



**The Quality in Careers Standard National Quality Award for Careers Education,
Information, Advice and Guidance Provision Assessor Report.**

Learning Provider: Harmonize Academy, 7 Phillimore Road, Liverpool, L6 6DL

Named Contact: Karo Onowighose, Assistant Principal and Careers Leader, Harmonize Academy.

Email: okaro.onowighose@harmonizeacademy.org

Website: www.harmonizeacademy.org

Assessor: Kath Wyke, Quality in Careers Standard Assessor, Career Connect.

Background:

Harmonize Academy is an Outstanding Alternative Education School for students in Years 9 to 11. The Academy has a Christian ethos based on values of trust, respect, compassion and forgiveness which permeate every aspect of school life. The aim of Harmonize Academy is to provide every student with a Vision for Life through a personalised curriculum enabling them to fulfil their potential in education, life and employment.

Harmonize Academy opened in April 2013 as one of the first Alternative Provision Free Schools in the country and in March 2015 we were rated an Outstanding School by Ofsted which still stands today. Ofsted visited on 14th and 15th January 2020. *'This school succeeds where no one else can'* sums up the view of all those students who spoke with the Ofsted inspectors.

Harmonize recognises that mainstream education is not for everyone, and, through their highly innovative curriculum and caring pastoral system, they offer students the chance to thrive, achieve and improve their life chances. *'The best thing ever'* is how students describe their experience at Harmonize Academy.

The latest Ofsted report praised the Harmonize curriculum for putting *'the needs of pupils at its heart'* by offering academic subjects and a wide range of options which result in significant academic achievement. Harmonize were also commended for *'a fantastic enrichment curriculum'* which enables pupils to develop interests, contribute to the local community, and improve their well-being. Ofsted further reported that, *'Pupils develop into respectful, caring and considerate young people. This is because the school prioritises pupils' personal development extremely well'*.

Commentary:

Through the submission of a comprehensive portfolio of evidence and the latest Compass Self-Assessment report dated July 2024, Harmonize Academy, have demonstrated that they are fully meeting all the accreditation criterion for BM1 of the Gatsby Benchmarks and the Quality in Careers Standard.

GB1 and QC Requirements: A Stable (structured) Careers Programme

Harmonize Academy has provided up to date evidence for the BM1 criterion; this includes a comprehensive Careers Programme delivered to Y9-Y11 learners. The Careers Programme is in place for all learners via PSHE and is delivered three times a week.

There is evidence of a budget for Careers and there are regular meetings with SLT and the link Governor for Careers. The Careers Leader/Assistant Principal, Karo, updates staff on the programme and has plans in place to map the Careers Programme against the CDI Framework ready for delivery in the academic year 2024-25.

The Careers Programme has benefitted from an evaluation and monitoring process which has included the views of students, employers, teaching staff, and parents/carers. Whilst reviewing the Careers programme the Careers Leader have taken account of trends in Destination Data, the needs of learners and what is happening in the Labour Market and links to transition. There is also evidence of Future Skills evaluation and collation to further inform the programme.

Evidence provided confirms the commitment to providing high quality CEIAG for the students: Provider Access Legislation is adhered to and the relevant policies: Careers and Equality and Diversity Policy are shared with staff and published on the Academy website along with information for students, teachers, employers, and parents/carers. The Equality and Diversity Policy also considers the 9 Protected Characteristics outlined by the Government. Policies are approved by the Governing Body.

The Management Chart provided and available on the Academy's website, clearly outlines roles and responsibilities, demonstrating a coordinated approach to CEIAG across the Academy. There is a new Link Governor with responsibility for Careers and he has been briefed by the SLT and Careers Leader on his responsibilities and how he can continue to support the Academy effectively. Julie Jones is the Enterprise Coordinator based with LCR Careers Hub. There is commitment for Careers from all Governors; they receive an annual report on Careers provision and destinations of pupils who have left the Academy (evidence provided in the portfolio). Harmonize Academy commissions a fully qualified Careers Adviser, who holds a Level 6 guidance qualification to provide impartial and independent guidance. Career Connect ensures she keeps her CPD updated. A management structure chart is available in the portfolio showing clear lines of accountability.

