Providing an effective careers programme

The role of governing boards in the secondary phase

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Contents

National Governance Association

The National Governance Association (NGA) is the membership organisation for governors, trustees and clerks of state schools in England.

We are an independent, not-for-profit charity that aims to improve the educational standards and wellbeing of young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. We are expert leaders in school and trust governance, providing information, advice and guidance, professional development and e-learning.

We represent the views of governors, trustees and clerks at a national level and work closely with, and lobby, UK government and educational bodies.

Introduction

Supporting young people to make informed choices about their future is an important responsibility for schools and their governing boards.

This guide explains how governing boards in all types of school meet their statutory duties relating to careers guidance, by supporting and challenging their schools and trusts to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks – the recognised blueprint for high-quality careers guidance. It has been produced in collaboration with The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), which exists to facilitate a world-class careers education and help every young person find their best next step.

Why careers guidance matters

The governance duty is, above all, to drive relentless ambition for the young people served by our school system. This means ensuring that they not only achieve good academic outcomes, but that they are equipped for life beyond school and to arrive in the workplace with the skills they need to thrive.

Aside from being a statutory responsibility, providing good careers guidance is a fundamental aspect of the board's service to its community(ies). It helps strengthen our economy and improve society by driving down youth unemployment and driving up social mobility.

This is why governing boards should collaborate with executive leaders, Careers Leaders and with the wider network of Hubs and Enterprise Advisers, to embed careers within the curriculum and ensure every young person is supported to move on to positive destinations.

Terminology

- We use '**student**' throughout this guidance to refer to pupils, learners, and young people in education.

- The term '**careers guidance**' describes the full range of interventions that support young people to make choices and develop their careers.

Advice for academy committees

If you serve on an academy committee (local governing body) within a multi academy trust, you should refer to the scheme of delegation for the trust or seek advice from your governance professional (clerk to the board) to understand the expectations for careers guidance in your context. Your responsibilities are likely to vary from that of a local-authority-maintained governing body or trust board.

1. Statutory responsibilities

Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance sets out the requirements on all schools and trusts to provide careers guidance. This applies to students in years 8 to 13 (ages 12 to 18) and those aged up to 25 with an education, health and care plan (EHCP). The requirements are to:

- Ensure opportunity for a range of education and training providers to talk to students in years 8 to 13 about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships.

- Publish a policy statement on the school website setting out the arrangements for provider access.

- Make sure that the policy is followed.

- Develop a careers programme which meets internationally recognised Gatsby Benchmarks. (The benchmarks are non-statutory but provide a framework around which schools can develop their careers programme in line with their legal requirements.)

- Appoint a named person to the role of Careers Leader to lead their careers programme.

- Publish details of their careers programme on the website (this information must be available for students, parents and carers).

Example careers policy

The CEC's resource directory includes an example careers education, information and guidance policy. It covers elements of the statutory guidance and includes an example careers programme, provider access policy, and details around key stakeholder responsibilities.

1.1 What Ofsted look for

When evaluating the impact of the education provided by a school, Ofsted inspectors will consider whether students are ready for the next stage of education, training or employment by the point they leave the school or provision that they attend. This includes the effectiveness of high-quality, impartial careers guidance in enabling students to make progress. Sources of evidence used by inspectors include nationally published information about the destinations to which students progress when they leave the school.

CEC have produced an Ofsted guide which provides governors and trustees with key questions to support strategic careers planning in their organisation.

1.2 The role of Careers Leader

Careers Leaders are responsible and accountable for the delivery of their school's careers programme. This role requires the appointed member of staff to have a clear overview of the school's careers programme and to make sure that the school meets the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Schools may choose to structure the Careers Leader role in a range of different ways – it is possible for an individual to be the Careers Leader for more than one school, such as for all the schools in a multi academy trust.

Ideally the Careers Leader should be a member of the senior leadership team. If not, there should be a clear reporting line to the senior leadership team. The governing board have ultimate accountability for the careers programme and so the Careers Leader should report regularly to the board. In practice, this may be fulfilled through working closely with the careers governor or trustee.

Access CEC's guide to learn more about the role of the Careers Leader.

2. The role of governing boards

The role of governing boards is explained on page 13 of the statutory guidance. Specifically, they are required to ensure that:

- There is a plan which sets out the delivery of the careers programme in the school or trust and how impact will be measured.

- The plan is developed in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks and informed by the statutory guidance.

- Careers guidance offered to students in the school or trust includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education routes

- The careers guidance offered is impartial – it shows no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or work option.

- Those giving careers guidance to students in the school or trust promote the best interests of the students to whom it is given.

To fulfil their role and meet the expectations boards will need to:

- Review the plan for providing careers guidance as a regular agenda item and use the opportunity to discuss delivery and impact with the senior executive and Careers Leader.

- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the plan using reports and information gained from a number of sources. This is explained further in section 4 of this guide.

Support from The Careers and Enterprise Company

- The CEC have a free online learning module designed to support governors and trustees with the knowledge they need to ensure that all students receive high quality careers education.

