



# **Progression for Success: Evaluating North Yorkshire's innovative careers guidance project**

Final report

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A history of the Centre is available in the book:

Hyde, C. (2014). *A Beacon for Guidance*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

For further information on iCeGS see [www.derby.ac.uk/icegs](http://www.derby.ac.uk/icegs)

## Recent iCeGS publications

Ambrose, J., Wilkinson, M., Andrews, D. and Moore, N. (2016). *#Digitisemycareer: Resources to support the development of digital career literacy skills*. Derby. International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

Andrews, D. (2016). *A New Strategy to Transform the Quality of Careers Education, Advice and Guidance for Young People*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

Artess, J. (2016). *Evaluation of Careers Yorkshire and the Humber: inspiration activity and good practice guide*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby. <http://hdl.handle.net/10545/609129>

Dodd, V. and Hooley, T. (2016). *Evaluation of the Legacy Careers Project*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

Hooley, T., Dodd, V. and Shepherd, C. (2016). *Developing a New Generation of Careers Leaders: An Evaluation of the Teach First Careers and Employability Initiative*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby. (Also see the executive summary)

Hooley, T. (2015). *The Kent Model of Career Education and Guidance*. Maidstone: Kent County Council.

Hooley, T., Watts, A.G., Andrews, D. (2015). *Teachers and Careers: The Role of School Teachers in Delivering Career and Employability Learning*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

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## Preface

The North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) Careers Guidance Project, 'Putting the learner first – progression for success' was established as a two-year project in June 2015 and has been a crucially important strand of our joint working with key partners to improve the quality of career guidance in our schools.

In formulating the project, we listened and responded to the voice of young people through the North Yorkshire Youth Council campaign 'Curriculum for life', and our influential '*Growing up in North Yorkshire*' (SHEU, 2014) biennial survey that told us that career guidance in many of our schools was not meeting needs. At the same time, the NYCC skills agenda provided a drive for improved delivery and outcomes for employment, skills, qualifications, enterprise and employability. Business leaders through the City of York, North Yorkshire and East Riding partnership echoed the need for improved Careers Guidance. National government raised the profile of career guidance through statutory guidance in March 2015 (DfE, 2015).

Whilst the educational outcomes for North Yorkshire pupils are some of the best in the country, and many of our young people have secure progression pathways with sustained destinations, we recognised that this was not true for all of our schools and all of our young people. In 2014, The Sutton Trust produced research (Hooley, Matheson and Watts, 2014) which provided our research evidence base with findings consistent with previous research that career guidance can impact on attainment at school, engagement, successful transition to further learning and work, and longer-term life success.

Two years later the project has now reached its conclusion and we commend this report to you: to recognise the improvements that have been made in the quality of career guidance in our project schools but to also address the ongoing challenges by implementing the recommendations to sustain and further improve career guidance across all of our schools.

We would like to thank the North Yorkshire and City of York schools for their involvement in the project and to recognise the significant improvements in careers guidance provision that have been brought about through the hard work and commitment of the senior and middle leaders, teachers and careers advisers. You will find this exemplified throughout the project report. We can safely say we are now much more familiar with the Gatsby Benchmarks that are fundamental in identifying and delivering against the components of a high-quality career guidance provision and the strategies that align to these.

The project has been challenged and supported in many ways and we particularly appreciate the interest of NYCC elected members and commitment of key partners which has enabled us to provide high quality training, and align resources. Finally, we would like to thank NYCC and The York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise partnership for the funding which enabled us to move forward with the project, and staff at the International Centre for Guidance Studies at The University of Derby, who provided the evaluation framework of which this report is integral and who have provided guidance and support throughout the project.

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## 1. Introduction

*We already have some great schools and colleges, we will take this further - by connecting every student with business, we will ensure our next generation of employees have the right skills and the right attitude that growing businesses need.*  
**Barry Dodd, Chair of the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Enterprise Hub (YNYER LEP, 2014)**

Ensuring that young people have the skills that they need to progress through life is a challenge everywhere. We live in a complex world in which many of the assumptions about how education and employment work are changing all the time. Government seeks to address this at the national level, but young people's career transitions are played out in the communities in which they live. As we will discuss in this report North Yorkshire is a distinctive context for young people's transitions from school to work to be played out. As such it presents schools and colleges with particular challenges and opportunities in providing help and support.

The York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Enterprise Partnership (YNYEREP) has identified the development of 'inspired people' as one of its main goals (YNYEREP, 2014). To achieve this, it has identified a range of actions including the following: 'increasing employability by connecting business to education'; and to 'build skills, attitudes and ambition to help people access jobs and progress in them'. The *Progression for Success* project is focused on exactly these aims. It seeks to use a small investment to leverage schools' involvement in career and enterprise activities.

In recent years our understanding of what works in career and enterprise education has become much stronger. Researchers have observed a range of educational, economic and social impacts that are associated with effective career and enterprise activities (Hooley, 2014; Hooley and Dodd, 2015; Hooley, Matheson and Watts, 2014). It has also helped us to have a clearer understanding of what is effective in school-based careers provision (Gatsby, 2014; Hooley *et al.*, 2012). Much of this learning has informed the design and development of the Quality in Careers Standard which sits at the heart of the *Progression for Success* project in North Yorkshire. Key features of this include the idea that schools should ensure that career education takes place across the school, that it connects with curriculum, that it involves employers and post-secondary learning providers, that it offers young people real experiences of the workplace and that it involves careers professionals and well trained and motivated teachers.

*Progression for Success* has recruited 20 schools across North Yorkshire and the City of York and worked with them to transform their career and enterprise provision. The programme has not been about delivering a series of short term interventions into schools, but has rather sought to build the capacity of schools and to engage with them at the level of culture and strategy. The aspiration for the project has been that by the end of the project in 2017 all of the participating schools will have excellent careers provision which is quality marked by an independent body. Perhaps even more critically the aspiration is that the participating schools will have increased their capacity to create and develop careers programmes, to interface with business and to prepare their students for their lives and careers.

## About the project

This report sets out the findings from the final evaluation of careers education and guidance in 17 schools in North Yorkshire and 3 schools in the City of York. The schools have been selected to participate in the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and York, North Yorkshire, and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership (YNYER LEP) funded project 'Putting the Learner First- Progression for Success' The project has been conceived as a way to improve the outcomes for young people in North Yorkshire through the development of school based career and enterprise provision.

All schools participating in the project have been provided with funding of £2,745 to improve their provision. To achieve this they have been provided with a programme of workshops, support visits and encouraged to seek a recognised careers education and guidance quality award validated through the Quality in Careers Standard. A key objective for schools is therefore to successfully gain a quality mark for their careers provision within the timeframe of the project. It is hoped that this objective, when tied with the other support that schools will be receiving, will drive a transformation of practice within the schools. The project is being conducted at a time of change in the careers and enterprise sector in North Yorkshire and the City of York. The YNYER LEP, The National Careers Service (NCS) and the North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership (NYBEP) are all developing their provision of support to schools such as through the provision of new and engaging career and labour market information portals, workshops, network meetings, and enterprise adviser networks. Other organisations such as Thirsk Clock are developing their offer to schools for tailored support for targeted groups of young people.

The [Quality in Careers Standard](#) (QiCS) was established in 2012<sup>1</sup> and is the national standard for quality awards for careers education and guidance. Awards which are accredited by QiCS have to demonstrate that they facilitate schools to deliver careers programmes which support progression, raise aspirations, promote social mobility and link schools with employers and the wider community (Quality in Careers Consortium, 2015). Independent research has found that on average schools which hold QiCS awards have better attendance, attainment and progression than equivalent schools (Hooley, Matheson and Watts, 2015). The QiCS award is also well aligned with descriptions of good practice such as the Gatsby Benchmarks (Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014).

Of course, an improvement in the quality and scope of career guidance in the project schools will be one measure of success and it is expected that there will be a demonstrable improvement in the provision of career guidance in schools (inputs). However, a further measure of success will be an improvement in outcomes for young people. To determine the extent of this, researchers have examined a range of indicators of performance such as data on attendance, attainment and progression. Research conducted for the Sutton Trust (Hooley,

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<sup>1</sup> In 2017, the Quality in Careers Consortium who owned the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) unified all of the national quality awards into one award. Whereas in the past organisations had their awards validated under the QiCS standard, they now apply for a license to deliver one award.



Matheson and Watts, 2014) noted that controlling for other factors, schools with quality awards had a two-percentage point advantage in the proportion of pupils with five good GCSEs, including English and Mathematics. They also found a small, but significant, reduction in persistent absences (of 0.5%). Further to this, sixth forms indicated that the proportion of students gaining 3 A levels was 1.5% higher in schools and sixth form colleges with the quality awards than other schools, and students also had higher UCAS scores, though the gains were not repeated in general further education colleges. Sixth form colleges with accredited career education and guidance showed a significant increase in the number of students going to leading universities. Researchers have examined the data to discover whether or not there is a corresponding improvement in outcomes for young people in the project schools. It should be noted that the project lifetime is two academic years and the benefits for young people may only be evident once the improvements in career guidance have been established and embedded.

The schools involved in *Progression for Success* were selected through a process of application and selection. Selection by the Project Steering Group was dependent on a clear commitment to improving career guidance provision, and an indication that inclusion in the project would have a genuine and positive impact on provision and the outcomes for learners. The steering group also wished to select schools which represented all geographical areas of the County of North Yorkshire and the City of York that represented urban and rural areas. Finally, in selecting schools, the steering group wished to ensure a good mix of schools with and without sixth forms, some academies and some collaborative partner schools.

The list of participating schools which embarked on the project were:

NYCC schools:

- Boroughbridge High School
- Ermysted's Grammar School
- Graham School
- Harrogate High School
- Harrogate Grammar School
- King James School
- Northallerton School and Sixth Form College
- Outwood Academy
- Richmond School and Sixth Form College
- Ripon Grammar School
- Risedale Sports and Community College
- Selby High School
- St Aidan's C of E School\*
- St John Fisher Catholic High School\*
- Tadcaster Grammar School
- Thirsk School and Sixth Form College
- The Virtual School

City of York schools:

- Archbishop Holgate School
- Joseph Rowntree School

- Millthorpe School

\*These two schools share a sixth form. For this reason, the schools have been dealt with together as one unit in terms of the collection of qualitative and quantitative data.

The schools in North Yorkshire are largely situated in small rural market towns. This has implications for schools' career guidance programmes due to the availability of external career guidance provision; the range of employers who can provide input into career guidance programmes and for work experience, in particular due to the limited range of provision for young people within comfortable travelling distances. A further issue for some of the schools is the transient nature of their students due to their proximity to the large Army camp at Catterick. The report explores the impact of geographical location on the provision of career guidance. The schools in the *Progression for Success* project have found innovative ways to overcome these challenges. This report describes these approaches and as such the report will act as a means of sharing this good and interesting practice both with other schools in the project, wider schools in North Yorkshire and schools across the rest of the country.

As in many longitudinal projects, there has been some attrition amongst schools participating in the evaluation. It has not been possible to revisit some schools to engage in case study exploration with internal stakeholders such as teachers, parents, governors and young people. Three schools did not participate fully in this element of the research during the final phase of the project. These were The Graham School, Thirsk School and Joseph Rowntree School. Because of this it has been impossible to determine the extent to which their provision has developed. Where researchers have been able to include the data from these schools from the earlier phase of the research, for example to provide examples of their developing practice, this has been done. The lack of participation during the second phase indicates that where there are staff changes in schools which directly affect the provision of career guidance, that attention should be given to ensuring that staff are replaced and inducted thoroughly into the requirements for career guidance provision. This ensures continuity of experience for staff and students alike. Where we have been able to utilise school data from other sources to help develop a picture of the impact of the project we have done this. We have ensured that we have made explicit where the scope of data in the second phase of the research differs from that in the first phase.

## About the evaluation

The research has been carried out by researchers at the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS), part of the College of Education at the University of Derby. The research presented in this report was conducted in two phases. The first was during December 2015 and January 2016 and the second phase was conducted during May and June 2017. This report therefore sets out how the project has had an impact on the career guidance provision in schools and the impact that this has had on the outcomes for young people.

In designing the research methodology, the research team concluded that an overarching framework would be required which could allow for consistent and comparable examination of the career guidance provision of each of the schools. The Gatsby Benchmarks (Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014) were chosen for this purpose. The Benchmarks were developed through six international visits, analysis of good practice in English schools and a

comprehensive review of current literature. The Benchmarks have become a recognised set of standards which underpin good career guidance in schools.

The research involved a desk review of literature, analysis of data, telephone interviews and visits to 19 schools in year 1 and 16 in year 2. Two schools (St Aidan's Church of England School and St John Fisher Catholic High School) share sixth form provision and were therefore considered together. Visits to schools involved interviews or focus groups with a variety of stakeholders including:

- 19 Senior school leaders (including Head Teachers)
- 2 Careers advisers
- 17 Careers coordinators and specialist staff
- 1 Governors
- 3 Parents
- 8 Teachers
- 15 Year 9 learners
- 6 Year 10 learners
- 8 Year 11 learners
- 9 Year 12 learners
- 5 Year 13 learners

This report sets out the findings from research conducted through visits to schools and analysis of school and pupil performance data. The report makes a number of recommendations for improving the service both at a school level but also at a Local Authority level. These are highlighted within the text and are summarised at the end of the report in section 7.

## **Terminology used in this report**

A number of terms are used throughout this report which require clarification. The term career guidance is used in this report to describe a range of interventions aimed at supporting individuals to make and implement career decisions. The definition of career guidance is based on that provided by UDACE (UDACE, 1986) which presents a list of seven activities to help define career guidance including informing; advising; counselling; assessing; enabling; advocating; and feeding back. SCAGES (1993) revisited and expanded this list to include: teaching; networking; managing; and innovating or creating systems change. The Gatsby Foundation differentiate career guidance from personal guidance in a similar way hence, in their report 'Good Career Guidance' (Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014) they refer to a range of interventions which support young people to make and implement their career decisions. One of the Gatsby Benchmarks refers to 'Personal guidance' which is characterised by face to face or other guidance delivered to individuals by a qualified career guidance practitioner. Throughout the report the term personal guidance is therefore used to describe this type of intervention.

## 2. Project context

This section sets out the context within which the project has taken place. The section begins by discussing the local context before moving on to discuss the wider national context for career and enterprise activity in schools.

### About North Yorkshire

North Yorkshire is the largest county in England and covers an area of 8,654 square kilometres. It is made up of a diverse area that comprises cities, towns, coast and countryside with the majority of the landscape being rural. The most recent census (2011) estimation of the population is approximately 601,500 (ONS, 2014).

