



The Mark of Quality
for Careers Education
and Guidance

6th June 2016

Career Mark 6

First Assessment Report

The Bulwell Academy

Valid from	22 th June 2016
Valid until	22 th June 2018
Assessed by	John Ambrose
Verified by	

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Assessment Identification Information

Assessor	John Ambrose
Assessor's Registration Centre	Complete-Careers LLP
Learning Organisation	Bulwell Academy
Contact	Keiron Turner and Alison Bingham
Career Mark Support Adviser (if used)	Gary Longdon
Date of review of Assessment Portfolio (Part 1)	5 th May 2016
Date of On-Site Assessment (Part 2)	25 th May 2016

Introduction to the Organisation

Bulwell Academy was established in 2009 with the sponsorship of the Edge Foundation. The Bulwell Academy sought to embed the importance and value of vocational education. Following the Edge vision of 'Many Pathways to Success', the Academy's vision was established as 'Everyone Achieves'.

This founding organisational value resulted in the recruitment of a Director of Business & Enterprise who had a strong business background and who was able to bring business thinking in to the organisation – often challenging traditionally-held educationalist views.

In 2012, Thomas Telford School joined the Edge sponsors to co-sponsor The Bulwell Academy bringing in a new range of knowledge and skills to help the school develop and grow. A new Principal, Mr Paul Halcro, also joined the Academy at that time and was quick to support the work in place for careers advice and guidance.

The Commons Library published the 'English Indices of Deprivation: constituency rankings' in October 2015. The data indicates that the Nottingham North constituency (where Bulwell Academy is situated) is the fifth most deprived area of the country whilst income deprivation affecting children ranks it second highest of 533 constituency areas.

A supportive Governing Body require that the Academy reports on careers advice and guidance activity on an annual basis, taking particular note of student destinations. The report outlines and evaluates the careers advice and guidance given to students to provide a counterbalance to the economic deprivation of the Academy's catchment area. The work undertaken is to ensure that young people receive good quality information, advice and guidance through a range of activities.

The area is characterised by long-term unemployment and underemployment meaning that students have very few positive influencers to inspire their future career choices. Where family members have held low-skill and low paid jobs for a long period of time, the prospect of entering new, 21st century skilled employment required a stretch which could not be provided by home influences alone.

From the opening of The Bulwell Academy there has been a clear policy regarding developing enterprise and employability skills to 'Inspire the Future' with a supporting annual delivery plan for Enterprise and Employability which has developed based on activities, evaluation and progression data.

The original policy was based on an economic development approach, building on the work of Howard Davies 2002 Enterprise Report. The strategy sought to develop the six employability skills (Leadership, Team Work, Creativity, Innovation, Problem Solving and Managing Risk) supported by communication and financial capability skills.

Historically these core competencies were lacking in the student group and a range of activities were put in place to begin to develop these skills.

The Academy continues to offer a wide range of support to students with the intention of 'inspiring the future' and enabling students to progress to satisfactory careers. This work can be evidenced by the progression figures reported to the Governing Body which outline a low NEET figures. These outcomes are remarkably impressive considering the location of the academy.

Description of the Assessment Process

General remarks

The assessor liaised directly with the Director of Business & Enterprise and the Careers & Progression Manager at The Bulwell Academy. This enabled the assessor to gain access to the description grids along with the supporting evidence.

How the assessment portfolio was used

The portfolio of evidence was organised in a logical and user-friendly format and presented professionally in a portfolio. All of the crucial elements of evidence were present, along with aspects above and beyond the requirements. Further information relating to evaluation procedures was also provided on the assessment day at the assessor's request.

How the on-site assessment was conducted

The assessor interviewed the majority of the staff directly involved with careers advice and guidance throughout the day, however the learning outcomes of the students were the main focus for the assessor. A series of questions and activities were delivered to learners throughout key stages 3, 4 and 5 to ensure the assessor was satisfied with the progression of learning and consistency of coverage across the year groups.

