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First Assessment Report

Peterhouse School

Valid from	12 September 2025
Valid until	11 September 2027
Assessed by	Linda Taylor
Verified by	Tracey Taylor

Contents

	Page
Assessment Information	3
Introduction to the Learning Organisation	6
Self-Assessment Table	13
Assessment Schedule	14
Assessor Summary Table	15
Standard O – Learner Outcomes	16
Summary and Judgement	21
Recommendations	22

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 the careers provision. As you are 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 the annual reviews with you.

Assessment Information

Assessor: Linda Taylor

Learning Organisation: Peterhouse School, Preston New Road, Southport, Merseyside, PR9 8PA

Careers Lead (Teacher for work related learning and careers guidance):

Kimberley Hall Kimberley.hall@aipeterhouse.org (formerly Hudson)

Career Mark support adviser: N/A

Date of review of Assessment Portfolio (Part 1)
Access provided: 15 July 2025

Date of On-Site Assessment (Part 2) 12 September 2025 (via Teams)

Test of IT: 5 September 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 Table

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.

A.I.	Artificial Intelligence
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
C	Career Learning (Description Grid component)
CV	Curriculum Vitae
CDI	Career Development Institute
CPD	Continued professional development
CEIAG	Career education, information advice and guidance
CM	Career Mark approach
EHCP	Education and Health Care Plan
FE/HE	Further Education/Higher Education
FSM	Free school meals
G	Advice, Guidance and support (Description Grid component)
I	Information (Description Grid component)
LMI	Labour market information
M	Management (Description Grid component)
MDT	Multidisciplinary team
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
OT	Occupational Therapists
PDA	Pathological Demand Avoidance
PICA	Medical term for when children eat non-edible items
QiCs	Quality in Careers Standard (Criteria for the Standard)
R	Recommendations
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths
WRL	Work-related learning

Introduction to the Organisation

Peterhouse School is a non-maintained Specialist Day school for young people with autism aged 4 to 19. There are currently 70 pupils on roll and the aim is to maximise each individual's educational potential; acknowledge each pupil as a person with a focus on their preferences and strengths; acknowledge each person's autism, the unique impact of this and the personalised strategies required; focus on outcomes in preparation *for the young people to be 'successful adults with autism'*

As a non-maintained special school, Peterhouse typically receives referrals from local authorities when the local provision has been unsuccessful. Pupils can transfer from other special schools, mainstream units or after a period of non-attendance. The school is currently full to capacity and continues to receive a large number of referrals throughout the year. This is a reflection of the reputation of the school for achieving successful outcomes for pupils and their families. Over its 50-year history, Peterhouse has always maintained and developed approaches in response to current research, working in partnership with autistic people, to remain at the forefront of specialist education. Peterhouse continues to evolve and respond to the ever-changing landscape of neurodiversity.

All pupils have an Education and Health Care Plan. Most pupils have complex needs associated with their autism and often with additional diagnoses including but not limited to; PDA, ADHD and PICA. This intersectionality of needs means that a range of specialist support is required to meet specific needs and break down barriers to learning. Specialist support includes

Speech and Language Therapy, - Two Speech and Language Therapists (SALTs) (and a SALT assistant) oversee speech and language support across the school, each with an individual caseload usually consisting of four class groups each (flexible dependent on experience, professional knowledge and interests). SALTs assess, formulate, implement, regularly review and evaluate communication targets for pupils and work collaboratively with class teams to ensure a clear understanding of communication needs. This is achieved by supporting and equipping class staff with the knowledge to embed targets and interventions across a range of contexts. Therefore, SALTs are responsible for whole school and class training and set EHCP targets for Communication and Interaction and report on these through the pupil's annual review. SALTs work collaboratively with class staff and OTs using both direct and indirect approaches dependent on pupil needs. SALTs also attend internal reviews and MDT meetings to advise, support and amend recommendations dependent on individual pupil needs.

Occupational Therapists work to promote, maintain, and develop the skills needed by students to be functional in school, home or in the community and beyond into adult life. Therapists may help students to develop the underlying skills needed as the building blocks of learning, physical skills and functional ability such as developing fine and gross motor skills, visual motor (eye-hand coordination) skills, emotional control, sensory regulation and emotional wellbeing. Peterhouse School employs two Occupational Therapist to work in school and within Peterhouse Flexible Education Service. The school's approach is to integrate therapy into the classrooms and across all curriculum subjects through a

combination of staff training and multidisciplinary working. The OTs will primarily work and model practice in the classrooms whilst maintaining the flexibility to withdraw pupils individually or in groups for therapy as needs dictate. All students will have an initial Occupational Therapy assessment within the first six months of enrolling at the school which will inform the multidisciplinary EHCP setting of targets. The OTs are responsible for set EHCP targets for Sensory and Physical and report on these through the pupils annual review.

