

# GATSBY BENCHMARK 5

## Encounters with employers and employees

### WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

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.

- All young people in years 7-13 should have at least one meaningful encounter a year by 2020, in line with the Gatsby benchmarks.
- A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace.

### WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

- Research from the Education and Employers Taskforce shows that a young person who has four or more meaningful encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training and can earn up to 22% more during their careers. It is important that young people with SEND have access to these advantages as part of the overall commitment to building high expectations.
- The CBI/Pearson Education's Education and Skills Survey 2016 reported "a gap between education and the preparation people need for their future, as well as the gap between the skills needed and those people have." Employer encounters help address the skills and knowledge gap.
- Expanding employer encounters broadens young people's horizons for action, builds independence and fosters community cohesion. The government's Improving Lives green paper on disability employment recognises the scale of the challenge in closing the employment gaps between disabled and non-disabled people. In 2015 the rates stood at 46.7% compared with 80.3% for non-disabled people. To halve this gap would require bringing an extra 1.2 million disabled people into work.
- Structuring employer encounters within the school curriculum strengthens aspirations and attainment and provides support as students take action to achieve their full potential. It is fully in tune with the culture of high expectations and person-centred approach set out in the SEND Code of Practice.

### WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

- Employers and schools work together in creative ways to ensure young people build a rich picture of the world of work and are well prepared to take up workplace opportunities. Schools provide first-hand encounters with employers as part of careers and enterprise programmes for years 7-13 and celebrate these links in their prospectuses and websites. They build sustainable relationships with local employers and plan mentoring, careers talks, mock interviews, enterprise competitions and workplace visits in partnerships. The encounters are well planned and help to increase students' enthusiasm and confidence. Employers are fully briefed to understand the particular needs of the students and there is strong partnership working.
- In the best examples, schools offer a progressive range of encounters taking into account the development needs of individual students.
- Where schools meet benchmark 5 well, there are strong and lasting links with local employers, supported by an Enterprise Adviser who understands the needs and circumstances of the learners and builds the commitment and involvement of businesses. There is good alignment between the skills and capacities of the students and the strategic economic needs of the region.
- In the best examples, schools and employers draw on evidence of what works including The Careers & Enterprise Company's ongoing study of the evidence base. They take particular account of:
  - the different effects for different kinds of activities
  - the sequencing of these activities to ensure they are age appropriate and progressive
  - the importance of effective implementation including proper briefing and debriefing
- They also ensure that there is a strategic and structured approach to the learning and a shared sense of purpose with key partners including families, employers, teachers and other agencies. It is particularly important in SEND schools to work closely with parents and carers.
- Care is taken to ensure that students with social, emotional or behavioural needs benefit from a longer introduction and preparation for employer engagement activities.

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### EXAMPLES OF ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

#### ABBOTS' LEA SCHOOL

Abbot's Lea is a SEND school specialising in autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Enterprise Adviser Amanda Follit, Head of Digital Operations at Amaze, and the Enterprise Coordinator, Kath Wyke, have been working on an enterprise and employability strategy with the senior leadership team and governors at Abbot's Lea School in Liverpool. Together they have identified individual students with creative imaginations and artistic flair pointing them to opportunities in the digital and creative sector in Liverpool. Many of the students at Abbot's Lea have great attention to detail; this fits really well with the skills gap identified in the digital and creative industries.

Amanda also attends employment days and has facilitated the national British Interactive Media Association's Digital Day at Abbot's Lea raising awareness of digital opportunities and matching a creative and digital industry company lead to the school to support them in the development of their digital ideas. Amanda has also spoken to parents to demystify the industry, raise awareness of the opportunities available including digital apprenticeships relevant to them.

#### SAMUEL RHODES SCHOOL

Samuel Rhodes School in Islington works hard on enterprise and employability outcomes for all of the school's students. The [ASDAN](#) and Workskills units are used to provide a curriculum framework and the basis for accreditation. Students also participate in a personal presentation day. The students find it difficult to ask questions of the employers but enjoy the experience and develop confidence. Samuel Rhodes has set up a tuck shop which is run by year 12-14 students. They have produced a video to demonstrate the work and skills covered. The school has also set up a mentoring programme with Euromonitor which runs for 10 weeks for years 12-14.

