

GUIDANCE:

Careers guidance: the role of the governing board

Pupils and Parents



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1. Introduction

Supporting young people to make informed choices about their future is an important responsibility for schools. Access to high quality careers guidance is essential to build knowledge of the world of work and to outline the qualifications, skills and experience needed to secure the next milestone on the path to a rewarding career.

Since 2012, it has been the duty of secondary schools to secure independent guidance for young people.¹ In January 2018, an additional duty to provide opportunities for “a range of technical education and apprenticeships to access pupils and inform them about technical qualifications and apprenticeships” was established.²

Governing boards have a key role in ensuring their school(s) not only does what is required by law, but gives its pupils the tools and knowledge to make a success of their lives. They can do this by offering strategic support to school leaders and by holding the executive leader to account for the quality of provision of career guidance, information and education offered.

This guidance sets out the duties of the governing boards of primary and secondary schools in the context of the broader aims of the government’s careers strategy, alongside the key resources, sources of information and data to consider when monitoring the provision and quality of careers guidance at your school(s).

2. Careers Strategy

In December 2017, the government published its long-awaited [Careers Strategy](#) which “aims to meet the skills that the country needs on the whole by connecting the worlds of education and employment.” The strategy sets out the government’s ambition for schools, colleges, universities and other education and training providers to work together, utilising the expertise of employers and careers professionals, to support young people to make informed choices about their future.

3. Challenging bias at primary school

The Careers Strategy highlights evidence that strong careers guidance has the potential to tackle gender and socio-economic stereotypes and barriers, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds who are less likely to receive high quality advice or know the right qualifications.³ The international study of the career aspirations of 20,000 primary aged children, [Drawing the Future](#)⁴, undertaken by the Education and Employers charity in partnership with OECD Education and Skills, TES, NAHT and UCL Institute of Education showed that gender stereotyping about jobs started at a young age and that children’s horizons were often limited. It recommended that schools invite volunteers from the world of work to visit schools to chat to children to help challenge these stereotypes.

Governing boards of primary schools may wish to ask their senior executive leader questions about how all children learn about the world of work and what is being done to challenge stereotypes and broaden horizons, especially for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds or children with special education needs or disabilities (SEND).

¹ Section 42A of the Education Act 1997.

² The Technical and Further Education Act 2017 inserts section 42B into the Education Act 1997.

³ DfE’s Careers Strategy, p.4.

⁴ See www.educationandemployers.org/drawing-the-future-published-on-19-january-2018



Primary schools should seek to inspire pupils and challenge preconceptions about certain careers or pathways such as women in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) or men in teaching or caring professions. They can do so in a number of ways through visits, talks and assemblies from individuals or organisations.

For further information about the importance of starting career-related early, including some myth-busting around the purpose of career education at primary school, see [this article](#) by Nick Chambers, CEO of the charity Education and Employers (EE). The article explores the findings of a [survey](#) published in partnership EE, TES and the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) which asked primary teachers why introducing children to the world of work at an early age was important.

4. Statutory duties for governing boards of secondary schools

The governing board ensures that the school complies with its statutory responsibilities. From September 2012, all state-funded secondary schools (including academies and free schools) have a statutory duty to “secure access to independent careers guidance” for their students aged 13-18.

Schools need to make programme of independent one-to-one guidance available to every student throughout their secondary education. This can be through an in-house advisor or through buying in external support. Schools are also expected to involve a raft of other internal and external support to meet their new duty including work with employers. This activity should provide information on the full range of post-16 options to all pupils through a comprehensive programme of careers education, based on the Gatsby Benchmarks of good careers guidance (see section 5).

From January 2018 a new duty to provide opportunities for “a range of technical education and apprenticeships to access pupils and inform them about technical qualifications and apprenticeships” was established. Every school is expected to publish a policy statement which sets out their arrangements for education and training provider access to pupils and the access policy should be signed-off in agreement with the governing board.