Their approach is to integrate therapy into the classrooms to ensure that students are generalising learning with a variety of different people in a variety of different ways. Therefore, both SALTs and OTs will primarily work and model practice in the classrooms whilst maintaining the flexibility to withdraw pupils individually/in small cross-class groups as needs dictate.

SEMH Lead. This role specifically addresses more complex social and emotional needs of pupils. The SEMH lead is also a trained Counsellor and has a specific caseload consisting of Flexible Education students, Personal Tutorials, Interventions and counselling. His caseload is defined by referrals that often come through the Support Team meetings and the Head of Autism Practice, training and research. The SEMH lead also supports wellbeing across the school and provides advice and training when needed.

The Family Support Team led by the Assistant Head for Welfare consists of a Health and Wellbeing Coordinator, 1 Family Support and Intervention Workers (part time) and 2 Family Support Coordinators (part time). The team offers a wide range of services to support students and family's health, wellbeing, and support. Their responsibilities include offering school lead support on a wide range of issues, contributing to Child in Need plans, signposting families to appropriate support and lead on interventions with pupils. Additionally, they support Friends of Peterhouse school and offer a range of parent information, training and support events. One member of the team is a counsellor who provides counselling to parents and staff where there is a need.

The specialists mentioned form part of the Peterhouse Support Team that meets on a weekly basis and is led by the Head of Autism Practice, training and research. The Peterhouse Support Team has various functions including identifying and responding to pupils, families, staff/teams causing concern and to identify the most appropriate professional/s to offer intervention and support.

Flexible Education. As part of Peterhouse School, a cohort of students can exhibit specifically complex presentation to the degree in which they can significantly withdraw from all aspects of society including but not limited to; education, health care, social care, and anything outside the family home. Peterhouse has identified this cohort as uniquely vulnerable and has developed an expertise in providing Flexible Education to meet individual needs. This service receives referrals from local authorities for students with a history of persistent/ long term non-attendance and/ or school refusal. 10 students currently access Flexible Education at Peterhouse School.

The school serves a wide geographical area with the majority of students residing in Sefton. The remaining school population is currently made up from four neighbouring Local Authorities including Halton, Liverpool, Wirral and Lancashire. The school is located in an area with wide socio-economic backgrounds with low ethnic diversity (in 2021 census, 96% of Sefton’s population identified as White British and mainly Christian) which is reflected in the school population. Therefore, it is vital pupils learn about and are given experiences beyond what may be their daily encounters. Understanding ourselves and others is a theme that is embedded throughout the curriculum and begins with the Peterhouse Drivers on which the curriculums are built. ‘Identity’ (knowing about us, others, relationships) and ‘knowledge of the wider world’ (cultures, beliefs, rule of law, society, values) are essential components of becoming a successful adult with autism (the mission). Students learn about equality and diversity through the curriculum offer and beyond, through the Personal Development offer. Well planned enrichment activities incorporate British Values and Cultural Capital to consolidate and generalise learning from the classroom to real life. Due to the unique impact of autism and how it shapes pupils' views of the world, personal learning is important to address misconceptions and challenge thinking. Personal Tutorials give an opportunity to explore their own Identity and Knowledge of the wider world through a person-centred approach.

The monitoring of attendance within the school has been developed significantly since 2022-23. Attendance was reviewed and it was established that within the school, it was imperative to gain further insight into accurate attendance data for the young people in their care. The importance of this is underlined by the fact that 26.7% of the school have presented as non-attenders for a significant period of time (average of two years out of school) prior to transition into Peterhouse. Attendance is gathered for students and extrapolated to incorporate sessions during which time a student may not be expected to attend school. This person-centred approach considers students on transition, students on amended timetables, or students accessing Flexible Education Provision. Over the last academic year, 2024-2025, the attendance data was 76.09% with an extrapolated (adjusted for students who may be working towards a full-time timetable/transitions) attendance of 88.32%%. This is higher than the Sefton average of similar special needs settings of 87.1% and a national average for similar special needs setting of 87.1% for the last academic year.

