



# Insight Briefing

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Gatsby Benchmark  
results for 2023/24

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# Top three insights



Benchmark achievement rose again in 2023/24. The average is now almost 6 Gatsby Benchmarks for each school and college. Progress is being made on all benchmarks



Institutions have benefitted from joining Careers hubs, driving up performance



More students are encountering employers and having workplace experiences. But there are opportunities to go further.

# Key data findings



5.8

5.8 average number of Gatsby Benchmarks across state-funded secondary schools and colleges (5.5 in 2022/23)



25%

25% of all secondary schools and colleges achieved all 8 benchmarks (30% of special schools)



6.3

6.3 benchmarks achieved by schools in Careers Hubs established the longest compared to 3.8 for those not in a Hub (and 5.3 for those who joined Hubs this academic year)



4,751

4,751 schools and colleges reported this year (92% of all state-funded secondary schools and colleges)



8%pts

8%pts improvement in Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces - most improved benchmark, from 64% in 2022/23 to 72%



+54%pts

Careers Hub members significantly outperformed institutions not in a Hub, particularly in relation to Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme (+54%pts) and Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information (+41%pts)

## Introduction

This insight briefing shares headlines about careers provision in England from the 2023/24 academic year. Findings are based on a national dataset of 4,751 state-funded mainstream schools, special and colleges (92% of secondary institutions), including 58 independent special schools with Section 41 funding. All participants completed a Compass evaluation - an online self-assessment tool - to review their provision against the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, which define what high quality careers education looks like. The full data, including sub benchmark results and trend data, are published [here](#).

We recommend completing a Compass evaluation every term, to effectively monitor development and progress over time. Guidance, training and resources are provided to support the completion of a Compass evaluation and use of this tool is encouraged and facilitated through the CEC networks and government policy. The goal is to promote continuous school and college-led improvement. The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC), as the national body for careers education, tracks national, regional, and institution-level progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks. This insight is shared publicly to inform policy and practice.