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### OTHER EXAMPLES OF ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

#### MICHAEL TIPPETT COLLEGE

The college is following the British Association for Supported Employment's (BASE) national standards and the DfE's Preparing for Adulthood curriculum. Three lead staff are undertaking the BASE Certificate for Supported Employment Practitioners. Students have first-hand experience of different work settings and throughout the college there are pictures of students doing different jobs. This helps students reflect on their experience and helps other students identify potential work activities. It also helps ensure staff are clearer about the preparation and support needed. The college works with Jobcentre Plus to help students and parents explore options in the labour market. Local businesses and other external partners are involved in mentoring and support as well as providing work-related activities.

#### KENNEL LANE SCHOOL

Kennel Lane School, a special school in Bracknell, held an employer event to talk about their new career development programme and find opportunities for local businesses to get involved with the school's careers provision. The event also provided an opportunity for the students preparing and serving lunch, to network and develop their hospitality skills. Students also hosted exhibition stands to showcase real-world projects to employers. As a result of the initiative, Dell introduced a personalised work experience programme to students.

#### CATCOTE ACADEMY

Catcote Academy in Hartlepool approached their local Howdens Joinery branch. The company now provides sponsorship on a national level, and is currently helping to fund a new training facility for students to develop real job skills.

#### ROSEHILL SCHOOL

Rosehill School, a special school in Nottingham, changed their curriculum for post-16 students and have focused on employability and career development. They have also employed 2 students with autism in their finance office.

#### YOUNG ENTERPRISE

Young Enterprise's Team programme inspires students with special educational and support needs to work together as they set up and run their own company, guided every step of the way by a Young Enterprise business adviser.

#### PEBBLE BROOK SCHOOL

Pebble Brook School, a co-educational special school in Aylesbury, has approached local employers and encouraged them to offer supported internships. Six internships started in September 2017.

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### RESOURCES

- [The Voice of Learning Disability](#) from Mencap is a handbook designed to help teachers raise the aspirations and employment prospects of young people with learning disabilities.
- [SEND in England: January 2017](#) from the Department for Education explains SEND statistics.
- Mencap provide [best practice guides](#) on employing people with a learning disability.
- [Inspiring the Future](#) have nearly 40,000 business volunteers ready to go into schools to offer careers talks or be part of events. To try to ensure that the service is inclusive and develop more relatable role models, they are asking their volunteers with disabilities to consider talking about how they work with their disabilities.
- [Supported Internships](#) from the DfE offers practical guidance and advice on supported internships.
- National Grid's approach to [supported internships](#) for other employers.
- BASE offer guidance on [involving employers in supported employment](#).
- [BASE](#) provide guidance on supported employment provision and job coaching.
- Brookfields School's [Pathway to Employment](#) whole career programme and film on employers.
- Leonard Cheshire Disability charity and Howdens Joinery have partnered to create [volunteering opportunities](#) for young people with disabilities.
- [Disability Confident](#) employer scheme and guidance from the Department for Work & Pensions.
- Young Enterprise's [Team](#) programme is aimed at young people with SEND aged 15-19. Participants are offered a structured enterprise learning opportunity and run their own business and are mentored by a local business professional.
- [Good for Business](#) from Mencap explains why businesses should employ people with learning difficulties.
- [Guide to employer engagement](#) to support the SEND reforms.
- [Remploy](#) provides resources to help staff and organisations.



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### TOP TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

1. Promote encounters as an exciting new staff development opportunity and a way of aiding retention, increasing motivation and attracting new recruits.
2. Build links with local schools and colleges and be prepared to reach out to both special and mainstream schools. Being rooted in local communities helps enhance your business reputation and diversifies your talent pool.
3. Ensure the role models and staff you deploy are well briefed and encourage interest and achievement from the broadest range of students.
4. Develop a shared approach with the school to plan and judge the general effectiveness of the encounters.
5. Explore ways in which both teachers and students can benefit from encounters.
6. Share approaches and celebrate success within your sector and business networks.

### TOP TIPS FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

1. Employers may have anxieties about working with young people with SEND. Offer training and support and help them understand more about your students through community activities.
2. Connect to the Enterprise Adviser Network to see what additional support is available.
3. Use your network of staff, friends and family who are connected with the school to find employers who are positive about supporting employer engagement activities.
4. Make sure you are clear about what you want from employers. Ensure you have thought about the documentation and risk assessment process if you want to organise work experience.
5. Agree with the employer well in advance of what the activity is, where it will take place, what your expectations are, what their expectations are and any additional support required. Prepare the students well in advance and organise pre-visits to meet staff if possible.