Assessment Schedule

Time	Meeting
8:30am	Review of additional evidence provided, as requested
9:00am	Meeting with Director of Business & Enterprise and Careers & Progression Manager
9:30am	Review of Learner outcomes with year 10 learners
10:00am	Review of learner outcomes with year 7 learners
10:30am	Review of learner outcomes with year 11 learners
11:00am	Break
11:15am	Review of learner outcomes with year 8 learners
11:45am	Review of learner outcomes with year 9 learners
12:15pm	Lunch
12:30pm	Review of learning outcomes with year 12 and 13 learners
1:00pm	Gathering of assessment documentation and feedback to Director of Business & Enterprise and Careers & Progression Manager

Standard M – Management

Areas of good practice for how the organisation has met Assessment Indicators

M1 – Abundance of evidence to suggest that Careers and Employability aspects are managed effectively. Good practice infrastructure in place with the Bulwell Academy Business Advisory Board to oversee career related activity. Comprehensive report to governors to inform of careers and employability aspects.

M2 – Very good reporting to governors to include detailed information of the expected destinations of current learners.

M3 – Effective strategic and operational arrangements to ensure careers and employability elements are coordinated and meaningful. Both the Director of Business and Enterprise and the Careers and Progression Manager have industry experience to provide an authentic work place experience throughout the career programme.

M4 – Evidence of comprehensive systems in place to identify learner need and respond accordingly with differentiated careers programme delivery.

M5 – There is a dedicated careers page on the academy's website to assure learners and their parents and carers of the careers components they can expect through their schooling. Excellent commitment to impartiality in explaining Raising of the Participation Age by stating that the duty "doesn't mean learners need to stay at our academy".

M6 – Parents and Carers are clearly identified by the academy as crucial to their child's career progression. Parents and carers have plenty of opportunities to attend academy events to find out more about career opportunities and events moving forward.

M7 – Both the Director of Business and Enterprise and the Careers and Progression Manager have achieved dedicated careers qualifications accredited by OCR at level 6. This evidences enhanced knowledge and understanding of career leadership.

M8 – The Bulwell Academy works with a wide range of partners to enhance the careers and employability experience of their learners'. This ranges from an abundance of visits/talks and activities provided by the local community, to formal arrangements with careers providers for the provision of Guidance.

M9 – The Academy is committed to a system of plan-do-review and improve. This is in operation throughout the year groups. An example is the Employment Intelligence programme which includes a detailed learner evaluation which results in a comprehensive analysis of student and employer perceptions.

Areas for further development for each Assessment Indicator

M1 – The current measured and reported outcomes of the careers and employability programme are orientated towards the Ofsted and DfE statutory requirements rather than the learners. The assessor recommends a shift in emphasis to capture the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes it wants Bulwell Academy learners to acquire throughout their education. The Career Development Institute's Careers and Work-Related Framework can provide a good starting point for this.

Standard C – Curriculum

Areas of good practice for how the organisation has met Assessment Indicators

C1 – There is a wide range of careers and employability activity in place throughout the academy. Learners benefit from an engaging and interactive programme which is extremely varied in how it is delivered to include a number of visits and opportunities to hear from inspirational speakers. The events/talks are coordinated with a PSHE programme, Tutorial support and timely collapsed timetable days are organised to maximise learning impact.

C2 – There is sufficient range of activities to meet differing needs and learning preferences within the careers and employability programme. Learners are constantly challenged to raise their aspirations and apply themselves to the best of their ability. Elements such as the Employment Intelligence programme are differentiated with learners receiving enhanced support if they have learning or social difficulties.

C3 – Overall there is sufficient range to enable learners to progress well from The Bulwell Academy to their next stage of learning as well as their chosen career pathway. As identified in M1 of this report, the academy would benefit from outlining the learner outcomes of the careers programme and mapping against the CDI's Careers and Work-Related Framework. This would better equip the academy to ensure there is adequate depth in the content of the programme.

Areas for further development for each Assessment Indicator

C3 – Please see recommendations in the 'outcomes' section of this report to scope future developments in the curriculum for self-awareness in key stage 3 and social media in key stage 5.

