

ELY College and Bishop Laney
CEIAG Strategy
2025-2027



Introduction

Ely College and Bishop Laney Sixth Form became a member of the Meridian Trust, previously known as CMAT, in July 2016, has a student population of over 1650 students (PP: 15%, FSM6: 15.7%, EAL: 16%, LAC: 0.5%, EHCP: 4%, SEND support: 7%) and its catchment area covers Ely St Mary's Junior, Ely St. John's, Isle of Ely, Lantern, Downham Feoffees, Littleport1 and Millfield1.

Ely College and Bishop Laney Sixth Form is in Ely which forms the centre of East Cambridgeshire, acts as the district's main employment hub, and constitutes the key leisure, retail, and education centre. The district benefits from an attractive rural environment, including the special landscape and ecological and agricultural value of the Fens, numerous historic villages, the renowned Anglican Ely Cathedral and has well developed connections to Cambridge.

According to the most recent Census (2021) and the Index of Multiple Deprivation, 85.77% of the people living in Ely West were born in UK vs 88.19% in East Cambridgeshire and 82.65% in England. Ely has a higher level of home ownership (66.7%) than the national average (61.31%). 84% of Ely West residents describe their health as either good or very good, which is 2% higher than nationally.

The combined percentage of Ely West's population falling either in the school-age or in the working-age group is 75%: 60.63% of the Ely West working age population is in employment, 25.19% in part-time work, 3.72% unemployed and the remaining seeking work; 74.81% of the people in work, are in full-time employment. Overall, 21% of East Cambridgeshire residents commute to work in Cambridge with only 40% of employed people who live in the district also working there. The largest employment sector in Ely is Professional Occupations, 29.52%, whereas the smallest employment sector is Process Plant & Machine Operatives, 4.71%.

In terms of education, 75.79% of the people in Ely West are either in apprenticeship (4.4%) or have a Level 2 or above formal qualification (L2: 12.55%, L3: 13.88%, L4: 44.96%) versus the 69.48% combined nationally.

This constitutes the socio-economic background within which Ely College and Bishop Laney operate in their pursuit of excellence, striving to deliver on the Trust's vision 'to ensure high quality education at the heart of the community.' Ely College and Bishop Laney Sixth Form's unwavering commitment to deliver an exceptional school for its exceptional community, providing every student with an inspiring education, equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed beyond the classroom, offering them outstanding opportunities and an enhanced range of pathways to employment and training, is at the core of its CEIAG provision.

Ely College has a statutory responsibility for securing access to CEIAG for all pupils in years 8-13. The school feels strongly that this should be extended to year 7. The purpose of the CEIAG is intended to assist pupils to make and implement education, training and occupation choices and to learn how to prepare for the workplace and their careers. Staff are committed to ensuring careers education is embedded within the curriculum, right from the start of Year 7, and that at all stages students are encouraged to consider their future aspirations.

The school strongly believes that careers and next steps information is critical for students when they come to making the best possible decisions and future career choices. Staff strive to

equip students with the necessary skills to effectively career plan and know how and where to access impartial and unbiased information: careers guidance includes information on all 16-18 education or training options, including Apprenticeships and T-Levels.

The school has established strong links with outside agencies and is working to further develop links with universities and colleges and local businesses which contribute to:

- Raising aspirations, increasing motivation and helping young people to identify educational and occupational goals
- Demonstrating the relevance of the knowledge and skills learnt in subjects to future opportunities in learning and working
- Developing the skills for effective learning by reviewing achievements, setting targets, planning and taking actions
- Demonstrating the links between living, learning and earning
- Improving literacy – developing information and communication skills
- Improving progression while reducing NEET

Our Pledge

By explicitly embedding CEIAG within our School Improvement Plan, we pledge that no student will leave our school without:

- Clear understanding of the full range of career pathways available to them
- Direct experience of workplaces and encounters with diverse employers
- Personalised guidance supporting their individual aspirations
- Essential employability skills and confidence to succeed
- A robust transition plan for their next steps

This strategic commitment positions CEIAG not as an additional requirement but as the golden thread running through all aspects of school life, raising the profile of careers education and ensuring every student is equipped to thrive in the evolving world of work.

Our Strategic Commitment

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) is positioned as a fundamental driver within our School Improvement Plan, recognising that high-quality careers provision is essential to achieving our vision of preparing every student for a successful and fulfilling future. Building on our achievement of the Quality in Careers Standard Award (October 2025), this statement explicitly embeds CEIAG as integral to school improvement, demonstrating how comprehensive careers education underpins all aspects of learning and development whilst fulfilling our statutory obligations and raising aspirations across our school community.

