

## **Schools *can* shift the dial on developing the future workforce the UK needs**

### ***New Careers & Enterprise Company report reveals the route to success for schools***

New research released today from the Careers and Enterprise Company gives the most comprehensive picture to date of schools' careers and enterprise provision. This marks a new era of annual reporting which will provide a consistent understanding of the progress being made by schools to prepare their students for an ever-changing careers landscape.

Almost 600 schools in England took part in the [research](#) by using the Careers & Enterprise Company's new 'Compass' tool which enables schools to anonymously evaluate how well they are doing against the *Gatsby benchmarks*, the internationally recognised eight good practice benchmarks<sup>1</sup> of careers provision developed by Sir John Holman. These include providing students with first-hand experience of the workplace, linking curriculum learning with the world of work and the use of local labour market information to tailor careers strategy and planning. In 2014 the best schools were only achieving five of the eight benchmarks. Two years on the data reveals top marks in careers provision *is* possible with the highest achieving schools meeting six, seven and eight of the benchmarks. Headway is also being made in other areas, with schools clearly adopting and working towards achieving these benchmarks.

Whilst encouraging progress is evident - the data reveals star performing schools that have completed seven or eight benchmarks - the [research](#) shows there is still much more to be done. Many schools are not yet in a position where: a clear strategy on careers provision has been communicated and embedded; students' progression is tracked over time; and students have access to the full range of objective information about all career options available to school leavers.

The research also finds that<sup>2</sup>:

- Schools that want to meet the Benchmarks can do so regardless of their student intake or local labour market conditions. Challenged schools, with tough socio-economic conditions and a disadvantaged student intake are often doing as much as schools in more favourable circumstances to meet the Benchmarks and therefore the career needs of their students.
- Strong leadership is key: having a dedicated careers programme leader, openly backed by the Head usually delivers good results. Similarly and unsurprisingly, well run schools with an outstanding Ofsted rating performed significantly better than schools with a lower rating.

#### **Carl Ward, President of the Association of School and College Leaders said:**

"As President of ASCL I believe it is critical that we bring school leaders and business closer together across a number of areas, but particularly in order to help young people find the right future pathway for them. This is why I have been delighted to Chair the Careers & Enterprise Company's Headteacher Advisory Group to ensure this agenda meets and supports the needs of schools and

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young people and enables schools to interact in positive ways with business leaders from a range of sectors. The Gatsby benchmarks and tools like Compass set a clear blueprint for schools and colleges to follow in tackling their Careers provision. It am pleased to see strides being made and look forward to working with my fellow school leaders, and leaders from business, to continue to close the gap in achieving the benchmarks.“

**Sir John Holman, advisor to Gatsby Charitable Foundation said:**

“Soon after we published the Gatsby benchmarks in 2014, we began to hear from schools who were using the Benchmarks and wanted to know how they measured up against them. This is how the idea of Compass was born – a self-evaluation tool for schools to measure themselves anonymously against the Gatsby Benchmarks. It’s great to see the progress that schools using Compass are making, and especially good that schools in the most challenging circumstances are on a level playing field with more advantaged schools when it comes to achieving good career guidance.”

**Claudia Harris, CEO at the Careers and Enterprise Company said:**

“We were delighted to collaborate with the Gatsby Foundation to develop the Compass tool. The tool allows schools to diagnose their individual performance against the Gatsby benchmarks, track performance over time, pinpoint areas of need and improve careers support to young people. At an aggregate level this data creates a national baseline from which we can track improvement over time, identify national areas of need and understand drivers of best practice. Although the research confirms a challenging baseline, we see improvements from 2014 and most importantly the report lays out a path to success based on those schools that are performing well against the benchmarks. We will repeat this publication on an annual basis. We believe this national project will help improve careers support in England, ensuring that young people have flourishing futures and strengthening our economy.”

**Peter Cheese, Chief Executive of the CIPD, the professional body for HR said:**

“With changing job and skill demands, British businesses are increasingly concerned about their future talent pipeline. But businesses also have a crucial role in helping to ensure that we are giving our young people the right skills they need in order to get into, and then progress in, work.

“It’s vital we understand the changes that will need to be made in careers provision and that there is a stronger focus on the outcomes from education and in to work. Many of our members are already working with the Careers and Enterprise Company as Enterprise Advisors in schools helping to make the connections with businesses and supporting students in the transition from education in to work. The Compass tool will help enable them to work with schools in a more targeted and strategic way and to help young people successfully navigate the world of work and make their mark. That’s great news for schools, businesses, the economy and society at large.”

**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

1 - The eight Gatsby benchmarks are:

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- a) A stable careers programme.
- b) Learning from career and labour market information.
- c) Addressing the needs of each student
- d) Linking curriculum learning to careers.
- e) Encounters with employers and employees.
- f) Experiences of workplaces.
- g) Encounters with further and higher education.

For more information on the eight Gatsby Benchmarks click [here](#).

A link to the full report can be found [here](#).

## 2 - Summary of findings:

The Careers & Enterprise Company's 'Compass' tool which enables secondary schools to anonymously evaluate their careers provision against the benchmarks has been completed by over 500 secondary schools and colleges across England and reveals:

- The overwhelming majority (79.4%) of schools achieved at least one benchmark and around half of schools (51.0%) achieved two or more benchmarks
- The average number of benchmarks achieved was 1.87 compared to 1.34 in 2014
- The proportion of schools not achieving any benchmarks has reduced to 20% from 30% in 2014
- 16% of schools now fully achieve half the benchmarks compared to 6% in 2014
- Schools have clearly adopted and are making progress towards meeting the benchmarks, with 6.4 benchmarks on average being partially achieved
- Good leadership at school level is crucial
- Any school can make this happen: Challenged schools, with tough local labour market conditions and a disadvantaged student intake are doing as much as schools in more favourable circumstances to meet the Benchmarks and therefore the career needs of their students

### **About the Careers & Enterprise Company**

The Careers & Enterprise Company is a community interest company which was set up by government in 2015 to inspire and prepare young people for the fast-changing world of work. Its role is to help to connect employers and schools in the fragmented landscape of careers and enterprise, supporting programmes that work, filling gaps in provision and ensuring coverage across the country.

The Company's 1700+ Enterprise Adviser Network of business volunteers currently works in over half of the country's secondary schools and colleges, supported by more than 100 trained Enterprise Coordinators who are co-funded with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

[www.careersandenterprise.co.uk](http://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk)

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