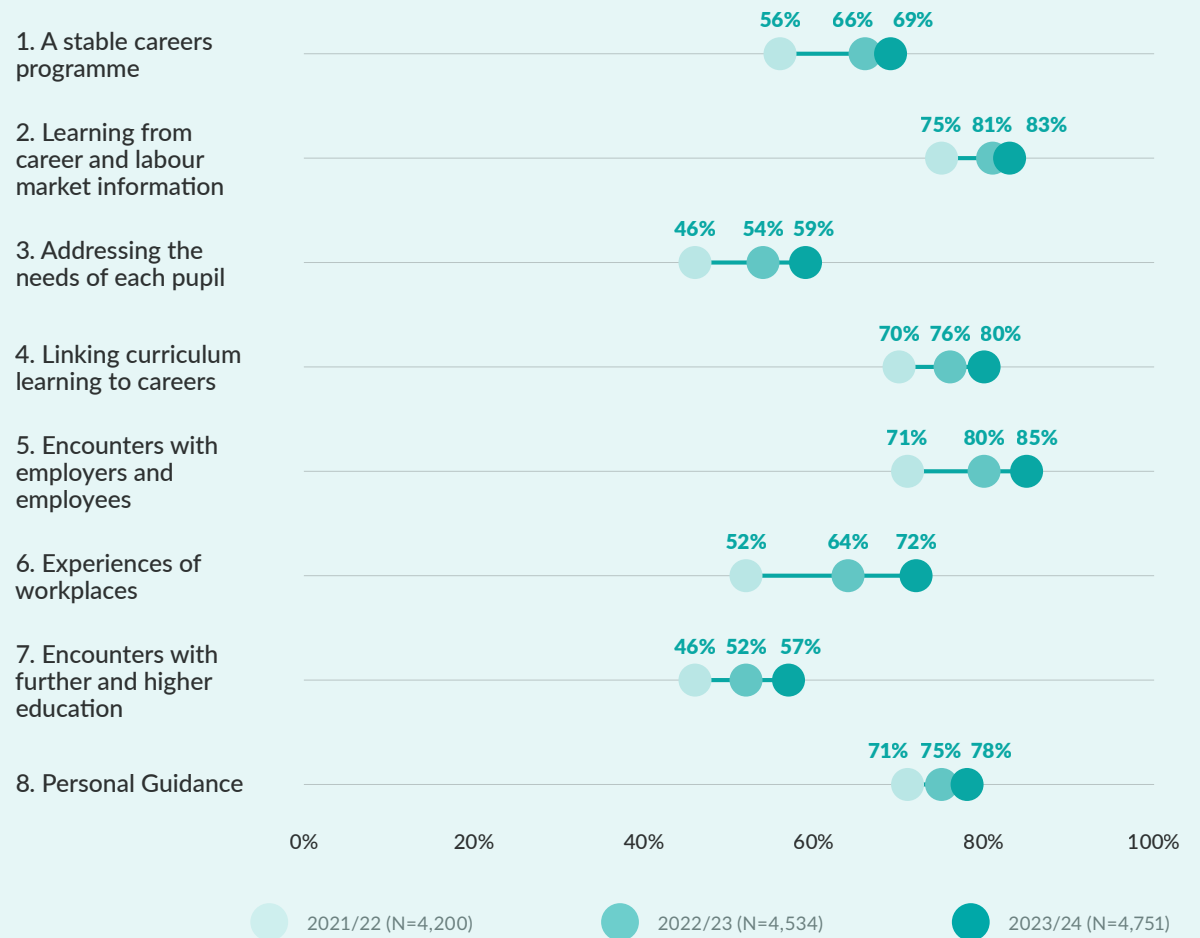


**Schools and colleges in England fully achieved on average 5.8 benchmarks out of 8, 0.3 benchmarks higher than last year (5.5), even as the number of reporting institutions increased.**

- The average number of benchmarks achieved was 6.0 for special schools, 5.9 for mainstream and post-16 provision, 5.2 for alternative provision institutions and 3.9 for independent special schools (a new category reporting this year).
- This is promising in light of CEC analysis, which finds a connection between increased benchmarks and improved rates of young people in employment, education or training.
- A larger proportion of institutions fully achieved each benchmark this academic year, compared with 2022/23.
- The greatest increase in full achievement was on Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces (up 8%pts from 2022/23). The highest proportion of schools and colleges fully achieved Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees (85%) (Fig. 1).
- 25% of institutions fully achieved all 8 benchmarks (30% of special schools). The top 25% of Careers Hubs achieved 6.3 or more benchmarks on average.

**Fig. 1: All benchmarks have increased, with the strongest growth for Benchmark 6, followed by 3, 5 and 7**

% of schools and colleges fully achieving each benchmark, 2021/22 – 2023/24



Source: CEC academic year-end Compass evaluation data, end of July 2024 (N=4,751)



**Fig. 2: Mainstream schools with the most disadvantaged students perform on par with the average school, achieving similar benchmarks and progress over the last six years**

Average number of benchmarks achieved by mainstream schools, 2018-19 - 2023/24



Source: CEC academic year-end Compass evaluation data, end of July (N=2,249)  
 Quartiles based on % pupils in mainstream schools eligible for Free School Meals, end July 2024

**The gap in careers education is narrowing as all schools achieve higher benchmarks.**

- 59% of schools and colleges achieved 5 benchmarks or more in 2021/22, increasing to 76% in 2023/24 (a 17%pts increase).
- When comparing the subset of 2,249 schools that completed Compass evaluations in 2018/19 and 2023/24, those with the highest proportion of young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (receiving Free School Meals(FSM)) achieved a broadly similar number on benchmarks to the average mainstream school (5.9 vs 6) (Fig. 2).
- Schools with a higher proportion of young people receiving Free School Meals were more likely to achieve Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education (62% for the most economically disadvantaged quartile compared to 53% for the least) and Benchmark 8: Personal guidance (86% compared to 68%) than schools with more advantaged students.