Standard I – Information

Areas of good practice for how the organisation has met Assessment Indicators

I1 – The assessor is satisfied that learners at The Bulwell Academy have sufficient access to independent and impartial careers information and that learners are supported and informed appropriately as to how to use it.

I2 – Learners at the academy benefit from excellent access to ICT, which forms the basis of the careers information offer at Bulwell Academy. This includes a suite of recommended websites for learners to utilise, as well as specific database access to encourage learners to source and approach their work experience placements. Further information provision includes access to useful personality profiling tools, such as the 'Crocodile' psychometric profiling software and CV builders on the National Careers Service website.

I3 – The assessor is satisfied with the budget commitments to assuring appropriate access to quality careers information, as well as the maintenance of the location of -careers information within the academy's website.

I4 – As a wide scope of information is online, this improves access for learners to locate information outside of school hours, as well as providing support for parents and carers. The academy has dedicated areas where learners can access ICT independently to work on their career planning and a 'CV clinic' offered each Wednesday after school.

Areas for further development for each Assessment Indicator

N/A

Standard G – Guidance

Areas of good practice for how the organisation has met Assessment Indicators

G1 – The academy has a comprehensive tracking and management programme in place to act on information arising from guidance to include intended destinations of learners post year 11, 12 or 13.

G2 – The academy is able to administer an entitlement to ensure all learners have access to a Careers Guidance interview. The academy has a contract with Nottingham Futures for the provision of impartial Careers Guidance. As such Careers Guidance is quality assured by the Matrix Standard and the Adviser is accredited in careers to Level 6.

G3 – The academy has a comprehensive Student Summary File to link interactions with individual learners and the coordination of careers activities and interviews. This attention to detail allows for greater tracking and monitoring of career activities and ensures there is no duplication or repetition. The assessor has no doubt about the academy's commitment to provide independent and impartial careers information, advice and guidance. The academy invites a variety of organisations to speak to its learners to help them make an informed choice.

G4 – Learners are prioritised appropriately for access to guidance and all interventions are recorded with learners receiving support with their career plans.

G5 – Adequate arrangements are in place for the facilities and the environment in which Careers Guidance interviews take place.

Areas for further development for each Assessment Indicator

N/A

Standard O – Learning Outcomes

Assessor Judgement

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

By the end of their education at The Bulwell Academy, learners are well prepared to make their transition to their chosen destination.

Learners are fully equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills to help them manage this process and subsequent transitions.

All learners could comment on a range of CEIAG activities that had taken place throughout their studies. Learners conducted themselves professionally and were a credit to the academy.

From year 7 through to year 13 learners greeted the assessor with a handshake and maintained professional dialogue and body language throughout their discussions with the assessor.

Learners could boast high aspirations for their preferred career pathway, which is testament to the work of the academy to raise aspirations, especially within a deprived cohort area.

O.1 – Learners understand themselves and the influences on them (self-development)

Positive messages of equality of opportunities are reinforced at an early age at The Bulwell Academy.

Year 7 girls spoke of visits to Nottingham City Housing to learn more about the Electrical, Plumbing and Plastering trades. When asked if it was ok for women to be car mechanics or men to be carers, year 8 learners responded with a resounding yes! This gave the assessor no doubt that the academy was working appropriately to breakdown gender stereotypes.

Year 7 learners could each communicate their strengths, but these were related to their academic subjects, rather than broader skills, qualities and competencies. This was also consistent with responses from year 8 and 9 learners. In addition, year 8 and 9 learners struggled to identify their weaknesses or targets for development in holistic terms.

Year 10 learners had a far more comprehensive understanding of their own strengths and abilities. They spoke favourably of a personality test – 'What Crocodile Are You', which helped them to identify their personality types and attributes. Areas of strength identified include 'confidence', 'team player', 'working in a team or on my own', 'problem solving' and 'resilience'. Year 10 learners also gained a lot from the Human utopia programme.

