

Banff Academy : S3 Pathfinder



A course designed to prepare young people for senior phase, further education, and beyond.

Overview

S3 Pathfinder at Banff Academy was inspired by the Academies of Nashville Freshman Seminars model. The course prepares students for senior school and beyond by learning about themselves, building skills, and developing a Personalised Pathfinder Map. This is achieved through a series of planned and intentional lessons, co-designed through teacher collaboration. Students also benefit from community and industry exposure.



Why?

Banff Academy is committed to giving every pupil the chance to **build skills for today, tomorrow and the future**. Cognisant of the challenges and impact of Covid-19, this significant body of work is a timely piece that drives pupils to be reflective in terms of their skillsets and opportunities for personal growth and development.



Approach

Preparation: The Deputy Head Teacher and Business and Community Support Officer researched the Freshman Seminar model, Scottish Career Standards, as well as personal development reflective practices in developing the concepts supporting the Pathfinder model.

Teaching staff were invited to volunteer for the design and delivery team. This collective created design principles, course objectives, and lesson plans.

Delivery: The 40-week course is being delivered to S3 pupils in the classroom and virtually.

151 pupils



11 teachers across 8 faculties

Banff Academy has restructured its timetable into three 100-minute blocks per day, allowing the space and time to delve into lessons with students in a meaningful way.

Pupils evidence their learning and skills development through their Personalised Pathfinder Map (PPM) on Microsoft OneNote.

Each pupil has a 'critical friend'; a class peer who provides additional support and helps to evaluate their work and reflections. The teacher acts as a mentor and facilitates this enquiry, as well as structuring and delivering lessons that include skills exploration and development, engagement with industry through career insight talks, and industry videos to support the blended learning approach.



Learning outcomes

Explore, Prepare and Build

- Soft skills
- Attributes
- Characteristics
- Senior Phase
- Further Education
- College
- University
- Training
- Work Experience
- Apprenticeships

Pupil Pathfinder Map

- Reflection
- Evidence
- Personal Development

Dedicated Time:

- To focus on your future & build a personalised pathway
- Create goals and realise personal responsibilities

Learn about Careers

- Develop career management & employability skills
- Raise aspirations through meaningful & inspirational encounters with different industries
- Understand the importance of life long learning

Support

- Critical friend
- Mentor
- Coach

Gain SCQF Award

- Certified qualification
- Create SDS [My World of Work Profile](#)



Student impact



"We think that the Pathfinder course has been a positive addition to the S3 timetable and has benefited everyone who has participated by allowing us to build skills and qualities and learn all about different pathways available to us once we leave Banff Academy. It has opened our eyes to all the different things we can do once we leave school and highlighted our strengths as well as telling us which skills we need to build on."

91%

Students felt they were more informed selecting their subject options for senior phase.

Partner feedback

"It was an absolute pleasure to volunteer with Lucy and Helen at Banff Academy to deliver this careers insight session—this is an exceptional school with a strong commitment to their young people. The preparation and structure they've put in place is wonderful to see and it was a privilege to be part of their classroom." Sheilina Somani



Evaluations

Each teacher completes weekly evaluations which informs the adaptation and development of lesson plans. The Deputy Head Teacher and Business and Community Support Officer supported delivery staff and facilitated reflection.

Students found subject presentations from Faculty Heads informative and useful, and the 1:1 discussions between Pathfinder Teacher and students were identified as a particular highlight.

86%

S3 students now have a career role recorded and this data is shared amongst staff and will be used to inform and target individualised career opportunities in senior phase.



Lessons learned

S3 students found it difficult to articulate their skills initially and it has been recognised this is something that could be weaved into the curriculum at an earlier stage. Once they became familiar with the language of skills they understood their skills journey better and noted these within their PPM. For future professional encounters, students will research them in advance and facilitate the session to support their communication, presentation, and professional skills.



Pupils have completed SCQF Preparing for Employment Award



Next steps

Project-based learning will be increasingly used as a delivery model. In the final term, students will develop a presentation of learning, evidencing their personal journey. These will be published for the wider school community to understand the impact of the learning.

To build on the success of this pilot, the team at Banff Academy is committed to evolving the offering. Learnings from this year will feed into next year's delivery model and there is ambition to involve S2 and S4 for pre and post-programme activity.

For more information, contact Banff Academy's Excelerate Business and Community Support Officer
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