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Ely College and Bishop Laney Sixth Form Reaccreditation – 2nd Assessment Report

Valid from	1 st October 2025
Valid until	30 th September 2027
Assessed by	Liz Reece
Verified by	Ron James

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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 meeting the Benchmarks and all 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 learners which the national Standard requires, through our annual reviews with you.

Assessment Information

Assessor: Liz Reece

Learning Organisation: Ely College and Bishop Laney Sixth Form, Downham Road, Ely, CB6 2SH

Career leader including email address: Max Grezio, Assistant Principal,
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Career Mark Support Adviser (if used or Trust/Project Organisation linked to):
N/A

Date of review of Assessment Portfolio (Part 1): September 2025

Date of On-Site Assessment (Part 2): October 1st 2025 – virtual, 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 REVALIDATION: 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.

C	Career Learning (Description Grid component)
CDI	Career Development Institute
CEIAG	Career education, information advice and guidance
CM	Career Mark approach
FE/HE	Further Education/Higher Education
G	Advice, Guidance and support (Description Grid component)
GB	Gatsby Benchmarks
I	Information (Description Grid component)
LOTC	Learning Outside the Classroom
M	Management (Description Grid component)
PLEDGES	Participation, Leadership, Excellence, Diversity, Giving, Environment, Service
QiCs	Quality in Careers Standard (Criteria for the Standard)
R	Recommendations
SLT	Senior Leadership Team

Introduction to the Organisation

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

Careers work also supports strategies for student's personal and social development by building self-confidence, self-reliance, promoting positive attitudes to learning, fostering leadership, organisation, resilience and initiative, and developing good communication skills.

While staff are proud of the well-established CEIAG programme, they are bound by moral conviction to keep developing and refining the programme to offer students the best opportunities to progress into further education, employment or training.

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 learner			✓
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			✓

(i) 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

Time	Meeting
9.00 - 9.45	Careers Lead - CEIAG SLT Link; and Careers Coordinator/Adviser
9.50 - 10.05	Head of Year 11 responsible for Post-16 Applications
10.10 - 10.25	Head of PSHE – off site, so emailed questions
10.30 - 10.45	SLT lead on Pupil Premium
10.50 - 11.10	Year 13 learners
	Break
11.25 - 11.40	Bishop Laney Achievement Lead responsible for Post-16 Applications
11.45 - 12.05	Year 12 learners
12.10 - 12.30	Year 8 learners
12.35 - 12.55	Year 9 learners
13.00 - 13.20	Year 10 learners
13.25 - 13.45	Year 11 learners
	Break
14.15 - 15.00	Feedback

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	✓	R1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
1.2 1.2i	M5 – Learner entitlement to CEIAG	✓	
1.3 1.1ii	M9 – Monitoring, review and evaluation for continuous development	✓	R1, 2, 3
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	✓	R1, 2, 3
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	✓	
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)	✓	
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	✓	R1, 3
CM + 1,3	I1 – Systems, content & processes	✓	R5
CM +	G5 - Facilities	✓	
CM + 4,5,6,7,8	O – Learner Outcomes	✓	R3

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.

Learners interviewed (online) were enthusiastic and articulate about their careers education and guidance provision and know who can help them with their questions about future options. Their responses showed that they are developing extensive learning and skills that are age-appropriate and in accordance with the Career Development Institute's 2021 learning outcomes, and they are achieving the intended outcomes of Ely College and Bishop Laney Sixth Form College's CEIAG programme.

The learners showed maturity in explaining how they are exploring their options, creating opportunities, decision making and developing understanding of career learning and of their opportunities beyond school. They appreciate the guidance and support that they have had in their preparation for the future and feel confident of their decisions and transitions within and beyond school.

CDI Career Development Framework outcomes headings for 2021 version are shown in the corresponding colours of the chart below. Quotes are in bold italics.



Grow throughout life

Learners in year 8 are already aware of the importance of personal development and growth. In discussion, they gave the assessor examples of where they have challenged themselves and gained from the process:

'I like drama and want to act. I like how you can express yourself. I was involved in a play last year. It was a bit scary on stage but it gives me confidence in future.'

'I enjoy computer science and do some coding outside school.'