Core Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Curriculum Excellence Through Real-World Relevance

We will embed CEIAG across all curriculum areas, ensuring every subject explicitly links learning to career pathways and labour market opportunities. Through systematic integration of the Gatsby Benchmarks and the CDI career learning outcomes framework into curriculum planning, students will understand the purpose and application of their studies, enhancing motivation, engagement and academic outcomes. All departments will demonstrate how their subject content opens doors to future opportunities, with careers learning outcomes comprehensively mapped across schemes of work, PSHE, PLEDGES, and Learning Outside the Classroom programmes.

Priority 2: Raising Aspirations and Addressing Disadvantage

We commit to using CEIAG as a powerful tool for social mobility, with targeted interventions that challenge stereotypes, broaden horizons and ensure no student is left behind. Priority support will be provided to disadvantaged students, those with SEND, and those at risk of becoming NEET, with personalised guidance, enhanced employer encounters, and mentoring programmes designed to raise aspirations and build cultural capital. Our approach ensures that background is no barrier to ambition.

Priority 3: Strategic Employer and Community Partnerships

We will establish meaningful, sustained partnerships with employers, training providers, and higher education institutions that enrich both curricular and extracurricular provision. These partnerships will provide authentic workplace experiences, mentoring opportunities, and real-world project work that develops employability skills whilst strengthening our position as a hub for community engagement. Through platforms like Unifrog, we will connect students with extension activities, online courses, and super-curricular opportunities that deepen their learning and enhance their applications. Alumni networks will provide relatable role models, demonstrating achievable pathways to success.

Priority 4: Developing Work-Ready, Confident Young People

We will ensure every student develops essential employability skills, career management capabilities, and the confidence to navigate their future pathways. Through progressive workplace experiences, encounters with diverse career routes including technical education and apprenticeships, and access to high-quality labour market information, students will make informed decisions about their futures. Personal guidance interviews and structured reflection will support individual career planning from Year 7 through to successful transition.

Priority 5: Leadership, Governance and Quality Assurance

Building on our successful Quality in Careers Standard Award, we will strengthen leadership and accountability structures with our named Careers Leader having strategic influence at senior leadership level, supported by succession planning to ensure continuity. Regular reporting to governors and dedicated budget allocation aligned with school priorities will maintain momentum. CEIAG will be integrated within our quality assurance cycles, with the CDI framework providing robust evaluation tools. All staff will understand their role in careers

provision through comprehensive CPD, with particular focus on extension activities and super-curricular opportunities that enrich student development.

Current Position and Recognition

Our commitment to excellence in CEIAG has been validated through achieving the Quality in Careers Standard Award in October 2025, demonstrating that our provision meets national quality standards. This external recognition provides a strong foundation for continuous improvement, with the assessment identifying key areas for strategic development that are now embedded within our School Improvement Plan.

Implementation Roadmap: Building on Excellence

Following our Quality in Careers Standard assessment, we commit to the following strategic developments:

Immediate Priority (Within 6 months)

Succession Planning for Careers Leadership: We will identify and support an additional staff member to undertake Careers Leader training, ensuring continuity, sustainability, and distributed leadership of our CEIAG programme. This will strengthen strategic capacity and create resilience in programme leadership.

Year 1 Priority (Within 12 months)

Promoting Extension Activities and Super-Curricular Learning: We will enhance staff and student awareness of extension activities, particularly through our Unifrog platform, including MOOCs, online courses, and super-curricular opportunities. This will deepen learning experiences and strengthen students' future applications for higher education, apprenticeships, and employment.

18-Month Priority

Comprehensive Mapping Using CDI Framework: We will adopt the Career Development Institute's career learning outcomes framework to holistically map provision across PSHE, PLEDGES/PLEDGES+, and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOT). This systematic approach will create a clear overview of how we meet statutory guidance whilst ensuring no gaps in provision and demonstrating explicit links to personal development outcomes.

Two-Year Priority

Strategic Communication and Stakeholder Engagement: We will implement a comprehensive communication strategy to share our School Improvement Plan links, careers policy, and CDI learning outcomes framework with all stakeholders - staff, Academic council, parents, and community partners. This will ensure coherence, shared understanding, and collective ownership of our CEIAG vision.

