

GATSBY BENCHMARK 4

Linking curriculum learning to careers

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

All teachers link curriculum learning with careers.

- Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subject teachers highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.
- By the age of 14, every pupil has had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people to gain entry to a wide range of careers.
- All subject teachers emphasise the importance of succeeding in English and maths.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

- Linking curriculum learning with careers refers to careers education as a discrete learning activity, careers embedded in subject and topic learning, and co-curricular provision such as clubs, celebration events and productions.
- Whole-school teaching and learning focuses on the relevance of subjects to everyday independent living, future learning and leisure, livelihood planning and employability skills. Careers provision is integral to the whole curriculum and not relegated to the margins.
- One size does not fit all. Young people with SEND need a personalised careers curriculum.
- Schools can benefit by using up-to-date, research-based evidence of what works in SEND teaching and learning such as the [ASK Research and Coventry University DfE-funded resource](#) when designing careers-related curriculum interventions.
- The medium is the message. Linking curriculum learning to careers is also about using teaching approaches that develop transferable career skills. This includes working as autonomously as possible, organising thinking, meeting deadlines, persisting and being reliable.
- Linking curriculum learning to careers involves harnessing the concepts, methods, perspectives and forms of explanation of the subjects taught in the school, for example:
 - maths for numeracy, time management and finance
 - science and technology for investigation, prediction and exploring the wide range of jobs in STEM from CSI to the space industry
 - English for self-presentation, telling your own story and writing occupational information
 - PSHCE for self-care, building safe relationships, assertiveness, negotiation, managing stress and emotional intelligence
 - geography for independent travel, growth sectors of the economy, green living and working
 - history for how work has changed and the future of work
 - art for the design of work clothes, what to wear and the design of the work environment
 - music for influencing the mood of consumers, work songs and planning a performance
 - computing and digital technology for freeing students from the barriers of production such as handwriting difficulties or physically carrying books so that they can function at higher levels
 - catering for producing food at home or in a catering environment
 - modern languages for leisure learning and social confidence
- The school or college recognises that the reach of subject teaching is far greater than what can be achieved through a few careers education sessions. Having careers as a cross-curricular subject in the school curriculum can give young people access to both work-related experiences and explicit skills, alongside ensuring the subject curriculum relates to the workplace.
- For students with learning difficulties, the careers programme may also incorporate a broader curriculum of independent living skills, social skills and travel training delivered by regular staff at school or by employer volunteers or mentors.
- Students with SEND need to have a tailored approach that takes into account their own pace of learning and unique abilities. This will involve providing a balance between different elements of their learning, such as class-based, work experience or enterprise activities.

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WHY THIS MATTERS

- Enabling young people with SEND to develop their career thinking whilst they are at school is often the best preparation for their future lives and employment. Teachers are highly influential and students are 18 times more likely to be motivated to learn if their teacher knows their hopes and dreams.
- Career-relevant learning improves young people's motivation and engagement in learning.

EXAMPLES OF LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS

CASE STUDY: WOODLANE HIGH SCHOOL

Woodlane High School is a purpose-built community special school for pupils aged 11-16 years with a range of barriers to learning including speech, language and communication difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), dyslexia or dyspraxia, or vulnerable pupils who have failed to thrive in a mainstream setting.

Personal, social, citizenship, health and economic education (PSCHE) is taught directly to years 7-10, and on a cross-curricular basis to year 11. The overall aim of PSCHE is to prepare students for future life. It is a developmental programme through which pupils acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills that they need to manage their lives now and in the future. PSCHE offers a skills-based approach to learning which endeavours to use a range of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning activities.

At key stage 4, pupils also learn about the world of work and prepare for a work experience placement at the beginning of year 11. The Careers Adviser runs part of [The Real Game](#) to help students become more aware of the local labour market and groups of students visit [Kidzania](#) in London to explore different work roles.

The school presents careers entitlement using student-friendly language in student planners. Subject teachers explain and link the entitlement to their subjects. The strong focus on developing outstanding teaching is achieved through drawing on real-world contexts to boost confidence and understanding. Within maths, teachers build pupils' confidence in their own ability and develop mathematical skills through showing them the usefulness and applicability of

what they are learning. Examples include visits to local shops to measure up for fencing and carpets, visits to theme parks to study entry costs, and analysing footballers' salaries. This helps draw on students' interests and popular current events to stimulate learning. Key stage 3 pupils have an additional numeracy lesson every week which is based on developing their problem-solving skills. Year 10 pupils act as mentors during these lessons. Within textiles, teachers show students how stereotypes have been challenged through an innovative card game and demonstrate the wide range of careers within the textile industry.