North Yorkshire's industries are also diverse with a mix of activities including rural farming, tourism and engineering. Key sectors that have expanded in recent years in the area include: agriculture and food, bio-renewable energy, the visitor economy (for example, York is the most visited city outside of London) and retail. In addition levels of employment, basic skills and business survival are above average for the country (Careers Yorkshire and the Humber, 2015). The employment rate in North Yorkshire is 79.2% and is 5.2% higher than the UK average. Whilst the unemployment rate is 3.9% compared to 6.1% for the UK average (North Yorkshire County Council, 2016).

North Yorkshire is one of the least deprived local authorities in England and is currently ranked 125<sup>th</sup> of 152, however at the small area level it contains pockets of high deprivation with Scarborough identified as the most deprived district within the county. There are also 39 LSOAs (Lower Layer Super Output Areas) in North Yorkshire that are identified in the most deprived quintile in England specifically for Education, Skills and Training (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015). But the most widespread form of deprivation in North Yorkshire is geographical barriers to services, due to the rurality of many locations in the county. These barriers include road distances to a GP surgery, supermarket or convenience store, primary school and post office (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015).

The broad picture of schools in North Yorkshire at the beginning of the project shows the county to be above average for attainment, with 61% of KS4 pupils achieving 5 A\*-C's in 2015 compared to the England average of 52.6% (DfE, 2015). Whilst the average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals in 2015 was 17.8% in North Yorkshire which is 10.7% below the England average (DfE, 2015). This picture of strong attainment follows through into good progression for young people into learning and work. The area has only 4% NEET (YNYEREP, 2013) which is well below the national average of 11.6% for the period October to December 2015 (DFE, 2016).

North Yorkshire is clearly a good place to grow up and one where most, although not all, young people can expect relatively high academic and career outcomes in comparison to their peers across the country. Findings from the Growing Up in North Yorkshire survey (SHEU, 2014) support this by suggesting that most secondary school students feel happy and engaged with school, demonstrating resilience and feeling that their opinions matter. Although some of these positive results decline as young people get older.

One area of concern is that 38% of year 10 respondents to the Growing Up in North Yorkshire survey (SHEU, 2014) felt that they had not had enough help and guidance about their options following year 11. This was a key driver for the project. The Developing the Future Workforce report (YNYEREP, 2013) also raised some concerns about careers provision, in particularly noting substantial variations across the area in terms of education/employer engagement. For example, less than 30% of schools in the area were doing anything to raise awareness of apprenticeships and only just over 50% were offering careers information to learners. The same report suggested that around 70% of young people in the area were accessing work experience.

There is no suggestion that careers work in the area is in any kind of crisis. However, national changes to careers provision, which will be discussed in the next section, have impacted here as they have elsewhere in the country. There is clearly room for further development if the ambitious economic aims set out by the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Enterprise Partnership are to be realised.

The York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Enterprise Partnership oversees the economic development of the area. In 2013 this body set out its Investment Strategy placing careers and the development of the area's human capital at its centre.

*'We want to have one of the best workforces in the country, with ambitious and enterprising young people, excellent employability skills and qualifications that meet the needs of businesses now and in the future. Achieving that will drive business growth and competitiveness and support high employment rates, inclusive communities and heightened incomes.'*

### **YNYEREP, 2013**

This was further emphasised in the Strategic Economic Plan (YNYEREP, 2014) which set out 'every student connected to business' as a key ambition of the plan. This is part of a wider plan to link up the education and employment systems, increase skill utilisation and upskill the future workforce.

During the lifetime of the project further evidence about the standards of careers education and guidance have emerged and improving the provision continues to be a priority:

*'With our ageing workforce, ensuring we have high-quality skills for the future is essential for our many great businesses. Helping young people make more informed choices and inspiring them to take advantage of the opportunities across our area is a real priority and something our business leaders are passionate about. Both business and young people are reporting that careers advice and links to business aren't strong enough. We must meet this challenge full on.'*

### **YNYEREP Annual Report 2016**

The Strategy Economic Plan (YNYEREP, 2016) further underpins the need to develop careers education and guidance as it sets out the need to 'Increase employability of our young people'

as a key ambition of the plan, with the aspiration to, 'improve links between businesses and education providers and ensure that young people are connected to careers guidance and job opportunities'.

In summary, it is possible to note that North Yorkshire has many advantages and that the young people growing up there typically have a good start in life. However, the area also has challenges, related both to some areas of deprivation and to the rurality and geography of much of the area. The York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Enterprise Partnership have taken this into account in the aforementioned strategy for the economic development of the area. They have actively placed the development of schools and their careers provision at the heart of this strategy. This means that the *Progression for Success* project is closely aligned with wider economic and political ambitions within the area.

## About the City of York

The City of York is a unitary authority and has operated as such since 1996. The area has an estimated population of around 200,000. The overview of schools in the City of York shows the authority to be above average for attainment, with 63.7% of KS4 pupils achieving 5 A\*-C's in 2015 (including English and mathematics) compared to the England average of 52.6% (DfE, 2015). Whilst the average proportion of pupils eligible for free schools meals in 2015 was 18.4% in the City of York compared to a national average of 15.2% for 2015 (DfE, 2015). The picture of strong attainment is mirrored by low NEET figures (5% compared to a national average of 11.6% for the period October to December 2015 (DFE 2016)). The York Skills Strategy 2013-2016 set out a clear ambition to 'Unlock York Talent' to support the economic vision of York to become a top 5 UK city and top 10 mid-sized European city in terms of Gross Value Added and jobs. This has been further developed in the 2017- 2020 plan which aims to continue to improve employment rates, skills and qualifications and wages and particularly to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged young people (City of York Council 2017)

The new Local Area Teams in York have Learning and Work Advisers that offer a targeted information, advice and guidance service to disadvantaged children and young people<sup>2</sup>. The 14 - 19 and Skills Team works with providers to secure provision for young people and produces information for young people, parents, schools and colleges on the range of opportunities available. The team also work with providers and employers to coordinate an Apprenticeship Offer for Schools, in terms of workshops and assemblies delivered in schools and coordinate two Apprenticeship Recruitment Events each year to talent match young people with local recruiting employers and an annual city-wide Apprenticeship Graduation and Awards Ceremony. There are no traded services offered by the LA to York schools to support them to deliver their statutory duties.

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<sup>2</sup> This includes those who are in the care of the Local Authority; those pre-16 subject to Family Early Help Assessment and on the Troubled Families Programme; those post-16 who are NEET until age 19 and those young people who are disabled up to the age of 25.

## National developments in careers education and guidance

Following the Education Act 2011 responsibility for careers work was transferred from the Connexions services to schools and colleges, with no funding, and local authorities were allowed to withdraw from the provision of universal careers support (Hooley and Watts, 2011). At the same time, the statutory duties for career education and work-related learning were removed and funding for complementary agencies such as Aimhigher (which worked to connect schools with higher education) and Education Business Partnerships (which worked to connect schools with employers) were cut. Schools and colleges were given new statutory responsibilities to secure career guidance for their students in the Education Act 2011. These were detailed in a succession of versions of the Statutory Guidance. More recently, there has been a shift in careers policy. While some questions about the scale of the new provision (in comparison with that available in 2010) remain, the focus on and resourcing of careers is clearly increasing.

There has been a recent shift in post-16 educational provision with the introduction of the new 16-19 study programmes where government expects work experience is an element of the offer. As part of its enquiry into careers information, advice and guidance, the first joint report of the Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy (House of Commons 2016) resulted in a recommendation to government that all students at Key Stage 4 should have the opportunity to take part in meaningful work experience and that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that work experience is being effectively delivered through Key Stage 5 study plans (House of Commons 2016. 27:79).

Further to this, there have been recent changes in the support mechanisms for young people with special educational needs (SEND) through the implementation of education, health and care plans for some identified individuals. These processes are in their early stages of development and again it is unclear how these are being implemented across the country.

A further shift in Government policy has been the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017. Whilst this is not directly careers education and policy this change will have an impact on schools' delivery of information, advice and guidance in several ways. Firstly, schools themselves are employers and as such will be required to pay the levy which is 0.5% of the pay bill, however, they will also receive an allowance of £15,000 to offset this cost. It is uncertain at the point of writing this report about whether schools will see this initiative as an opportunity to consider employing their own apprentices, but it is likely to raise the profile of apprenticeships generally. A further potential outcome of this initiative is the development of more apprenticeship opportunities amongst local employers and this will also affect the information which schools will be required to provide for their students.

These shifts in government policy provide the context against which the *Progression for Success* project is undertaken. The government's approach has resulted in the creation of a complex marketplace in provision. Consequently, schools now have a critical role in sifting through the various offers that exist and creating a coherent and impactful programme for their students. This is why the *Progression for Success* project is particularly timely, because it seeks to raise the capacity of schools to manage their career and enterprise programmes and make best use of the wide range of resources that exist beyond the school.

### 3. Engagement in the project

This section explores the rationale for both stakeholders' and schools' involvement in the 'Progression for Success' project and how they have benefitted. The section explores the original reasons for engagement and the extent to which these original aspirations have been realised.

#### Schools' rationales for engaging in the project

During the early phases of the research, schools were asked about their commitment and engagement with the project. All participant schools believed that there was a relationship between improved careers provision and better outcomes for young people. When asked specifically to define their rationale for applying for inclusion in the project five specific reasons emerged.

**External validation:** The most commonly cited reason for participating in the project was that schools wished to have an external review of the quality of their career guidance provision. Schools saw that the process of assessment offered through quality awards would provide validation of the quality of their programme. For most schools this was an important message which they wanted to communicate to a range of stakeholders including parents, employers, the Local Authority and Ofsted.

**Improving outcomes for learners:** A further reason for engaging in the project was to improve the outcomes for learners. There was recognition that for this to happen careers work needed to become a strongly articulated and embedded concept throughout the school and that the project offered a means to achieving this.

**Access to continuing professional development:** A further reason was that the project provided a valuable opportunity for key staff to undertake continuing professional development through the support provided at project events and through sharing good practice throughout the project.

**Financial benefit:** For some schools, the financial contribution provided by the project was an attraction. Some schools have experienced cuts through the drive for austerity and this funding was a welcome contribution to an area in the school which had experienced reduced resourcing.

#### Schools experiences of the project

All schools have remained very positive about their involvement in the project and most have achieved their original goals. Schools have found the project a real catalyst for change. The following three quotations exemplify the experience by schools

*'The project has allowed us to hold ourselves accountable and the award process has helped us to identify what is going well. It has helped us to evidence our progress'*

**Careers Coordinator**



*'The project gave us license to work together to look at provision year by year to examine what we are doing'.*

### **Lead governor for careers work**

*'When you are pushing yourself, you need to give yourself credit but you also need to understand the boundaries. We are now more mindfully focussed.'*

### **Head of careers**

In summary schools have:

- Developed more effective policies with the support of a wider range of stakeholders;
- Strengthened management processes including those of monitoring, review and evaluation;
- Improved the resources for careers work;
- Created more comprehensive programmes including more work-related learning which are embedded and delivered by a wider range of staff;
- Improved the involvement of parents and other stakeholders;
- Widened the range of options which young people are considering;
- Improved the expertise of their delivery staff; and
- Increased the involvement of more school staff across a range of curriculum areas.

The following sections describe the outcomes achieved in response to the original aims expressed by schools.

### **External validation:**

Schools acceptance onto the project was dependent on their willingness and commitment to achieving a quality award for career guidance. This was deemed a suitable measure of the extent to which schools were delivering good quality career guidance. Quality awards validate the quality of the inputs into a careers programme for example whether schools have good policies and processes in place. Achieving a quality award is an accepted way of publicly declaring and recognising the quality of provision and many schools engage in quality awards to demonstrate their commitment to their learners. At the start of the project there were a number of awards being offered across the country and schools were given a free choice in their selection of awards to pursue. Five awards were chosen by the participating schools. These were:

- Career Mark (four schools),
- C&K (nine schools),
- Investor in Careers (three schools),
- Inspiring IAG (one school),
- Prospects (one school).

St Aidan's and St John Fishers both undertook C and K and are counted together. Graham School did not identify an award to pursue at the first data collection point

Schools in the City of York worked together to explore and improve career guidance provision. They met together and reviewed the awards and jointly chose C&K as their preferred option. This was also the case for schools working in the Northallerton and Risedale Colleges Federation who chose the Investor in Careers Award.

The early research enabled an investigation and comparison of the processes and rationale for selection by schools across a range of awards and reveals four different rationales for the selection of awards.

**Value for money:** The project provided a contribution of £2,745 which schools could use for a range of purposes. Most have chosen to use the money to purchase the quality award process. Schools have been very careful to ensure that the award chosen provided ongoing support and mentoring to help them to improve and saw this as a measure of value for money. A number of schools were considering the financial implications of sustaining the quality award in the future and understood that they would need to find funding from their own budget in the future. They were therefore making selections based on their future financial commitment beyond the project.

**Approachable and helpful nature of the staff:** This was particularly noted during early discussions about the award process. Schools described feeling reassured by some award providers. Some schools described a feeling of commitment by the award providers to their school. A feeling of 'being able to work with the school's mentor' was often evident as was the notion that mentors would accompany schools on their journey to quality.

**Local versus national:** A further reason for selection was the feeling by some schools that they wanted a 'local' provider. This was not a partisan decision but rather a feeling that a local award provider was more likely to be accessible and responsive if need arose.

**Ease of process:** Finally, the level of ease and accessibility of the process was mentioned as an important consideration in selection. Some schools spoke about simplicity, a straightforward and easily understood process and the idea that the development of a portfolio would provide evidence for Ofsted.

Whilst most schools expressed one rationale more strongly than others, most named several reasons for selecting particular awards.

The final stage of the evaluation has shown that much progress has been made in terms of achieving the awards. Ten schools have now achieved awards, one is awaiting assessment, two are in the process of application and one has partially completed the award. No information is available for four schools. Table 1 below sets out schools' progress with the awards.

**Table 1:** Schools progress with the quality awards

Award	Number of schools using the award	Number of schools who have achieved the award	Number of schools awaiting assessment
Investors in Careers	3	1	2
Career Mark	4	3	1
C and K	9	5	4
Prospects	1	1	0
Inspiring IAG	1	Partially	
Total	18*		

St Aidan's and St John Fishers both undertook C and K and are counted together. Graham School did not identify an award to pursue at the first data collection point and were not available at the second data collection point.