There is access to up to date and relevant CEIAG resources appropriate to the needs of the students including the use of START profile, the Get Connected portal and the BeMore portal. All students work towards the **CACHE Awards** which has 5 levels ; substance misuse, alcohol awareness, sexual health awareness, mental health awareness and stress awareness and in Key stage e they do the **Young leaders Award** (KS3).

There is evidence of CPD for all staff involved in the delivery of CEIAG in the portfolio and records of training events that have taken place. Staff also complete an Off Site proforma when students are taken out and this clearly states the Careers element of the visit.

Karo has completed a recent Audit of Careers delivery across the curriculum and is committed to repeating this on an annual basis to further inform the Careers Programme review processes. Karo is also introducing the CDI Audit process and plans to use this tool on an annual basis to ensure the programme remains engaging and relevant to all.

There is evidence in the portfolio of careers lessons with clear learning objectives and outcomes, schemes of work are available in the evidence portfolio, these schemes of work are updated every year as part of the wider Careers Programme review processes. The CEIAG programme is currently being mapped against the Gatsby benchmarks and the CDI framework, ready for delivery in the 2024-25 academic year.

Students are supported in Y11 for preparing for and taking part in work experience; the Academy secures placements and learners are accompanied on placement. Comprehensive evidence is available in the Portfolio to demonstrate the complete WEX process. There is a House system on a Friday afternoon whereby students have their own mentor who supports them with their Career ideas.

Leanne Morrey from Career Connect provides independent and impartial CEIAG each Monday for learners. Leanne has provided her level 6 guidance certificate as evidence and there is a copy in the portfolio.

Harmonize Academy have SLAs with Career Connect, We Are with You (previously Addaction), Everyman and LIPA etc. Review meeting reflects recommendations and changes.

Strengths:

The commitment from the Careers Leader is evident, and there is dedicated support from the link Governor, Enterprise Coordinator, and teaching staff. There is a newly appointed Link Governor and a newly appointed Enterprise Coordinator. CEIAG provision is well resourced and benefits from a renewed review process to ensure that it is relevant and effective to the needs of all stakeholders.

Information is available for parents via the Academy website. There is also evidence from employers from industry visits and events, including the Careers Fair which last took place in January 2024 with 20+ providers. This demonstrates how learners have prepared well for activities and provides evidence of learner engagement.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio and the latest Compass SEF (July 2024) the assessor is confident that Harmonize Academy has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 1.

SUGGESTED ACTION: Schedule in meetings with the Enterprise Coordinator and Enterprise Adviser to further enhance Careers opportunities for learners.

GB2: Learning from Careers and the Labour Market

The CEIAG programme provides clear evidence that the following areas are covered:

- *Personal Effectiveness*
- *Career Readiness*
- *Career exploration and development*
- *Employability and enterprise skills*
- *Career management*

The Academy has a comprehensive and inclusive CEIAG programme in place for all learners. They are a member of the Liverpool City Region Careers Hub and the Careers Leader attends regular inputs around the local labour market and the growth areas in the city region. The Careers Hub also provides resources to support the delivery of LMI linked Careers activities in school e.g. information on apprenticeships, supported internships. LCR BeMore portal provides a variety of LMI short films and support and there is a direct link on the website. The Academy has additional support from Career Connect. All staff receive annual CPD, and the careers programme is supported by a range of speakers both virtually and in person. There is an annual Careers Fair with representatives from local colleges, HE, Training Providers, and supported learning.

Students are also supported by a wide range of events including Options Evenings and Open Evenings. Students all benefit from an individual Action plan to further support their own Careers research/pathways. Harmonize Academy is fully compliant with Provider Access Legislation (January 2023), there is evidence of the wide range of visitors and providers.

Strengths: A comprehensive CEIAG programme which is regularly monitored (please also refer to the evidence of evaluation from students, teaching staff, employers, and parents/carers in the portfolio).

Students engage well with the range of CEIAG activities that the Academy provides; students are encouraged to use START at home. The Academy are also further developing their alumni using past students to effectively engage with current learners and have set up a system to ask students to return to speak to learners.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio and the latest Compass SEF (July 202) the assessor is confident that Harmonize Academy has fully achieved this benchmark.