Students take part in various enterprise activities and run a café and grow produce in the school garden. Students have an opportunity to undertake relevant level 1 vocational qualifications in horticulture. Teachers work with students to develop and value key skills such as communication, money handling and teamwork through these activities. Students have made and sold Christmas cards and then had their work exhibited at the Apothecary Gallery, an arts project space in Hammersmith.

Alumni return to the school and students have appreciated talking with these former students about their individual transitions and progress, including to university.

There is more information on the [PSHCE](#) page of the school's website.

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CASE STUDY: GLEBE SCHOOL

The developing careers provision at the Glebe School in Bromley, a school for students with complex needs including autistic spectrum disorders, visual impairment, speech and language difficulties and physical difficulties, involves increased collaboration between the head of PSHCE and transition coordinator and other subject teachers. The geography department uses themes from the geography curriculum including rivers and sustainability to link with the working world.

There are strong links with land-based colleges including Hadlow College and Capel Manor College, and students explore apprenticeships and job roles in related fields. Year 8 students take part in a farmers' market in Bromley and grow produce in the school's market garden to sell. The roles they undertake from growing, to setting up the stall, selling the produce and handling the cash to help them develop key employability skills including numeracy, communication, teamwork and problem solving.

RESOURCES

CAREERS PUBLISHERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

- [Prospects Education Resources](#) provides a range of publications including a SEND catalogue.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- [Barclays LifeSkills](#).
- iCould provides [career videos](#) and [resources](#) to complement the curriculum.

SCHOOL VIDEOS

- Brookfields School: [Pathway to employment](#).
- Charlton Park Academy: [Careers programme for students with special needs](#).



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TOP TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

1. Accept invitations from schools to participate in activities and events at options time. Students and their parents are particularly receptive to messages about careers around this time.
2. Work with subject teachers to develop problem-based challenges. These will show how the perspectives, methods and skills developed through subjects are used in working life to solve real problems.
3. Volunteer as a presenter, adviser or judge to help the school or college run curriculum enrichment and enterprise activities such as Dragons' Den type activities.
4. Bring examples of the equipment you use and the products you make to illustrate your presentations and give opportunities for hands-on and multi-sensory experiences.
5. Support the initiatives the school is taking to help students recognise and counter stereotypical thinking about careers and the abilities of students with SEND. This can include highlighting what your own organisation is doing to promote equal opportunities and diversity.
6. Take advice from the school or college on how to pitch your presentation to students at the right level to maintain their interest and enable learning.
7. Follow this checklist for employers to plan and deliver activities in the curriculum:
 - make sure you know your session well and have rehearsed it
 - visit the school before your session, if possible, to check that the activities you have planned are pitched at an appropriate level
 - arrive early and leave time to sign in - understand that when the bell goes you need to have everything ready
 - double-check the room is set up properly and you have all of your materials to hand
 - structure your activity with an introduction, a middle and a conclusion
 - ask the students to introduce themselves if they want to
 - give students time to do what you have asked, clarify what comes next and take your lead from the teaching staff who will be in the room with you at all times

TOP TIPS FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

1. Young people with SEND have individual challenges. Finding solutions is an exercise in problem solving: what does the young person need to learn next about careers? What are their individual barriers and how can they be overcome?
2. The Gatsby report acknowledges that this benchmark is aspirational. Identify the subjects that are hot spots for embedding career learning such as English and maths. Start with these and then build on their success to bring other subjects on board.
3. Schools often report initial inertia from teachers in linking curriculum learning to careers because of their existing priorities and workloads. However, once they get going, they quickly become creative, resourceful and energetic.
4. Consult with your Enterprise Coordinator and Enterprise Adviser to find inspiration in various case studies and resources highlighting good practice.
5. Encourage teachers who have moved into teaching from other jobs to make their previous experience and expertise available to students. Try to build a positive culture of applied learning.
6. Avoid overloading careers-based lessons for students with SEND with too many learning objectives and be aware of the danger of choosing contexts that overcomplicate subject learning.
7. Evaluate primary careers education resources carefully before using them with older students with learning difficulties as visual images and learning objectives may no longer be appropriate. Be prepared to adapt resources.