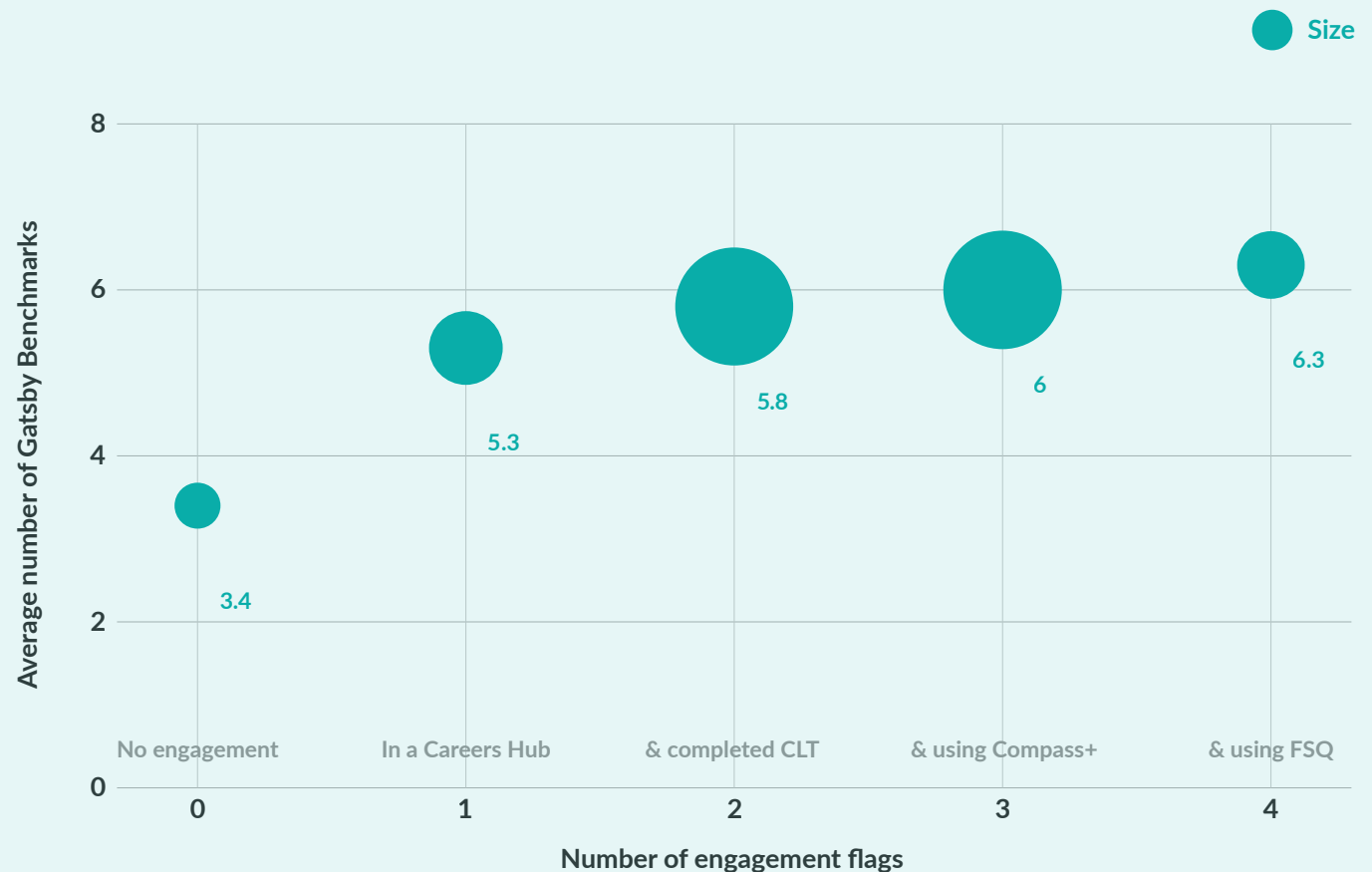


### Stronger engagement with the system is associated with higher benchmark scores

- Being part of a Careers Hub, completing Careers Leader Training, using the Compass + digital tool and supporting young people to complete the [Future Skills Questionnaire](#) (FSQ) are all associated with higher benchmark scores.
- Schools and colleges engaging in all these four ways achieved 6.3 benchmarks on average, compared to 3.4 for those not engaging with any of the four resources (Fig. 3).
- 92% of schools and colleges have now joined Careers Hubs and this is associated with higher benchmark performance.
- Those in Careers Hubs established the longest achieve on average 6.3 benchmarks, compared to 5.3 for those joining most recently (Fig. 4).
- Institutions in a Careers Hub significantly outperform those not in a Hub, particularly in relation to Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme (+54%pts) and Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information (+41%pts).