Reflecting on the links between lessons and careers, these year 8s told the assessor that:

'Maths is useful for careers and daily life. Physics affects us all the time and is useful to know how things work and happen.'

Geography helps with map skills and learning what's going on around.'

Year 9s told the assessor how they have been helped by the online platform, Unifrog:

'I took a personality test which gave me new options to look into. It made me think more about what I would like to do.'

Learners see the value of their sports to their personal development:

'I do netball after school and I do rowing before school which helps my self-discipline.'

A year 11 learner explained how working with his parents had developed his skills:

'Since the age of 7 until 12 I did a weekly job in a market stall so I learned about customer service, communication, and money handling. It's helped me to understand how hospitality works which was relevant to my work experience.'

By KS5, learners had participated in many areas that develop themselves and evidence of their interest to support applications. Year 12 learners recognised how their teachers have assisted this process:

'Our teachers recognise our abilities. My design teacher recognised my ability in architectural diagrams and encouraged me to take a notebook. I still take an interest in drawing.'

'We get taught about soft skills in careers meetings and PSHE.'

'My maths teacher has enabled me to volunteer with a year 7 pupil after school group and this builds my confidence and experience. It is now part of my routine and I really enjoy it – the younger students appreciate me.'

A year 13 learner, applying for marine biology, explained how her work experiences help her career and personal development in many ways:

'I did work experience and now volunteer for wildlife organisations to plant trees and improve the village. I also volunteer at a hospice which has given me confidence. A manager will help me to meet an ecologist to network.'

Balance life and work

All learners knew the importance of work-life balance, and this year 11 learner explained that the school makes them aware of this:

'A lot of us really like to read and the school encourages us to do things we like, balancing with something we can enjoy.'

This year 12 learner said:

'It's very important not to get overworked as it creates a mental block.'

These examples were from other year groups:

'The gym relaxes my mind and makes me focus which I will take with me. The endorphins give me a better focus.'

'Reading helps alleviate stress – I love to read. I also love climbing trees so I take a book, snacks and my music up a tree.'

'I'm a guitarist - I use it to de-stress. The key skill is commitment. This is something I'll carry on throughout life.'

Year 9s told the assessor that they have had many discussions around stereotypes and human rights, in PSHE and in subject lessons:

'We talk about stereotypes in PSHE and recently focused on the 9 Protected Characteristics in human rights and how assumptions can limit careers.'

'In history last year we looked into human rights – these might relate to a job. E.g. construction might be male dominated and discourage women.'

Learners gave the assessor examples of when they have considered finance in their choices. A year 10 learner said:

‘To decide whether or not to go to uni we’ll be discussing cost and keeping options open – uni costs are different from apprenticeships where you get paid.’

Year 11s told the assessor that finance was a feature of MyChoice16 information.

Explore possibilities

Ely College and Bishop Laney Sixth Form provide diverse opportunities for learners to explore possibilities, evident in discussions with all year groups who were very well informed well informed about all options. The year 7s had not had any careers input, so the assessor focused on older learners, starting with year 8:

‘There was a careers week. We talked about what we wanted to do, and GCSEs. We learned how different subjects have roles in jobs.’

‘Employers want to employ someone reliable, qualifications, experience, willing to learn which we’re already showing in lessons.’

Year 9s looked back to the previous year to highlight that they had people talking about their jobs in school, and:

‘Last year we had universities and Cambridge Regional College in school. They talked about routes, apprenticeships, and T levels so we can learn about other options. I enjoyed this as I don’t necessarily want a conventional option. This helped me to see that apprenticeships are more than trades - and I researched and found out that there are journalism apprenticeships.’

This was echoed by older learners who highlighted careers fairs:

‘The fair had a lot of information when choosing subjects, how to choose and what our future options are, including evenings with our parents.’

Year 13s also found fairs of value:

‘We have a careers fair and there was the Cathedral uni fair. The latter really helped my decision – I had an interest, and then the fair solidified my decision about location. I also met new reps, e.g. Warwick and Kent.’

They find the university visits useful:

‘We did a trip into ARU and had a tour around campus. It was quite cool as it was big and had lots of areas.’

‘It helped to know what a uni environment could be like.’

