

CEIAG Case Study:

Sutton High School, Sutton, Surrey

THE SCHOOL

Sutton High School is an independent girls' day school in the London Borough of Sutton. The school was opened in 1884 and is a member of the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST). There are approx. 650 girls on roll from 3–18 years old, with 370 in the senior school. The aim of the school is to provide an academically rigorous and challenging education for girls within the framework of a caring and supportive community.

Sutton High School has a long history of academic excellence and its examination results often place it in the top 100 independent schools in the country. 80 students in the senior school are on the Learning Support Register, including 12 English as an Additional Language (EAL) students. The school is a diverse community of girls from varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including our overseas students for whom English is a second language. Emphasis is placed on the individual and her particular strengths and talents.

Careers Education is included as part of the curriculum from Year 7 with lessons delivered by teachers within the Life Skills (PSHE) programme which is overseen by the Life Skills teacher and the Head of Careers. The subject has a high status within the school, with all staff involved in a range of activities. The philosophy of the Careers Department is that it seeks to provide an atmosphere of care, encouragement and positive support in which students can find their own strengths, explore possible options and make informed and appropriate career decisions.

Approximately 98% of its students leave Sutton High to take up a place at University; a few will progress to Art Foundation courses, Music Conservatoires or will choose to take a gap year.

CAREER EDUCATION INFORMATION ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (CEIAG)

The Head of Careers has the postgraduate Diploma in Careers Guidance (DCG) and is in school on 4 days a week, providing information, advice and guidance interviews. She works closely with the Senior Leadership Team and the Life Skills Coordinator.

Further support is provided by Inspiring Futures Foundation (external careers guidance provider) which carries out the psychometric profiling, conducts guidance interviews for Year 11, provides training, attends Careers events and organises Careers Experience days for students across the country.

As part of the Girls Day School Trust, the school also benefits from the GDST Career Start programme with a range of lessons being delivered by specialists, and taster days organised with large companies, for example a weekend Engineering Conference was held for 6th Form students and day events have been organised with HSBC, Rolls Royce and other such companies. Preparation courses are provided for students applying to competitive university courses.

Close links are maintained with employers and higher education institutions.

BROAD RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

Here is a flavour of what Sutton High School offers:

- Year 7 students interview members of staff across a range of occupations and give presentations; they research using the Job Explorer Database (JED) website
- Year 8 students take part in the Real Game and Take Our Daughter to Work day
- Year 9 have careers interviews with their parents and the Head of Careers; they learn about decision-making skills, use the Fast Tomato website and they learn about managing their online profile
- Year 10 work on CVs and Interview techniques and learn about their rights and responsibilities in the workplace. They visit Oxford
- Year 11 complete the Futurewise psychometric profile through Inspiring Futures and have face-to-face careers interviews
- The GDST Career Start programme supports the curriculum by giving a variety of skills related lessons to all year groups
- The school has developed a very active STEM club and is hosting The Big Bang@SuttonHigh event as part of the Big Bang Fair –a programme of UK-wide events to get students excited about science, technology, engineering and maths. (<http://nearme.thebigbangfair.co.uk/>)
- UCAS support - all students have individual interviews. The Head of Careers sends relevant information to them about different courses and careers. They have university visits, speakers, university-style lectures, taster days, study skill sessions and visits to employers.

HIGH QUALITY GUIDANCE

The school puts great emphasis on guidance interviews throughout years 9 – 13 with all these year groups having individual interviews with the Head of Careers and in addition, all of Year 11 having a guidance interview from an Inspiring Futures qualified guidance specialist.

ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

- Year 8 students go on Take Your Daughter to Work Day and share their experiences of the workplace with their peers when they return
- All Year 11 students take part in work experience and the school works closely with Employers to facilitate this
- The school organises a Careers Fair for students in Years 9 - 13 where students can find out about careers in different fields and attend talks from over 50 of our recent alumnae, our parents, universities and from local employers
- The school works with local employers through the local Education Business Partnership and students attend talks and presentations
- Links with the school's alumnae are encouraged, and alumnae help with mock interviews, talks and presentations.

QUALITY AWARD

Sutton High School has gained the Gold "Career Mark" Quality Award for CEIAG (2015) and has been successfully accredited 4 times. Career Mark is nationally validated under the Quality in Careers Consortium (QiCS) national scheme administered by the Quality in Careers Consortium

(See <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/quality.php?page=ceiag-quality-awards>).

The Career Mark award recognises the whole school approach to leadership and management of CEIAG.

Comments from the Career Mark Assessor in 2015 included:

- *The school delivers a high quality career development programme, ably managed by the Careers Coordinator and which is fully supported by the Senior Leadership Team and the Girls Day School Trust.*
- *The school devotes considerable resource to this work area in both curriculum time and personnel. The school delivers an extensive and varied careers curriculum which includes a wide range of external providers and a diverse range of activities.*
- *The students were able to recount in some detail and with considerable enthusiasm, the vast range of careers related activities which the school offers. The students clearly appreciated this. Without exception they found the whole programme interesting, stimulating and beneficial.*
- *The students value the careers provision very highly and fully appreciate the contribution it makes to their own career development planning. This was demonstrated admirably by the way in which all students seen could articulate with clarity their short term, medium term and long term career plans and can be summed up by the following quote from a Year 13 student:*

“Sutton High School cares about what we want to do, whether it’s academic or not. Being guided and encouraged to think about our futures from a young age, we are more capable of making informed choices when the time comes.”

Comments from the Students in 2015 included:

- *The Real Game was a very helpful session the school has covered with us because we were all given different jobs with various salaries and with that we had to buy a house, car etc. This was really good because it brought you into reality and it showed you how hard the real world is and that you have to work hard to get the best results. (Key Stage 3 student)*
- *I have found the careers advice and support a huge benefit regarding what I want to do when I am older. We have had several interviews, all of which have helped me to make decisions which will help me in the future. The Head of Careers has also helped me get work experience with a company that I am really interested in and gave me a lot of advice on how to write my covering letter and CV to them. (Key Stage 4 student)*
- *The careers support we have had over the years has been diverse, encouraging and enjoyable. It has always taken into account the fact that plans change and people change and has never tried to pigeon-hole people into deciding on a career at too young an age. (Key Stage 5 student).*

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