Schools' experiences of the quality award processes have been very positive. The audit process has been fundamental in identifying areas for development and to create a detailed development plan. A number of participants highlighted the role that the awards had on creating a joint ownership of career guidance between managers, operational staff and external stakeholders in driving forward provision. In the same way that the project as a whole gave a focus to careers work, the quality awards underpinned the need for systematic and strategic approaches to development. Furthermore, the quality award process has been very important in some schools where staff change has created a need for some continuity. Quality awards and their processes and support have provided this continuity. The quality awards are explicit about the requirements to develop staff competence and this has encouraged schools to consider professional training for their staff.

Several schools noted their pride in achieving the quality award and have used a number of methods of communicating this success to parents, young people, school staff and community stakeholders; for example, by including information on the school website, emails to parents and stakeholders and through newsletters.

### **Improving outcomes for learners**

The project has analysed attendance, attainment and progression data for learners in project schools and the outcome of this analysis will be dealt with in section 6. However, another way of thinking about the outcomes for learners is to reflect on their experiences of the career education and guidance provision and all schools were very clear that this had improved as a result of the project.

Schools reported improvement to access to career and labour market information, access to qualified staff, and developments in curriculum which included handbooks and online

approaches to recording learning. Schools also reported that career learning was now a shared responsibility with more curriculum teachers now delivering aspects of the programme within their subjects. One school noted that there had been an increase in requests for curriculum resources and information by curriculum staff as a result of the project.

### **Access to continuing professional development**

At the start of the programme, schools were keen to access the continuing professional opportunities made available through the project. This has been very well received by staff and in one instance, a school is working with others in their academy trust to develop a module for the rest of the staff in the Trust schools which replicates the learning and development which they have received through the project.

### **Financial benefit**

Some stakeholders recognised that on a local level, a lack of ring-fenced resources to pay for staff expertise, and transport for visits were limiting factors in providing good quality careers education and guidance. Schools have appreciated the additional funding provided through the project at a time when resources have been scarce. The funding has been used in a variety of ways such as to pay for the quality award, to pay for professional training for staff and to pay for classroom and information resources and licences.

### **Stakeholder engagement in the project**

Stakeholders feel that the main driver behind the project has been the need to improve outcomes for young people and believe the project hopes to tackle this by improving careers information, advice and guidance across schools. In turn, they believe that the aspirations of young people will be raised and that the social inequalities which disadvantaged young people experience will diminish. Success will be seen through an increase in the number of schools having quality awards and an improvement against using an assessment against the Gatsby Benchmarks as a yard stick for progress. One stakeholder acknowledged that achieving a quality award is not the end goal and whilst this is an important element of the project, sustaining and further developing the quality of careers education and guidance is part of a cycle of continuing quality improvement and will need to be sustained in future.

An improvement in attendance, attainment and progression will be the critical indicators of improvement in the outcomes for young people. One stakeholder suggested that an improvement in outcomes may ultimately reduce the movement of people from the region to other more prosperous areas. The region experiences social and economic inequality due to its largely rural nature and with many coastal communities. Whilst this project does not assess the impact of the project on the movement of young people and the 'skills drain' stakeholders may wish to consider this as a further measure of success albeit a long term one.

Of course, quality developments do not occur in isolation and one of the outcomes of the programme will be to have more school staff trained and more confident in delivering careers information, advice and guidance. An analysis of attendance and feedback data from the events shows that more people are attending training than previously, and the programmes have been valued for the way they have developed a more critical approach to programme development, delivery and evaluation.

But it doesn't stop there. Several stakeholders spoke of the role of the project in terms of awareness raising amongst a wider group of stakeholders such as with elected members of North Yorkshire County Council who now regularly request updates on the project progress and the impact on young people in the area.

## **Measuring success**

Case studies from schools shared during the 5 training events have indicated positive feedback about the improved quality of provision. In the 2016 the Growing Up in North Yorkshire survey (SHEU, 2014), a higher proportion of students in the project schools reported that careers guidance in their schools was at least useful or very useful compared to non-project schools.

An unexpected outcome of the project is the way that it has drawn stakeholders such as the NYBEP, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the National Careers Service together to focus on a common interest. The project has helped stakeholders to define joint aims and develop a coherent approach to the delivery of careers education and guidance. One outcome of this partnership approach has been an entitlement statement for accessing to careers education and guidance which is shared across the region.

Many stakeholders are aware of the government's intention to publish a new strategy and felt that this would be influential in driving quality improvements in provision. A national strategy needs to be accompanied by an accountability framework and most stakeholders felt that without the involvement of Ofsted in inspecting the quality of career guidance there would be little incentive for schools to progress. Two schools commented that careers had been singled out in their Ofsted reports as an area of excellence.

## **Developing, sharing and sustaining good practice**

Schools and stakeholders alike spoke widely of the lessons learned during the project both as individuals and collectively. Many participants spoke of the importance of capturing this learning and development and sharing it with each other and with those outside the project. There is much to be said for developing and sharing resources and approaches through collaboration. This requires vision and leadership and the existing partnership which has come together to deliver this project is well placed to consider how it can pool its resources and expertise to sustain local networking events and regionally produced information for schools and learners. Parents are important stakeholders who can contribute much to careers programmes through their knowledge of the world or work and their own professional contacts and should be drawn into the partnership so that they can influence the coherence of the messages between school and home.

## 4. Good career guidance: The Gatsby Benchmarks

The evaluation of the *Progression for Success* project required an overarching framework of indicators against which progress within the project could be measured. The Gatsby Benchmarks offer such a framework. The Benchmarks were developed in 2014 after research into what 'good' career guidance looked like in countries around the world alongside an investigation into the provision in schools in the independent sector in England. In addition, the research team studied the available literature on career guidance in state schools and consulted with key stakeholders. The resulting Benchmarks identify different dimensions of good practice. The 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 and work-related learning providers
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

The Benchmarks have been used to explore the provision of each school during the project.

### Overview evaluation against the Gatsby Benchmarks

Schools were asked to reflect on the content of their current programme and then provide a self-assessment against each of the Benchmarks. Schools were asked to grade themselves against each of the Benchmarks using the following levels shown in Table 2.

These grades are open to interpretation by schools and this may have led to differences both within schools and across the sample. To mitigate this, researchers with expertise in careers education and guidance facilitated conversations with each school which explored their provision and supported them to identify which grade was most appropriate. For ease of analysis, the grades which each school gave to themselves was given a numeric value set out below. These values were then used to calculate the changes which have taken place during the project.

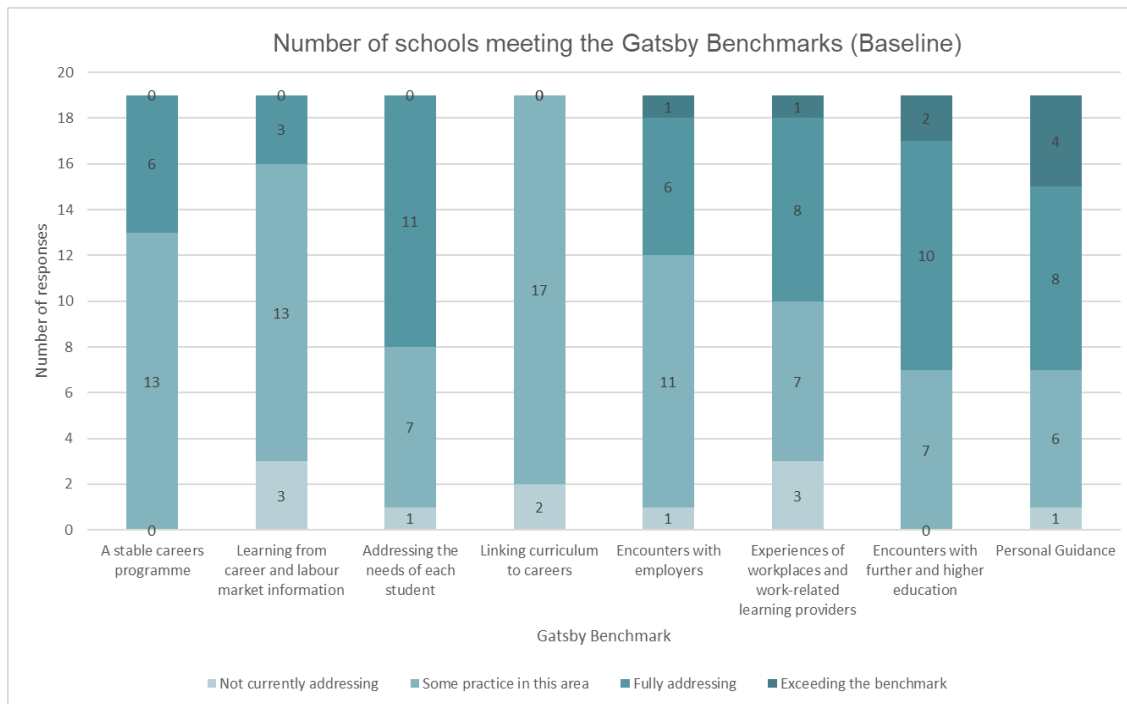
**Table 2: Coding schools Benchmark data to allow analysis**

Benchmark	Numeric value
Not currently addressing this Benchmark	1
Some practice in this area	2
Fully addressing this Benchmark	3
Exceeding the Benchmark	4

## Changes in the provision of career guidance during the project

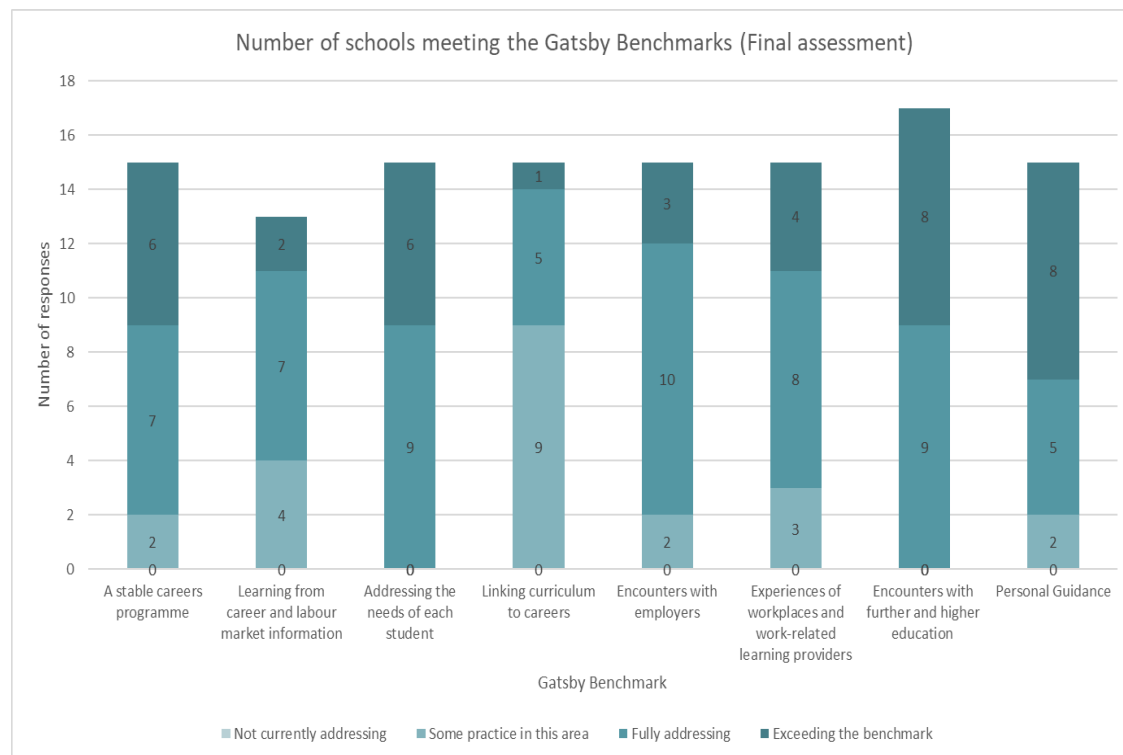
During the 15 months of the project, although there was evidence of substantial improvement across all the Benchmarks, no schools were exceeding all of them. The following two tables show how schools have improved against each of the Benchmarks during the project. The first figure (Figure 1) shows the results for the baseline assessment (December 2015 /January 2016). At the start of the project, there were six Benchmarks which registered that there were some schools which were not addressing this area of work. The Benchmark which was most regularly exceeded was *Personal guidance* (Four schools had this grade). The Benchmarks which were most regularly not addressed were learning from career and labour market information and experiences of the workplaces (Three schools had this grade).

**Figure 1: Number of pilot schools are meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks (Baseline assessment December 2015/January 2016)**



Data from the second visits (Figure 2) shows that every Benchmark had at least one school registering that they were exceeding the standard and there were no schools which registered that they were not addressing any Benchmarks. The Benchmarks which were regularly exceeded were *Personal guidance* and *Encounters with further and higher education* (Six schools were exceeding these Benchmarks). The Benchmarks which were least well addressed (Some practice in this area) were *Addressing the needs of each pupil* and *Linking curriculum to careers* (Nine schools had some practice in this area).

**Figure 2: Number of pilot schools meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks (Final assessment June/July 2017)**



By allocating a numerical code (Table 2 above) to each of the Benchmark grades it is possible to analyse which Benchmarks have experienced most progress (Table 3).

