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Reaccreditation Report – Platinum (9th Assessment) Shirebrook Academy

Valid from	27 th March 2025
Valid until	26 th March 2027
Assessed by	John Ambrose
Verified by	Tracey Taylor

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“Congratulations on achieving the Quality in Careers Standard which fully incorporates the Gatsby Benchmarks. This is an excellent achievement and recognises the quality and breadth of your careers provision. As you are “making good progress” towards meeting the Benchmarks and all of the accreditation criteria, as we comment upon below in the detail of your report, we will continue to review your progress with the Benchmarks, and the additional career-related learning outcomes for students which the national Standard requires, through our annual reviews with you.”

Assessment Information

Assessor: John Ambrose

Learning Organisation: Shirebrook Academy, Common Lane, Shirebrook, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG20 8QF

Career leader including email address: Kelly Brown, KBrown@shirebrookacademy.org

Career Mark Support Adviser (if used or Trust/Project Organisation linked to)
ACET Trust

Date of review of Assessment Portfolio (Part 1): 12th March 2025

Date of On-Site Assessment (Part 2): 27th March 2025 via Teams

Summary of Process to Achieve the Standard using Career Mark

1. **SUBMIT COMPASS self-assessment:** If possible, organisation submits their latest Compass report at the beginning of their membership to receive a certificate of commitment.
2. **PREPARE EVIDENCE PORTFOLIO:** review Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance provision against the four components of Career Mark components which incorporate the national criteria for the Quality in Careers Standard and Gatsby Benchmarks. Write a description and prepare evidence against the criteria detailed in each of these components (evidence can be submitted in a range of formats)
 - **Management** - measures the effectiveness of systems for planning, managing and integrating career education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG.)
 - **Information** - measures the accessibility, relevance, importance and effectiveness of information and the acquisition of skills to research and evaluate information to be able to make well informed and realistic career decisions.
 - **Advice and Guidance** - measures the effectiveness of an integrated programme of advice, guidance and support including provision by a qualified level 6 guidance practitioner.

- **Career Learning** - measures how effectively the curriculum supports the development of learners' knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes helping them towards being 'work ready'.

The fifth component, **Learning Outcomes**, is assessed on the assessment day via learners.

- 3. ASSESSMENT UNDERTAKEN:** The assessment process is undertaken in two stages:
 - A. Desktop assessment.** The assessor reviews the 'description grids' and **supporting evidence** against the national criteria. Once satisfied the assessor plans with the learning provider for the **live assessment day**.
 - B. Assessment day.** This is for discussions/interviews with learners on the organisation's site. (Normally using virtual platforms though at an additional cost onsite assessment may be arranged). A first assessment takes a full day, but subsequent reaccreditation assessments are shorter. The live assessment day focusses mainly on the fifth component of the Career Mark approach, Learner Outcomes: evaluating learners' knowledge, competence and attitudes towards career management and development.
 - C. ASSESSMENT OUTCOME:** The desktop assessment and live discussions enable the assessor to obtain a clear picture of provision and its impact. An informed professional judgement is then made regarding meeting the national Quality in Careers Standard using the Career Mark approach. A report is written including the assessor judgement and recommendations. The report is then shared with the organisation and once agreed verified by a Complete-Careers Career Mark internal verifier.
- 4. AWARD:** Once verified, learning providers receive their standard certificate, plaque, final verified report and use of both the Quality in Careers Standard and Career Mark logos. The report includes a choice of summary paragraph noting whether the provider meets all eight Gatsby benchmarks or is still making good progress towards them. Deferred providers will receive a comprehensive report outlining the areas for improvement before resubmission.
- 5. REVIEW AND REACCREDITATION:** A review of progress against the recommendations is offered by Complete Careers Career Mark staff after a year. This enables the organisation to review progress towards recommendations from their last assessment. After two years, the learning provider is required to seek reaccreditation of the award and to demonstrate continuous improvement.
- 6. LONG TERM COMMITMENT:** Learning providers who successfully achieve a second consecutive revalidation (third assessment) will be awarded with the Complete Careers Career Mark Gold Award. The process for this is identical to a revalidation, but the Gold Award rewards long term commitment to a quality externally validated career programme. Continued long term commitment leads to the Platinum Award after a fifth successful revalidation (sixth successful assessment).

Introducing the Report Tables

There are two tables in the report to summarise judgements from the assessment process:

1. Quality in Careers Standard Assessment Summary Grid – based on Compass self-assessment.

This table focuses on the self-assessment data from the learning provider's most recent Compass assessment against the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. The assessor does not alter the information provided by the learning provider even if their judgement is not the same. The self-assessment should be no more than three months old.

