

Verulam Careers Progression Journey 2026-27

Visual Progression Map

Year 7 → Year 8 → Year 9 → Year 10 → Year 11 → Year 12 → Year 13

EXPLORE BUILD FOCUS EXPERIENCE DECIDE APPLY TRANSITION

Detailed Progression by Year Group

Year	Key Focus	Gatsby Benchmarks Addressed	Activities & Experiences	Skills Developed	Outcomes / Decisions
Year 7 Discovering the world of work	- Introducing the world of work - What jobs and career sectors exist? - Why do people work? - Basic career vocabulary	GB2: Learning from LMI GB4: Curriculum links GB5: Employer encounters	Autumn: - UK Maths Challenge; - Unifrog 101 lesson; - PSHE careers activities; - Morgan Sindall assembly Year 7 USP: Working Options industry insight. Spring: - National Apprenticeships Week - National Careers Week - Staff careers interviews careers treasure hunt. Summer: - Barclays Life Skills lesson.	- Career vocabulary - self-awareness - exploration skills - digital literacy, questioning skills and awareness of job sectors.	- Students understand how careers connect to learning, gain awareness of local employers, create a basic - Unifrog profile and begin identifying personal interests.
Year 8 Exploring pathways and apprenticeships	- Making subject-career links - Identifying skills and exploring what people actually do at work through first workplace encounters - Career Readiness – Completing the Future Skills	GB2, GB5, GB6, GB7	Autumn: - UK Maths Challenge; - Unifrog and PSHE careers activities.	- Subject-career links, - professional communication, - networking, - observation skills, workplace culture and confidence with adults.	- First-hand workplace experience - understanding of work routines and skills - expanded career vocabulary and PAL KS3 requirement met.

	Questionnaire on Compass +		Spring: - National Apprenticeships Week and National Careers Week, industry insight and assemblies. Summer: Year 8 USP: Work shadowing - Royal Navy Workshop Day - Barclays Life Skills lessons.		
Year 9 Connecting Choices to future pathways	- Making GCSE choices with careers in mind - Exploring post-16 pathways - Comparing university and apprenticeships and setting goals. - Career Readiness – Completing the Future Skills Questionnaire on Compass +	GB2, GB3, GB4, GB5, GB7	Autumn: - Scholars Programme, Unifrog - Unifrog and PSHE careers activities. Spring: - National Apprenticeships Week and National Careers Week - Pathway assembly - GCSE Options Evening - Introduction to University Year 9 USP: Career Skills Day (CSD) Summer: - Degree apprenticeship talk.	- Decision-making, research - long-term planning - understanding progression routes - evaluating options and challenging stereotypes.	- GCSE options chosen with career interests in mind, - understanding of post-16 routes and emerging Plan A / Plan B.

			Royal Navy / British Army assembly		
Year 10 Theme: Exploration & Experience	- Experiencing the workplace - exploring post-16 routes - identifying employer-valued skills and beginning careers guidance.	GB2, GB3, GB5, GB6, GB7, GB8	Autumn: - Unifrog - HPQ opportunity, Spring: - National Apprenticeships Week and National Careers Week - PSHE lessons and Unifrog, Summer: Year 10 USP: Work experience - Apprenticeships assembly - College and university visits - and CV workshop. - Generation St Albans Careers Fair	- Work readiness - CV writing - professional behaviour - time management - independence - networking - applications and interview techniques.	- Work experience complete - post-16 options understood - careers guidance received - draft CV created and PAL KS4 requirement met.
Year 11 Theme: Decisions & Applications	- Finalising post-16 choices, - understanding entry requirements - completing applications and contingency planning. - Career Readiness – Completing the Future Skills Questionnaire on Compass +	GB2, GB3, GB5, GB7, GB8	Autumn: - Unifrog Year 11 USP: IAG interviews - FE assemblies - Sixth form and college applications - Oaklands College School Explorer Day	- Application writing - interview skills - resilience - flexibility, decision-making, contingency planning, goal-setting and self-advocacy.	- Applications submitted, Plan A and Plan B secured - Understanding of clearing or adjustment and readiness for post-16 transition.

			Spring: - National Apprenticeships Week and National Careers Week - apprenticeship evening at Verulam - Careers Week and guidance. Summer: GCSE results and next-step conversations.		
Year 12 Theme: Researching Post-18 Options	- Exploring university, apprenticeships and employment - Identifying courses or sectors of interest and building relevant experience - Career Readiness – Completing the Future Skills Questionnaire on Compass +	GB2, GB3, GB5, GB6, GB7, GB8	Autumn: - Post-18 pathway support, - careers interviews - FE event Year 12 USP: Opening Minds Lectures - online CEIAG - open days - Q&A sessions and UCAS introduction. Spring: - PSHE, Unifrog planning, personal statements, - MOOCs, university and apprenticeship research. Summer: - Lectures - personal statement completion - work experience	- Research, personal statement writing, - UCAS skills, interview skills, work experience, university visit etiquette and critical comparison.	- Clear Plan A and B - UCAS account created - Draft personal statement - University shortlist and understanding of degree apprenticeships.

