**Minutes of Careers Leaders Network – 11th March 2025**

**Ruth Flynn – Guest Speaker**

In December 2023, our school underwent an Ofsted inspection, and I was pleased to observe a significant shift in the inspection approach compared to previous evaluations. The focus was less on data, individual progress, and league tables, and more on the individuals, their destinations, and how we support them through the curriculum and careers guidance. Careers played a much larger role in the inspection, with a dedicated inspector meeting with the careers lead and other staff to understand the careers program. This shift towards developing the whole student, rather than merely pushing them through exams, is a positive step forward.

Ofsted inspections are inherently stressful, involving two days of lesson observations and meetings with various stakeholders, culminating in a brief report. However, the recent report highlighted the importance of careers, indicating its growing significance in Ofsted evaluations.

To achieve outstanding careers provision, we undertook the Investors in Careers award process twice. This rigorous process involves mapping evidence against the Gatsby benchmarks and having an external assessor validate our efforts. This external validation is crucial, as it provides an objective assessment of our careers program.

**Fiona Dowling, STEM Ambassador/VGC**

We collaborate with engineers and other professionals through the STEM Ambassador program. This program allows schools to request specific activities or discussions about various job roles, engaging local STEM ambassadors to fulfill these requests. This initiative supports schools in meeting the Gatsby benchmarks and enriches students' learning experiences.

The STEM Ambassador website facilitates these connections, allowing schools to search for local ambassadors and request activities. Raising awareness of this resource within local schools is essential to maximize its benefits.

**AOB:**

**Preeti Dhiman, Post 16 NEET Manager**

The September Guarantee project, led by Preeti, involves collecting destination data for current year 11 and year 12 students to support their transition to the next academic year. This annual project runs from May to October, and schools will be contacted with detailed instructions and support.

**Action Points and Recommendations**

1. **Focus on Holistic Student Development**:
   * Shift the emphasis from purely academic performance and league tables to the overall development of students, including their career aspirations and personal growth.
   * Ensure that the curriculum supports individual student needs and future destinations.
2. **Enhance Careers Provision**:
   * Appoint a dedicated careers lead to oversee and coordinate the careers program.
   * Regularly review and update the careers program to align with the Gatsby benchmarks.
   * Consider undergoing external validation processes, such as the Investors in Careers award, to objectively assess and improve careers provision.
3. **Engage with External Programs and Resources**:
   * Utilize the STEM Ambassador program to connect students with professionals in various fields. This can include practical activities, discussions about job roles, and career guidance.
   * Raise awareness of the STEM Ambassador website and other similar resources within the school community to maximize their use.
4. **Prepare for Ofsted Inspections**:
   * Be prepared for Ofsted inspections by ensuring that all aspects of the careers program are well-documented and aligned with the latest guidelines.
   * Highlight the importance of careers and student destinations in the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
5. **Foster Employer Relationships**:
   * Encourage students to build relationships with potential employers through work experience, internships, and career fairs.
   * Promote the benefits of degree apprenticeships and T levels as viable career pathways.
6. **Support Transition Projects**:
   * Participate in local authority projects, such as the September Guarantee, to track and support student transitions from year 11 and year 12 to their next academic or career steps.
   * Collect and analyse destination data to identify trends and areas for improvement in supporting student transitions.
7. **Continuous Improvement and Feedback**:
   * Regularly seek feedback from students, parents, and employers to continuously improve the careers program.
   * Stay informed about best practices and new initiatives in careers education and student support.
   * Look into CPD programmes with all school staff to be aware of ‘careers’.

Slides attached

* West London Careers Hub updates
* VGC STEM Ambassadors
* Ruth Flynn, Careers Programme from a school in Lambeth