O.2 – Learners can research opportunities for training, work and personal development (career exploration)

Learners from year 7 onwards had aspirations for their future career paths. It is obvious from the career ideas discussed that learners are encouraged to aim high and to not feel restricted in any way. Aspirations included ICT Programming, Scientist, Nurse or Teacher, Paramedic etc.

Year 7 learners spoke of a range of activities and visits they had benefitted from to help with their career learning. These opportunities included attending an apprenticeship event where they could speak to employers and the Armed Forces, as well as taking part in a number of 'have a go' activities. They also spoke fondly of talks from Nottingham Trent University to help them understand university life.

Learners from year 8 described a range of useful curriculum inputs and trips to help with their career development. Such activities included a trip to Rolls Royce, an assembly on confidence building from Barclays Life Skills, a trip to Nottingham City Homes, have a go events and a visit to the National Skills Show at Birmingham NEC.

Year 9 learners expressed different means of how they could discover more about their career ideas. Some learners spoke about the dedicated careers events such as the careers or apprenticeship evenings as a good way to discover more about your career pathways. Other learners had accessed the careers information on the academy's website.

Year 9 learners could also describe a wide range of activities and curriculum inputs. In particular, they spoke favourably of a 'human utopia' programme. This helped them to build their confidence and helped them to identify that the past shouldn't influence your future.

Year 10 learners each found the Employment Intelligence programme extremely useful to help them learn more about the workplace and to gain work experience. All year 10 learners had an accurate understanding of the broad range of options open to them post 16. They could describe opportunities to hear from post 16 opportunities other than The Bulwell Academy's post 16 provision.

Year 10 learners had a good understanding of the world of work to include employees safe working practices. This has most likely stemmed from the Employment Intelligence programme. When asked about employee rights, learners listed:

'time for a break and for lunch'

'appropriate clothing and equipment'

'no discrimination – not treated differently for being a man or a woman.'

Learners from year 9 onwards were asked about skills that employers would find desirable. All learners were able to respond well with examples to include 'team working', 'leadership' working independently' etc. Learners were also able to describe how employability skills are central to the academy with poster displays in every classroom.

Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 learners in particular spoke of the range of support available to them to help them with their career development. This included access to independent and impartial careers guidance from their local Careers Adviser.

O.3 – Learners can make and adjust plans to manage change and transition (career management)

When asked how they would support younger learners to make option choices, Year 8 learners said:

'decide what you want to do when you are older and choose options that would help with that'

'keep your options open'

'discuss with your teacher and always have a back-up plan'.

Year 9 learners also had some good advice on this topic by stressing the importance not just to go with what you enjoy, but think carefully of what you need for your career path. Another learner suggested it is not helpful to consider the same options as your friends.

The Employment Intelligence programme was well received with year 10 learners. The learners found it extremely useful to apply a number of career management skills, such as writing a CV and letter of application etc. into practice when communicating with their work experience placement.

Year 11 learners were asked to give tips for what should be included in a CV. They responded with:

'your targets or any qualifications you have'

'skills and qualities to get a job'

'a summary of your experiences'

'summary of your hobbies and interests'

Year 11 learners were also asked for tips of how to conduct themselves in an interview. They responded with:

'sell yourself to them, express yourself'

'the first 7 seconds are key, so make a good impression'

'appearance'

'punctuality'

'confidence – keep eye contact'.

Year 11 learners remembered their Employer Intelligence programme and how it helped them to practice telephoning employers/making business calls, how to build your CV and how to act in a confident manner. They also found the Interview Day useful to practice their interviewing skills and gain some useful feedback. Learners could recall how one interviewer made them think by asking them to compare themselves to an animal. One learner had said that they considered themselves to be like a polar bear – appear soft and gentle, but can be strong when needed.

Year 11 learners could describe a range of activities the academy provides to help them stay safe online. Such activities include cyber bullying and messages to explain how online activity can have consequences on employment opportunities in the future. Although this is extremely useful learners could further benefit from considering supporting learners to generate professional online content as part of a modern careers management approach.