			• university workshops and apprenticeship talk.		
Year 13 Theme: Finalising & Transitioning	Securing destinations, completing applications, making final decisions, preparing for independence and transition planning.	GB2, GB3, GB5, GB7, GB8	Autumn: • UCAS and apprenticeship applications, lectures, mock interviews and offer management. Spring: • Firm and insurance choices • Interview preparation • clearing options • accommodation • research and student finance. Summer: • Results support • Clearing or adjustment, • Final acceptance and transition preparation.	• Independence, • financial literacy • transition planning, • resilience • adult decision-making, self-management and final interview technique.	• Post-18 destination secured, • Student finance arranged, accommodation secured if needed and clear plan for September start.

Strategic Framework & Skills Progression

Key Progression Themes by Key Stage

Key Stage	Age Range	Overarching Theme	Primary Focus	Key Transitions
KS3 (Years 7-9)	11-14 years	DISCOVER & EXPLORE	Building awareness of the world of work, exploring interests and strengths, understanding career pathways, and making informed GCSE choices.	Year 9 → GCSE Options: subjects chosen with career awareness.
KS4 (Years 10-11)	14-16 years	EXPERIENCE & DECIDE	First-hand workplace experiences, exploring post-16 routes in depth, developing employability skills, and making post-16 applications.	Year 11 → Post-16: sixth form, college, apprenticeship or employment.
KS5 (Years 12-13)	16-18 years	APPLY & TRANSITION	Researching post-18 options thoroughly, making applications, developing independence, and preparing for adult life.	Year 13 → Post-18: university, degree apprenticeship, employment or gap year.

Skills Progression Ladder

Skill Area	Year 7-8 (Foundation)	Year 9-10 (Development)	Year 11-12 (Application)	Year 13 (Mastery)
Self-Awareness	Identifying interests and strengths	Linking skills to career areas	Articulating personal brand in applications	Confident self-presentation in professional contexts
Research Skills	Basic exploration of job sectors	Using Unifrog and LMI tools effectively	Detailed course/apprenticeship comparison	Independent critical evaluation of options

Skill Area	Year 7-8 (Foundation)	Year 9-10 (Development)	Year 11-12 (Application)	Year 13 (Mastery)
Decision-Making	Understanding choices exist	Choosing GCSEs with career awareness	Selecting post-16 pathway	Making final post-18 commitment
Professional Skills	Basic workplace vocabulary	Communication with employers	CV writing, interview technique	Application forms, assessment centres
Digital Literacy	Introduction to Unifrog	Regular platform use for careers research	UCAS navigation, online applications	Managing digital professional identity
Enterprise Skills	Understanding what employers do	Workplace observation	Work experience with reflection	Extended placement with independence
Networks	Meeting local employers	Building contacts through events	Utilising contacts for opportunities	Alumni connections and mentoring relationships

Cumulative Employer & Provider Encounters (Building Year on Year)

Year Group	New Encounters (Events)	Cumulative Total Encounters	Key Contributing Activities
Year 7	1–2	1–2	Morgan Sindall assembly, Working Options insight
Year 8	2–3	3–5	Tilbury Douglas, Royal Navy day, work shadowing
Year 9	4–5	7–10 (<i>Up to 14 with CSD</i>)	Career Skills Day (multi-employer), Uni intro
Year 10	7–8	14–18 (<i>Up to 22</i>)	1-week work placement, campus visits, CV workshops

Year 11	5–6	19–22 (<i>Up to 28</i>)	FE assemblies, college visits
Year 12	6–8	23–26 (<i>Up to 36</i>)	Uni visits, Opening Minds lectures, Future Skills Week
Year 13	4–6	27–30 (<i>Up to 32+</i>)	Mock assessment centres, interview panels, transition days

The Progression of Career Planning Documents

Year Group	Career Planning Tool	What Students Complete	Purpose
Year 7	Unifrog Profile and PSHE Booklet 2	Basic profile, interests survey, 101 lesson	Initial self-awareness and platform introduction
Year 8	Unifrog, Compass + PSHE Booklet 2	Career activities, competency quiz, LMI exploration	Developing understanding of skills and sectors
Year 9	Unifrog, Compass + PSHE Booklet 1 and 2	Comparing pathways, subject-career links for GCSE choices	Supporting informed GCSE option choices
Year 10	Unifrog, Compass + PSHE Booklet 2	Exploring post-16 routes, drafting CV, recording work experience	Post-16 pathway exploration and first CV
Year 11	Unifrog, Compass + PSHE Booklet 1 + Applications	Plan A and Plan B, college/sixth form applications	Securing post-16 destination
Year 12	Unifrog, Compass + UCAS + Personal Statement	University shortlist, apprenticeship research, drafting personal statement	Preparing post-18 applications
Year 13	UCAS + Final Applications	Completing applications, firm/insurance choices, clearing if needed	Securing post-18 destination