**Table 3: Average improvement in Benchmark for schools in the pilot**

Benchmark	Average change across all participating schools (n=16)
A stable careers programme	0.9
Learning from career and labour market information	0.8
Addressing the needs of each pupil	0.8
Linking curriculum learning to careers	0.5
Encounters with employers and employees	0.8
Experiences of workplaces and work-related learning providers	0.8
Encounters with further and higher education	0.6
Personal guidance	0.5

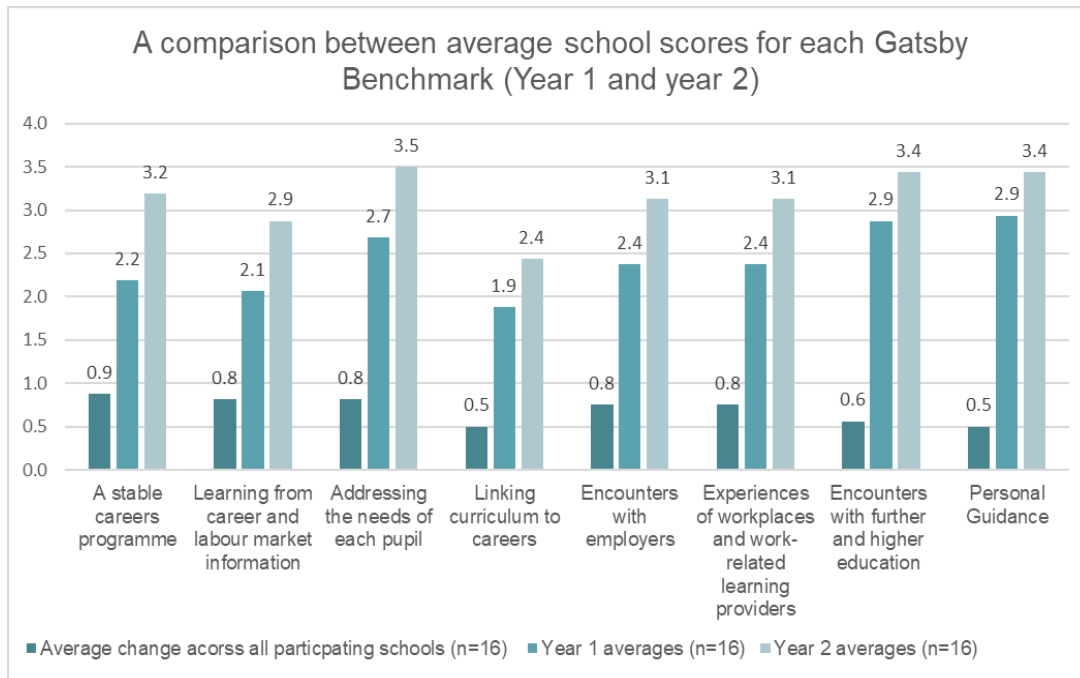
When viewed against the data from the baseline assessment this demonstrates that the Benchmark which was most regularly exceeded early in the project (Personal Guidance) made



the least gain. This suggests that as schools were generally performing well in this area, they allocated least energy in improving in this Benchmark. The Benchmarks which were less well met (not addressing) during the early stages of the project (learning from career and labour market information and experiences of work places) were tackled differently. *Learning from career and labour market information* and *Experiences of workplaces* showed the second greatest gain but was not alone in this as two other Benchmarks (*Addressing the needs of individuals* and *Encounters with employers and employees*) also showed a similar improvement.

The picture changes again when the average achievement against the Benchmarks of year 1 and year 2 are compared. Figure 3 below shows a comparison of the average scores of each Benchmark from the baseline and the final assessments with the average increase during the project. The table shows that the Benchmark which had the smallest average score (Linking the curriculum to careers) has remained the least well met of the Benchmarks across all of the schools and has made least progress (0.5). This is of concern and suggests that there is still work to be completed to ensure that young people receive consistent messages across all curriculum areas about careers. This issue will be explored more fully in the next section which explores each of the Benchmarks in turn and what progress has been made.

**Figure 3: A comparison between average school scores for each Gatsby Benchmark for the baseline and at the end of the project (n=16)**



## 5. Progress against each of the Gatsby Benchmarks

This section explores the changes and developments which have been made against each of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. The data is presented as both a narrative of changes made, presented by staff, and students in each of the participating schools in the second cycle of data gathering (June and July 2017) and where appropriate, the views of stakeholders. Each Benchmark also includes a table which shows the changes in grades which schools have achieved for each of the Benchmarks. Where available, areas of good practice have been highlighted and recommendations to both schools and local authorities have been made.

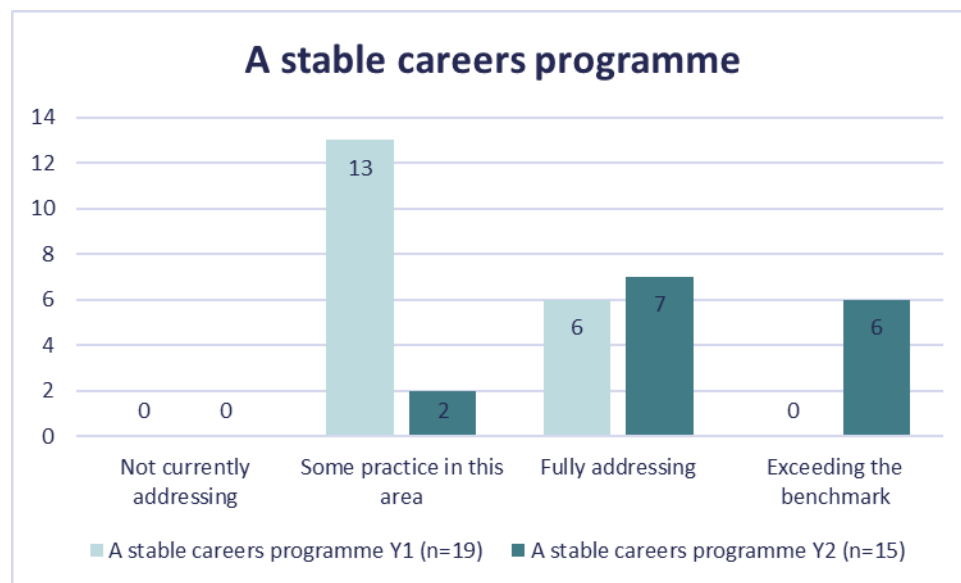
### Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme

*Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers, governors and employers.*

#### Overall progress

Figure 4 below shows that progress has been made in this Benchmark. Previously there were no schools which assessed themselves as exceeding this Benchmark and the final assessment showed that there are now six. There has been a reduction in schools having some practice in this area from 13 to 2.

**Figure 4: A comparison of schools' progress against Gatsby Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme**



N.B. Two schools, St Aidan's Church of England High School in partnership with St John Fisher Catholic High School have been assessed together as they share provision.

## Governance

Since the beginning of the project, there have been several changes in the governance elements of career guidance. Most schools reported that they have interest by at least one governor with this usually being formalised to having a named governor who has an overview of careers work in the organisation. Some schools reported that there was an increase in interest by governors and this was variously explained because of the pilot project, the need to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and a need to link more closely with the community.

Where the role of the Governor was described, schools noted that the relationship was one of being a 'sounding board' or 'critical friend'. The role has been much valued and has often resulted in careers staff feeling more supported both at a senior level and in some schools with resources which have been the result of governor contacts in the community and also due to advocacy to the governing council on behalf of the careers team. Governors also had overview of the careers policy and worked with careers staff to both develop and review this. Where schools have a policy for careers work, this is usually endorsed by the governing body. A number of schools now keep their policy on the schools' website where it is openly accessible to stakeholders.

Governors meet regularly with school staff often at least termly but sometimes more regularly on a monthly basis. Because of the increased interest by governors, more schools reported that careers work featured in the schools' reporting systems in planning and development terms to the senior leaders and governors.

## Leadership and management

As noted earlier there has been several changes to the leadership and management of careers work across a number of the schools. One of the significant areas of learning from the project relates to the impact of changes on the strategic direction of careers work. Where schools have been unable to maintain their commitment to the pilot project, this has been a direct result of a change in management and the lack of continuity planning, or handover and induction for new staff. It is worth noting that were these changes related to other areas of the curriculum such as Maths or English, it is likely that there might be well documented processes for change management. That this has not been the case in some schools for career leadership and management highlights that there may be less of a priority attached to the change management for careers work. Schools should review their processes for continuity for strategic leadership for careers to ensure that momentum is not lost. Policies for careers work should include the names of those staff within the organisational structure who have leadership and management of careers work when change takes place.

**Recommendation:** Continuity and succession planning should be reviewed by all schools to ensure that momentum is not lost when there is a change in leadership and management of careers work.

An interesting and unanticipated development which has taken place during the project has been the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy (see page 9). Many of the senior leaders in the project schools spoke of the impact of this on their thinking about careers work. Although this is not directly related to the direct delivery of careers work, the potential for employing apprentices in schools as a result of the levy has caused senior leaders to discuss how this might work. The

discussions have resulted in a greater awareness amongst senior leaders about apprenticeships and this will raise the profile of apprentices with the wider school staff. Some senior leaders have begun to draw links between employing apprentices and the provision of information about apprenticeships. It has also been evident that some schools are determined that apprentices should be recruited from their own alumni and school leavers and see the positive impact this might have on raising aspirations amongst their existing student body.

Many of the schools in the project described how processes for supporting careers work had improved during the project. Most described an improvement in the regularity of meetings between senior leaders and operational managers, an improved visibility of careers work across the school including the inclusion of careers policies on the school website.

**Case study:** At Harrogate Grammar School, there has been a move to create a careers 'team'. A new faculty structure will ensure that curriculum and pastoral provision is more joined up. The discourse will become less of 'what option choice will students make' to a more holistic conversation about what career students will pursue. Each faculty will have a careers ambassador. The language used with students will be around employability. An example is that school standards of behaviours will be linked to employability.

## Resources

Time remains the largest resource commitment for schools and many staff expressed the opinion that they could improve provision if they had more time to do this. No schools reported an increase in the budget associated with careers work however, staff did report that they had become more aware of freely available resources during their conversations with others during the project and had therefore seen an overall improvement in the resources available. There were two occasions where resources were improved. In one case, a school governor has been able to secure a grant of £1,000 from the Foundation Governors Fund. This is a local discretionary fund managed by the members of the Foundation. In a second school, the Parents Association have funded two modules of Unifrog, a web-based resource, to support the careers programme.

Schools provide a range of curriculum and information resources through their budgets. The main target for this funding is for software licences for web-based resources such as the aforementioned Unifrog, but also Kudos, and E-Clips. The second most regularly cited use of the careers budget was for the provision of careers fairs and events.

## Curriculum organisation

During the second phase of the research school staff discussed the extent to which the careers curriculum had been extended and enhanced. Where schools had a strong basis on which to develop there were stories of how the timetable had been extended to make careers lessons more visible. In some schools, more careers lessons had been made available and in others the provision had been extended to more year groups. In the majority of schools, all students now receive some careers education. Career learning is delivered through a range of approaches including:

- PSHE and particularly for Key Stage 3 learners,
- Tutorial groups particularly in Key Stage 4,

- assemblies,
- presentations,
- employer visits,
- work experience,
- seminars,
- workshops, such as student finance road shows for students and parents
- drop down days,
- 1:1 sessions,
- Careers fairs including the UCAS fair and
- STEM careers events.

In one school, all Year 10 students do a short AQA qualification called Preparation for Working Life.

The use of email and social media has increased as a means of communicating with both parents and students. This is seen as an effective and strategic approach to delivering timely information to those that need it and this approach supplements the information on school websites. This shows that schools are using a variety of ways of communicating important events and thus increasing young people (and their parents) accessibility to information.

*“We email parents and whole year groups with the information they need at particular times. This is a new initiative and has been very well received. It’s more directed than just putting information on the website. Everybody now gets the same information at the same time. We now have a more strategic and co-ordinated approach. We know that parents are getting the information. It’s allowed us to provide more information as it becomes available. We’re using technology to be more responsive and pro-active.”*

### **Senior Leader for Careers Education and Guidance**

There appears to have been a move away from careers being delivered solely through tutor registration periods. Where this is the case in Tadcaster Grammar School, the length of the tutorial lesson has been extended from 20 minutes to 30 minutes and this has made it a more useful and effective opportunity for delivery.

Students across all of the pilot schools were very complimentary about the careers provision and all could name the activities which they remembered and were able to discuss the impact of these events.

Students at one school reported that they experienced a range of workshops where people came in to talk to them and how this had changed the way that they thought about the future.

*‘They tell you about what the environment is like – you can see more clearly down the pathway.’*

### **Year 13 pupil Harrogate High School**

*‘When I was little, I used to think when I was 20 I would be married. Now I think about business. This is important before you get on to family and stuff.’*

## Year 13 pupil Harrogate High School

### Monitoring, review and evaluation

The baseline assessment revealed a variety of monitoring, review and evaluation (MRE) practices. This is still the case, however, schools appear to have a greater variety of MRE processes in place. Overall, MRE is now being tackled more strategically and some schools have invested in systems such as Grofar to allow them to track the aspirations and interventions for all students. There is also some evidence that schools are linking their career MRE practices to a wider school evaluation strategy and that the outcomes of evaluation are being used more effectively to develop provision.

**Case study:** Ermysted's Grammar School uses multiple approaches to monitor, review and evaluate the careers programme. Through the project and using advice from those commissioning the project the school now employs similar reviewing techniques as they have used in other areas of the school. This includes the use of the 'student voice'. This is now included in the school's policy for careers work. The school gathers information about the programme systematically. The career programme self- assessment form has been developed to map onto the Gatsby Benchmarks to highlight areas of success and where improvements are needed. The outcomes of this monitoring process, and feedback from the students are used to develop the programme. For example, the students requested that information about University be provided earlier in their school career. As a result, this year the Head of Sixth Form has given presentations about University and UCAS earlier on in Year 11, and in addition there is a basic introduction to higher education in Year 9 presented by representatives from Newcastle University.

Schools are now more regularly using recognised frameworks to audit their careers provision. During the research, schools named a number of frameworks including The Gatsby Benchmarks (Gatsby Charitable Trust, 2014) and The CDI framework (CDI, 2015). One school noted that not only had they used their evaluation to improve the content of the programme but had also used it to target continuing professional development activities at staff.

Despite such satisfactory progress being made in developing provision against this Benchmark, schools still reported barriers to progression. As has been noted previously, staff changes have been very disruptive in a number of schools. Where changes in leadership and management have occurred, it can have a very disruptive impact however, some staff reported that there had been a reduction in staff and of course this squeeze on resource has a negative impact on the type, quantity and quality of provision.

**Recommendation:** Support to develop coherent, consistent approaches to monitoring, review and evaluation which links career guidance to schools' strategic aims will inevitably lead to improvement in provision. The project offers a unique opportunity to bring schools together to work on this area and to learn from schools where good or excellent practice is evident. This could result in a more effective process of gathering and sharing monitoring, review and evaluation data across the North Yorkshire area and lead to more effective reporting and allocation of resources

Another challenge has been a lack of specific knowledge and expertise about careers work by senior leaders. This has an impact on the type of support which operational teams receive and

some careers coordinators reported having to advocate on behalf of the subject area to staff and other school leaders when having an expert senior leader would have been more effective.

A further challenge has been in obtaining agreement from other curriculum staff to release students to attend careers activities.

Funding remains a challenge and as has been previously noted there has been very modest increases in the resources which have been made available. This has made some career staff more innovative in accessing free resources or sharing resources with others through partnership activities.

Very big schools find it difficult to provide consistent provision for all their learners whereas this is much easier in smaller schools. This is for several reasons. Firstly, the amount of staff resource is not always scaled up in a larger school. This means that a careers coordinator in a small school has more time and capacity to work on behalf of individuals than a careers coordinator in a larger school. In some big schools careers teams are beginning to emerge as an approach to delivery however, senior leaders then have the problem of ensuring consistency in quality of the delivery of provision and this requires an additional range of observations and monitoring activities.

