

ST ALBANS GIRLS' SCHOOL ACHIEVES EIGHT GATSBY BENCHMARKS

In October 2018, St Albans Girls' School (STAGS) became the first school in Hertfordshire to fully achieve all eight Gatsby benchmarks for good careers education.

STAGS joined Hertfordshire LEP's Enterprise Adviser Network in 2016. The school's Careers Leader Ellen McHugh worked closely with Enterprise Coordinator Heather Hawkins and Enterprise Adviser Jay Powell to improve and increase the provision of careers education and events for students.

In October 2017, Compass showed that STAGS was already fully achieving six of the eight Gatsby benchmarks. With room for further improvement, a careers programme was established to address the following priority areas:



Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme

Challenge: to improve stakeholder communication about its careers programme and events.

Solution: to achieve this, Ellen created a designated careers section on the school's [new website](#), as well as a separate section for employers, with useful information including the school's careers policy, providers access policy, relevant contact details and other resources.

Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

Challenge: to provide access to employers and training providers

Solution: by working with the LEP's Careers & Enterprise Company programme and Enterprise Adviser Jay Powell, the school was able to connect with more employers and training providers, allowing it to increase the size of its careers fair to cover more industries and routes to employment than before.

Benchmark 8: Personal guidance

Challenge: to ensure the majority of Year 11s take part in 1:1 careers advice meetings

Solution: the school invested further funding into their careers advice provision from YC Hertfordshire to enable the overwhelming majority of Year 11 students to benefit from independent and impartial advice and guidance.

Ellen and Jay now encourage students to keep their options open by using both the UCAS route and applying for apprenticeships. Students also benefit from regular talks from alumni who share their experiences of university, apprenticeships, the workplace and life after school.

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The STAGS careers programme has expanded to cover all year groups, ensuring that from Year 7 onwards, students are developing their aspirations, challenging stereotypes and building their understanding of career pathways. The programme enables students to leave school more resilient and better equipped for the world of work.

Jay was a senior City financial professional with 20 years of experience working at Barclays, BlackRock and Northern Trust in client service, client solutions and strategic sales.

Jay said: *"I wanted to become an Enterprise Adviser because careers advice for me was a 3 minute chat in a corridor. In this globally competitive world, young people need sufficient careers education. Meeting all eight of the Gatsby Benchmarks will mean they will have had a taster of what's to come."*

Ellen was keen to use Jay's expertise and Heather's knowledge to help the school achieve all eight benchmarks and improve the quality of its careers provision.

The careers programme is now fully embedded across the whole of the curriculum, with the school using the [Hertfordshire Skills Framework](#) to show how every subject - not just Maths, English and PSHE - teaches skills valued by employers and helps boost students' employability.

Margaret Chapman, Head Teacher at STAGS, is highly supportive of the programme. She said: *"Careers education is a vital component of preparing a young person for their future. We are committed to providing outstanding careers provision for all students to enable them to achieve their full potential."*

About the Careers & Enterprise Company programme

Hertfordshire LEP works with YC Hertfordshire to deliver the national Careers & Enterprise Company programme within the county, with the aim of bridging the gap between education and employment. Its Enterprise Adviser Network, made up of local business leaders, works closely with schools to enhance careers education and help prepare young people for the future. [Learn more.](#)



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