

The Career Leaders' guide to Gatsby

What are the Gatsby benchmarks?

In 2014, Lord Sainsbury's Gatsby Foundation asked Sir John Holman, a leading figure in the promotion of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects and careers, to report on "what career guidance in England would be like were it good".

The evidence for their report came from:

- six countries (the Netherlands, Germany, Hong Kong, Finland, Canada and Ireland)
- five English independent schools
- a review of the literature on good career guidance
- a survey of English state schools.

The contents of their report include:

- eight benchmarks of good career guidance that they identified.
- the results of a survey of a sample of English schools to see how they measured up against the benchmarks
- an analysis by PwC of the start-up and ongoing costs of implementing the benchmarks in school
- ten recommendations on how to improve the career guidance system.

Download the report, appendices and PwC costing report [here](#)

Developments since 2014 include:

- the launch of a four-year pilot project in the North-East of England to help thirteen schools and three colleges to use the benchmarks to improve their provision. The project is based at the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) and is being evaluated at the International Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby. The intention is to roll out examples of good practice across the rest of the country.
Watch a short video of teachers talking about the pilot [here](#)
- the launch by the Careers & Enterprise Company of Career Compass, a self-review tool based on Gatsby to enable schools to identify their own strengths and priorities for improvement.
Download the Compass tool [here](#)
- the mapping of the Gatsby benchmarks against the national accreditation criteria for the Quality in Careers Standard by the Quality in Careers Consortium.
Download the Guide [here](#)

The table below shows the eight benchmarks:

<p>1. A stable careers programme</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>2. Learning from career and labour market information</p>	<p>Every student, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.</p>
<p>3. Addressing the needs of each student</p>	<p>Students have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each student. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.</p>
<p>4. Linking curriculum learning to careers</p>	<p>All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.</p>
<p>5. Encounters with employers and employees</p>	<p>Every student should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.</p>
<p>6. Experiences of workplaces</p>	<p>Every student should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.</p>
<p>7. Encounters with further and higher education</p>	<p>All students should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.</p>
<p>8. Personal guidance</p>	<p>Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all students but should be timed to meet their individual needs.</p>

How important is it for school leaders to have regard to the Gatsby benchmarks when planning their careers provision?

The Gatsby benchmarks are a very good tool to help schools plan and develop their careers programmes. In part, this is because benchmarking is a proven technique for helping leaders and organisations improve their performance. Benchmarks enable schools to compare themselves against a standard which shows what good looks like in order to find out what they need to do to improve. Benchmarks also facilitate organisational learning and enable schools to compare themselves against other schools.

Another advantage of using the Gatsby benchmarks is that they were developed after the duty to secure independent and impartial careers guidance was devolved to schools. The benchmarks, therefore, suit the current policy context, however confusing and unhelpful schools may find what is happening in England. It is the case that schools were inadequately prepared and funded for taking on this responsibility and the guidance and support from the DfE has been weak. It also remains the case that the limitations on the remits and agendas of bodies such as the National Careers Service, the Careers & Enterprise Company and Jobcentre Plus do not always give schools the help they need.

When the new careers strategy is launched in the autumn followed by revised statutory guidance to schools in the New Year, it is likely that the Gatsby benchmarks will figure prominently.

What should schools be doing to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks?

These are the key steps which schools can take:

1. Monitor and evaluate your provision using the online Compass tool.

An analysis of nearly 600 schools that have used the Compass tool found that most schools can achieve two or three of the benchmarks. Only three schools reported that they have achieved all eight benchmarks.

2. Compare your performance against other schools.

The table below shows the percentage of schools that meet each element within the benchmarks.

Gatsby Benchmark	Elements within the benchmarks	% of schools meeting elements within the benchmark
1. A stable careers programme	1.1 Every school should have a structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained person of authority responsible for it.	71%
	1.2 The careers programme should be published on the school's website in a way that enables pupils, parents, teachers and employers to understand the school's offer in this area.	19%
	1.3 The programme should be regularly evaluated with feedback from pupils, parents, teachers and employers as part of the evaluation process.	66%

2. Learning from careers and labour market information	2.1 By the age of 14, all students should have accessed and used information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options. 2.2 Parents and carers should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and future study options to inform their support to their children	20% 72%
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil	3.1 A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations. 3.2 Schools should keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each student, and subsequent agreed decisions. 3.3 All pupils should have access to these records to support their career development. 3.4 Schools should collect and maintain accurate data for each student on their education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave school.	73% (sters) 88% (asps) 56% 42% 79%
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	4.1 By the age of 14, every pupil should have had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers.	20%
5. Encounters with employers and employees	5.1 Every year, from the age of 11, students should participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer.	39%
6. Experiences of workplaces	6.1 By the age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have. 6.2 By the age of 18, every pupil should have had one further such experience, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.	46% 30%
7. Encounters with further and higher education	7.1 By the age of 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including Sixth Forms, colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and pupils. 7.2 By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and pupils.	23% 21%
8. Personal guidance	8.1 Every pupil should have at least one such interview by the age of 16, and the opportunity for a further interview by the age of 18.	44% (age 16) 22% (age 18)