Several schools noted that parental engagement has been very challenging either in discussing careers generally or in breaking down stereotypical career choices but that this was being addressed with good effect.

**Case study:** King James School have found that parental engagement has been a key area of development. The school is very traditional and has a good reputation for delivering excellent quality education particularly in the sixth form. Parents often hope that their children will stay in the sixth form and not move in to vocational programmes at local colleges. This is a mind-set which the school is working to develop. They feel that it is important that parents are fully informed, with all the options and pathways explained, to help them help their son or daughter make an informed choice.

## **Discussion and areas for future development**

Examination of schools' self-assessment against the Benchmark *A stable careers* programme indicates that whilst just under a third of the participating schools fully meet this Benchmark, approximately two thirds have at least some practice in this area. There are some examples of good practice which are evident in some of the participating schools, notably in the way schools are developing their policies, reaching out to stakeholders to provide feedback on their provision and providing strong messages to school staff and stakeholders about the roles and responsibilities required to manage good career guidance successfully. This is a positive picture and demonstrates a strong platform on which to build.

One issue which has emerged during the research is that where there are changes in staffing around careers work, some schools have shown a lack of succession planning. This has the potential to negatively impact on the experiences of career guidance which learners receive. Where the transition from one member of staff to the next is prolonged, an entire cohort of young people could have their career decision making interrupted and this could have a significant impact on their long-term goals.

Areas which presented most challenges are in resourcing career guidance both in terms of available budget and curriculum time. Whilst the majority of participating schools identified these factors as challenges, many schools had responded by developing innovative approaches to engaging with community stakeholders and employers to bolster their provision. Some schools had developed activities to address the lack of curriculum time available to support career guidance.

Assessment against this Benchmark suggests that the main area for development across the majority of schools is that of monitoring, review and evaluation. This tends to be sporadic, lacks coherence and seldom connects effectively with schools' strategic aims.

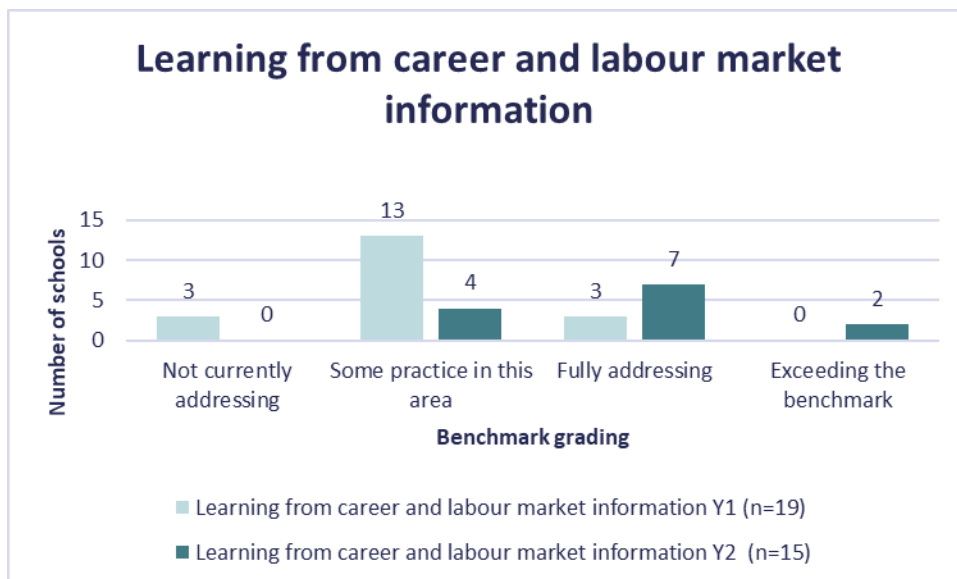
## Benchmark 2: Learning about career and labour market information

*Every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.*

### Overall progress

Figure 5 below shows that progress has been made in this Benchmark. Previously there were no schools which assessed themselves as exceeding this Benchmark and the final assessment showed that there are now two. At the start of the pilot, there were three schools who indicated that they had no practice in this area and this has been reduced to zero.

**Figure 5: A comparison of schools' progress against Gatsby Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information**



N.B. Two schools, St Aidan's Church of England High School in partnership with St John Fisher Catholic High School have been assessed together as they share provision.



## Scope and variety

Ways of introducing parents and young people to information includes through displays and posters, careers fairs, careers week, career focus days, assemblies, guest speakers and websites. Events such as careers fairs were regularly cited by student research participants as activities which were valued.

*“The careers fairs have been really useful. It is good to know what is out there. That we are not restricted to universities. You get to know what all of the options are.”*

### Year 13 student

In some schools, dedicated careers rooms contain additional resources for use during small group works and face to face guidance. Many schools produce their own careers workbooks which contain sections on careers and labour market information. In one school, parents receive a ‘Student Entitlement Document’ which contains information about the programme and some sources of information including the school’s website. Several schools noted that they had made a specific effort at raising the profile of apprenticeships through their provision of career and labour market information.

**Case study:** At Risedale School members of the Armed Forces are encouraged to help learners make the links between civilian careers and the opportunities for apprenticeships with the Forces through visits and work experience.

## Timing

There is a clear distinction between schools in North Yorkshire and schools in the City of York in terms of the way information is provided to parents and carers. The City of York collate information about career-related events and activities and this is emailed to parents as a newsletter on a weekly basis. Where parents in the City of York have follow-up questions about events, these are directed to the school. This system does not appear to be in place in North Yorkshire. In this area, schools take responsibility to do this. Where this is happening, schools are reporting more queries from students about careers in general and the events and opportunities which have been emailed to them.

In one school, students are encouraged to take a lead in the development of information events through the provision of societies.

**Case study:** At Harrogate Grammar School, sixth form students are encouraged to set up and run societies and some of these have been career related. Topics have included developing leadership skills, the history of feminism and the medical society.

## Sources

Across all the pilot schools, the resource ‘Shape Your Future’ produced by Careers Yorkshire and Humberside has been well received. The booklets and posters contain information about the types of businesses that will be recruiting in the local area in the future. It has statistics about how many people are employed by what sectors and businesses.

**Recommendation:** Centrally produced information on the local and regional career and labour market are a valued curriculum resource however these need to be regularly maintained and updated. The Local Authorities and their partners should explore ways of maintaining the resources necessary for this.

The City of York collects data on destinations for all of the schools in their area and this is shared with schools and used in a variety of ways to support career decision making; for example, in leaflets, posters and careers talks to both young people and their parents.

## Partners

Some schools in the pilot described the impact that the project was having on the way they were developing, sharing and using career and labour market information. Of note was the idea that the pilot had brought schools together to benefit from a shared vision and resources to support them. There was a general sense that the quality and scope of career and labour market information provision to both to students and parents had improved as a result of the programme.

*“Our work on this Benchmark has allowed us to present a realistic picture of the employment market locally and nationally and we are now able to better support students on where to look for information about their future careers and decisions. Through the project we’ve also had access to LMI resources, so some of the information I’ve transferred to slides and shared with students, and sometimes we give the students the booklets that have been produced”.*

## School Careers Manager

One school explained how they had found a new way of involving partners through their ‘new build’.

**Case study:** At Harrogate High School, the schools’ new build has provided an opportunity to get the builders involved and this has given new insights into construction related careers. Students learned a lot about health and safety at work during the building, for example, about Asbestos. (Health and safety is always included in the vertical mentor groups).

One school explained that networking was now seen as more important and that this important skill ensures a supply of visitors to the school who can provide interesting and useful insights.

## Introducing information

Students in the study valued the early introduction of information. In one school a sixth form student reinforced this message.

*‘Make sure that students know there are other avenues from a young age. When I was young I thought it was just primary then school, then sixth-form then Uni.’*

## Year 13 student

Software packages including Kudos and Plotr were regularly cited as ways in which information were introduced to learners.

### **Digital Career Management skills**

There appears to be an increasing awareness that young people need the skills to manage their online career research and development. Some schools noted that they were now introducing these digital career management skills through the classroom resource #DigitiseMyCareer<sup>3</sup>.

Some schools reported that digital awareness was something which was embedded as a theme across the school. Lessons on the danger of improper use of digital media often take place during personal, social and health education. One school noted that they lead by example in the way they used social media to keep students and parents informed. In another school, messages about the importance of managing one's online profile are reinforced in the sixth form by an employer who comes in to talk to students about the way that they use social media to vet staff and potential staff.

### **Supporting staff**

Across the pilot schools there was an understanding that staff needed opportunities to develop their knowledge and expertise regarding career and labour market information. Careers Yorkshire and Humberside convenes regular meetings between careers coordinators to help them to explore best practice and to share resources. This is a service which is highly valued.

*'It is important to have someone prodding this agenda. This system means that people are released from school to attend. This ensures that the agenda is raised with senior leaders as the meetings are publicised through them.'*

### **Careers Coordinator**

**Recommendation:** The Local Authorities should ensure that resources continue to be made available for careers staff to come together to share information and good practice. This is a valued and effective resource and needs to be co-ordinated centrally to be most effective.

Some schools provide regular staff updates through newsletters or briefings in order to help staff incorporate relevant information in lessons and conversations. Whole school training on career and labour market information has also taken place in some schools. Several schools described the importance of external qualified professional guidance providers who had access to a range of specialist information resources and who were able to support schools to develop their provision.

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<sup>3</sup> [#DigitiseMyCareer](#) is a classroom resource developed at the International Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby and is based on the 7 Cs of digital career management (Hooley, 2012)

## Support from alumni

Across the pilot schools, the use of ex-students to inform career decision making was widespread. Alumni provide support through being role models, through mentoring and career talks and are regularly used as examples in posters and talks to illustrate a variety of career pathways.

**Case study:** At Northallerton School, one of their ex-students has a Level 4 apprenticeship in aerospace engineering, and has been invited in to school to run workshops for current students.

Sometimes young people find their own way to alumni to learn of their experiences.

*'My brother, he went to sixth form and then got an apprenticeship. He has got a job now. This has made me think about the route I want to take.'*

### Year 9 pupil

What differs across schools is the way that alumni networks are managed. There was a recognition across all schools that effective management of an alumni network requires resources (both time and money) and a number of schools suggested that this would be an area which they would improve if more resources were made available. Several schools provided details of initiatives to formalise pre-existing alumni networks. At one school, a parent has now volunteered to coordinate the alumni network. At a separate school, Facebook is used to locate and target alumni.

Two schools described their arrangements with Future First<sup>4</sup>, an organisation which supports schools and colleges. One school uses the resulting database of alumni to target individuals to provide work experience placements as well as mentoring and support for careers events. They consider the cost of working with Future First to be 'good value'. One school is beginning negotiations with Future First on the recommendations of a colleague from a different part of the country.

**Recommendation:** Schools and colleges should investigate the options for developing and managing their alumni network. This is an important and effective resource for career learning and guidance and when managed effectively enhance the experiences of young people.

## Discussion and areas for future development

The research has demonstrated that schools are making good progress in the provision of career and labour market information and the research has resulted in a number of case studies of practice. Schools have taken note of the recommendations made in the interim report and have made progress against these.

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<sup>4</sup> [Future First](#) is a UK wide organisation which supports schools and colleges to engage with their alumni network.

There is a distinction between the support which the City of York provide to schools and that of NYCC. This is largely due to the centralised approach to disseminating information about careers events and activities to parents. It is done centrally in the City of York and is left to individual schools to do in the County' There is no indication of whether one model is preferable to another. What is important is that parents are and feel informed and there is an improvement across the pilot schools.

Several specific support mechanisms were named as beneficial and these largely involved the sharing of knowledge and expertise. In the first case, a centrally organised forum for careers staff to come together regularly to share knowledge and expertise is valued and popular. This is a cost-effective approach as it draws on existing and emerging practice and creates a community which ensures that the improvement in the quality of careers work is sustained. Of particular note has been the suite of resources produced by Careers Yorkshire and Humber. These have been widely used and schools appreciated their local nature. Career and labour market information quickly loses its currency and it will be important that the Local Authorities and the Local Enterprise partnership continues to fund this initiative so that the materials can be reviewed and updated.

Schools also valued the professional expertise of qualified careers staff whose support is often provided to schools and school staff to help them to select the most relevant information for a variety of curriculum and guidance reasons.

There has been a recognition of the importance of alumni networks in supporting careers programmes and some schools have demonstrated commitment and initiative to developing their networks although no one model emerged as preferred. A variety of approaches to developing and sustaining networks have included the use of volunteer parents, mining social media profiles of ex-students and using commercial organisations to develop a database of contacts. Although a number of schools previously reported having 'old boys' networks' what has emerged in a number of schools is a more strategic use of alumni networks to identify suitable work placements or mentors linked to specific industrial sectors and careers. Where schools are not using this resource as effectively, they should consider ways of improving and sustaining their networks.

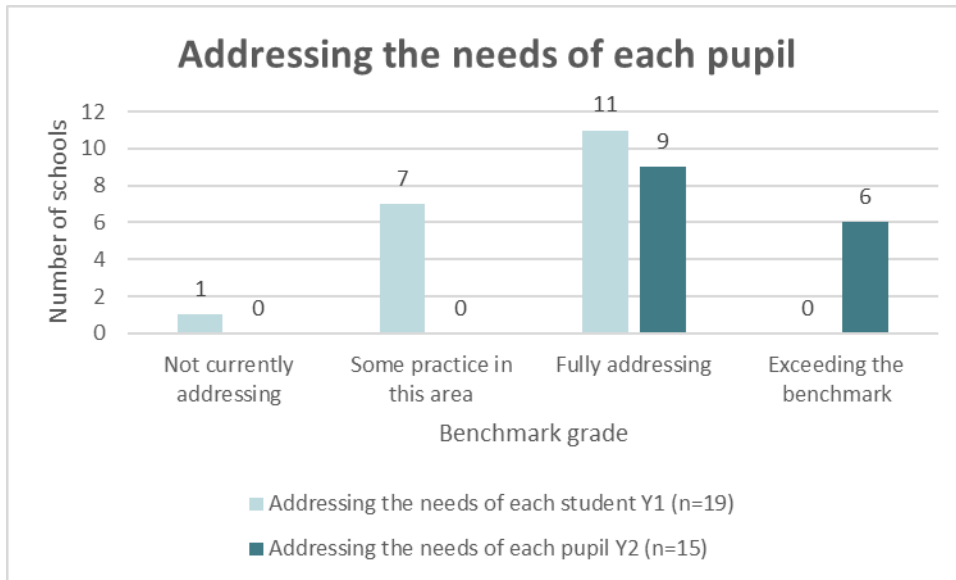
### **Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil**

*Pupils have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.*

#### **Overall progress**

Figure 6 below shows that progress has been made in this Benchmark. Previously there were no schools which assessed themselves as exceeding this Benchmark and the final assessment showed that there are now six. At the start of the pilot, there was one school who indicated that they had no practice in this area and this has been reduced to zero.