Expected Impact

Building on our Quality in Careers Standard foundation, we will achieve:

- 100% of students progressing to positive and sustained destinations
- Measurable improvement in student confidence and career readiness scores
- Reduction in NEET figures to below local and national averages
- Increased uptake of technical and vocational pathways where appropriate to student ambitions
- Enhanced academic outcomes driven by improved student motivation and engagement
- Sustained recognition as a beacon school for careers excellence in our region
- Full implementation of all Quality in Careers Standard recommendations within specified timeframes.

Statutory Compliance and Quality Standards

This strategic approach ensures:

- Full compliance with the Education Act 2011 and DfE Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers (2023)
- Adherence to the Baker Clause requirements for provider access
- Implementation of all eight Gatsby Benchmarks as the framework for world-class careers provision
- Meeting Ofsted Education Inspection Framework expectations for personal development and preparation for next steps
- Maintenance and enhancement of our Quality in Careers Standard Award (achieved October 2025)

Appendix A: Gatsby Benchmarks

The Gatsby Foundation was set up to work in areas that the trustees of the foundation are passionate about. One of these is Education and as part of that, good careers guidance in schools. In 2013, the foundation commissioned Sir John Holman, a Professor of Chemistry at the University of York, senior education adviser and former headteacher, with setting out what career guidance in England would be like. His report identified 8 benchmarks that schools should work towards to improve and deliver high quality CEIAG provision. A decade later, following two years of extensive research and consultation drawing on international evidence and listening to young people and educators, the Gatsby Foundation published 'Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years' in late 2024. This report presents the updated Gatsby Benchmarks, which retain all eight benchmark titles for stability while introducing practical refinements based on new evidence and best practice.

The updates, to be implemented from September 2025, strengthen five key themes: careers at the heart of education and leadership; inclusion and impact for every young person; meaningful and varied encounters and experiences; data-driven continuous improvement; and parent and carer engagement. The government has reaffirmed its commitment to the framework ensuring all young people have access to world-class careers guidance for the next decade

1	A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME	Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers.
2	LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION	Every student, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.
3	ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH STUDENT	Students have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each student. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.
4	LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS	All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.
5	ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES	Every student should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.
6	EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES	Every student should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.
7	ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	All students should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.
8	PERSONAL GUIDANCE	Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all students but should be timed to meet their individual needs.

Current analysis against the Gatsby Foundation benchmarks

The Gatsby Foundation provide a tool that allows us to see how the provision of CEIAG at Ely College compares against these benchmarks. Over the last few years, we have consistently met each of the benchmarks.

	December 2021	November 2022	December 2023	November 2024	November 2025
Benchmark 1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Benchmark 2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Benchmark 3	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Benchmark 4	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Benchmark 5	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Benchmark 6	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Benchmark 7	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Benchmark 8	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Appendix B: Quality in Careers Standard Report (October 2025)

Overall Outcome

Ely College and Bishop Laney Sixth Form retain 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.

Recommendations and requirements

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

1. Develop a School Careers Policy

Create a comprehensive school careers policy that documents Ely College and Bishop Laney Sixth Form's specific CEIAG provision. This should:

- Cross-reference the Meridian Trust CEIAG Procedures and reflect the school's values and vision.
- Include the overarching aims and intended learning outcomes.
- Clarify the roles of all contributors to the programme.
- Outline where and how careers education is delivered, and detail procedures for monitoring, review, and evaluation. Include links with the PLEDGES and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTIC) programmes.
- Summarise monitoring, review and evaluation procedures.

This policy should be developed and implemented over the next two years.

2. Integrate CEIAG into the School Development Plan (SDP)

Explicitly embed CEIAG within the SDP to show how it underpins both curricular and extracurricular learning. This will strengthen strategic alignment and raise the profile of CEIAG across the school. This should be in the next two years.

3. Map Provision Using the CDI Learning Outcomes Framework

Develop use the CDI's career learning outcomes framework to holistically map provision across PSHE, PLEDGES, and LOTIC. This will create a clear and comprehensive overview of how the school meets the latest statutory guidance and supports learners' personal development. This should be in the next 18 months.

4. Communicate Strategy and Policy to Stakeholders

Share the updated School Development Plan links, careers policy, and learning outcomes framework with staff, governors, parents, and other stakeholders to ensure awareness, coherence, and shared understanding. This should be in the next two years.

5. Promote Extension Activities for Learners

Further develop staff and learner awareness of extension activities—particularly those available through platforms like Unifrog—to support deeper learning and strengthen future applications (e.g. online courses, MOOCs, or super-curricular activities). This should be in the next year.

6. Plan for Succession in Careers Leadership

Explore options for staffing and succession planning by identifying an additional staff member to undertake Careers Leader training, ensuring continuity and sustainability in programme leadership. This should be in the next six months.