3. **Estimate the total cost of achieving all the benchmarks in your school** (Gatsby has a worked example from the second year onwards in a typical school on page 40 of the report). Compare it with the current spend. PwC calculate that the total cost of achieving all the benchmarks in a typical school will be under £54,000 in the first year and just under £45,000 annually thereafter. There are no real models to follow for this, but estimate the return on investment if career guidance were to be improved, for example in terms of pupil motivation and aspirations, raised attainment, savings in staff time from reduced course-switching and dropping out.
4. **Decide to achieve the Quality in Careers Standard.** Getting support from an Award Provider for the Quality in Careers Standard will give you the practical help and challenge you need to improve the school's performance. External assessment will give you more robust feedback on your school's provision than a self-conducted audit.
5. **Identify the practical steps you can take to make an immediate improvement** in your school's careers guidance provision.
See the table below for suggestions:

Practical tips for achieving each of the benchmarks

<p>1. A stable careers programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a senior lead for careers to advise the senior leadership team and governors on strategy for careers guidance with the support of a curriculum lead responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the strategy • Publish an annual careers plan which does more than just list activities and events but shows how elements of the programme are connected to provide students with a coherent offer • Make careers a whole-school activity, e.g. embed careers in subject learning, celebrate national events such as National Careers Week • Actively use the school's website and social media to support students' progression and planning • Regularly evaluate the impact of key elements of the careers programme
<p>2. Learning from career and labour market information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train students on how to locate, navigate, evaluate, organise and process careers information • Find out if the local enterprise partnership or other organisations in your area produce labour market information • Promote the best sources of careers information – free and priced – for your students and protect them from information overload • Encourage your students to research careers information earlier than they think they need to do • Harness the support of parents, employers and alumni in providing students with access to up-to-date information
<p>3. Addressing the needs of each student</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set challenging goals for making your careers programme more responsive and more effective in meeting the needs of different groups of students

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do an equality impact assessment before introducing new activities • Make sure that students with protected characteristics, gifted and talented students, young carers, looked after children and students in receipt of the Pupil Premium get the tailored support they need • Monitor student destinations to check whether students are progressing into personally-valued destinations • Develop a careers programme which teaches hope, optimism, adaptability and resilience
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a planned and progressive programme of careers education based on the CDI Framework for Careers, employability and enterprise education • Embed careers in subject learning to show the relevance of the content and skills of the subject to everyday life and career planning • Use careers as a context and resource for motivating and engaging students in subject learning • Offer co-curricular activities which reinforce and enrich the careers programme, e.g. STEM clubs, Young Enterprise • Ask subject staff to familiarise themselves with opportunities for studying the subject and related subjects at higher levels
5. Encounters with employers and employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build long-term relationships with local employers to make it easier to run annual events • Fully brief employers on what you want them to do and give them feedback afterwards • Monitor the range of employers you invite into school, e.g. to give students access to a range of role models • Work collaboratively with local employers to develop real challenges and projects with the potential to benefit students, the school, the employer's business and the community • Get in touch with organisations that can help you make contact with employers, e.g. STEM ambassadors, Inspiring the Future, Speakers4Schools, founders4schools
6. Experiences of workplaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider holding a 'Take your sons and daughters to work' day for Key Stage 3 pupils • Focus pre-16 work experience on giving pupils a taster of the world of work and post-16 work experience on complementing students' study programmes • Make use of resources such as Barclays LifeSkills and RBS Kickstart to support your activities in this area • Provide good administrative support for activities in this area, for example the satisfaction levels of students and employers drop considerably when arrangements are made at the last minute • Build in sufficient curriculum time for students to reflect on their learning in the workplace

<p>7. Encounters with further and higher education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on raising aspirations towards higher education should start by Year 8 at the latest • Make full use of alumni to raise awareness of current students about what students like them can do in further and higher education • Find out about support that you may be able to access from the national collaborative outreach programme in your area to encourage disadvantaged students to participate in HE • Publicise open days and taster courses and, where appropriate, organise visits to HE institutions • Make sure that students fully understand what higher and degree apprenticeships have to offer
<p>8. Personal guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a careers adviser who is on the CDI professional register • Produce a paper showing how personal guidance is delivered in a joined-up way for each year group in your school • Consider which students could benefit from mentoring • Keep records of the guidance given which students can access to support their progression and planning • Work proactively with parents and carers to help them support their children's progression and planning

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