Context	Number of Pupils (70 on roll)
EHCP	70
Previous non-school attendance	26.7%
Flexible Education	9
Hypermobility impacting handwriting and fastening clothes.	(81%) (excluding 6 new students who have not yet been assessed)
Reading	

6 month assessment results show skills to be within average range as same aged peers	28% of learners
6 month assessment results show delayed development of skills compared to same aged peers	25% of learners
Functional level understanding	18% of learners
Pre word level understanding	21% of learners
Twinkl Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme (Phase 2+)	24% of learners
	5 new pupils (8%) starting September 2025, will be assessed during the 6 month transition period where the correct pathway will be identified.
Individual Healthcare Plan	16
Child Protection	2
Child in Need	11
Early Help	1
Child Looked After	0
Post Child Looked After	2
Pupil Premium/ Free School Meals	26
EAL	4
Additional Diagnosis	48 pupils (67%) including ADHD, PDA and SEMH (and includes some medical issues). (81%) hypermobility
Qualifications Achieved by Leavers (24/25)	<p>Formal Pathway</p> <p>Functional Skills Maths Level 2 x1</p> <p>Functional Skills Maths Level 1 x1</p>

	<p>Functional Skills English Level 2 x1</p> <p>Functional Skills English Level 1 x1</p> <p>Open Awards Science Level 2 Award x2</p> <p>ASDAN Employability Level 2 Certificate x2</p> <p>ASDAN Personal & Social Development Level 2 Certificate x2</p> <p>BTEC Digital Media Level 1 Introductory Certificate x1</p> <p>BTEC IT Level 1 Introductory Certificate x2</p> <p>BTEC Art & Design Level 1 Introductory Award x1</p> <p>BTEC Art & Design Level 1 Introductory Certificate x1</p> <p>BTEC Subsidiary Award in Entry to Vocational Study x1</p> <p>Semi Formal Pathway</p> <p>No leavers</p>
Exit Routes Leavers 16- 19 (24 - 25)	<p>Formal Pathway</p> <p>1x Mainstream College - Level 2 Uniformed Public Services</p> <p>1x Mainstream College - Level 1 Construction Multi-Skills</p> <p><u>Flex Ed Students</u></p> <p>1 - Autism Initiatives Adult Services Provision (Bridging service) Last year's Development of post-19 offer within Autism Initiatives adult services</p> <p>1 – Social care package</p> <p>Semi Formal Pathway</p> <p>1x Independent Specialist College - managed move (Blended offer)</p>

Staffing information

84 staff (76 FTE)

- 7 SLT (7 FTE)
- 17 Teachers (15.2 FTE) – 3 of these are ECTs, 1 is an Apprentice
- 4 Therapists and 1 Therapy Assistant (5 FTE)
- 24 TAs, 9 HLTAs and 3 TA Apprentices (31.3 FTE)

- 9 Other professionals (7.7 FTE)
- 11 Support staff (9.8 FTE)

Sharing Practice with External Partners 2024/25

- Research study designed and completed in partnership with Edgehill University ethics committee to support emerging practice, presented in the following forums, Autism Europe and Quality of Life Network.
- Two abstracts submitted and accepted to present research at **Autism Europe** conference 2025 (11/9/25). The titles are as follows;

‘Exploration of the ways that diagnosis can contribute to misrepresentation of need and how this links with young people with Autism being ‘out of School’. (Presented by the Head of Flexible Education)

‘Quality of Life: What If best practice is the problem, not the solution?’ Reframing autism education through co-construction, connection and trust and emergent practice. (Presented by the Head of Autism practice, training and research.

- Quality of Life Network (Schools across UK) – Presented two workshops on student voice and autism practice entitled ‘Peterhouse approach to tutorials supporting pupil voice and QoL’ and ‘Our QoL Journey – supporting Network Development and building partnerships’
- Quality of Life Network – Sub partnership with Swalcliffe Park School, Breckenborough School and Demeter House School
- Challenge Partners Conference – Best practice event – Tutorials
- Liverpool Hope University – Delivered for Initial Teacher Training
- Edgehill University – Delivered 2 workshops for Initial Teacher Training
- Further developed links with Edgehill – Student placements for Nursing, Teaching and Early Childhood Studies with a GPC placement.
- National NASS Conference – Keynote speech – Successful Outcomes/ 2 workshops on empowering conversations through tutorials (delivered Oct 24)
- Articles on school business leadership published in EdExec magazine
- Presentation on Staff Wellbeing delivered at EdExec Live event by School Business Leader
- Head of Expressive Arts delivered workshop ‘Therapeutic use of music in classrooms’ as part of his Leadership course’ at NASS conference.

