

GATSBY BENCHMARK 1

A stable careers programme

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

- **Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers.**
- **Every school should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team and an appropriately trained person responsible for it.**
- **The careers programme should be published on the school's website so students, parents, teachers and employers can access and understand it.**
- **The programme should be regularly evaluated with feedback from students, parents, teachers and employers as part of the evaluation process.**

WHY THIS MATTERS

- This benchmark provides a foundation for the other seven benchmarks.
- A stable programme to prepare young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life is a core statutory responsibility for schools and colleges.
- Inspiring careers and enterprise activities in a stable careers programme improves motivation, attendance and attainment.
- A stable careers programme enables young people to make well-informed decisions about education, training, apprenticeship and employment opportunities. It also helps them cope with challenging labour market conditions. We know that young people are three times more likely than adults to be unemployed.
- Delivering social mobility and justice relies on opening doors for all young people. The government has recently endorsed the fact that "great careers guidance provides the first rung on the ladder of opportunity, helping everyone to achieve their full potential". (DfE, 2017, p. 3)
- A stable careers programme can play a part in promoting social mobility for the benefit of young people, their families and wider society.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

- The careers programme has strong backing from the head teacher or principal, senior leaders and governing body. It needs to be embedded into the structures of the school and its position should be recognised and secure. This means the programme can continue to be developed to meet the needs of students. It is not entirely dependent on the goodwill of individuals or vulnerable to competing education priorities.
- The programme is coordinated and led by an appropriately trained and supported careers lead, whose views are considered in the decision-making structures of the school. This means that the role needs to be part of the senior leadership team or have their backing. The role of the careers lead needs to be wide enough to support contributions from specialists in related roles, such as the coordinator for students with special educational needs and disabilities, and for teachers embedding careers in subject learning.
- Students, parents, teachers and employers know what is in the programme. The programme is set out clearly on the school's website and promoted through the school's social media accounts and newsletters and local media outlets. Students should discuss the programme in the school council and parents should know what to expect in the meetings arranged for them throughout the year. Messages for teachers are reinforced through the staff handbook, meetings and curriculum guidelines. Employers invited to participate in the programme know clearly what to expect, how their contributions fit in and how they will benefit.
- A plan for how the careers programme will be implemented is included in an annual careers plan that includes priorities from the overall school development plan. This makes it easier to evaluate the achievements of the programme at the end of each year.
- Students, parents, teachers and employers provide regular and systematic evaluative feedback on their participation in activities via questionnaires, surveys and focus groups. This feedback is then used to inform decisions about the future development of the programme and feeds into the whole-school process of evaluation.

GATSBY BENCHMARK 1

A stable careers programme

TOP TIPS FOR SCHOOLS

1. Ensure your careers provision is tailored to the needs and circumstances of your students.
2. Write a careers plan, publish it on your website and commit to making all stakeholders aware of it and keeping it up to date.
3. Take advice from the governing body to ensure that the programme considers their knowledge of the changing labour market.
4. Appoint a lead or coordinator with sufficient status and expertise to maintain and develop a stable careers programme.
5. Ensure that the programme design and delivery is embedded in school structures and not invested solely in the goodwill of individuals.
6. Promote the importance of the careers programme to students, parents, teachers and employers so that they know what to expect and how they can contribute to its success.
7. Undertake regular evaluation of the programme with a clear intended purpose, for example, reports for the senior leadership team and the governing body should be used to inform future decisions about the programme.

TOP TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

1. Ask the school or college for their careers programme and see where your expertise will count most.
2. Be a critical friend – support and challenge the school to develop a stable careers programme.
3. Be prepared to build a long-term relationship and to contribute to all aspects of school or college life.
4. Make sure your staff are briefed before taking part in activities.
5. Contribute to the school or college's evaluation and act on feedback to do things differently or better next time.
6. Help schools and colleges develop a programme that takes into account the trends in your business, your sector and the wider economy.
7. Use your networks to encourage others to contribute to the careers programme and to take on key supporting roles.
8. Employers can review all existing employer engagement and make sure that it has maximum impact and streamline where appropriate.

RESOURCES

Practical guides to developing a stable careers programme:

- [Compass Evaluation Tool](#) – an online tool to help schools measure their effectiveness against the eight Gatsby benchmarks
- [Moments of Choice, The Careers & Enterprise Company](#)
- Framework for careers, employability and enterprise education 7-19 (CDI Framework, 2015)
- Good Careers Guidance (Gatsby, 2014)
- Careers Education in the classroom – the role of teachers in making young people work ready (TeachFirst, 2015)
- Access Toolkit (TeachFirst, 2016)

Links to relevant programmes and providers who can support a school or college:

- [The Careers & Enterprise Company Enterprise Adviser Network](#)
- [Business in the Community's Business Class programme](#)

Alignment to Ofsted/National requirements:

- [Ofsted school inspection handbook](#)
- [Ofsted further education and skills inspection handbook](#)
- [Careers guidance and inspiration in schools. Statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff \(Department for Education, 2017\)](#)
- [The Quality in Careers Standard is a supportive resource and national standard awarded by a range of licensed awarding bodies.](#)

GATSBY BENCHMARK 1

A stable careers programme

AN EXAMPLE OF A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME

An 11-19 school in south-east London has created a programme that aims to transform the life chances of all students by supporting the development of healthy, confident and independent young adults. The governing body supports the programme through a designated link governor and the commitment of the senior leadership team is reflected in the school development plan.

The school's careers plan clearly sets out the roles of the:

- assistant head
- team leaders
- pastoral leaders for each key stage
- head of KS3
- careers adviser
- access project worker.

Good communications and teamwork underpin activities and support for students. The programme includes activities for all students from years 7 to 13 that are delivered through:

- assemblies
- enrichment activities
- tutor time
- the personal, social and health education programme (PSHE)
- employer encounters
- workplace experiences.

Year 10 students take part in employer-inspired extended projects and students with special educational needs and disabilities benefit from employer links to improve their transitions at age 16-18. The Enterprise Advisers act as critical friends and are helping the ongoing development of a programme that has a high impact on students.

The school has completed the Compass evaluation and is using it to drive improvement. They have contracts with an external guidance provider to offer information, advice and guidance. They have also completed the Kirkland Rowell survey with parents, who rated the school as outstanding for:

- developing young people's confidence
- explaining how to help their children
- providing post-16 careers advice.