2. Quality in Careers Standard Assessor Summary Table – holistic summary of CEIAG provision

The assessment process requires an assessor to review all elements of a learning provider's CEIAG provision. This table allows the assessor to summarise the areas of strength and areas for development, listed in the Career Mark criteria. This may not be the same as the Compass self-assessment.

Ticks against criteria are used to indicate if the learning provider has met the criteria fully or if further developments are required. Further developments will either be recorded as a 'requirement' or 'recommendation' later in the report or will form part of the improvement plan if the assessment outcome is a deferral.

Abbreviations used in the report.

ACET	Aston Community Education Trust
AI	Artificial Intelligence
C	Career Learning (Description Grid component)
CDI	Career Development Institute
CEC	Careers and Enterprise Company
CEIAG	Career education, information advice and guidance
CM	Career Mark approach
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
FE/HE	Further Education/Higher Education
G	Advice, Guidance and support (Description Grid component)
GB	Gatsby Benchmarks
I	Information (Description Grid component)
LAC	Looked After Child
M	Management (Description Grid component)
PD	Personal Development
PE	Physical Education
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic education
QICs	Quality in Careers Standard (Criteria for the Standard)
R	Recommendations
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths

Introduction to the Organisation

Shirebrook Academy opened in September 2010 replacing Shirebrook Community School. It moved to its new purpose built site in April 2013. The school shares its site with Stubbin Wood Special School. In May 2017 the Academy became part of the ACET Multi-Academy Trust.

The school has approximately 820 students from Y7-11. With 351 students eligible for support through Pupil Premium this is almost twice the national average. The catchment area of Shirebrook and neighbouring villages are characterised by high levels of social and economic deprivation. There are a significant number of students of White British heritage with approximately 15% of the student population being from other ethnic backgrounds and 67 of 110 students being of Eastern European Ethnicity. We currently have 213 students with SEND or which 23 of those hold an EHCP. Shirebrook currently has three LAC students on roll.

In the latest Ofsted report during December 2022, we were graded 'Requires Improvement' overall, but the Personal Development provision was graded 'Good'. In the summary of strengths in the 2022 report it stated that "Careers education is a strength of the school. Pupils receive high-quality careers advice. They receive information about a range of post-16 courses, including academic and non-academic routes. This enables them to make the right choices and move on to appropriate next steps".

The Careers Education programme is co-ordinated by Kelly Brown, Personal Development & Careers Co-ordinator, in collaboration with Pastoral Learning Leads, SLT and external agencies. Careers Education is delivered during Personal Development days (when the normal timetable is suspended for the whole study body to work with form tutors and receive external delivery), and Personal Development lessons (two form lessons per week for Y7-10, delivered by form tutors). The Personal Development Scheme of Work incorporates the careers education topics.

Work experience placements take place for the whole of Y10 in July. Preparation work and de-brief activities are planned to help students make the most of this opportunity. In 2024, 146 students were placed from 155 in the year group, demonstrating the success of the programme.

The Academy has contracted with Chesterfield College to provide a careers guidance service for two days per week. Students can self-refer for individual guidance via their form tutors, use a library drop-in, and will be offered and scheduled a 1:1 career meet to discuss Post 16 options. Initially students are asked to complete a 'Y11 Careers Interview Questionnaire' to gain current status from students in regards Post 16 plans. The Careers Adviser also supports groupwork delivery both on an Ad hoc basis dependent on need and on Personal Development days, offering application workshops and attending parental events.

Quality in Careers Standard Assessment Summary Table

Learning Organisation Compass Self-Assessment

National criteria section headings for the Quality in Careers Standard	Insufficient progress towards fully meeting the Standard	Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria	Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria
1. A stable careers programme			✓
2. Learning from career and labour market information			✓
3. Addressing the needs of each student		✓	
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers			✓
5. Encounters with employers and employees			✓
6. Experiences of workplaces			✓
7. Encounters with further and higher education		✓	
8. Personal guidance			✓

Notes

- (i) Achieving the Standard, making good progress towards fully meeting the national criteria = Evidence of good progress in this section of the Standard's national criteria and robust plans in place to fully meet this section of the national criteria within two-three years. Has met or partially met the expectations of the relevant Gatsby Benchmark indicators.