SUGGESTED ACTION: No areas for development –Speak to Julie Jones to link effectively with the new Enterprise Adviser

in the new academic year or if possible before the end of the Summer term.

GB3: Addressing the needs of each student:

There's a range of evidence to illustrate how Harmonize ensure the needs of all students are met.

The Careers Leader provides access for Careers Guidance interviews for all students and students at risk of NEET are flagged to the LA Team. There are effective systems in place if learners disengage. The Education Welfare Officer visits every day to check on students. These students receive early access to one-to-one guidance support. The Academy support the effective transition for students on an individual basis, including arranging visits to learning providers and support for applications.

The Academy endeavour to raise the aspirations of all students; provider access is adhered to.

Destination Data is used effectively to identify trends. (Much of this evidence is also available and cross referenced in BM2). Analysis helps tailor visits and attendance at the Academy events such as the Careers Fair.

The Academy as an up-to-date Equality and Diversity policy, and there are data sharing agreements to ensure relevant information on students is shared with partners and providers (as appropriate). All students have access to a fully qualified Careers Adviser for a one-to-one interview and are provided with a written record of the discussion/action plan.

Strengths: Careers support is very visible to students and is embedded in all support processes across Harmonize Academy. This includes support at review meetings for learners and their parents/carers.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio and the latest Compass SEF (July 2024) the assessor is confident that Harmonize Academy has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 3.

SUGGESTED ACTION: Continue the process of evaluation, assessment and review to identify cohort need and plan.

GB 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers:

All curriculum staff receive CPD on the delivery of Careers via subjects and they have an input on LMI to ensure they are aware of the local opportunity structure and areas of growth.

Strengths: The curriculum audit has identified areas of good practice to further develop careers in the curriculum and the Academy uses a range of speakers and employer visits to support subject teaching. There's good evidence of how careers are built into the curriculum subject areas and visual displays providing insights into possible career pathways.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio, assessment meetings and the latest COMPASS SEF (July 2024) the assessor is confident that Harmonize Academy has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 4.

SUGGESTED ACTION: Continue the Curriculum Audit process to further inform, share practice and identify any gaps.

GB 5: Encounters with Employers and Employees:

There is a wide range of multi media evidence in the portfolio to demonstrate that the Academy are meeting this benchmark with a range of employer and employee encounters included as part of the CEIAG programme throughout the Academy. The programme includes an annual Careers Fair with a range of local employer representatives, participation in Apprenticeship week and Learn LIVE events.

As part of the external assessment visit, the External Assessor, Neil McCaskill will speak to two employers (this can be a short telephone interview) to confirm their effective engagement at school events. Neil will also speak to a range of students so that they can confirm their attendance at a range of employer events including the Careers Fair and external employer events. Curriculum areas have careers and employer encounters built into them, in addition to employer visits and contact with positive role models and this will be further developed with new employer contacts.

Harmonize Academy is an active members of the LCR Careers Hub and can make use of the Give an Hour employer

volunteer service to increase the number of employer/employee contacts.

Strengths: Harmonize Academy has an effective relationship with employers and students engage well with employer encounter activities; this is evidenced in the portfolio. The Academy demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that a range of encounters are experienced by students.

Harmonize Academy do invite Alumni to deliver assemblies for current students and have developed this over the last 3 years. Please refer to the Move UP and ON documents and report, sent separately via email.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio, assessment meetings and the latest COMPASS SEF (July 2024) the assessor is confident that Harmonize Academy has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 5.

GB 6: Experiences of the Workplace:

The Academy uses COMPASS + and have completed the Future Skills Questionnaire which feeds into further actions. The Academy provides a wide range of opportunities for students to take part in employer visits where possible. All experiences of the workplace are recorded and inform further developments. There is a copy of the Work Experience Dairy in the portfolio.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio, assessment meetings and the latest COMPASS SEF (July 2024) the assessor is confident that Harmonize Academy has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 6.

SUGGESTED ACTION: No areas for development; continue to support students with introductions to local employers, networks etc. and further develop external links.