The policy statement must be published on the school website and must include:

1. any procedural requirement in relation to requests for access
2. grounds for granting and refusing requests for access
3. details of premises or facilities to be provided to a person who is given access⁵

An optional template policy statement is set out in Annex A (p.29) of the DfE’s statutory guidance for schools which can be accessed [here](#).

5. A stable careers programme at secondary school

A key component of achieving the Careers Strategy is improving the provision of careers guidance and advice offered in schools. In January 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) expanded on this aim in its [statutory guidance for secondary schools](#).

⁵ DfE statutory guidance for secondary schools, p. 10.



The guidance sets out the expectation for school leaders to take a strategic approach to developing and improving their careers programme. It defines a standard of excellence based on robust national and international evidence - the eight Gatsby Charitable Foundation Benchmarks first established by Professor Sir John Holman in the [Good Careers Guidance Report](#) (2014).

In line with the new guidance, secondary schools are expected to improve their careers guidance offer and those governing should familiarise themselves with the Gatsby Benchmarks; it is the government's expectation that every school should begin using the Benchmarks to improve careers provision from January 2018 and meet them by the end of 2020.

The DfE's guidance outlines that whilst the Benchmarks are "not a statutory framework ... by adopting them schools can be confident that they are fulfilling their legal duties".⁶

The eight Benchmarks are:

1. a stable careers programme
2. learning from career and labour market information
3. addressing the needs of each pupil
4. linking curriculum learning to careers
5. encounters with employers and employees
6. experiences of workplaces
7. encounters with further and higher education
8. personal guidance

5.1 Careers Leaders

To coordinate and deliver a careers programme underpinned by the Gatsby Benchmarks, every school is expected to appoint a dedicated Careers Leader from September 2018. In recognition of the importance of strong strategic leadership to develop, co-ordinate and drive forward the careers programme, the statutory guidance calls for the governing board and headteacher to give "explicit backing" to the Careers Leader.

The government has published an amendment to the [School Information Regulations](#) which will come into force from 1st September 2018. From this date schools are required to publish the following information about their careers programme:

- The name, email address and telephone number of the school's Career Leader
- A summary of the careers programme, including details of how pupils, parents, teachers and employers may access information about the careers programme
- How the school measures and assesses the impact of the careers programme on pupils
- The date of the school's next review of the information published

Further information about the expectations and duties of the Careers Leader has been published by Gatsby and the Careers and Enterprise Company in a guide for secondary schools which is available [here](#).

⁶ DfE Statutory Guidance, p.5.



5.2 Questions for secondary school governors/ trustees to ask to ensure compliance with their statutory duties:

- Is careers guidance presented in an impartial manner, showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or occupation? In particular, is information provided about all post-16 choices to every student?
- Does guidance include information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education routes?
- Does careers advice promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given?
- Has the school published a policy statement setting out arrangements for education and training providers to access pupils?
- Has the school named a Careers Leader who is appropriately trained?
- Has the school published details of its careers programme which is accessible to student, parents, carers, employers and other stakeholders?

5.3 Timetable of requirements and expectations for secondary schools⁷

From September 2012	Every school must ensure that pupils are provided with independent careers guidance from year 8 to year 13.
From January 2018	<p>Every school must ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access <u>all</u> pupils in year 8 to year 13 for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships.</p> <p>Every school must publish a policy statement setting out their arrangements for provider access and ensure that it is followed.</p>
From January 2018 to the end of 2020	<p>Every school should begin using the Gatsby Benchmarks to improve careers provision now and meet them by the end of 2020.</p> <p>For the Employer Encounters Benchmark, every school should begin to offer every young person seven encounters with employers – at least one each year from year 7 to year 13 – and meet this in full by the end of 2020. Some of these encounters should be with STEM employers.</p>

⁷ DfE Careers Strategy, p.8.



From September 2018	Every school should appoint a named person to the role of Careers Leader to lead the careers programme.
From September 2018	Every school will be expected to publish details of their careers programme for young people and their parents.

6. Finance

As the government will not be providing any extra funding to schools, the careers programme must be paid for out of the school budget. Schools may choose to spread the cost of such services by working in partnership with other schools and it is important to ensure that the service provided is of high quality.