Assessment Schedule

Time	Meeting
09:00	Meet with PD and Careers Coordinator and SLT Careers Lead
10:00	Focus group with year 8 learners
10:30	Break
11:00	Focus group with year 9 learners
11:45	Focus group with year 10 learners
12:30	Focus group with year 11 learners
13:15	Lunch and assessor reflection time
14:30	Feedback session with PD and Careers Coordinator and SLT Lead
15:00	Close

Quality in Careers Standard Assessor Summary Table

Gatsby QiCs	Career Mark & Quality in Careers Standard Assessment Criteria	Met	Development identified
1.1 1.1i-iv	M1 – National requirements & good practice guidance M7 – CEIAG trained & competent staff	✓	
1.2 1.2i	M5 – Learner entitlement to CEIAG	✓	
1.3 1.1ii	M9 – Monitoring, review and evaluation for continuous development		✓ (R4)
2.1 2.1i,3.1i	C2 – Planned programme of careers education I2 – Accessibility of & competence to use resources		✓ (R1 & 2)
2.2 2.2i	M6 – Involving and supporting families and carers in CEIAG provision	✓	
3.1 3.2ii	C2 – Planned programme of careers education M4 – CEIAG provision based on learner needs G1 – Identification and referral systems		✓ (R1 & 2)
3.2 3.3ii	G3 – Coordinating and tracking	✓	
3.3 3.2i,3.3i	G4 – Career action planning and target setting	✓	
3.4 3.4iv	M2 – Measuring impact of CEIAG on progression	✓	
4.1 4.1i	C3 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – subject links to careers		✓ (R3)
5.1 1.2iv,3.2iii, iv 5.1i-iii,6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement M8 Partnership arrangements	✓	
5.2 5.1i-iii,6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement (encounters with employers)	✓	
6.1 5.1i-iii, 6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement (experiences of workplace pre 16)	✓	
6.2 5.1i-iii, 6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement (experiences of workplace pre 18)	N/A	
7.1 1.2iv,3.2iii, iv 7.1i-ii, 7.2i-ii	C5 – Coordinating curriculum inputs encounters FE/HE M8 – Partnership arrangements	✓	
7.2 7.1i-ii,7.2i-ii	C5 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – encounters with FE/HE	✓	
8.1 8	G2 – Independent and impartial careers advice and guidance	✓	
CM + 1.1, 1.2	M3 – Structure and process for leading, managing and delivering CEIAG	✓	
CM + 2,3	C1 – Curriculum overview/model for CEIAG	✓	
CM + 1,3	I1 – Systems, content & processes	✓	
CM +	G5 - Facilities	✓	
CM + 4,5,6,7,8	O – Learner Outcomes	✓	

Recommendations later in this report are linked to the 'Dev. Identified' column of this table using R1, R2 etc. they will not necessarily be statutory requirements.

Standard O – Learning Outcomes

General remarks about learners’ overall capacity to demonstrate skills, knowledge and attitudes to be effective career planners.

The assessor engaged with Shirebrook Academy learners in small groups of four to five learners per group. Focus group sessions were carried out with year 8s, 9s, 10s and 11s. Teams was used as the platform to host the remote assessment. This was most successful with the assessor able to build rapport while building the evidence of outcomes needed for the assessment. The assessor used the national best practice 2021 CDI framework to review learners’ age-appropriate competencies against the six areas of career learning. Learners at Shirebrook Academy overall could evidence a good understanding of career development. Their behaviour and attitudes were impeccable throughout the day.

CDI Career Development Framework outcomes headings are summarised in the illustration below:



Grow throughout life

The assessor asked year 8 students how they would describe themselves to someone they don’t know. From their responses the learners shared a good overall self-awareness with the following examples:

- *‘I’m sporty, intelligent and athletic’.*
- *‘I’m trustworthy and hardworking and athletic’.*
- *‘Funny and trustworthy’*
- *‘I’m not very academic or sporty, but I’m good at keeping secrets.’*

Year 8s were asked to describe the difference between a skill and a quality. One group member stated how *‘a skill is something you can learn, where as a quality is something you*

can do naturally. Like you can naturally have a good memory or be artistic. A skill is something you can practice to do perfectly'.

Year 9 learners were asked to share two of their skills or qualities. Overall the group found this quite difficult. One group member said he was good at working in small groups and how he can keep groups on task. Another member mentioned communication skills. The other group members spoke about school subjects like Maths, PE and Art. This theme was similar when asked about weaknesses. Two group members mentioned Maths or English, whereas others had a more holistic approach to include public speaking and presentations.