Awards Gained

- Leading Parent Partnership Award 2025
- Wellbeing Award for Schools 2022 (currently preparing for reaccreditation (5/11/25)
- ArtsMark Gold 2025
- Trinity College Champion Centre 2022/23
- Hunrosa Sleep Right Centre 2025
- Challenge Partners Area of Excellence – Personal Tutorials

- Disability Confident Employer (AI)
- HSBC Smart Money award 2025 (Financial awareness)
- Quality in Careers Award 2025

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			✓

Achieving the Standard, fully meeting the national criteria = Has met all the criteria in this section of the Standard's national criteria including the relevant Gatsby Benchmark indicators.

Assessment Schedule

Discussions and meetings took place via Google meet.

Time	Meeting
8.30	Meeting with careers lead, Kimberley Hall (formerly Hudson)
9.15	KS5 learners
10.15	Break 1
10.35	KS4 learners
11.15	Break 2
11.35	KS3 learners
12.15	Lunch
12.15	Discussion with other member(s) of staff involved with Careers or WRL including Assistant Head for Pupil Welfare Claire Sayles
12.45	Assessor reflection time
13.15	Feedback meeting to discuss outcomes and agree recommendations
13.45	Assessment concludes

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	✓	R1, R2,
2.1 2.1i,3.1i	C2 – Planned programme of careers education I2 – Accessibility of & competence to use resources	✓	
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	✓	
3.2 3.3ii	G3 – Coordinating and tracking	✓	
3.3 3.2i,3.3i	G4 – Career action planning and target setting	✓	R2
3.4 3.4iv	M2 – Measuring impact of CEIAG on progression	✓	R1, R2
4.1 4.1i	C3 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – subject links to careers	✓	
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)	✓	R4
6.2 5.1i-iii, 6.1i-ii	C4 – Coordinating curriculum inputs – employer engagement (experiences of workplace pre 18)	✓	
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	✓	R3
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.

During the pre-meeting, a screen shot was taken of the assessor to share with the learners ahead of the assessment, to help build confidence in taking part. A great idea, although a few learners felt more comfortable with the camera not on them.

The assessor met with learners from both the formal and semi-formal pathways. However, due to the complex needs of the cohort, the focus was primarily on the outcomes of learners on the formal pathway. Many pupils found it challenging to recall and share their experiences due to the nature of their autism. Nonetheless, the assessor engaged with those who were able to communicate most effectively, although even these learners experienced some difficulty in recalling certain recent activities and aspects of their learning.

Staff supported the learners with a few prompts throughout the discussions, however, at least one member of each group was able to effectively communicate and gave an indication of their confidence in knowing who to go to and where to find careers and work-related information. Staff interact with learners using first names.

The numbers in each key stage group taking part in the assessment were small, reflecting the size of the school, nevertheless most learners were happy to engage with the assessor and were able to demonstrate they had taken part in a number of employer encounters and had enjoyed topics relating to learning about money.

Most learners made reference to a the 'Have a go day,' which took place during careers week in March. They mentioned a number of organisations that had come in to school and talked to them about jobs within their particular sector, alongside providing practical experiences, for example, sitting inside police vehicles and trying on the protective equipment required to work in construction. Staff are encouraging all learners to recognise how their learning in school relates to the world of work and that all areas of life require the need to follow rules and that there are expectations, both at work and in further learning.

Learners are positive about their experience at Peterhouse School - one KS3 learner had only started that week and had told his parents he felt it was 'heaven'. Both pastoral and academic staff know the learners and their families well and are readily available to provide support. Learners show an awareness of the local labour market within their community and have an understanding of post-16 pathways.

CDI Career Development Framework outcomes headings for 2021 version are shown in the corresponding colours of the chart below:



Grow throughout life

Some learners are in transition and have been away from formal education for a number of years. Those recently returning to a school environment were positive about their environment and were enjoying the topics on offer. One learner had very recently joined the school but was confident in answering questions and had a particularly good rapport with his peers, although another said ***“I just want to come in to school and work. I’m happy being on my own”*** (KS4 learner)

Some learners found it challenging to identify the soft skills they were developing, although when coaxed, they could reflect on these. ***“I like to organise people and telling them what to do.”*** and ***“I asked the lady if I could work with her in the ice cream van and learnt how to use the machine and serve people”*** (KS3/4 learners)

Learners can reflect on parental influences and engaged in debate around the different types of working environment, including self-employment and working from home. A visit from someone who had returned to school to talk about the struggles he experienced when seeking employment, due to the stigma associated with being on the autistic spectrum, was appreciated and enabled learners to see how barriers they might face can be overcome.

