

Work Experience & Related Activities

A review considering DfE guidance and the 'Out of Harms Way' report.

In December 2021 Anne Longfield, the former Childrens' Commissioner for England, published a report, 'Out of Harms Way' which served to highlight the failings children in the care system were experiencing. The report is highly recommended and is both extensive and concerning. A key observation within the report was made that the care population is getting older and 16 and 17 year olds with acute needs now make up 23% of children in care. The evidence shows that these children, along with those who receive pupil premium payments, are disproportionately likely to experience significantly lower life chances than other children of a similar age. The DfE has stated that it is, 'urgently reforming the system to address growing pressures'.

Belle Vue was established with a foundation ethos of improving the life chances of children, regardless of any obstacles they may face, and a commitment was made to post-16 pupils in registering the school for pupils up to the age of 19 years old. Belle Vue are determined to address the imbalances that pupils arrive with and to provide the environment and support to develop their education, their social skills, their self-esteem and to allow every pupil to believe they have a place in their community where they can be happy and thrive. We are determined to improve the life chances of our pupils and we welcome the DfE guidance in relation to work experience and related activities.

The DfE guidance is contained in the following table where we have outlined what we are currently doing and, where applicable, our plans to further build on our delivery.

Expected Delivery:	What we did:
<p>Availability of work-related activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-related activities are delivered as part of a structured programme. • Activities support: career decision making, provide experiences of the world of work and help with the development of employability skills. 	<p>Our curriculum offers a structured programme involving Preparation for Life & Work and Employability lessons for pupils. The sequences of work cover all aspects of work-related activities as part of a structured programme with Open Awards for Level 1 Employability & Professional Development.</p> <p>Additionally, pupils engage in MATHs through Practical Application (MAPA) and Writing for Purpose, both of which involve pupils engaging in work related activities whilst further improving the core subjects of maths and English.</p> <p>This curriculum exposes pupils to a wide range of potential careers which, in turn, provides them with informed choices when engaging in independent careers advice provided through the school.</p>
<p>Identification of work experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people are actively involved in the identification of work experience placements. • Young people are given guidance/support to help them find a work experience placement. • Young people/staff have a range of opportunities to engage with employers. 	<p>The wide curriculum experienced by pupils allows pupils to be focussed on work experience areas of interest to them and to show enthusiasm for engaging in more work in those areas. As part of the Life Skills lessons, pupils are able to explore different ways to gain work experience and employment. Activities include, but are not restricted to, independent travel, presenting oneself for interview (washing and ironing clothes, 'bulling' shoes) and community engagement with land-based activities such as allotment improvements for elderly residents who are finding the upkeep of the land difficult.</p> <p>Within Writing for Purpose pupils learn how to use various techniques to gain</p>

	<p>work experience or employment; this can range from a card in a newsagent window to identifying vacancies and submitting a full CV.</p> <p>Life skills directly exposes pupils to a range of employers in the community and as pupils' confidence grows in achieving independent activities, so does their desire to explore opportunities to engage in work experience in their areas of interest. A strong relationship has been forged with the local parish council who support our pupils in engaging in work experience and who facilitate our pupils meeting with employers such as a local costumes maker who has offered work experience to several pupils.</p>
<p>Preparatory activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people are supported in researching the company that are they are due to work for. • Employers meet with staff/young people to better understand the student's abilities and needs. • Employers offer a programme of activities which allow young people to develop their skills and knowledge. • Employers can access support in setting-up a placement. 	<p>The coronavirus pandemic has presented a challenge in securing work experience for pupils at Belle Vue. This has been further compounded by the need to also gain Local Authority agreement for children in care which has often not been forthcoming due to covid 19 concerns. These factors have become even more pointed with the emergence of the Omicron variant.</p> <p>Where work experience opportunities have been identified, the school will pre-meet with the employer to ensure the placement is suitably risk assessed and that the necessary health & safety and insurance requirements are in place. Open source background checks are made on companies and employers.</p> <p>The strong links with the local Parish Council have resulted in pupils receiving unanimous support in achieving work experience opportunities. The Parish Council's local knowledge of employers</p>

	<p>has contributed greatly to securing the right work experience for our pupils.</p> <p>Pupils have scaffolding to allow them to determine what they are likely to experience, the expectations that will be required of them and the benefits they will gain from the work.</p> <p>Pupils will generally be accompanied by a member of staff or the employer will hold a valid DBS certificate. Pupils are debriefed at the end of each day to allow them to self-determine what went well, what could have been better and how they will approach the next day.</p> <p>At the end of a period of work experience, pupils are encouraged to complete a display to show others what they have learned and to promote this area of work to peers.</p>
<p>Monitoring, evaluation and review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers provide feedback on the performance of a young person. • Young people reflect on their experience. • Staff in school appraise the effectiveness of their offer. 	<p>The school actively seek feedback for pupils attending work experience in order to further support pupils and to maximise the benefit they may gain. Staff also conduct regular quality assurance visits to work experience venues to ascertain specific and general feedback.</p> <p>The employer feedback is also considered against the feedback and reflection of the pupil themselves to ensure the work experience is appropriate and beneficial to the pupil. If additional support is required the school will assess this against the employer's offer and ability to accommodate additional support. Pupils also provide a reflection of their experience during the EHCP and PEP processes.</p>

	<p>At the conclusion of a work experience, the school will jointly assess the value of the placement for the employer, the school and, most importantly, for the pupil themselves. This may or may not involve future work experience with this employer being tweaked to provide better value for future pupils engaging in work experience at the particular setting. This quality assurance monitoring is formally recorded.</p>
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