The Gatsby Foundation piloted its framework with North East Local Enterprise Partnership (North East LEP) in 16 schools and colleges across North East England. The pilot aimed to find out how schools could best achieve all eight Benchmarks.⁸ In 2015, 50% of the schools and colleges in the pilot achieved no benchmarks, but after over 85% now reach between six and eight benchmarks. Insights and case studies of good practice from the pilot can be found [here](#).

When considering the lessons learned during the pilot on minimising the costs of achieving the Benchmarks, Ryan Gibson, National Facilitator for the Career Benchmarks Pilot at North East LEP said: *"There are lots of services you can buy in to support a career education programme, and it is worth talking to colleagues in other schools for recommendations but also carrying out your own research. There may be discounts or free services in your area. You can also minimise cost by sharing resources with other schools, working with employers and applying for bursaries (see: [potential support](#)). Some of the most creative ideas cost very little, for example ensuring you have employer representation on the governing body, directing young people to the National Careers Service or by making use of the labour market plugin available on the LMI for All website. The key is understanding what support you need, based on an audit of practice".*

For further information on support available to schools, see the resources in section 8.

7. Monitoring progress

Governing boards will want to question the quality and impact of careers education and there are several key sources of information to consider when holding the senior executive leader to account for the quality of the careers programme.

Self-audit tool

The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) have created [Compass](#), an online self-evaluation tool for schools to use to assess how their careers programme compares against the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

⁸ Every school and college who participated in the North East pilots of the Gatsby Benchmarks received direct funding of £9k+ from the Gatsby Foundation.



Schools should baseline themselves using this tool, consider the opportunities to improve their careers programme based on their results, and track their progress against the Benchmarks over time.

National perspective

Every year CEC publishes a report based on anonymous information collated from the Compass self-assessment tool. The [State of the Nation 2018: Careers and Enterprise Provision in England's Schools](#) report shows that almost two-thirds of secondary schools have used Compass and there has been improvements on every dimension of careers support:

- a stable careers programme (achieved by 6%);
- learning from career and labour market information (32%);
- addressing the needs of each pupil (13%);
- linking curriculum learning to careers (26%);
- encounters with employers and employees (38%);
- experiences of workplaces (37%);
- encounters with further and higher education (13%);
- personal guidance (49%).

Those who had submitted data more than once were making “steady progress”, with an average improvement of 0.79 benchmarks.

However, NGA’s annual School Governance Survey 2018 finds that almost half of primary schools offer no form of careers education. This is despite [evidence to suggest](#) that talking about future options with pupils of primary age can potentially impact upon their future education and career choices. Additionally, only 51% of all schools reported that their careers programme had the explicit backing of the governing board, indicating the need for governors and trustees to take an active interest in careers education across all settings. The importance and impact of career related learning in primary schools, as well as the hallmarks of success of the outcomes and activities that primary schools should aim for when delivering career-related learning, can be found [here](#).

7.1 Questions for secondary school governing boards to ask when monitoring progress toward the Benchmarks include:

- Does the Careers Leader utilise the Compass self-audit tool?
- Does the Careers Leader have the full backing of the head/ governing board and how is this best demonstrated?
- Is a clear strategy on careers provision communicated and embedded across the school?
- Is students’ progression tracked over time?
- Do students have access to the full range of objective information about all career options available to school leavers?
- Is feedback on the careers programme collected from pupils, parents and staff and does this evidence inform judgments about the effectiveness of the programme?

7.2 Internal sources of information

Examples of evidence that the governing board may consider when triangulating evidence to assess how well the school prepares pupils for the next stages includes:



- pupil exit interviews (anonymised)
- feedback from parents
- proportion applying for degree programmes at universities (including elite universities), vocational programmes at colleges and apprenticeships
- destination data for pupils up to three years after leaving and numbers of pupils who are NEET (not in education, employment or training)⁹

Using a combination of sources can prove most effective. Governing boards must be mindful of staff workload when requesting data and should not expect to receive data that is not already utilised by a member of staff with responsibility for delivering the careers programme.