The year 10 group were tasked to provide examples of skills they have that employers would value. These included:

- *'I am confident, good at talking to people and am friendly'.*
- *'I am friendly, good at keeping eye contact and communication in general'.*
- *'I am good at getting my point across and debating'.*
- *I am a good problem solver, communicator and am well organised'.*

Balance life and work

Year 9 learners were asked to describe some of the things people enjoy about work. Examples shared included:

- *'The environment they work it'.*
- *'Following their passion or interests'.*
- *'Working with good colleagues'.*
- *'Good pay'.*
- *'Work/life balance'.*
- *'Not too much stress or pressure.'*

The above responses are all most valid, but the assessor was hoping examples could evidence a deeper understanding of how values and causes could be actualised through work.

The year 9 group described 'career' as '*something they did in the future'.* '*It is post 16'.* They described it as '*jobs' and how they get jobs.* They didn't necessarily make the connection that they were already engaged in career development and their career has already begun.

Year 10 learners were asked a similar question about 'career'. Overall answers were limited to '*job' , 'apprenticeships' , 'college and university' , though one learner stated, 'something that changes all the time'.*

Explore possibilities

Year 8 learners could describe a range of opportunities they had experienced to engage in career learning. They spoke about their PD day in year 8 with a focus on STEM and careers with various talks on college and university life and the courses and societies they could be part of. Year 8 also shared how careers and futures are often discussed as a topic of

assemblies. The group later explained how they learned about things like apprenticeships and A Levels in tutor time, but they struggled initially to make the connection. Year 9 learners described how they had been discovering more on the options process as part of their PD lessons. They had experienced a PD day with a broader theme of financial capability. Some of the group also experienced a STEM visit to an employer in Rotherham, that they valued.

Year 8 learners could all share ideas for their future pathways with examples including *'Police Officer', 'Archaeologist', and 'Forensic scientist'*. The year 9 group could also describe a range of aspirations they had for the future, such as *'Doctor', 'engineer', 'construction', 'stage and light technician' and 'social worker'*.

All learners in years 9, 10 and 11 were familiar with T Levels and were fully aware of apprenticeships. When asked about the difference between an A Level and T Level one learner said *'a T Level is worth 3 A Levels. They are more vocational, a combination between an A Level and a BTEC. You get hands on experience and work experience.'*

Create opportunities

Year 8 learners were asked about apprenticeships and T Levels. The group had a good understanding of apprenticeships, with one learner explaining how *'80% of the time you are at work and the other 20% you are learning.'* None of the group had heard of a T Level.

When asked how learners could find out more about their aspirations the year 8 learners mentioned how they could approach their teachers or speak to Ms Brown or Ms Evans.

Access to Ms Brown and Ms Evans was a consistent theme of strength throughout the focus groups. This was referenced for option choices, work experience placements, post 16 options and applications, or just drop-in sessions in the library for questions.

The assessor asked the year 8 group if they had heard of Unifrog, and they recalled doing some quizzes on this last year. Year 9 also needed prompting about Unifrog and were quite ambiguous in what they had used it for. The year 11 group did not state Unifrog as a source they could use to find out more about career pathways. They did express that they had used it when asked but conceded that they hadn't logged in for a while. By contrast the year 10 group were fully engaged in the Unifrog platform. They had accessed the quizzes and found a wealth of information about careers and different pathways.

Year 10 learners had already arranged their work experience placement and were looking forward to the event. The year 11 group reflected favourably on their work experience and the learning they had gained from it.

Manage career

Learners from year 8 upwards knew Ms Evans and recognised her as someone they could talk to in school, as well as career drop-ins in the library with Ms Brown.

Year 9 learners were invited by the assessor to share their personal achievements (anything they feel particularly proud of). All of the group members spoke about school subjects like

passing Maths tests, getting good marks in Art, getting better at Maths or PE. The assessor wanted to see if any of the group could recognise achievements outside of the classroom.

Year 10 learners were brimming with confidence and spoke positively about two impactful events they had encountered this year. The first was a ‘talk the talk’ PD day, hosted by external specialists. They day had really helped learners to consider their communication skills, body language, eye contact and essentially how to make a good impression. The second was a recent mock interview day with local employers. The group found this ‘*really helpful*’, especially the individual feedback they received on their performance. Year 10 learners referenced how they have been learning about transferable skills as part of their tutorials.

The entire year 11 group were fully aware of their next steps after year 11. They all had offers and conditional offers for a preferred plan and a back-up plan. The group could evidence a wide range of intended destinations and types of courses.