‘I visited Manchester University and I saw how teaching methods vary with different subjects.’

Learners told the assessor that they heard from apprentices during college talks, and search for local jobs on the school’s website:

‘Mr Grezio showed it to me in a maths lesson when he showed us the website.’

The school’s focus on work related learning from year 8 has an impact in career exploration:

‘I shadowed my dad who is Head of IT in a law firm and I talked to HR about pensions which showed me about the workplace.’

Learners of all ages like using the Unifrog platform and its interactivity. Learners explained that:

‘Unifrog information is easy to find – I like using the research.’

‘We have a whole module looking at what there is, including UCAS and post 16 choices. It helped me know that I need a science for what I want to do.’

‘It told me the grades I need to get for catering and the skills I need.’

‘The quizzes have been useful based on interests and balancing money.’

‘We got asked what we thought of Unifrog and we found it useful, giving an in-depth description of careers and education. The option to compare is useful too.’

Learners told the assessor about subject-related career exploration encouraged by some departments. For example, year 10s and 13s told the assessor that:

'In Science they introduce what you could work in, what you earn and link to topics of interest and see connections with subjects.'

A year 12 Media learner gave another example of career exploration in her subject:

'My Media teacher talks about the careers and parts of production, and about the jobs you could get. This linked to a research task into careers.'

A year 13 learner was grateful to her Geography teacher for explaining teacher training; and learners from several year groups mentioned how they had been shown links between subjects and careers.

Learners were very positive about information provided by the careers adviser:

'We have had individual meetings with Miss Lambo Hills and have looked at uni's aligned to our values – for me, Cardiff and Bath align to my Formula 1 future plans.'

Year 11 learners looked back on the information they were given to choose their options:

'We had a GCSE booklet explaining our choices which was helpful. We also had videos with interviews of people who had done the subject, and we were encouraged to talk to people doing the subjects. We will do this for the next options for sixth form.'

One learner reflected on their mock interview as being valuable:

'We had mock interviews last summer, and I met a tax lawyer, I heard about different career paths. I want to do a law conversion course after a geography degree, and pros and cons were discussed.'

Year 12s told the assessor that:

'We were prepared for post 16 choices in PSHE. We researched post 16 options, requirements, and by gaining the knowledge it helped us see the goal, helping us focus in studies. We had an equal display of options and we heard about other sixth form centres.'

'Apprenticeships were mentioned a lot and we were able to compare with sixth form. Money was also mentioned.'

Other resources cited included open evenings, assemblies, PSHE lessons where tutors explained options and the MyChoice16 process. All learners emphasised that they were given impartial information, and their parents were included in an open evening with all the colleges from the area represented. Learners valued how the school engages with parents: ***'We've had meetings for parents which helps us as we discuss together and at home. This stops us being lazy and enhances support. Careers 1-1 meetings also talk about apprenticeships and T levels.'***

By the end of their school career, learners have had many opportunities to explore career options and paths through diverse activities and people.

Create opportunities

The school provides opportunities for learners to use proactively as they build their relationships with others and extend their career experiences. Learners like the PLEDGES system, recognising it for the way it links to employability. Year 8 learners are already aware of how they can proactively build their opportunities through PLEDGES:

'I'm doing Spanish and I use language apps outside class for Diversity. It's really good that you can put PLEDGE badges on your blazer and makes you feel proud. I think it links to future careers as excellence can support progression.'

'In football I enjoy playing and it helps with teamwork. I got Leadership PLEDGE when I was chosen for captain, Participation for playing in matches, and Excellence if I play well.'

Year 10 learners added:

'You need to do stuff to get PLEDGES which pushes you to do something useful which transfers to applications such as leadership.'

Year 9 learners told the assessor about the exciting club set up to build a Formula 1 car and the added value afforded by the experience:

'You can do challenges between schools, countries and a final which could be wherever a Grand Prix is being held. I did this one between a couple of schools where we made a car and then my group of 3 girls won. I chose 3D Products for my GCSEs and this contributed as I enjoyed the processes.'

Other curriculum areas also enable initiative:

'We had to design an awards park in a team at a university with about 50 other colleges. We worked in a team with teachers and had to create a presentation.'

'I do PE GCSE and some do Sports Leaders Award - and many people get job opportunities from this.'