**Figure 6: A comparison of schools' progress against Gatsby Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil**



N.B. Two schools, St Aidan's Church of England High School in partnership with St John Fisher Catholic High School have been assessed together as they share provision.

### Supporting individual career development needs

All schools in the research identified changes to the way they identified and met individual career development needs. There have been positive developments in the way school staff liaise to ensure that needs are met and that students are monitored. Many schools reported new approaches to providing curriculum support including both differentiated and bespoke programmes for specific groups.

There was an overall view in participating schools that it is easier for small schools to address individual needs more effectively than it is for larger schools. Staff in small schools have a better opportunity to get to know more of the pupils and are therefore more able to observe and report any issues as they occur. That is not to say that larger schools do not have successful systems in place to support individuals with their career development and the research has highlighted much good and emerging practice.

*'Our worry before was the mainstream pupils, we've always been good at targeting support to those vulnerable groups but now we make sure the programme is suitable for all pupils.'*

**Deputy Head**

**Case study:** Thirsk School incorporates career planning across all of its systems such as in school reports to parents from year 7. All students do a self-assessment at each assessment point and reference to career development is included. Students can earn points for a variety of activities and achievement. The school uses a 'Challenge' booklet to record success and which all pupils use. The booklet helps to provide evidence for student self-assessment. Further to this in terms of Year 11 transition, the school has developed a process of individualisation which allows them to design a sixth form timetable around individual needs and interests. The school admits that this very responsive process is only really possible because the school is small, however the individual attention given to learners' career aspirations, development and progression is highly developed.

### **Systems for identifying and prioritising need**

All schools had systems for identifying a range of needs and for managing these to ensure that these needs were met through a process of targeting or prioritisation.

**Case study:** At Tadcaster Grammar School, the careers manager has a spreadsheet which contains all students and includes information on Pupil Premium, free school meals, SEND, NEET and career activities and progress. She uses this spreadsheet to track and monitor their progress. She communicates with house leaders and there are student development plans for each student. She is linked with the SENCO and her team.

**Case study:** Staff in the Virtual School use a process of assessment and action planning called the Rickter Scale which is used to support vulnerable and disaffected students. This process provides a three-dimensional approach and focus for discussions with young people about their issues and needs. The process is useful for recording outcomes and mapping progress. One of the Rickter overlays addresses whether students have the skills in maths and English to help them with the future. This helps the school to identify needs in these areas as well as more personal needs.

Schools prioritised students with career development needs in several ways. A popular approach is the use of a survey, delivered variously in year 9, 10 or 11 which is used to identify those who have clear ideas and plans and those who do not. This allows the targeting of support to those students who are unclear and are given priority in terms of face to face guidance. Some schools ensured that pupils with SEND, free school meals or who are at risk of becoming NEET (Not in employment, education or training) were the first to receive face to face guidance during the annual cycle of career development in order to maximise the time available each year to work with them and overcome barriers. In other schools, students with needs received a differentiated careers education programme. Typical of this type of programme is that delivered by Millthorpe school which has a special programme for young carers who make additional visits to York University to help develop their aspirations. This school also has a general programme in school to support the needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community which involves raising awareness of successful LGBT individuals through posters and activities. Most schools had a means of supporting the aspirations of gifted and talented students and the City of York a widening participation programme called 'Green Apples' is widely used and valued for this group.

Some students are identified as being particularly vulnerable and likely to become NEET (not in employment, education or training). Most schools in the NYCC area receive support from Thirsk Clock through a service commissioned by NYCC called the 'Active Engagement Programme'. Some schools buy in additional support for some targeted young people through Thirsk Clock for this group. Thirsk Clock staff are not qualified careers advisers but do provide mentoring and support to vulnerable learners. This can include for example accompanying a young person on an open day visit or to an interview. The Thirsk Clock provision is designed to develop employability skills and attitudes which are necessary to make a successful and sustained transition to education and employment post-compulsory schooling. City of York provide a free targeted information, advice and guidance service to children and young people who have SEND, who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority or who are at risk of becoming NEET.

### **Supporting students with special educational needs (SEND)**

All schools reported development in this area. Several schools in the pilot described a strengthening in the education, health and care (EHC) planning processes. This often involved an increase in the opportunities for careers staff and Special Educational Needs Coordinators to work together to identify career development needs and agree ways of having these addressed. The EHC planning process is also a very important process for drawing parents into discussions about their child's career development. Most schools in the research described a strengthening of this process so that it involved more stakeholders, included more regularly and rigorous reviews and was increasingly seen as more rigorous, academic and career focussed.

**Case study:** King James School has a high number of students with EHCP's due to its status as a school with enhanced facilities for young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Students with SEND who have an EHC plan are subject to a rigorous process of annual review. The careers coordinator interviews all students with SEND and is actively involved in the EHCP review meetings. The meetings are chaired by the SENCO and attended by any member of staff who has some involvement with the learner. Students with SEND without EHCP plans have a mentor/ key worker who works with the heads of year to write a support plan which is shared with the learner and parents. This is reviewed on a yearly basis.

The School also takes the lead to support the development and implementation of a special regional event for young people with SEND and their parents. Recently the school hosted a North Yorkshire careers event for young people with SEND. This was for students from Y8 upwards and their parents and was well attended with a round 100 students attending. The event also provided much needed CPD to school based practitioners and was well received by them. This is an example of how the NYCC project has helped school think creatively about how they could meet their intended aims to improve careers provision to SEND students. This has not been as a result of the pilot project but has certainly grown in importance during the pilot and should be seen as good practice.

Some schools reported that professional career guidance staff often had more resources at their disposal to work with students with SEND and often had more external contacts and were able to more effectively support students with SEND to make successful transitions through the EHC planning processes.

Students with SEND are supported in a number of ways. This includes specialist provision to help them develop key and employability skills through programmes in Key Stage 4 which might



offer additional work experience and life skills programmes to specialist sixth form programmes which include numeracy, literacy and employability skills. These programmes regularly offer qualifications such as ASDAN, and BTECH and COPE awards.

Young people with SEND often have very distinctive career development needs which require specialist knowledge and information. Harrogate College is an organisation which runs a specific programme for young people with SEND to help them with transitions. One school in the research has developed an elevated level of expertise in this area including employing a specialist careers advisor and taking the lead in developing and implementing a regional pre-transition conference for students with SEND and their parents. This has been highly valued by parents. One parent noted that the overall programme of support for her son had been effective and she had valued the information, mentoring support and work-experience opportunities which her child had received.

**Case study:** St Aidan's School has over 40 young people with SEND and has a careers adviser with a specific remit to work with this group. The Careers officer works closely with the SENCO to help implement the Education Health and Care Plans. Parents are far more involved than they were. An example is that the careers adviser and the SENCO now run a targeted, pre-options open evening for parents and young people specifically targeted at those with SEND. This takes place a month before the main school event.

### **Pupil Premium**

Some schools reported that there had been an improvement in the way students described as 'eligible for pupil premium'<sup>5</sup> were supported more generally. School based mentoring was the most regularly cited approach and this was not specifically targeted at career development but around support for a range of issues including careers. Several schools spoke of these initiatives as in-line with their attention to social justice and addressing inequality and that career development is part of this general drive to address these issues. Parental involvement for this group is also seen as an important element of the overall support package and this was being addressed more effectively in a number of schools.

For this group, widening participation (WP) in higher education was seen as a priority and there were a number of approaches to this including the use of the City of York 'Green Apples'. Some schools commission additional support from organisations such as Prospects who offer mentoring support for pupils in receipt of the pupil premium to ensure that they develop transition skills. Other schools use the support provided by individual universities such as the 'Shine' WP project which is run by York University. In this initiative, thirty Y7 students who meet widening participation criteria visit the university for a day. In Y8 the same group have a similar visit. This continues for Y9 when the group is reduced to 12 individuals and then this group of individuals undertake a residential in Y10 and a conference in Y12. This programme becomes the 'Next Step' group in Y12 and 13. The group also receive individual mentoring to help with

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<sup>5</sup> [The Pupil Premium](#) is additional funding given to schools to support disadvantaged pupils. Schools receive additional funding for looked after children and for every pupil who has received free school meals over the past 6 years.

UCAS applications. Other students are encouraged to attend summer schools such as those offered by Oxford University.

### **Student who are at risk of becoming NEET**

Mentoring was the most regularly used intervention to support this group. This was provided either internally from pastoral staff or through externally commissioned services such as those offered through Prospects or Thirsk Clock. Mentors offer support for attending open days at colleges and universities as well as meeting regularly with the students and with other support staff. Some students are offered additional years to complete their GCSE studies and some schools emphasised the importance of having 'back p plans' in case the criteria for the students' first choice were not met.

Links with external providers is also important in helping school staff understand the range of vocational options available so that they can promote these to students who are less likely to want to pursue an academic programme. At King James School, for example, the careers coordinator has very good connections with the local colleges to the extent that Harrogate College provides a list of which students have applied to the college so that discussions about the support requirements for individuals can result in more effective transitions.

### **Referral**

Most schools in the research described the processes of supporting individual career development needs as being a collective responsibility. Internal specialist staff who have additional responsibilities for individuals career development include pastoral staff, heads of year, heads of houses, form tutors, SENCOs mentors, student advisors as well as those in the careers team. There are a range of external services which have important roles to play in students' career development and these include social work teams, foster carers, and youth justice workers.

Schools who effectively meet the individual career development needs of students have strong processes for referral in place. This includes internal referrals to specialist school staff for example from pastoral staff to the careers staff and from the careers staff to those responsible for gifted and talented students or those with SEND, and external referrals to a range of support service. Effective referral systems include the recording, monitoring and follow up of each referral. One school in the study identified changes to the systems for internal referrals which link pastoral support with career development which they describe as having improved and increased.

**Case study:** At Richmond School, the careers manager receives referrals from pastoral staff from Key Stage 3 onwards. This might indicate that there is a relatively serious situation developing, for example a behavioural issue, or that the student is not engaging with school, and these students will then get a careers interview. A decision is then made about whether the internal school careers team will work with the student or whether a further referral to an external careers advisor is made for more specialist support. In Year 9 SEND students get careers interviews to help them prepare for their options and their work experience placement that will take place in Year 10. In Year 10 students' individual needs are considered when organising work experience placements. For example, if students are identified as being eligible for Pupil Premium funding and are from a more disadvantaged background, the school ensures that they get their

placements allocated first. There is an acknowledgement that family networks for this group do not always facilitate high quality work experience placements and that this can be a barrier for this groups' developing aspirations. For Year 11 students there are different levels of support and referrals to Thirsk Clock ensures that 15 of the schools most disadvantaged students receive targeted support. There are some students who will always need that level of extra support and referrals to the NYCC Specialist Careers Advisor take place if there are issues with SEND or mental health. The school also uses career assessments for its high achievers provided through Morrisby to support subject choice and the results of these tests are used during face to face interviews through referral to the external careers advisor.

### **The personalisation of the careers curriculum**

Much of the careers curriculum is personalised for example subject choice at the end of Key Stage 3. Some schools use the iCould buzz quiz which links a young person's personality type to suggestions for jobs which might match their skills and attitudes and are discussed through careers interviews. Several schools use careers workbooks which students complete and which are monitored by staff. Some schools are increasingly using commercial products such as Unifrog for this purpose.

*There's a booklet where you have to fill in information all about your extracurricular activities so you remember to include them in your CV and you can note down other things you've learnt.*

#### **Year 9 student**

### **Challenging stereotypical career thinking**

Most schools described this as an area of importance and some explained that although progress was being made overall in addressing the needs of individuals, challenging stereotypical career decision making was still an area requiring development. This was particularly important in rural areas where there was a less diverse range of opportunities and where young people working on family farms often felt that their future lay in working in their family business but in manual occupations. Some schools reported making specific efforts at targeting this group of young people with information about the relationship between STEM learning and professional careers in the farming industry.

**Recommendation:** Key stakeholders including the Local Authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnerships should consider further research into the specific career aspirations and development needs of young people in rural and isolated areas. This will help inform a more strategic approach across the region to supporting the needs of this group.

Most schools described the raising of STEM courses and careers as a large area of focus and some run specific events to target girls and provide them with inspiration and information to encourage them to consider STEM careers. Other ways of raising awareness of different options includes notice boards, events, speakers and workshops.

**Case study:** In Joseph Rowntree School, the female science teacher has taken responsibility for a 'woman of the week' in science display. It was noted that there was no gender gap in the results at GCSE for physics and there was no reason why one should exist at A' Level. There is an emphasis in this school in trying to improve the number of girls taking A Level physics.

Some schools recognise the key role that parents and carers have in raising the aspirations of their children and target them specifically. This can include the use of specialist speakers at careers events and providing workshops to parents and young people to provide opportunities for them to ask questions and explore a wider range of options.

### **Raising career aspirations**

Most schools described raising aspirations as a whole school responsibility that was embedded within and beyond the curriculum. Raising aspirations begins early, for example at Archbishop Holgate School, all students in year 7 have a residential which helps them to develop leadership and independence skills. Some schools described the key role that curriculum teaching has in raising aspirations. WP activities and programmes are also widely recognised as important in raising the aspirations of high achieving students.

*I think the school encourages us to think about careers, and to keep your options open, they make sure you don't shut any doors that you may need later on in life and I like that.*

#### **Year 9 student**

Of course, raising aspirations is only one perspective on ensuring that young people move in to the most appropriate programmes for them. One school noted that it was very important to work with parents so that they understand the full range of options including the vocational courses and apprenticeships available to their children. Another school noted that introducing realism into student career decision making was also a challenge. In this school, parents were highly aspirational and their children's career decisions were sometimes based on parents hopes rather than more realistic options which were based on their own interests, aspirations and abilities.

### **Discussion and areas for future development**

This Benchmark had been a strength in earlier research because the majority of schools had been fully meeting this Benchmark however, the research has shown that considerable progress has been made in schools achieving this Benchmark with six schools now fully meeting this Benchmark where previously, there were none. The changes which have been made have largely been around creating learning environments where more staff are able to meet and share information about students amongst themselves to ensure that their career planning needs are met. Effective systems require strong processes of identification, monitoring, review and referral and there was ample evidence that these systems were being strengthened across many of the schools in the pilot and where this was not the case, schools were identifying this as an area for further development. What has been clear in a number of schools is that career development is seen as one significant way of tackling the social injustices which are derived from low prior attainment and social deprivation.

