Email: office@westacre.worcs.sch.uk
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Who?	What do they do?
Headteacher / SLT	Provide support, appropriate resources and ensure careers is linked to school priorities.
Governing Body / Link Governor	Provide strategic challenge and oversight and review the impact of the careers programme.
Careers Leader	Plan, coordinate and evaluate the programme; work with staff, families, employers, providers and the Careers Hub; report progress.
Teaching Staff	Make relevant links between curriculum learning, skills and careers and support pupil reflection.
SENDCO / Pastoral Team	Help identify barriers and ensure careers activities and information are accessible and appropriately tailored.
Enterprise Adviser / Careers Hub	Support employer engagement, strategic development and progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks.
Parents and Carers	Discuss aspirations and pathways, use information shared by school and contribute to careers activities where appropriate.

4. Our current careers provision

Westacre already provides a wide range of careers-related learning. The updated strategy keeps these strengths while making the intended learning and Gatsby links clearer.

Years 5 and 6

- Careers links woven through curriculum lessons.
- Visiting speakers, employers and expert judges.
- Careers Day with a range of careers and practical activities.
- Teamwork, communication and problem-solving activities.
- Age-appropriate discussion of stereotypes, skills and the changing world of work.

Year 7

- Dedicated PSHE careers and employment learning.
- Curriculum-career links across subjects.
- Worcestershire Skills Showcase, and similar careers events where available.
- Big Bang / STEM careers experiences where available.
- Careers Day, including CV/application awareness, wages/cost of living and interview skills at an age-appropriate level.
- Futures Day exploring personal skills and future pathways.
- Enterprise Project developing creativity, teamwork and enterprise skills.
- Encounters with employers, employees and education providers.

Partnerships

The school will continue to work with:

- Worcestershire Careers Hub and Careers & Enterprise Company support
- Local employers and the business community
- Further and higher education providers;
- Training and apprenticeship providers where age-appropriate;
- Parents and carers
- Receiving schools to support progression and transition.

5. Objectives for 2026–2027

1. Provide a clear and progressive careers programme for Years 5–7

To be supported by a published progression framework with clear aims and learning outcomes that build pupils' careers knowledge, skills, confidence and aspirations as they move through the school.

Gatsby Benchmark 1

2. Ensure pupils understand the full range of future pathways

Including further and higher education, apprenticeships, technical education and other vocational routes, so they can make informed choices at key transition points.

Gatsby Benchmarks 2 and 7

3. Raise the profile of careers across the whole school

Ensure careers education continues to be visible across the school and closely linked to the curriculum, personal development, wellbeing and wider school improvement priorities.

Gatsby Benchmark 1

4. Continue to embed careers learning across all curriculum areas

Ensure all subjects make meaningful careers links explicit to pupils throughout the year, helping them understand how their learning, knowledge and skills relate to future careers and opportunities, including the wide range of pathways linked to STEM.

Gatsby Benchmark 4

5. Raise aspirations and challenge stereotypes

Ensure pupils encounter a diverse range of people, careers, sectors and pathways, and develop an understanding of how stereotypical thinking can influence career choices and aspirations.

Gatsby Benchmark 3

6. Provide meaningful encounters with employers, employees and training providers

Ensure pupils have opportunities to learn about the world of work, employability skills and different career pathways, with every Year 7 pupil having at least one meaningful employer encounter.

Gatsby Benchmark 5

7. Develop age-appropriate employer and workplace learning

Strengthen opportunities in Years 5 and 6 for pupils to learn about employers and workplaces, while ensuring pupils are prepared for careers encounters and supported to reflect on what they have learned.

Gatsby Benchmarks 5 and 6

8. Ensure careers provision is inclusive and meets the needs of every pupil

Track participation in key careers activities and experiences on Compass+ to ensure all pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, receive appropriate support and access to all opportunities.

Gatsby Benchmark 3

9. Strengthen parent and carer engagement with careers education

Provide parents and carers with appropriate careers and labour market information, helping them understand future pathways and support their child's aspirations and future choices.