And in wider school life:

'Being a student librarian helps me taking responsibility. I like the library and wanted to help out so chose this.'

Year 12 and 13 learners told the assessor about opportunities they have to be proactive, including Student Council, group projects, mock UN conference and debating, and helping with field trips. In this example, a year 13 learner took the initiative:

'I've started a wellbeing group and a welcome to the new year 12s day. From there we're going to organise more activities – this was based on my idea.'

Manage career

Learners are managing their career with support from specialists, teachers and external inputs. Work related learning has had a significant impact on career plans, as explained by these year 9s talking about their work shadowing in year 8:

'Work shadowing has been really helpful. I work shadowed my step dad in G's for 2 days. It gave me an insight into how different the workplace is from education, how practical and thinking approaches differ.'

'I went with my dad and I saw the importance of maths and communication skills.'

'I went with my dad who is an electrician, and although unsure about its relevance to me, I saw the importance of customer care and maths, linking to my subjects.'

The older learners also looked back positively on their year 10 work experience:

'A work experience in a primary school in year 10 showed me the inside of a workplace rather than a career choice. I have also worked as a chef for a job and got help from Miss Lambo-Hills to find and apply for this.'

'My work experience opened up a path and a part time job. While I don't want to go into hospitality, it gives me money and the ability to understand how wages work. I gain transferable skills such as teamwork in a friendly team, flexibility and work ethic.'

'I did a work experience as a teaching assistant and although not initially interested, it pushed me further away from this possible career, so was very helpful.'

All learners were able to tell the assessor who can help them with their career plans in school. Year 8s and 10s explained:

'Mr Grezio and Miss Lambo Hills and form tutors.'

'It depends on the question – Miss Lambo Hills gives completely unbiased information. Some subject teachers use Unifrog to highlight what we could do.'

Year 13s told the assessor how valuable it had been to discuss career plans and next steps with the career development practitioner:

'We did a lot of talks with Miss Lambo Hills about career paths and she tried to match the mock interviewer with our interests. I was matched with a former chef so this was very specific to me.'

Mock interviewers and alumni were referred to as supportive in learners' career journey, and learners applying to highly competitive universities have had subject teacher support on the tests required, such as for maths.

When asked how they made and will make future career decisions, year 11s gave several interesting answers along with their likely next steps:

'Grades, transport and course details – I have chosen the course with the best modules for me.'

'I was considering the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Impington and I am very interested in this and think I would fit well as it's academic and broad. I've seen the school.'

See the big picture

The school evidently develops learners' understanding of the changing labour market, with all year groups keen to put forward their views on technological developments and potential scenarios for future work. Year 8s told the assessor:

'We've been told that some jobs may be taken by AI. It's a bit scary as there may be lost jobs.'

When asked what occupations are less likely to be affected by AI, learners suggested builders and trades, and possibly artists. Year 9s told the assessor about this in more depth, showing insight:

'The labour market is mentioned in PSHE a lot. When we talk about jobs we discuss how AI can affect jobs. We bring in factors and how these might affect the jobs of interest to us, looking 20 years ahead as to where it might be. I feel that AI could be good but is potentially scary due to its realistic delivery.'

'I feel that it's really important to sympathise with people which AI cannot do – and if you can see people struggling you know that a break is needed.'

When the assessor asked learners about how they perceive social media affecting their careers, differing responses were given by year 11s:

'We had a self-employed artist come in and she talked about how she has used social media as advertising, and makes me think how it can be used.'

'It can make pressures harder – publicising people's successes. We know about employers viewing profiles and affecting our prospects.'

Learners appreciate the careers programme at Ely College and Bishop Laney Sixth Form, and the year 8s recognise it is not too soon to develop career management skills:

'It's important because it's our future.'

Year 10s were also positive about the way that school organises the careers programme:

'We learn about career in different ways so we are likely to remember key bits.'

This year 12 learner analysed how they felt about the way that the school is helping them to develop careers:

'Leadership is often portrayed as owning your learning, and the school encourages you to make your own decisions over learning. It's nice to know that the school keeps us safe – but it's genius that they push us to take control when we have to.'

'We have been well prepared for our future.'