KS5 learners talked about the possibility of setting up their own business and had been learning about employability words in business studies lessons. ***“We found out about health and safety in the workplace”*** and ***“I might have my own business in the future”***

Balance life and work

Learners acknowledged that it is important to have a good work life balance and have differing views on the benefits and disadvantages of working from home. ***“It’s not good to be stuck in the house all day, I wouldn’t want to stay in just one place”*** (KS5 learners) and ***“My stepdad works from home and earns lots of money. He is self-employed now.”***

Staff were keen to add that a speaker came in to school to explain the importance of soft skills, as A.I. cannot replace these. There is a focus on developing soft skills across all aspects of the curriculum.

Learners were able to talk about managing their money and most referred to a bank (HSBC) who had visited the school to talk about recognising coins, having a bank account and debit and credit cards, as part of a financial awareness session. ***“I’m good at managing my money and not worried about this”*** (KS3 learner).

Some learners engage in activities outside of school, including fishing, football and music, with one learner securing a part-time job in a fishery and another at a garage. Learners are assessed when they join the school and encouraged to take steps to develop their independence and confidence in moving around their region on public transport as part of accessing community activities. This includes having to work out bus times, how much it would cost to use the bus and feeling confident enough to ask when they get stuck.

Explore possibilities

All learners take part in the ‘Have a go day,’ which presents opportunities to hear from a number of employers who visit the school. This means that learners from an early age have a good appreciation of the local labour market and could talk about jobs in ***“retail”*** namely Morrisons ***“catering,”*** specifically a baker and ***“construction.”***

Older learners can describe apprenticeships and understood that this pathway would enable them to learn skills on the job whilst earning money, which was an important motivator for most. There was an opportunity to learn CPR and to talk to visitors about the skills you need to get a job, ***“timekeeping, teamwork, independence and communication are good skills.”*** (KS4 learner)

There were discussions around the different types of jobs you can find at McDonald’s, including being a delivery driver, and one learner expressed an interest in joining the Army. There had been a visit to an apprenticeship fair, colleges and a University, with more planned later this academic year.

Some learners were unsure about their plans for the future, nonetheless, all knew who they could speak to for advice and were looking forward to their personal guidance meetings later this year to discuss all the options.

Create opportunities

Learners have opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities in school and can select from a list each week. This includes being the class ambassador for anti-bullying, with most learners taking a turn at one of these roles to help develop skills and build their confidence.

A KS3 learner said, ***“I can ask my dad about jobs and also Kim.”*** There are posters highlighting jobs of the week which detail the skills required for the job, a careers notice board and college prospectuses within tutor classes. In addition, there is a school councillor – Barry – who is supporting learners.

Some learners spoke enthusiastically about the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award and have achieved the silver award. All learners have the opportunity to access the bronze award and can move on to silver if they would like to. ***“We stayed in a tent overnight and I helped cook a stir fry and sausages.”*** (KS5 learner)

Staff at the school use Compass + effectively to ensure all learners have the workplace encounters they are entitled to, but learners do struggle at times to recall the experiences they had – both recently and from some time ago.

Learners are involved in a range of enterprise events with one group of KS4 learners setting up a car wash activity. ***“I have a part-time job at a garage at the weekend and enjoy it.”*** This learner could recognise that having the job at the garage had enabled him to be more confident in taking on a leadership role for the car wash activity

Manage career

All learners can talk about the support they receive and know who to talk to for guidance if they need help. ***“I can speak to Kim about anything for careers, or my personal tutor”*** (KS4 learner)

The majority of learners are still thinking about their plans ready for when they leave Peterhouse School and are keeping options open, although some spoke positively about moving on to college. The main focus for older students is exams, ***“I just want to pass my GCSE in English.”*** (KS5 learner)

All interventions are bespoke, based on the needs of the learner and can continue after the young person leaves the school. Positive and effective relationships are developed to provide continuity of support with a trusted adult. The school works hard to make sure that learners are supported with their transition and are actively contributing to the decisions

around learners' next steps. Staff and learners reflect on the partnerships with parents/carers and calls home are generally made at the end of each day, to keep everyone up to date with progress. In this way staff can help ensure learners are making choices that are right for them and that can be supported by families.