The assessor asked the year 11 group about CVs. All of the group had received support in PD about what should be in a CV and helping them with the basics of how to construct a CV. Only one if the group (of five) had a completed CV.

See the big picture

When asked about career connectivity in their subject lessons, only English came across as a good practice subject where aspects of their work were commonly associated with jobs – such as descriptive writing and songwriting etc. References however were made to career displays in or outside classrooms, such as in Art.

Learners in the year 10 and 11 groups were asked about trends in the labour market to include global, national and local. Both groups spoke about trends in technology and AI and the opportunities and threats associated with jobs. Neither group were familiar with local opportunities and what the growth areas are in the region.

Summary and Judgement

Shirebrook Academy's Vision is "A community of inspiration, excellence and opportunities for all to grow" - this is synonymous with the vision and values of the Careers Education Programme where we are "committed to raising standards of attainment and providing students with the skills needed to progress successfully into further education, employment, and adult life." The careers team are currently working to refine the careers mission further to make it more learner friendly.

The academy experienced a short period of instability for careers after the long-standing previous Careers Leader left for pastures new. There is now a dedicated careers team who are passionate about making a difference. The SLT Lead is the Assistant Vic Principal for Personal Development and has recently started the CEC funded Career Leader course. The Personal Development and Careers Coordinator is settled into the role and has made various positive developments already. She is considering further CPD for the role. The Academy commissions considerable days of guidance support. This is working well and learners from year 8 upwards could identify the careers team by name and had accessed for options advice, work experience, post 16 options and broader support.

The flagship to Shirebrook Academy's careers programme is arguably the work experience and inspiration events. The vast majority of year 10s experience a week of in person work experience, which is quite an achievement given the challenges employers face currently. Every year group experience a Personal Development collapsed timetable day dedicated to careers. The learners value the impact of these days, especially where external speakers can come into school as part of the day. The year 10s for example all spoke incredibly enthusiastically about the impact of the 'talk the talk' workshops which helped them to improve their confidence and communication skills. The year 10 group had also recently taken part in a mock interview event.

Careers features clearly within the Academy Improvement Plan under 'Personal Development' (Aim 3). There is a dedicated annual career improvement plan. The current policy would benefit from an overhaul to re-write on the focus and outlook of the new careers team. As part of this activity there is an opportunity to review the Personal Development programme to ensure career learning is sufficient and to align with national frameworks such as the PSHE association and the CDI framework.

Shirebrook Academy retains the Quality in Careers Standard fully incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks provided by the Licensed Awarding Body, Complete-Careers Career Mark, using the Career Mark approach.

This is an excellent achievement and recognises the quality and breadth of your careers provision. You are "making good progress" towards meeting the Benchmarks and the accreditation criteria, as detailed in this report. We will review your progress towards the Benchmarks, and the career-related learning outcomes for learners which the national Quality in Careers Standard requires, through annual reviews.

Recommendations

To maintain the good practice already in place and to support continuous improvement the assessor recommends the following:

Before the annual review in March 2026 the academy should:

1. **Overhaul the currently careers policy** to make sure it is serving the purpose of 'pulling together' all the careers provision at Shirebrook Academy through the lenses of 'intent, implementation and impact'. Consideration should be given to refine the careers mission in a plain English approach, suitable for learners.
2. **The Personal Development programme should be reviewed to ensure the career content is sufficient to meet learner need.** National frameworks such as PSHE Association and CDI framework should be used as a guide, taking the opportunity to map outcomes. Opportunities should be taken to ensure learners know when they are experiencing career learning in PSHE. Broader topics such as understanding self should utilise the 'Shirebrook Careers' brand to help make the connection.

Before the reaccreditation in March 2027 the academy should:

3. Take time to **plan an approach for cross-curricular engagement in careers.** Subjects and topics within subjects can do more to make clear the relevance of subject learning to later life through career pathways, skill development and further learning opportunities. The example of descriptive writing in English can act as a catalyst and the 'Shirebrook Careers' brand can be brought into every subject. Good use of staff CPD can help staff 'buy-in' to careers, recognising the value of getting more involved, helping learners to see subject relevancy without generating extra work for themselves.
4. Utilise the career policy overhaul to outline the approach to **monitor, review and evaluate all aspects of the careers provision in order to continually improve.** This will include activities such as learner voice, Future Skills Questionnaire, staff feedback, employer feedback, as well as reviewing tools such as Unifrog to ensure it is having the desired impact.