Gatsby Benchmark 2

10. Evaluate and continually improve careers provision

Use pupil voice, stakeholder feedback, participation information and Gatsby/Compass review findings to identify strengths, address gaps and continually improve the quality and impact of careers provision.

Gatsby Benchmark 1

6. The updated Gatsby Benchmarks

The eight Gatsby Benchmarks remain the core framework for good careers guidance. The wording below is kept simple so that staff, pupils, parents and governors can quickly understand what each benchmark means for Westacre.

1

A stable careers programme

What this means: Have a planned, progressive programme that is backed by leaders and governors, understood by the school community, published and regularly evaluated.

At Westacre we will:

- Publish the programme and key contacts.
- Set clear learning outcomes.
- Engage parents and carers.
- Review impact annually.

2

Learning from career and labour market information

What this means: Help pupils use reliable, up-to-date information about careers, pathways and the labour market. Help parents and carers use it too.

At Westacre we will:

- Use local and national examples.
- Teach pupils how to ask questions of careers information.
- Share accessible information with families.

3

Addressing the needs of each young person

What this means: Tailor careers support to pupils' aspirations, needs and barriers so that every pupil can take part and aim high.

At Westacre we will:

- Monitor participation.
- Provide SEND adaptations and additional support.
- Challenge stereotypes and assumptions.
- Use pupil voice and aspirations.

4

Linking curriculum learning to careers

What this means: Help every pupil understand how the knowledge and skills learned in subjects connect to future study and careers.

At Westacre we will:

- Make careers links visible in every subject.
- Identify transferable skills.
- Use real-world and employer contexts where useful.

5

Encounters with employers and employees

What this means: From age 11, pupils should have at least one meaningful employer encounter each year.

At Westacre we will:

- Guarantee a meaningful encounter for Year 7.
- Include two-way interaction.
- Build in reflection afterwards.

6

Experiences of workplaces

What this means: Give pupils first-hand insight into workplaces and working life as part of their wider careers journey.

At Westacre we will:

- Use workplace visits or employer-led experiences where appropriate.
- Make the purpose clear.
- Include interaction and reflection.

7

Encounters with further and higher education

What this means: Help pupils understand the full range of future learning routes, including academic, technical and vocational options.

At Westacre we will:

- Explore different options for further education, higher education, technical education and apprenticeships in Year 7.
- Use visitors and transition activities.

8

Personal guidance

What this means: Ensure pupils can access appropriate individual careers support as they progress towards significant choices.

At Westacre we will:

- Provide individual signposting and support appropriate to Years 5–7.
- Share relevant information at transition.
- Recognise that formal personal guidance by age 16 occurs later in pupils' careers journey.

7. Careers programme: Years 5–7

Year	Focus	Examples	Gatsby
5	Discover possibilities	Curriculum links; Careers Day; visitors/expert judges; teamwork and skills; stereotypes and aspirations.	1,3,4,5
6	Connect learning to work	Curriculum links; employer/employee talks; Careers Day; real-world projects; local sectors; future skills; transition learning.	1,2,3,4,5,6
7	Explore pathways and prepare for transition	PSHE careers unit; LMI; employer encounters; Skills Showcase; STEM events; Careers Day; Futures Day; enterprise; FE/HE/technical/apprenticeship awareness.	1-8 as appropriate

Planned annual cycle

Autumn	Set aspirations and skills; Year 7 PSHE careers learning; employer/visitor encounters; curriculum links; Careers Hub planning.
Spring	Careers Day / Futures activities; Skills Showcase where available; employer encounters; pathway and LMI learning.
Summer	STEM / Big Bang-style opportunities where available; enterprise and workplace learning; transition reflection; evaluation and next-year planning.

8. Making encounters meaningful

A careers activity should do more than simply take place. For employer, workplace and education encounters, Westacre will use the same simple four-step approach:

1. PURPOSE	What do we want pupils to learn?
2. PREPARE	What do pupils need to know beforehand and what questions could they ask?
3. INTERACT	How will pupils have genuine two-way interaction rather than only listen?
4. REFLECT	What did pupils learn, what surprised them and what will they remember?