**Fig. 3: Sustained engagement with Careers Hubs, training and resources improves careers education in schools and colleges**

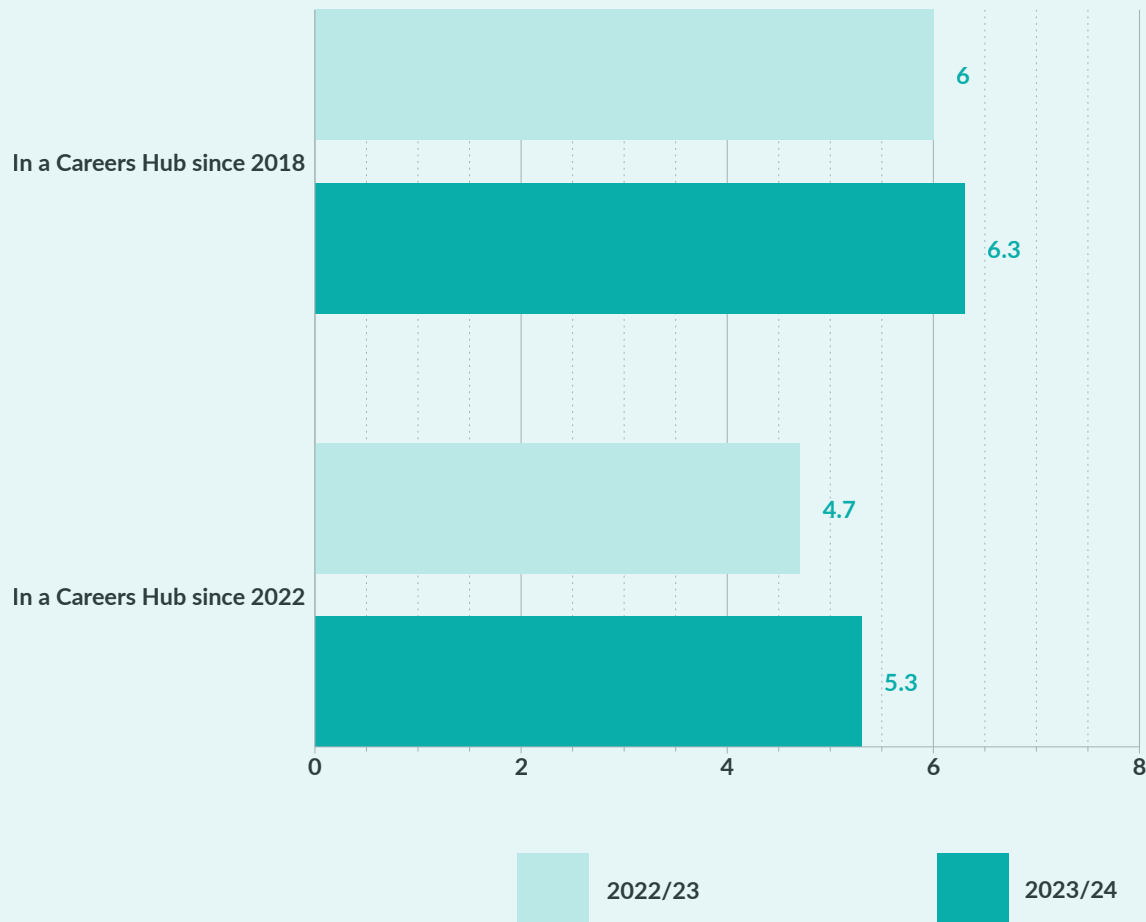
Average number of benchmarks achieved by all schools and colleges by number of indicators (in a Careers Hub, completed accredited Careers Leader training, using Compass+ and using FSQ), 2023/24



Source: CEC academic year-end Compass evaluation data, end of July 2024 (N=4,751)

**Fig. 4: Longest standing members of Careers Hubs achieve highest benchmark scores and new joiners benefit within an academic year**