A further area of development has been a growing awareness of the need to support parents and students in understanding a wider range of options including vocational programmes and apprenticeships to ensure that career decisions are realistic and based on young people’s own interests, aspirations and abilities. Where previously there was much discussion about widening participation for high achievers, the latest research has shown an increased focus on the realism of all student’s career decisions.

Although schools are doing a very good job in working to support individual needs there remains a troubling concern for young people in the more rural areas of the region. This is a group who are less exposed to a wide range of careers and options and are more likely, as a result to have lower career aspirations. Further work needs to be done to understand how this group can be supported.

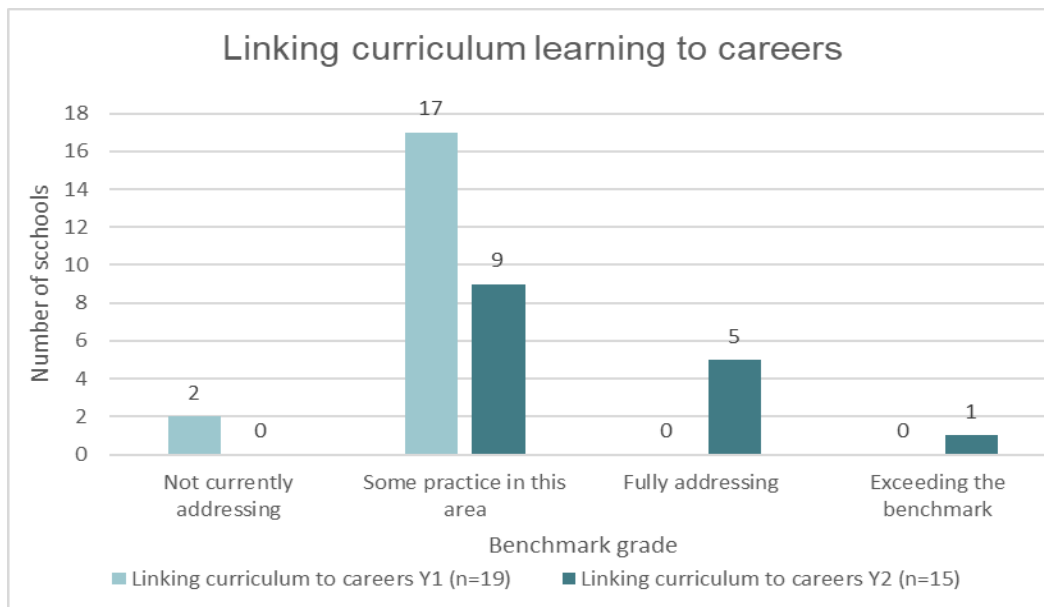
### Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

*All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.*

#### Overall progress

Figure 7 below shows that progress has been made in this Benchmark. Previously there were no schools which assessed themselves as exceeding this Benchmark and the final assessment showed that there is now one. There are now no schools who describe themselves as not addressing this Benchmark whereas previously there were two. Five schools now consider that they are fully addressing this Benchmark.

**Figure 7: A comparison of schools’ progress against Gatsby Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers**



N.B. Two schools, St Aidan’s Church of England High School in partnership with St John Fisher Catholic High School have been assessed together as they share provision.

## Changes in the way that career learning is linked to curriculum subjects

Most schools acknowledge that this is an area for further development however there has been some progress in this Benchmark and schools attribute this to the impact of the project. Being part of a high-profile project has enabled careers staff to ask questions of curriculum staff and therefore more mapping of opportunities to link careers into the curriculum has been taking place. One teacher noted that:

*'Subject departments can be very isolated and staff can be so focussed on their everyday job however the project as a whole school initiative has helped to bridge the divide'.*

### Subject teacher

Many schools described how a previously ad hoc and inconsistent process is now becoming more strategically managed and whilst this is far from perfect many related an improvement in the communication systems which ensured that curriculum staff were communicating activities which they provided to careers teams who were more able to monitor and manage this. One school noted that a careers, employability and enterprise audit of the curriculum for each subject was being carried out to gain an understanding of how subjects integrate careers into the curriculum.

*'There's a lot of good practice but we don't yet know how it is all tied together'.*

### Deputy Head

Senior staff in one school noted that measuring the changes in the way school staff integrate careers into the curriculum and into tutorial sessions can be difficult, however, one member of staff noted that

*'The biggest yardstick is how engaged the students are in careers and this tells you how engaged the tutor is'.*

### Careers manager

Several schools noted the importance of the Career Development Institutes<sup>6</sup> Framework for Careers and Employability and Enterprise education (CDI, 2015a) as an important resource to support mapping activities.

Most schools noted that there was more enthusiasm for this from some staff than others and this was more dependent on individual commitment rather than subject specific. One school now asks subject staff to visit students during their work experience placements and this has developed staff knowledge and understanding about the links between industry and the

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<sup>6</sup> The Career Development Institute is the lead body for the standards of career guidance in development in the UK and are the custodians of the professional standards and the register of career development practitioners (The professional register) for practitioners qualified at level 6 or above.

curriculum. Whilst enthusiasm is individual specific there are some differences in the way different subjects address the issue of linking careers to the curriculum, for example, most schools reported that more progress was being made in STEM subjects however less progress was being made in the Arts and Humanities.

**Case study:** At St Aidan's School, the reporting system has four themes: Community; Organisation; Determination and Enterprise. Staff have regular conversations with all students about these themes in subjects and these relate in large part to career conversations. Staff are also linking tasks and activities to the world of work more effectively.

There have been challenges to progress for example, one school reported that changes in the national curriculum for subjects has created difficulties but also opportunities and staff have seen this as a chance to review their links to the careers curriculum whilst addressing other changes. Monitoring compliance to the requirement to include careers across the school curriculum remains very difficult to monitor.

Several schools indicated that this Benchmark was an area which needed further development.

### **Making links between careers and the curriculum**

All schools provided descriptions of the types of activities which curriculum teachers now provided. This included some innovative activities which regularly involved employers and visitors to the school. Some examples included:

- A PE department who have introduced some professional sports people to deliver aspects of the curriculum;
- A Modern Foreign Languages department who have brought in the Holiday Inn who have asked the students to translate their menus in the subjects which they are learning.
- A Design and technology department who have been working with Nestle on the re-designing of KitKat wrappers
- A school who has a STEM week which draws the links between the skills learned in STEM subjects and career options.
- STEM ambassadors visit some schools to help with STEM events.

These activities are well received by students.

*'STEM day was good because it showed us lots of jobs like plane engineer and mobile phone designer.'*

#### **Year 9 pupil**

One regularly used tactic was to create displays and posters which link curriculum subjects to careers. In an innovative approach, one school encourages all of its staff to talk about their own career progression to help students develop a sense of different options.

**Case study:** In Boroughbridge High School, there has been a recent initiative by the Head of Drama who was concerned about the falling numbers of young people taking the subject at GCSE. It was thought that parents in particular were quite negative about the subject because there was not an obvious link to career development and opportunities to be an 'actor' were

limited. The initiative has involved an improved focus on employability and transferable skills used in drama for example improved confidence, communication and presentation skills. The drama teacher identified a number of local employers who had either studied performing arts or who had employed individuals with performing arts backgrounds. These have been invited into school to talk to students and parents about the relevance of the subject. The impact of this initiative has been to double the number of drama groups from one to two being taught at GCSE.

### **Staff responsibilities**

Schools described this as the most important development in trying to link curriculum learning to careers. Where schools have a strongly communicated message from senior leaders that linking careers to the curriculum is an expectation, this is more likely to happen.

*'Quality is not just the responsibility of the quality manager and careers is not just the responsibility of the Head of Careers.'*

#### **Senior leader**

The project has ensured that this is the case, and in at least three schools there was now a clearly expressed philosophy that 'all teachers are careers teachers'.

*'The project has added gravitas to careers education so it has helped get subject staff on board.'*

#### **Careers coordinator**

Of course, it is not possible to create a change of this sort without providing support for teaching staff many of whom feel inadequately prepared to undertake careers work. A number of schools noted the important role that the centrally organised staff training provided through the project had been in helping them make developments in their school strategies to link curriculum learning to careers. Centrally organised training is a cost-effective way of maximising progress and the Local Authority should investigate whether they can continue to support these types of activities.

**Recommendation:** Local Authorities and their partners should explore how support can be provided through centrally organised training events. These are particularly valued and have had an impact on schools' approaches in this Benchmark.

Schools have found a number of ways of providing this support. Specialist careers staff have provided staff training to ensure that staff are fully aware of skills shortages in certain sectors. Some schools provide regular updates through staff briefing sessions, newsletters and emails. A number of schools reported sharing the Careers North Yorkshire and Humberside Career and labour market information resources with curriculum staff and had found this a very useful approach as the materials are easy to use in teaching and learning activities.



## Discussion and areas for future development

The research has shown that there has been much progress in this Benchmark however whilst there is some emerging practice, there is still more work to be done in ensuring that the linking of curriculum learning to careers is consistently made across all curriculum areas by all staff. A key contributor to success in the Benchmark are strong messages about the expectation placed on staff to undertake this work communicated by senior school leaders. Where the philosophy that 'all teachers are careers teachers' is continually reinforced, there is more likelihood that this will happen.

Schools have demonstrated some innovative practice in the linking of curriculum learning to careers. One of the recommendations from the early phase of the research was that the Local Authority should explore ways of delivering training for schools in this regard and this should be continued with opportunities for schools to share their emerging and innovative practice. It is also clear that centrally produced career and labour market resources and newsletters are valued and these initiatives should be continued as they are a cost-effective approach to reaching the maximum number of staff with information which they can link to their lessons.

Employers and external visitors to schools are an important element in helping link curriculum learning to careers work and whilst this is covered later in this report it is important here to emphasise the type of role that employers can play in helping young people draw the links between their curriculum learning and their future career progression.

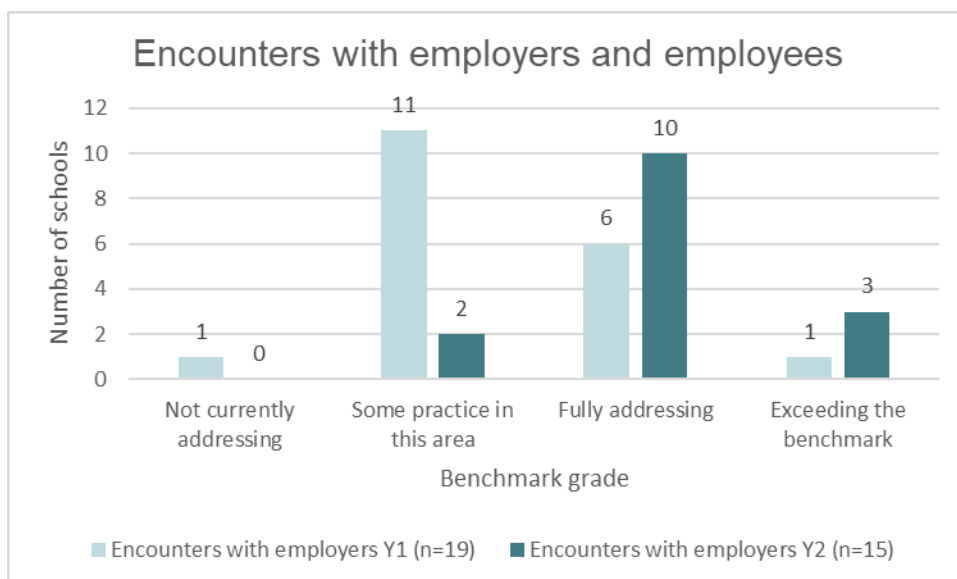
## Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

*Every pupil 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.*

### Overall progress

Figure 8 below shows a comparison of schools' baseline self-assessment scores and the scores at the end of the project for the Benchmark 'Encounters with employers and employees'. The data shows that satisfactory progress has been made in this Benchmark. This is a very positive outcome of the project as this was an area which a number of schools had previously identified as a priority for further development. Previously there was one school which assessed themselves as not currently addressing the Benchmark and one school who identified themselves as exceeding the Benchmark. The final assessment showed that all schools now have provided some opportunities and three are now exceeding the Benchmark

**Figure 8: A comparison of schools' progress against Gatsby Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees**



N.B. Two schools, St Aidan's Church of England High School in partnership with St John Fisher Catholic High School have been assessed together as they share provision.

Schools were asked to identify any changes which had occurred during the project and these are described below.

### Managing employer engagement

Data collected during the baseline assessment showed that in most schools, employer engagement was not managed strategically and tended to lack coherence. Employer engagement often relied on the personal networks of individual members of staff around specific curriculum inputs or activities. This had the effect of restricting the impact that individual employers had across the school in other contexts. This finding resulted in a recommendation to schools that they review their strategic leadership of employer engagement and to develop robust management process which would support the provision of quality experiences for students.

During the second visits to schools a number reported a more strategic approach to employer engagement. One school reported that employer engagement was now included in their school development plan and was now explicitly the remit of one senior leader. Other schools reported more robust measures to monitor, review and evaluate the employer engagement activities including through the learner voice. One school hopes to involve employers and governors in quality assuring some of the careers work. This could for example involve some feedback about how well the students have been prepared to move in to the workplace. In another schools the senior lead for careers is also responsible for employer engagement. They have been busy auditing employer engagement activities across the school to identify gaps in provision and to develop a plan to improve opportunities for young people to meet employers.

**Recommendation:** Schools should explore the range of options for developing tracking systems for employer engagement activities to ensure that they are providing students with at least one meaningful experience of employers and employees before the end of year 11.

**Recommendation:** Schools should develop a more strategic approach to evaluating employer engagement. This should include an analysis of both the short term and long-term impacts of these activities. The results of evaluation should be integrated in to the school planning cycle.

Some schools reported the appointment of members of staff with a specific remit to engage employers and manage the relationships. Where these staff were not directly involved with careers staff there were mechanisms and processes for employer engagement planning to support careers work.

Case study: At Ripon Grammar School, the work experience and enterprise coordinator works alongside careers staff to plan and implement a programme of work related learning involving work placements, enterprise activities and visits in from employers. There has been an expansion in the number of companies attending the careers and HE evening. In Y8 there is a two-day engineering simulation project. Years 11, 12 and 13 students have visited Nestle. In Year 12 employers are invited in to provide practice interviews linked to work experience and practice medical interviews.

The school now has an enterprise advisor from Green-Tech as part of the CEC/LEP enterprise advisor scheme and the Building for the Future project is in its second year which involves a business representative. The careers club, which is attended by students across all years, has given the students access to a wide range of employers/employees.