7.3 Ofsted

Careers guidance will continue to be considered as set out in Ofsted's [Common Inspection Framework](#) and [School Inspection Handbook](#).

Earlier this year, Ofsted's Director of Education Sean Harford said: *'We ask our inspectors to bear in mind the government's careers strategy and the Gatsby career guidance Benchmarks. We expect, over time, that these will become more and more widely used in schools and colleges.'*

8. Resources

Support for schools from the Careers & Enterprise Company

The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) are an umbrella organisation seeking to support schools and colleges improve career guidance through research, funding and regional networks. They provide support for schools to improve their careers guidance offer including:

A. Training for Careers Leaders

The government has provided £8 million to provide training and support for Careers Leaders "so they can give the most up-to-date advice and fully prepare young people for the world of work".

Places will be offered on a first come first serve basis provided that schools and colleges meet specified criteria. For further information about accessing training go to the Careers Leader section of the CEC website [here](#).

B. Support for encounters with employers

To support secondary schools to offer every young person at least seven encounters with employers during their education, with at least one encounter taking place each year from years 7-13, the CEC have created a network of Enterprise Coordinators and Advisers.

By 2020, CEC aim to have an Enterprise Adviser available to all secondary schools and colleges. An Enterprise Adviser – effectively a senior volunteer from business – can help to unlock relationships with

⁹ The DfE publish KS4 and 16-18 (KS5) education destinations in performance tables available at <https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables>



other local businesses. Further information about joining the Enterprise Adviser network is available at the CEC website [here](#).

C. Career hubs

As part of the Careers Strategy, the government tasked CEC to establish Careers Hubs across the country, allocating £5 million over a two-year period to support them. The Hubs are based on a successful model from the North East LEP pilot. From September 2018, 710 schools and colleges (equivalent to one in five) will work within a Hub and there will be at least one Hub in every region of England outside of London. Further information is available [here](#).

In October 2018, the Secretary of State announced extra funding for careers education which means that from 2019, CEC will be able to roll out the Careers Hub model further and will look to establish 20 additional Careers Hubs across England.

9. Further sources of information

- The charity [Education and Employers](#) has produced several pieces of research on careers and the difference employer engagement in education makes to young people. Their research has found that employer engagement helps improve social mobility, reduces the likelihood of young people becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training), increases the amount they earn in adult life and helps them make better informed career choices – [click here](#) to access this research.
- Education and Employers also runs the [Inspiring the Future](#) programme – a free service utilising match-making technology to connect schools and colleges with volunteers from the world of work. Their aim is to broaden young people’s horizons, raise their aspirations and show them the range of opportunities and careers routes open to them. So far, 80% of secondary schools have registered with the service and nearly 50,000 people have already volunteered in the UK. There is also a version for primary schools called [Primary Futures](#)
- A new and improved [National Careers Service website](#) has been published which offers provides careers information, advice and guidance. Also look out for their National Careers Week 2019 on 4th - 9th March, sponsored by RBS.
- A list of key organisations that can offer support and information to assist schools in meeting the Benchmarks can be found Gatsby Foundation’s Good Career Guidance Website, available to access [here](#). Visit the ‘Be Inspired’ area of the site to access learning from the excellent case studies of schools in the North East of England who participated in the Gatsby Benchmarks pilot.



National Governance Association

The National Governance Association (NGA) is an independent charity representing and supporting governors, trustees and clerks in maintained schools and academies in England. The NGA's goal is to improve the wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. It does this by providing information, guidance, research, advice and training. It also works closely with, and lobbies, UK government and educational bodies, and is the leading campaigning national membership organisation for school governors and trustees.

The NGA online Guidance Centre is the information hub for governors. It supports you in your role as a governor, giving you access to up to date guidance and advice covering all aspects of school governance, including finance; staffing; Ofsted; curriculum; special educational needs; legislation and school improvement.

Practical governance resources include sample documents; templates; checklists; information summaries; insights; case studies and much more.

To join NGA and receive regular updates, contact:

T: 0121 237 3780 | E: membership@nga.org.uk | www.nga.org.uk