GB 7: Encounters with Further and Higher Education:

Harmonize Academy has a wide range of evidence to demonstrate that they are meeting this benchmark, they provide a range of local colleges and university visits and speakers that are part of the CEIAG programme. This includes the Careers Fair information, visits and assemblies.

All students are supported to visit local colleges and specialist provision where appropriate. The Academy has well established links to colleges and universities, and they provide access to speakers. The Academy also provides students with information about all pathways as appropriate as part of the CEIAG programme.

Strengths: All staff at Harmonize Academy help to raise the aspirations of all students and prepare them well for their future pathways.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio, assessment meetings and the latest COMPASS SEF (July 2024) the assessor is confident that Harmonize Academy has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 7.

SUGGESTED ACTION: No areas for development. Continue to involve local colleges, apprenticeship providers and universities in a range of activities to support the CEIAG programme.

GB 8: Personal Guidance:

The Academy benefits from a fully qualified level 6 Careers Guidance Adviser from Career Connect. Karo also works closely with Julie Jones, the Enterprise Coordinator, from the LCR Careers Hub to introduce new initiatives into the Academy such as U Explore WEX headsets and additional funded programmes of support.

All students have a guidance interview and are provided with an individual Action Plan, student records are kept on COMPASS + and a Careers Guidance spreadsheet. The Careers Leader takes an active role in the LCR Careers Hub and attends events and sharing of good practice meetings across the Hub.

Strengths: Karo and the extended team have developed effective, accessible, and embedded CEIAG for all students.

From the evidence provided in the Quality in Careers Standard portfolio, assessment meetings and the latest

COMPASS SEF (July 2024) the assessor is confident that Harmonize Academy has fully achieved Gatsby benchmark 8.

SUGGESTED ACTION: Continue to access any funded training via the Careers and Enterprise Company for any members of staff involved in Careers.

Further Comments from Career Connect as a Licensed Awarding Body for the Quality in Careers Standard.

Harmonize takes the delivery of comprehensive CEIAG seriously, there is clear commitment from the Careers Leader/SLT and Governors. Students are well supported and have access to an enriched programme that includes activities and experiences provided through a range of employers and FE, and HE encounters. The Academy continue to provide dedicated support to all students. The Academy is commitment to the provision of high quality CEIAG.

Well done Karo – keep up the good work!

External QA Assessor Neil McCaskill I conducted the on-site external assessment visit on Tuesday 16th July. As part of this visit I met and spoke with the following members of the school community – Principal, Vice Principal, Careers Lead, teaching staff, teacher/Governor, current students, past student, parent and employer/FE provider. May I express my gratitude for all people that I spoke with for being so open and enthusiastic with your responses.

From the evidence provided in the files and in my conversations with the named people above, there is a strong commitment throughout SLT and the teaching staff, to the benefits of a good and varied careers programme and experiences across this school. The Careers Lead has enthusiastically developed a team around him that shares his vision and passion. Students enthusiastically spoke about the opportunity for the careers fayre and valued meeting employers and further provision, they could see how careers support prepares them for life Post 16. From the students I spoke to, they feel supported and listened to, which I feel is also evidence in how the teaching staff see their role within the wider careers programme, being career specialists in their subject area.

As well as having a school wide careers programme, it is clear that there is individualised support available that is bespoke to the needs of each student and their aspirations, as well as on demand support for ex-students who utilise the familiarity of your school for post 16 support where required.

I am pleased to report that I agree with the assessor's report, in that Harmonize Academy demonstrates the commitment and dedication of the Careers Team providing a well organised and structured programme of support to all learners.

One area for further exploration maybe in the school's work experience offer to students. Students and some teachers fed back that they would like to see more of this and give students a prolonged individual experience of the workplace, to further prepare them for working life and future careers.

The school may now use the following words to describe their achievement of the award in all publicity materials.

Harmonize Academy is nationally accredited by the Quality in Careers Standard as fully meeting all the accreditation criteria incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Signed: Neil McCaskill – 23/07/2024

Signed: Kath Wyke

Career Connect Date: Wednesday 3rd July 2024.