9. Inclusion, parents and carers

Inclusion

Westacre will promote high aspirations and ambitious futures for every pupil. Careers provision will be inclusive, responsive and designed to ensure that all pupils are supported to explore and pursue the full range of opportunities available to them.

- Promote participation in key careers activities and provide flexible opportunities to ensure every pupil can benefit from important experiences.
- Provide accessible, personalised information, preparation and communication to enable pupils with SEND to engage fully and confidently.
- Use a diverse range of role models, visitors, examples and resources to broaden horizons, celebrate possibility and challenge stereotypes.
- Build on our knowledge of each pupil's aspirations, strengths and individual circumstances to provide tailored guidance and support that helps them take positive next steps.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers are a major influence on young people's thinking about the future. The school will make careers information easy for families to access and understand.

- Publish the careers programme and key contact details.
- Share simple information about pathways and labour market information.
- Explain terms such as apprenticeships, technical education and vocational routes.
- Invite feedback and, where appropriate, parent/carers involvement in careers activities.

10. Measuring impact

Evaluation of our careers programme enables us to assess what we do, identify areas for improvement and provide stakeholders with a clear summary of its impact.

What we check	Evidence	When
Pupil learning and confidence	Pupil reflection, pupil voice, simple check-ins / questionnaires	After key activities / annually
Participation and inclusion	Participation by year group and key groups; catch-up records	Termly
Quality of encounters	Pupil and employer/provider feedback	After encounters
Curriculum links	Subject audit / curriculum map	Annually
Parent/carers engagement	Feedback, survey responses, engagement with information	Annually
Strategic progress	Compass/Compass+ review and governor report	Every July. Next review: July 2027

11. Action plan 2026–2027

Priority	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Gatsby Benchmark(s)
1	Publish and implement a Years 5–7 careers programme and progression framework, with clear aims and age-appropriate learning outcomes that demonstrate progression across the school.	Careers Leader	Spring 2027	1
2	Strengthen pupils' understanding of future pathways by ensuring the careers programme includes appropriate opportunities to learn about further and higher education, apprenticeships, technical education and vocational routes.	Careers Leader / Staff	Across the year	2, 7
3	Raise the profile of careers across the whole school by ensuring careers is visible within the curriculum, personal development programme, school communications and relevant school improvement priorities.	Careers Leader / SLT	Across the year	1
4	Complete a subject careers-link audit and support subject leaders to identify and make meaningful careers links explicit to pupils throughout the year, including links to STEM careers.	Subject Leaders / Careers Leader	Spring 2027	4
5	Raise aspirations and challenge stereotypes by reviewing careers activities, resources and role models to ensure pupils encounter a diverse range of people, careers, sectors and pathways.	Careers Leader / Staff	Across the year	3
6	Ensure every Year 7 pupil has at least one meaningful employer encounter and strengthen age-appropriate employer engagement opportunities within Years 5 and 6.	Careers Leader	Across the year	5
7	Strengthen preparation and reflection around careers encounters by using a consistent Purpose–Prepare–Interact–Reflect approach for key employer, workplace and education encounters.	Careers Leader / Staff	Autumn 2026 onwards	5, 6, 7
8	Track participation in key careers opportunities for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged, vulnerable and absent pupils, identifying and addressing gaps to ensure that all pupils have access to all opportunities.	Careers Leader / SENDCO / Pastoral	Termly	3
9	Strengthen parent and carer engagement by sharing accessible information about career pathways, apprenticeships, further and higher education and relevant labour market information.	Careers Leader	Termly	2, 7
10	Evaluate and improve careers provision using pupil voice, stakeholder feedback and Gatsby/Compass review information, with progress and priorities reported to SLT and governors.	Careers Leader / Link Governor / SLT	Termly review / Summer 2027 evaluation	1–8

This action plan supports the school's Careers Strategy aims and provides clear actions for developing careers provision in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance.