See the big picture

Learners are aware of a wide range of job roles and can identify some of the soft skills that will be useful to them when they leave school. Year 11 learners have opportunities to undertake internal work experience, citing the kitchen or maintenance team as areas they had worked in, nevertheless, if a learner is felt able to participate in a work placement outside of school they are supported in doing so. On reaching Year 13, and where feasible, learners experience the world of work in an external setting. There is an aim to expand on the opportunities available to Year 11 learners.

Independence is encouraged and staff will support learners in accessing their local community and developing their confidence in asking for help when needed and being able to travel by bus to locations around the town. This will enable learners to become more integrated into society and develop their own personal strategies for coping with the unknown.

There were interesting discussions around the use of A.I. with comments including, ***“losing jobs is a bad thing but it can be good for research”*** and ***“we went to Microsoft and they talked about A.I.”*** (KS5 learners). They had no obvious concerns about the increasing development of artificial intelligence.

All learners were using some form of social media, listing Tik Tok, Snapchat and YouTube as those in regular use. LinkedIn was not mentioned as a source of information, however, there have been recent lessons talking about social media and the need to ensure photos and comments posted are appropriate, as employers will often search for a candidate on Google to find out more about them. Learners appeared to appreciate the need to be careful about their on-line security and that personal branding is an important consideration.

Summary and Judgement

Learners at Peterhouse School are supported by a dedicated team of staff who are focussed upon securing positive outcomes with them. The school has strong relationships with a number of external organisations, including FE and HE and takes every opportunity to incorporate visits to business and to invite representatives into school. There is strong emphasis on enterprise at the school which means that learners are exposed to a wide range of pathways and careers sectors.

There are successful relationships with parents and carers and a good system, called Earwig, for recording all interventions. This platform also allows for photos, witness statements and input from the wider team to be uploaded, thus ensuring the learner can be more effectively supported. The careers staff ensure that learners gain significant contact with people from a wide range of jobs and this is well supported by opportunities to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, both at bronze and silver level. Learners reflect on the skills this programme helps them to develop.

The staff at the school are creative in exploring interventions that benefit individual learners and the attention to the needs of the individual is excellent. The new "Cultural Capital" learning has been introduced, alongside delivery of an ASDAN course, which includes modules on skills for life, managing money, healthy eating etc. and challenges the learners' often rigid thinking patterns.

There are person centred planning meetings, with most learners remaining with the school until Year 14. Alumni are welcomed back into school to talk about their careers journey and there are plans to arrange an 'off site' event for Y11 learners during this academic year.

At Peterhouse, all staff have a shared responsibility for the delivery of careers information throughout the school. Careers information is taught explicitly through the Work Related Learning Curriculum, which is specifically adapted to ensure it is appropriate and meaningful for students. This is further enhanced by the implicit delivery of careers information, and this is embedded throughout the curriculum. Discussing the Peterhouse 'Job of the Week' with pupils along with other LMI information, helps to increase awareness of local growth areas and the variety of roles within an organisation. There are also opportunities for key staff to develop links with Autism Initiatives Social Enterprises.

The careers lead has identified a requirement to expand the use of the Future Skills Questionnaire, to increase targeted learner support, although it is recognised that even the version available for SEND learners will require some review and revision, to ensure it is presented in a meaningful way.

Career Connect is an affiliate member of the Careers Development Institute and are contracted to deliver personal guidance, although this is supplemented by Kim at the school. Speaking with staff the assessor is impressed with the dedication shown by all in engaging and empowering the learners and it is without hesitation that the school is awarded the Quality in Careers Standard.

FIRST ASSESSMENT

Peterhouse School is achieving the Quality in Careers Standard fully incorporating the Gatsby Benchmarks. The assessor awards Peterhouse School the Quality in Careers Standard 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 fully meet all Benchmarks and the accreditation criteria, as detailed in this report. We will review your progress in continuing to meet 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:

- R1 By Easter 2026 review and revise the use of FSQs to enable more effective collation of data to enhance future targeted support.
- R2 By annual review, for the careers team to consider additional methods to encourage reflection of work-related learning encounters and careers activities, so that learners can recall their experiences over a longer period of time, perhaps considering the use of a personal diary or journal.
- R3 By October 2026 to establish a work-related learning group/working party for members of staff across the school to have input into careers development plans, and to identify a staff member from each class who could take on the role of careers ambassador/champion.
- R4 By December 2026, for all pupils in Year 11 to have access to appropriate and meaningful workplace experiences.