Exploring the World of Work: Gatsby Benchmark 6

At **Edgbarrow**, we are committed to preparing every student for a successful, fulfilling future. In line with the latest Department for Education (DfE) Careers Guidance, our careers programme is built around the updated **Gatsby Benchmarks**.

Gatsby Benchmark 6 (Experiences of Workplaces) ensures that every student gets first-hand, meaningful experiences of real working environments—over and above any weekend or part-time jobs they might have. Rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach, the updated guidance focuses on varied, inclusive, and tailored experiences that build real confidence and expand students' horizons. You can access further information on Gatsby Benchmark 6 here.

- **By age 16** (end of Year 11) every student should have had **meaningful experiences** of workplaces
- **By age 18 (**end of Year 13**) e**very student should have had **at least one further** meaningful workplace experience.

How We Experience Work: What's the Difference?

To make sure opportunities are inclusive and suited to different ages and needs, students engage with the workplace in three main ways:

Type of Experience	**What It Involves**	**How It Is Meaningful**
Experiences of the Workplace *(Workplace visits & employer projects)*	Structured visits to local businesses, behind-the-scenes tours, or working on a real-world project set and mentored by an employer (in-person or virtually).	Opens students' eyes to industries and job roles they may never have heard of, connecting classroom subjects directly to real careers.
Work Shadowing	Closely observing a professional as they go about their normal working day, attending meetings, and asking questions about their role.	Gives an honest, realistic insight into the pace, skills, and daily responsibilities of a specific career without the pressure of doing the job solo.
Work Experience	Stepping into a workplace (for a single day, a block week, or extended placement) to take on real tasks, solve problems, and work alongside a team.	Develops independence, workplace etiquette, and transferable skills (like teamwork and communication), while providing constructive employer feedback.

What Makes an Experience "Meaningful"?

Under the updated DfE and Gatsby guidance, a workplace activity is only counted as **meaningful** when it goes beyond simply turning up. Every experience should include:

- **A Clear Purpose:** Shared beforehand with both the student and the employer so everyone knows what the goals are.
- **Two-Way Interaction:** Active conversations, Q&As, and tasks with employees—not just passive watching.
- **Employer Feedback:** Direct, constructive feedback from the employer on the student's tasks, attitude, or ideas.
- **Time to Reflect:** Dedicated time back in school for students to reflect on what they learned, what they enjoyed, and what skills they gained.

What This Looks Like at Each Key Stage

Key Stage 3 (Years 7–9): Sparking Curiosity

- **For Students:** You'll start exploring what different workplaces actually look like. Through workplace visits, virtual tours, and employer-led challenges, you'll discover how the subjects you study in class are used in real jobs.
- **For Parents & Carers:** At this stage, the focus is on broadening horizons and challenging stereotypes. We help students build early confidence and start connecting their personal interests to future possibilities.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10–11): Exploring & Experiencing

- **For Students:** Before you finish Year 11, you will take part in meaningful workplace experiences—including a dedicated **week of work experience in Year 10 during the week commencing 12th July 2027**, and employer encounters. You'll practise professional skills, ask questions, and get feedback from real employers.
- **For Parents & Carers:** Year 10 students will be asked to source a one-week work experience placement for **w/c 12th July 2027**. These experiences help students make informed choices about their post-16 options (A-levels, T-levels, BTECs, or apprenticeships). We support students throughout the search process and work closely with families and employers to tailor opportunities—ensuring students with SEND or additional needs have full, supported access.

Key Stage 5 (Years 12–13): Preparing for Next Steps

- **For Students:** You will complete at least one further, deeper workplace experience tailored to your career goals—highlighted by a dedicated **week of work experience in Year 12 during the week commencing 28th June 2027**. This gives you real, relevant evidence to talk about in university personal statements, apprenticeship applications, and job interviews.
- **For Parents & Carers:** Year 12 students will be asked to source a one-week work experience placement for **w/c 28th June 2027**. Sixth Form experiences bridge the gap between education and adult life—allowing students to build professional networks, test out potential career paths before committing to a degree or training route, and develop the resilience needed for employment.

The Impact on Our Students

Research behind the updated Gatsby Benchmarks shows that high-quality workplace experiences have a lasting, measurable impact on young people:

- **Stronger Career Clarity:** Students make better-informed decisions about their post-16 and post-18 pathways, reducing the risk of dropping out of courses or jobs later on.
- **Boosted Confidence & Motivation:** Experiencing an unfamiliar professional environment—and realising they can cope and succeed—builds self-belief and increases motivation back in the classroom.
- **Long-Term Earning & Employment Benefits:** Evidence shows that young people who take part in multi-day workplace experiences are more likely to secure full-time employment and tend to earn higher wages in adulthood.
- **Equal Opportunities for All:** By providing structured, school-supported experiences (including virtual and supported placements), we ensure every student builds professional networks regardless of their family background or personal connections.

How Parents & Carers Can Get Involved

Parents and carers are the single biggest influence on a young person's career decisions. You can support your child by:

- **Talking about work:** Share what your own job involves, the paths you took, and the skills you use every day.
- **Supporting placement searches:** Help your child explore local businesses and reach out to contacts ahead of the **June/July 2027** placement weeks.
- **Preparing & Debriefing:** Help your child think of questions before a workplace visit or placement, and chat with them afterwards about what surprised or interested them.
- **Partnering with us:** If your workplace can offer a site visit, work shadowing, or a placement for our Year 10 or Year 12 students, please contact our Careers Leader or Careers Manager.