Supporting Actions

The school will maintain up-to-date careers information on the school website, including named careers contacts, relevant policies and statements, provider access information and useful careers, education and training links.

Progress against the action plan will be reviewed during the year, with evidence gathered to demonstrate impact and inform priorities for the following academic year.

12. Provider access and transition

Pupil entitlement

Department for Education statutory careers guidance applies to pupils from Year 7. Westacre provides impartial, age-appropriate careers information and guidance to help pupils understand the range of routes into future education, training and employment, including academic, technical, vocational and apprenticeship pathways.

The statutory provider access requirement applies to pupils in Years 8–13 and requires schools educating pupils in those year groups to provide at least six opportunities to meet providers of technical education or apprenticeships at specified points during Years 8–13.

As Westacre currently educates pupils up to Year 7, the statutory six provider encounters do not fall within the year groups provided by the school. Responsibility for meeting those statutory requirements therefore rests with pupils' subsequent school or education provider.

WESTACRE APPROACH

WESTACRE APPROACH	Year 7 pupils are introduced, in an age-appropriate and impartial way, to the full range of future education and training pathways, including academic, technical, vocational and apprenticeship routes. As part of the school's careers programme, pupils are also provided with opportunities to learn from employers and people in the workplace and, where appropriate, to meet education and training providers and other organisations. These activities are intended to broaden pupils' understanding of the world of work and the different routes available to them as they progress through education
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Provider Access

Although the statutory provider access encounters apply from Year 8, Westacre welcomes appropriate engagement from education and training providers, employers and other organisations where this supports the school's Year 7 careers programme.

Providers wishing to support the school's careers programme should contact the designated Careers Leaders, who will share the request with the Senior Leadership Team.

Careers Leaders: Mrs A Barker-Miles and Mrs K Bullard

Telephone: 01905 772795

Email: office@westacre.worcs.sch.uk

Requests will be considered fairly, taking account of:

- the age, needs and best interests of pupils
- safeguarding requirements
- relevance to the school's careers programme
- curriculum and timetable commitments
- staffing and room availability; and
- other planned school activities.

Where an activity is agreed, the school will provide suitable space and, where available and required, appropriate ICT or other equipment. All visiting providers must comply with the school's safeguarding and visitor procedures.

With the school's agreement, providers may also supply appropriate prospectuses, course information or other careers literature for pupils.

Transition

Westacre supports pupils to reflect on their interests, strengths, skills and careers learning as they prepare to move to their next school.

Pupils are encouraged to understand that their future options include a range of academic, technical, vocational and apprenticeship pathways and that their careers education will continue as they progress through secondary education.

Where appropriate and in accordance with the school's information-sharing and data-protection arrangements, relevant information may be shared with receiving schools to support continuity and progression in careers education.

13. Feedback and useful links

Feedback

Westacre welcomes feedback from pupils, parents/carers, staff, employers and education providers. Feedback will be used to improve the careers programme.

Careers Leaders: Mrs A Barker-Miles and Mrs K Bullard
Telephone: 01905 772795
Email: office@westacre.worcs.sch.uk

Useful links / resources

Gatsby Benchmarks	www.gatsbybenchmarks.org.uk
Department for Education – Careers guidance and access for education and training providers	www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools
The Careers & Enterprise Company	www.careersandenterprise.co.uk
Worcestershire Careers Hub	Local Careers Hub support and labour market information
UCAS	www.ucas.com
University of Worcester	www.worcester.ac.uk

Annual review checklist for review July 2027

- Is the programme published and easy to understand?
- Are learning outcomes clear and progressive from Year 5 to Year 7?
- Are careers links visible across subjects?
- Has every Year 7 pupil had a meaningful employer encounter?
- Are pupils prepared for and given time to reflect on encounters?
- Are parents/carers supported to understand pathways and careers information?
- Can we show that pupils with SEND and disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils are included?
- Have pupil voice and feedback influenced improvements?
- Have governors reviewed impact and next steps?
- Are all named contacts, dates, website information and useful links current?