Summary and Judgement

The assessment process was informed by a well-organised portfolio, clear description grids, and interviews with key staff as well as learner representatives from years 8 to 13. The assessor concluded that Ely College and Bishop Laney offer an excellent careers and personal development programme, fully meeting all the Career Development Institute's (CDI) learning outcomes and Gatsby Benchmarks.

The school has a well-developed CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) strategy, which identifies key areas for development and builds on internal evaluation procedures and the previous 2022 assessment, conducted using the Cambridgeshire County Council *Investing in Quality* framework. All prior recommendations have either been met or are now embedded within the school's development plan.

CEIAG provision is overseen by a member of the senior leadership team, a Level 6 guidance-trained careers adviser and careers coordinator, and a careers leader, although the latter is currently unwell and unlikely to return to the role (R6). The governing body is kept well informed and actively supports delivery in line with statutory guidance.

While the Meridian Trust's CEIAG procedures are aligned with earlier statutory guidance and the Provider Access Statement is appropriate, there is currently no school policy that outlines internal CEIAG processes and procedures (R1). Careers provision at Ely College and Bishop Laney would be further strengthened—and more closely aligned with the revised 2025 statutory guidance—if it were fully embedded in the School Development Plan (R2). Once this is complete, it will be important to ensure it is communicated effectively to staff and governors (R4).

Careers education is delivered to a high standard within the PSHE curriculum, supported by a wide range of targeted events including year 8 work shadowing, year 10 work experience, enterprise projects in years 7 and 9, and optional work experience in year 12. Education visits to and from the school are integrated throughout the programme.

The school evaluates and monitors its CEIAG provision effectively using tools such as the CEC Careers Impact internal leadership review, Future Skills Questionnaires, parental surveys, learning walks, and destinations analysis. These feed into the strategy document and development plan. The school currently meets statutory guidance and is well placed to fulfil future requirements relating to work experience, personal guidance, parental involvement, and governor engagement. However, provision would be more coherent and delivery of Gatsby Benchmark 1 stronger if curricular and extracurricular activities were more clearly mapped to the CDI learning outcomes framework (R3).

The Meridian Trust Pupil Premium Charter ensures targeted support for disadvantaged learners, including three termly career meetings for all Pupil Premium, SEN, and LAC learners by the end of Year 11. The SEND team collaborate with CEIAG staff to provide additional, differentiated support for delivery of the programme and meet different needs. All year 11 learners receive a guidance interview, with additional meetings available for years 8–10 as needed. Year 12 and 13 learners at Bishop Laney Sixth Form benefit from extended one-hour guidance sessions, particularly those identified as being at risk of becoming NEET.

Both learners and staff spoke highly of the careers adviser (Level 6 Registered Career Development Professional) responsible for guidance and coordination. Systems for recording guidance and activities are well-organised and used to maximise communication about activities.

The CEIAG programme is delivered by PSHE/careers specialists, tutors, and subject teachers. The assessor was impressed by the staff's commitment to providing high-quality careers education, information, advice, and guidance. Departments actively engage with careers-related activities, organising noticeboards and links to employers and universities. The Unifrog platform is widely used and well-liked by learners, though some would benefit from additional extension activities to enhance learning and strengthen applications—for example, by engaging with Unifrog's online courses (R5).

Staff strive to offer impartial, current, and accurate information and labour market insights through both digital and physical resources. Many subject staff also embed careers and employability skills into their curriculum areas. Resources are effectively shared with learners and parents via events, activities, and the school website. Parents are also engaged through newsletters, letters, 1:1 guidance interventions, and attendance at information evenings.

The school has built strong partnerships with a wide range of organisations, including The Employability Partnership, EDT, Cambridge University Hospitals, and local businesses offering work-related experiences. Higher education partnerships with the University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University, and the University of Bedfordshire aim to raise aspirations and increase awareness of HE pathways. Cambridge Regional College informs learners about post-16 options, including T Levels, while Form the Future provides valuable mentoring that contributes to the school's careers referral system.

As outlined in the Outcomes section of this report, learners provided clear evidence of how the programme supports their ability to grow themselves, explore possibilities, create opportunities, manage their careers, balance life and work, and see the big picture.

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.

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 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.