- There is also an area of The CEC's resource directory dedicated to governors and trustees which includes further guidance, support and ongoing CPD opportunities.

- Register for The Careers & Enterprise Company Governor Digest to stay up to date with the latest policy developments, CPD and resources.

2.1 Appointing a careers governor or trustee

The statutory guidance states that there should be a member of the governing board who takes a strategic interest in careers, encourages employer engagement and who may work closely with the Careers Leader. This role does not remove the board's collective responsibility; the appointed person should ensure the board are kept up to date on progress being made.

Link governor/trustee role description

Use our role description for careers link governors and trustees to learn about how this important role contributes to the work of the board.

2.2 Using the Gatsby Benchmarks

The Gatsby Benchmarks describe all the elements of good careers guidance in schools. Testing in pilots showed that with good leadership and a clear sense of purpose, the Benchmarks are achievable by each and every school. The eight benchmarks are:

1. a stable careers programme

2. learning from career and labour market information

3. addressing the needs of each pupil

4. linking curriculum learning to careers

5. encounters with employers and employees

6. experiences of workplaces

7. encounters with further and higher education

8. personal guidance

Refer to section 4 of this guide to see how the benchmarks can support and prompt your discussions with school leaders and Careers Leaders.

Although there are eight individual benchmarks, these should also be considered as a whole, reflecting the school/trust vision for careers education and personal development. There is cross-over between benchmarks; blending them leads to an embedded, whole school approach. The Gatsby good career guidance handbook provides further advice on creating a careers guidance programme that is framed by the Benchmarks.

3. How to build an effective careers programme

The following elements should feature within your strategy for building an effective careers programme. Use these to support discussions with your school leaders and Careers Leader:

3.1 Allocating resources

Schools do not receive additional funding for their careers programmer; it must be paid for out of their own budget. However, there are ways of providing cost effective and sustainable careers guidance. Ask your Careers Leader about:

- How the school or trust makes use of the range of the high quality careers tools and resources and training programmes that are freely available through The CEC.

- Opportunities to collaborate with other schools and colleges to spread the cost of careers activities while maintaining quality.

3.2 Working with Enterprise Advisers

Enterprise Advisers are recruited through The CEC's Enterprise Adviser Network. They are typically senior leaders and professionals recruited from all sectors of the economy including financial services, manufacturing, technology and transport.

Enterprise Advisers work with Careers Leaders and other senior leaders, offering specialist advice, establishing employer links and delivering activities directly to students. There is strong evidence that Enterprise Advisers:

- raise the profile of schools to local employers

- help to embed schools in local employer networks

- create work experience and job opportunities for SEND students

- improve teachers' understanding of the local labour market

3.3 Collaborating with other schools

Careers Hubs, each with a dedicated Hub Lead, bring together a group of secondary schools and colleges with partners in the business, public, education and voluntary sectors. The number of schools in Careers Hubs is growing and evidence shows that they are making the fastest progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks.

4. Monitoring the careers programme

Routine monitoring will allow the governing board to evaluate the progress that is being made towards achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks. Refer to the indicators and information sources outlined in the following table during your discussions with school leaders and your Careers Leader.

Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme (which meets the requirements of the 7 other benchmarks)		
Is characterised by	**Indicators of success**	**Governing board information sources**
A programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by stakeholders (students, parents, employers and training providers) Access benchmark 1 resources	▪ Careers education and guidance is featured within the school/trust development plan ▪ The school (or schools in the trust) have achieved or are working towards the national quality in careers standard ▪ Strategy and delivery are informed by stakeholder feedback ▪ The Careers Leader works collaboratively with others (the SENCO for example) to embed a whole school approach ▪ Effective CPD and support has been provided to the Careers Leader	▪ Details of the careers programme published on the school/trust website ▪ Reports and presentations from the Careers Leader ▪ Key points arising from stakeholder feedback

Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information (LMI), such as job role, pay and vacancy trends		
Is characterised by	**Indicators of success**	**Governing board information sources**
Students and their parents are provided with good quality, accessible information about future study options and labour market opportunities, as well as support from an informed adviser to make best use of available information Access benchmark 2 resources	▪ Resources like the National Careers Service are being used to support students and parents to make informed choices. ▪ LMI is being used to help students identify careers with good prospects ▪ Organisations like Local Enterprise Partnerships have been engaged to help interpret local LMI	▪ Reporting and case studies that show the range of information used to inform students and parents of different courses, job roles and progression pathways ▪ Examples (case studies) of careers advisers providing information, advice and guidance to students on a one-to-one basis and in groups

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil

Is characterised by	Indicators of success	Governing board information sources
Tailoring advice and support to the needs of each student and embedding equality and diversity throughout the careers programme Access benchmark 3 resources	■ Destination data is used to shape the careers programme and advice given ■ Activities are tailored to meet the needs of particular students and this results in positive destinations ■ Skills audit books are used to inform student self-evaluation and the choices they make ■ The SENCO, pastoral leader and Careers Leader work together to ensure the needs of every student are addressed	■ Data on the education, training and employment destinations of students over the last three years ■ Examples (case studies) of careers activities tailored to meet the needs of particular students (such as those with SEND and or in receipt of the Pupil Premium) ■ Skills audit books completed by students ■ Feedback from students and parents

Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

Is characterised by	Indicators of success	Governing board information sources
All teachers linking curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths Access benchmark 4 resources	■ Curriculum content for each subject area is linked to the world of work throughout the academic year ■ Strong working relationships exist between the school and employers ■ The governing board utilises the range of insight and valuable experiences that governors and trustees bring from the world of work	■ Examples (case studies) of employer engagement with the curriculum and careers strategy ■ Feedback from staff on the impact of careers CPD on the curriculum ■ Presentations from STEM subject teachers on relationships between school and industry ■ Feedback from employers on the impact of their involvement

Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

Is characterised by	Indicators of success	Governing board information sources
Every student having 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	■ Students in all year groups and their parents are engaged in careers enrichment activities ■ Wide ranging enrichment activities that are not restricted to providing generic careers advice	■ Reporting of student and parent attendance and engagement with enrichment activities, such as careers fairs and visiting speakers

| enrichment activities, including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.

Access benchmark 5 resources | ■ Collaboration with partners such as CEC that boosts employer engagement
■ Student voice is used to identify areas of interest and target engagement
■ Opportunities to learn from employers are linked to the curriculum (rather than one-off events) | ■ Examples (case studies) of personalising interactions between students, employers and employees
■ Student surveys
■ Feedback from parents and employers |

Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces

Is characterised by	**Indicators of success**	**Governing board information sources**
Every student having first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and to expand their networks Access benchmark 6 resources	■ A wide range of workplace experiences are offered ■ Workplace experiences have clearly defined outcomes attached to them: what students need to take away from meeting a range of people from workplaces ■ Feedback from students and employers is captured to measure impact and share success	■ Data and reporting of student workplace experiences ■ Feedback from students on the value of their workplace experiences ■ Case studies ■ Evaluation of workplace experiences

Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education

Is characterised by	**Indicators of success**	**Governing board information sources**
All students understanding of 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 Access benchmark 7 resources	■ Students are introduced to careers concepts and options at an early stage ■ All students are aware of all options available to them, and parents understand these routes ■ Parents and carers are involved in careers education so that they can support their children ■ Strong engagement with providers is underpinned by regular, two-way communication and visits ■ The needs of all students are clearly being considered, such as through SEND-focused careers events	■ The calendar of activities offered to students about careers and subjects, such as studying at a university or a college ■ The learning outcomes for visits from further and higher education providers ■ Examples (case studies) of how students, regardless of their needs, are prepared for meaningful encounters ■ Destination data: understand/investigate trends and patterns which may indicate the range of options understood and taken up by students

Benchmark 8: Personal guidance		
Is characterised by	**Indicators of success**	**Governing board information sources**
Providing all students with opportunities for guidance interviews with a Careers Adviser, whenever significant study or career choices are being made Access benchmark 8 resources	▪ Every student has had a one-to-one guidance interview before they leave in year eleven ▪ Quality assurance monitors the guidance given to students and ensures that those giving it are suitably trained ▪ Efforts have been made to ensure the advice students receive is impartial such as through adviser-swapping with other schools	▪ Reports and presentations from the Careers Leader ▪ The method used to quality assure the guidance given to students ▪ Case studies ▪ Feedback from students and parents

Your monitoring routine may also involve:

▪ A termly summary of progress against priorities included in the senior executive leader report.

▪ A termly update report to the board from the Careers Leader on the implementation of the careers programme.

▪ A termly update report from the careers governor or trustee outlining their activity and work undertaken with the Careers Leader.

▪ Focused monitoring visits to school (reviewing progress on specific Gatsby Benchmarks for example) that may also provide opportunities to talk to teachers, students and parents.

▪ Attendance at careers events and opportunities to see the careers programme in action and meet with stakeholders such as employers, providers, Enterprise Advisers, and Hub representatives.

Underpinning these activities is the working relationship and routine engagement between the careers governor/trustee and the Careers Leader. We recommend that they meet at least once a term to discuss how the careers programme is being planned to raise its profile and embed it into the curriculum. This may lead to them providing a joint termly update report to the governing board.

4.1 Measuring impact

The indicators of success referred to in the table above will help governing boards to evaluate the extent to which careers guidance in the school or trust meets Gatsby Benchmarks and improves outcomes for students.

Boards should use the following to measure impact:

- Data on the education, training and employment destinations of students.

- Insight gained through engagement with the school/trust, students, parents/carers, employers and providers.

You may wish to use The CEC Impact evaluation toolkit in collaboration with your Careers Leader to support this work.

4.2 Self-assessment

Compass is an online evaluation tool that schools can use to self-assess their careers programme and track improvements. Compass data is confidential to the school or college concerned, but they may choose to share the data with governors/trustees, parents, colleagues, and Ofsted. All eligible schools can now upgrade to Compass+ which offers the facility to collect student-level data.

Thank you for reading this guide. If you have any feedback you'd like to share, please email kcfeedback@nga.org.uk.

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