Critical Decision Points & Support

Year	Decision Point	Support Provided	Deadline/Timing
Year 9	GCSE Options	Options evening, Unifrog pathway tools, PSHE guidance	March 2027
Year 10	Post-16 exploration	Taster sessions, college visits, guidance interviews begin	Throughout the year
Year 11	Post-16 applications	Multiple provider visits, guidance interviews, application support	Autumn-Spring: applications by Feb/March
Year 12	Post-18 direction	UCAS introduction, university visits, apprenticeship research	Throughout the year
Year 13	Post-18 applications	Personal statement support, UCAS submission, interview prep	UCAS deadline: mid-January 2027
Year 13	Results & Clearing	Results day support, clearing guidance if needed	A-Level results: August 2027

How the Programme Builds Complexity

Year 7-8: Awareness	“What jobs exist?” → “What do people in those jobs actually do?” - Passive learning (assemblies, lessons) → Interactive experiences (speed networking, work shadowing) - School-based → Beginning to venture out
Year 9-10: Understanding	“What interests me?” → “What qualifications and skills do I need?” - Generic career awareness → Subject-specific career links - Exploring options → Making informed choices (GCSEs, then post-16) - Introduction to guidance interviews → Regular guidance support
Year 11-12: Application	“What are my options?” → “Where am I applying?” - Broad exploration → Focused research and comparison

	• Drafting documents (CV) → Completing applications (sixth form, college, UCAS) • Short work experience (1 week) → Extended placement opportunities
Year 13: Transition	• Applications → Final decisions • School support → Independent adult decision-making • Local providers → National/international opportunities • Student → Employee/Undergraduate/Apprentice

Summary: The Golden Thread

Each year builds on the previous one, with students developing greater independence, sophistication in their thinking, and ownership of their career journey.

Year 7	“Work exists and it’s interesting” (WONDER)
Year 8	“I can connect my learning to work” (CONNECT)
Year 9	“My choices matter for my future” (CHOOSE)
Year 10	“I can experience and succeed in workplaces” (EXPERIENCE)
Year 11	“I know where I’m going next and how to get there” (DECIDE)
Year 12	“I’m researching and preparing my post-18 future” (PREPARE)
Year 13	“I’m ready for my next step as an adult” (LAUNCH)

VERULAM SCHOOL

Gatsby Benchmarks – Careers Programme Evidence

Our approach: Careers education is embedded within PSHE and the wider Personal Development programme. Students are supported to understand themselves, explore the full range of progression opportunities and make informed decisions about their next steps.

Gatsby Benchmark	How this is implemented at Verulam School	Key evidence
1. A stable careers programme	Careers is embedded within the PSHE curriculum and Personal Development programme, supported by a planned careers strategy and annual programme of activities. There is qualified coordinator of Careers	Careers Programme; PSHE curriculum; Careers Strategy; Compass+
2. Learning from career and labour market information	Students access careers and labour market information through PSHE, Unifrog, employer encounters, apprenticeship activities and progression guidance.	Unifrog; LMI resources; employer sessions; apprenticeship events
a3. Addressing the needs of each pupil	Careers provision is responsive to individual needs, interests, aspirations and intended destinations. Additional support is provided where appropriate for disadvantaged and SEND students.	Student data; targeted interventions; adapted resources; IAG records; destination information
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	Careers is connected to subject learning so that students understand how curriculum knowledge, skills and qualifications relate to future pathways and employment.	Subject careers activities; PSHE curriculum; National Apprenticeship Week activities; teacher resources
5. Encounters with employers and employees	Students encounter employers and employees through talks, Q&A sessions, careers events, apprenticeship encounters and other employer-led activities.	Employer encounter register; student evaluations; event records; employer feedback
6. Experiences of workplaces	Students develop first-hand understanding of the workplace, including the Year 10 Work Experience programme and workplace visits/activities.	Year 10 WEX records; employer confirmations; student evaluations; placement information

Gatsby Benchmark	How this is implemented at Verulam School	Key evidence
7. Encounters with further and higher education	Students are exposed to the full range of post-16 and post-18 progression routes, including sixth form, FE, HE, apprenticeships and other progression opportunities.	University/college encounters; apprenticeship events; Unifrog; progression activities
8. Personal guidance	Students receive impartial, personalised careers guidance. Year 11 students receive structured IAG interviews with an external Careers People adviser, with action planning and follow-up.	IAG timetable; adviser briefing; student action plans; interview records
9. Measuring the impact of the careers programme	Participation, student feedback, destinations and programme activity are monitored to evaluate provision and identify areas for development.	Compass+; student evaluations; destination data; careers activity records; Gatsby evidence

Provider Access Legislation (PAL)

PAL is monitored separately from the Gatsby Benchmarks. Verulam School provides appropriate opportunities for approved technical education and apprenticeship providers to engage with students. Provider encounters are planned through the careers programme and recorded as part of the school's PAL evidence.

Our principle

There is no single "right" progression route. University, further education, apprenticeships, employment with training and other pathways may all be appropriate depending on the individual student. The purpose of careers education is to ensure that every student has the knowledge, experiences and guidance needed to make an informed decision about **their own future pathway**.