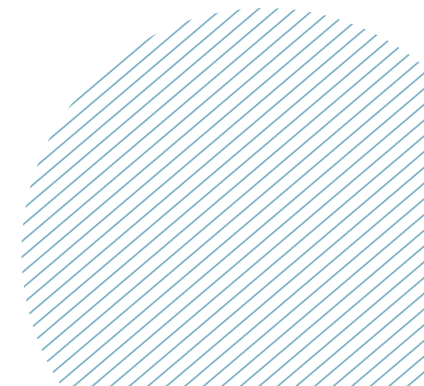
Average number of benchmarks achieved by mainstream schools, 2018/19 – 2023/24



Source: CEC academic year-end Compass evaluation data, end of July 2024 (N=4,751)

**More students are experiencing workplaces (Benchmark 6)**

- Overall performance on workplace experiences improved by 8%pts (up from 64% to 72% this academic year).
- The majority of students in 76% of mainstream schools had an experience of a workplace by the end of Year 11 (+6%pts from 2022/23), rising to 84% during Year 12 or Year 13 (+7%pts).
- 77% of special schools (+9%pts from 2022/23) reported that the majority of learners (for whom appropriate) had experience of workplaces by the end of Year 11, increasing to 88% (+11%pts) in Year 12 or 13.
- 67% of colleges reported that the majority of their learners had an experience of a workplace (excluding part-time jobs) by the time they finish their programme of study.





### Schools and colleges are progressing well with facilitating encounters with further and higher education (Benchmark 7)

- Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education (57%) saw a 5%pts improvement this academic year but continued to be the hardest benchmark for schools and colleges to achieve.
- 94% of schools provided the majority of students with information about the full range of apprenticeships.
- 90% of mainstream schools (+4%pts since 2022/23), and 89% of special schools (-1%pt), reported that the majority of students had meaningful encounters with FE colleges.
- 62% of schools reported the majority of students have had at least 2 visits to higher education providers. 71% of colleges reported the majority of learners had at least 2 visits to higher education providers (67% for special schools - down 2%pts since last academic year).

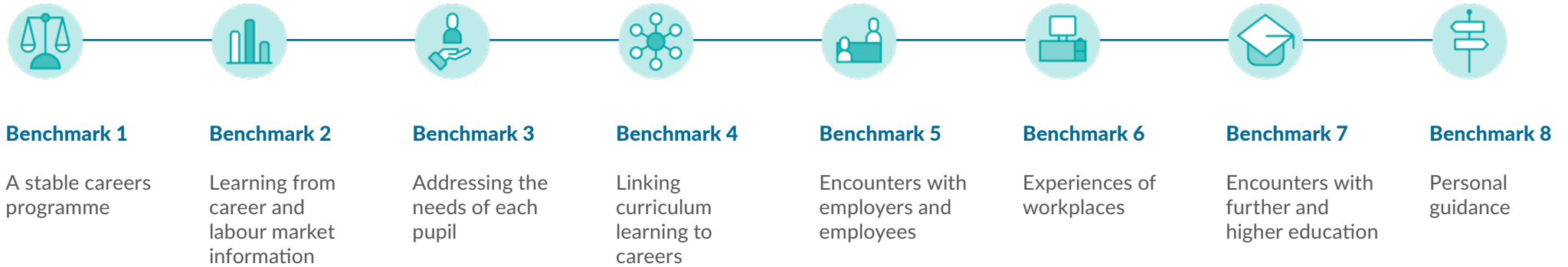
### Schools and colleges have made good progress in addressing the needs of each pupil (Benchmark 3), but there is more to do

- Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil focuses on targeted and tailored provision and continues to be difficult for schools and colleges to achieve in full (59%, +5%pts this year).
- 69% of colleges reported integrating records of learners' participation in careers programmes at previous stages of education.
- 85% of special schools enabled pupils and parents/carers/families to access accurate records about their own careers and enterprise activities and decisions on future pathways.
- 71% of mainstream schools were able to collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their destinations for three years after they leave school, indicating scope for improvement.

# Gatsby Benchmark for Good Careers Guidance

In 2014, Lord Sainsbury's Gatsby Charitable Foundation published a report by Professor Sir John Holman, Adviser in Education at the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, titled "[Good Career Guidance](#)."<sup>1</sup>

The report identified eight benchmarks that are the core dimensions of good careers and enterprise provision in schools.



<sup>1</sup> The Gatsby Foundation is currently undertaking a [10-year review](#), seeking to assess the effectiveness of its career guidance benchmarks in improving student outcomes.



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