Judgement

The Bulwell Academy has a truly unique and refreshing commitment to Careers Education and Guidance to ensure it is central to the education experience of its learners.

Learners at the academy benefit from accessing a plethora of career activities to help ensure they are well prepared for their next stage of education and are well equipped for future career development. The academy invests considerably in Careers and Employability to ensure that learners access first-hand information from industry to help inspire them to raise their aspirations for the future. Such activities include numerous visits to employers throughout the year groups, as well as inspirational opportunities such as attending the national Skills Show etc. Learners also have access to a coordinated catalogue of talks and activities taking place in school.

The academy has a community approach to the learning experience. Parents and Carers are held in high regard, along with the needs of local business and industry. Parents and Carers are invited to attend a number of careers and apprenticeship evenings and members of the community can access the academy to make use of the facilities and meeting infrastructure.

Learners at the academy are surrounded by a professional business and enterprise mentality which has a big influence on their own manner in how they conduct themselves. Every learner from year 7 onwards greeted the assessor with a handshake, which is something the assessor had not experienced before in Career Mark assessments.

Careers and employability is well managed at the academy with the Bulwell Academy Business Advisory Board reviewing activity and ensuring that it meets labour market needs. This Board includes members of the wider community including Job Centre Plus to help meet the needs of the learners and the local economy.

Employability skills and readiness for work are one of the core principles of the academy. So much so the academy has created its own employability values which are displayed on the walls of every classroom.

The outcomes of the academy in terms of successful progression to employment and or further/higher education are remarkable considering the pockets of deprivation within the local community.

It is without reservation this Assessor recommends that The Bulwell Academy is awarded the Career Mark 6 quality award validation.

Recommendations

1. M1 – The current measured and reported outcomes of the careers and employability programme are orientated towards the academy, Ofsted and DfE statutory requirements rather than the learners. The assessor recommends a shift in emphasis to capture the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes it wants Bulwell Academy learners to acquire throughout their education. The Career Development Institute's Careers and Work-Related Framework can provide a good starting point for this.
2. O1 – Learners throughout key stage 3 struggled to communicate their general skills, strengths and competencies. Learners could describe the lessons they were good at, but couldn't summarise their general characteristics or personality traits. This was also reflected with learner targets. These were largely grade orientated rather than a broader understanding of the holistic key skills that need development. The assessor recommends more emphasis on self-awareness activities throughout key stage 3, as well as opportunities for learners to reflect on their targets for development.
3. O3 – Learners at The Bulwell Academy spoke of curriculum input they had received to help raise the awareness of potential damage that could arise from social media misuse. The assessor recognises this as good practice, but recommends further activities are introduced to address the positive opportunities social media can present. The assessor recommends that 'personal branding' is introduced into key stage 4 and or 5 to help learners to develop appropriate online content to help showcase their capabilities to potential employers.

Appendix

Student Quotes

The following quotes were made during discussions with representative samples of pupils from different year groups.

Year 7

When describing the opportunity to give feedback on the careers inputs one learner described how 'at the end of each lesson you have a student response to tell the teacher about what you thought, what level you think you are for a piece of work and what your targets for improvement are'.

Year 8

During a discussion about gender stereotyping, one year 8 learner stated 'no matter what sex you are you can do whatever job you want. No one can decide for you'.

Year 9

When discussing the human utopia programme one learner found it extremely useful and empowering to discover 'your past shouldn't influence your future, it is up to you if you want to do something'.

Year 10

Describing his skills and strengths a year 10 learner stated 'I have resilience, I don't like to give up on anything until I have achieved what I want'.

Year 11

Year 11 learners were asked what activities the academy had done this year to help them with their career learning. One learner responded by saying 'since year 7 the academy has been preparing us for how to be employable!'

Year 12

A year 12 learner spoke favourable of the care and support they receive from the teachers. She described 'it felt like they were nagging at the time, but I am so thankful'.

Year 13

Year 13 learners were asked if there was anything they could feedback to the academy to help them develop the careers programme. One learners stated 'there is so much we have done there is no room to have missed anything out!'.