Students can take part in the Young Enterprise Company programme and this programme allows the students to engage with a business mentor and when the school does enterprise mornings (competitions) business people come in to judge. There is also informal mentoring as ex-students come in to the school.

## Resources

Schools have found some innovative approaches to overcoming a lack of resources for employer engagement activities. In some cases, this has involved identifying alternative free resources. One school had switched from using Young Enterprise as their model of brokerage which is a costed activity to the Enterprise Coordinator Service based in the LEP as this was free of charge. In another school, the responsibility for resourcing employer engagement has been devolved to subject teams who now have a responsibility for including employer activities within the curriculum.

Schools reported an increase in parental involvement and the impact that this was having on the resourcing and impact of employer engagement. In some schools, parents are now asked to cover the cost of the insurance required to attend work place visits. In another school, parents have come in to school to talk about their jobs. This is important because students rarely understand their parents work roles and it helps them to understand the work place and people's jobs in a more personal way.

A further development is that an Academy Trust chain is considering taking a Trust wide approach to organising work-related activity and this will minimise costs as currently, individual schools commission some of these services directly from NYBEP.

### **Partnerships and networks**

The responsibility for creating links and partnerships lies variously with senior, and middle leaders and with specialist staff employed directly to develop business liaison activities. No overall picture emerged of patterns of responsibility or accountability. Schools reported two main approaches to developing links and partnerships. The first was through direct contact by employers and the second was through proactive, outward facing engagement activities. Schools reported three sources of brokerage for employer engagement. These were the Enterprise advisers at the LEP, NYBEP, Future First and through the alumni network. Although there has been an obvious increase in the ways schools link with the enterprise coordinators, some admit to being unclear about the role and would welcome more information. One school was particularly interested in developing a targeted approach to employer engagement activities and wanted to learn more about employers in the area who would be able to offer activities and support for students with special educational needs.

**Case study:** At Outwood Academy, links have been developed with Ripon Grammar School across the road to provide access to a wider range of employer engagement activities. Outwood are also instrumental in working with partners to deliver a local SEND careers fair which is attended by students and parents from a number of schools in the area. The school management really supports these collaborative activities because they feel that it increases the opportunities for everyone to access all of the information that they need in a very cost-effective way. It shares the cost rather than remaining a burden to individual schools. This approach has helped to grow the reputation of the school and career team in a very positive way.

### **Curriculum organisation**

Student research participants were clear about the positive impact that employer engagement activities had on their career development.

*'We learned about stressful deadlines and independent working when we had to run a company which made shoes.'*

#### **Year 9 pupil**

One year 13 female student explained that having people in from different professions helps *'open their eyes to 'what it's like working your way up. When people come in it helps you learn about yourself. Who you are and what you are out for.'*

That said, whilst students were able to explain the value of employer engagement, schools sometimes found it difficult on occasion to accommodate this into their teaching and learning

strategies. In one school, national careers week <sup>7</sup>(NCW) was used as an opportunity to integrate employer engagement across the curriculum. In one school, business studies and English students write CV's and letters of application and have mock interviews with employers. In another school, Technology has strong links with employers and regularly have engineers as guest speakers and get local firms to provide information on what they do. The school is also supported by Portakabin, a York based company, who sponsor an award for the school's Engineer of the year.

In other schools, employer engagement was introduced during enrichment days throughout the year. In another school, employer engagement is delivered through extra-curricular activities. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is hoped to be used as an extra-curricular activity in the future and the national Citizenship Service is widely taken up by students in the summer holidays. In another school, there is an extracurricular Enterprise group in Year 10, run via Young Enterprise, and sponsored by Merchant Adventurers in York.

Employer engagement activities are often targeted for individuals with special educational needs and disabilities for example one school uses the Young Enterprise 'Team' programme for learners with SEND.

### Employer activities

There has been little change in the range of opportunities available to students however there has been a change in the ways these are offered to students with a greater diversity of age ranges now having to meet with employers. More schools are now offering more of the options to their students. The following tables (Tables 4 and 5) illustrate the changes which have taken place during the project.

**Table 4:** Changes in opportunities for students to learn about working practices

Opportunities for learning about work and working practices (Baseline)	Opportunities for learning about work and working practices (Second assessment)
Mock job applications and interviews (5 schools)	Mock job applications and interviews (8 schools)
STEM ambassadors (2 schools)	
CV development (1 school)	CV development (5 schools)
Speed dating (1 school)	

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<sup>7</sup> [NCW](#) is run as a not-for-profit company to promote the importance of good careers education in schools and colleges, founded and backed by a number of volunteers with a wealth of experience from education, business and careers guidance.

Careers fairs (8 schools)	Careers fairs (3 schools) plus one shared event for students with SEND
Lectures and inputs into the curriculum by local employers and business representatives (7 schools)	Lectures and inputs into the curriculum by local employers and business representatives (11 schools)

**Table 5:** Changes in opportunities for students to learn skills for work

Opportunities for learning skills for work (Baseline)	Opportunities for learning skills for work (Second assessment)
Business games and competitions such as the Physics Olympiad (1 school)	Business games (Similar to Dragons Den) (1 school)
Governor and local business sponsored awards for pupils (1 school)	Governor and local business sponsored awards for pupils (1 school)
Duke of Edinburgh's award (1 school)	Duke of Edinburgh's award (4 schools)
Young Enterprise and other enterprise challenges and simulations (3 schools)	Young Enterprise and other enterprise challenges and simulations (6 schools)
Industry mentors (1 school)	
	Enrichment week / drop down days (2 schools)

**Case study:** At Boroughbridge School, the Year 10 mock interview challenge has been adapted after receiving feedback from external professionals. The challenge day is now based around the concept of a local hotel as an employer with a range of different vacancies in different areas of hotel work. The students complete a mock application form for one of these positions and then attend a mock interview. The year before the scenario was only based on one retail vacancy. This has now been expanded to appeal to different interests and aspirations. The day is taken very seriously. The students have to attend in 'business dress'. The school puts on an assembly before the mock interview challenge to give ideas about what appropriate interview attire might include.

## Discussion and areas for development

There is a feeling across most of the schools that employer engagement activities were now a strength. Staff spoke of the processes required to manage employer engagement as being more formalised and robust. This is a pleasing finding which demonstrates that schools have responded to the recommendation from the interim report of the baseline research. Guidance provided by the Career Development Institute has provided useful information for schools and colleges on developing effective approaches (CDI, 2014). The guidance describes the important role that strategic leaders play such as securing resources and commitment for employer

engagement activities within school. The developments in the pilot schools show an alignment to the good practice set out in such guidance documents.

Schools reported an increase in activities which involved employers but also spoke of an increase in the number of employers who were involved in schools. This was often because of engaging in new networks and partnerships such as with the LEP and with Local Enterprise Coordinators. There was a notable increase in the number of schools linking with Enterprise Coordinators at the LEP. Some schools also reported an improvement in communication with parents regarding employer engagement and this has often resulted in an increase in opportunities for visits to and from employers. One school reported that because of this improved communication, parents were now more confident of making suggestions.

Schools were actively involved in a range of activities and whilst there was not a great deal of difference in the type of activities provided there was an increase in the number of activities which young people received as well as an increase in the types and number of employers who are now involved with schools. Gatsby define the term 'meaningful' as 'one in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the work place. Gatsby describe a range of work-related activities which expose young people to employers and employees such as through visiting speakers, careers fairs, enterprise events, work simulations, mentoring, mock interviews and CV writing and events such as 'speed dating' which involve young people and employers interacting in multiple, short encounters generally as part of a careers fair or recruitment event (Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014: 25). The research has shown that schools are working diligently to provide their learners with a diversity of meaningful and relevant opportunities. Some schools in rural areas reported a difficulty in accessing employers due to the nature and size of local employers. Where this has been the case, schools have engaged with national organisations such as Speakers for Schools and Inspiring the Future. This has led to several professionals visiting schools who represent businesses which are not available locally.

Schools did not provide evidence that they were accurately tracking the number and type of activities students had and this does remain an area for development. There are a number of commercial and non-commercial systems for undertaking tracking activities and whilst some might view this as onerous it is an important activity to ensure that fairness and parity of opportunity exist for all.

A further area for development concerns the processes of evaluation. Although schools do undertake some limited evaluation this is largely to ascertain the reaction of stakeholders and students to certain events and rarely explores the longer-term impacts of what schools tell us is a resource intensive activity. There was no evidence provided that employer engagement was included in schools' evaluation plans.

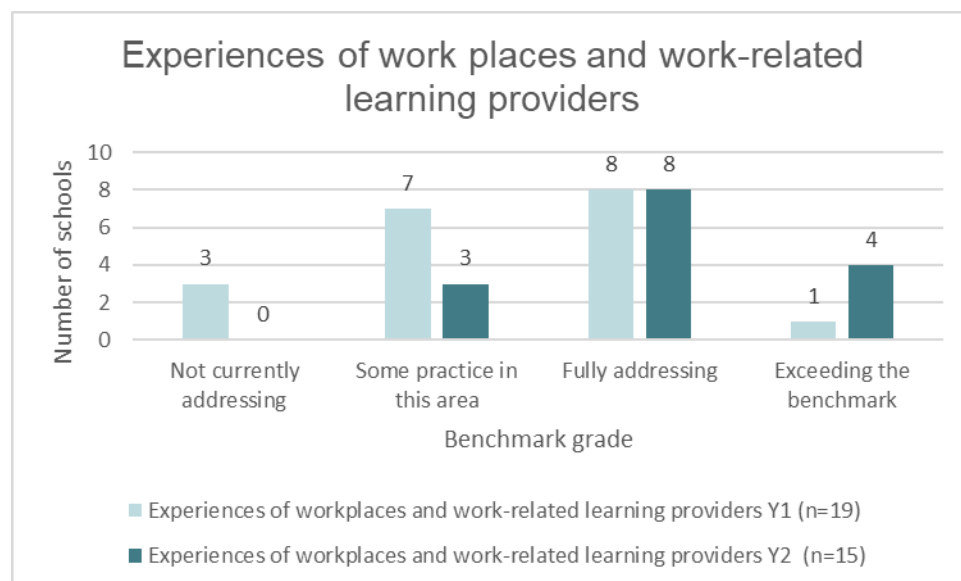
## Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces and work-related learning providers

*Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.*

### Overall progress

Figure 9 below shows a comparison of schools' baseline self-assessment scores and the scores at the end of the project for the Benchmark *Experiences of workplaces and work-related learning providers*. The data shows that satisfactory progress has been made in this Benchmark. Previously there were three schools which assessed themselves as not currently addressing the Benchmark and one school who identified themselves as exceeding the Benchmark. The final assessment showed that all schools now have provide some opportunities and four are now exceeding the Benchmark.

**Figure 9: A comparison of schools' progress against Gatsby Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces and work-related learning providers**



N.B. Two schools, St Aidan's Church of England High School in partnership with St John Fisher Catholic High School have been assessed together as they share provision.

The overarching view of the development of work experience is that this has been strengthened through the introduction of more robust approaches for managing the activities such as the development of accurate data bases for monitoring and tracking young people's experiences and preparation. One school has re-introduced work experience in Year 10. One school reports that there is more targeting of work experience particularly for those considering careers in medicine or the caring professions.



## Resources

There have been several changes to the way that work experience is resourced. Many schools still use NYBEP to broker work experience. Services provided by NYBEP include access to the database of employers providing work experience and the health and safety checking of placements providers.

In one school, parents are now asked to cover the cost of the insurance required to attend work place visits. A further development is that an Academy Trust chain is considering taking a Trust wide approach to organising work-related activity and this will minimise costs as currently, individual schools commission some of these services directly from NYBEP.

Some schools report an increase in the time available through members of the careers team and this has had a positive impact on the way students are supported on placements and in the monitoring and evaluation of these experiences.

## Scope and quantity

The data reveal an interesting picture about the changes which have taken place in the delivery of work experience.

There has been an overall increase in the opportunities provided for students although one school still does not provide any work experience. There is now more targeting of work experience for students with specific needs. This includes special educational needs but also where work experience is seen to increase the potential success of students in their career choice such as for those wishing to progress to careers in health or caring professions. One school is now offering block work experience in year 10 where it was only offering it in Year 12. There has been an increase in the opportunities for work experience in Year 12. The most obvious change is that there are now more experiences of work places provided as part of the curriculum.

**Case study:** Richmond School recently provided a trip for a group of Year 11's which was designed as a Careers and Resistant Materials trip. The Careers coordinator reported that it was good to develop a careers trip in partnership with another subject teacher. Having had such a positive experience, the careers team are now arranging more of these where careers are delivered in conjunction with the curriculum.

**Case study:** At Archbishop Holgate School, there has been an increase in the range of visits to workplaces which students are involved in for example there have been visits to factories to develop an understanding of manufacturing processes but also recruitment and selection processes from an employer's perspective. Visits are also used to introduce the concept of health and Safety in the workplace.

One school has introduced 'virtual' work experience during tutor time to enhance their provision. This is an innovative approach designed to ensure that students experience a range of sectors.

Table 6 below summarises the provision at the baseline assessment at the second assessment. It should be noted that three schools did not provide data at the second assessment. The 'virtual

School' does not directly provide work experience as this is provided through students 'home' school.

**Table 6: A comparison of work experience provision**

Experiences of workplaces and work-based learning providers (Baseline)	Experiences of workplaces and work-based learning providers (second visit)
Three offer work experience on occasions to specific students depending on an identified need	Six offer work experience on occasions to specific students depending on an identified need
Five offer work experience in Y10 only	Three offer work experience in Y10 only
One offers work experience in Y11 but this is optional	One offers work experience in Y11 but this is optional
Three offer work experience for Y10 and Y12	Seven offer work experience for Y10 and Y12
Three offer it in Y12 only. It is a compulsory element for students in one of these schools.	Two offer it in Y12 only. It is a compulsory element for students in one of these schools.
Included as part of the wider curriculum (no information)	Five included as part of the wider curriculum
One offers no work experience	One offers no work experience
Not relevant 1	Not relevant 1
No information 0	No information 3

In many cases, schools commission support for work experience through an external organisation. The most regularly cited is NYBEP. Other organisations involved in brokering work experience include 'Changing Education'<sup>8</sup>. One school reported that they were exploring options for support for the following year with Job Centre Plus. In one school, students are actively involved in seeking out employers for work experience. A parent in this school explained that she thought that this was a strength of the programme and provided her daughter with an opportunity to explore what was appropriate for her. Guidance was integrated into the decision-making process about what type of placement would be helpful.

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<sup>8</sup> [Changing Education](#) is a provider of work experience, including software in work experience management.

Two schools do not offer work experience in Key Stage 4. There are two reasons for this. In the first school, it is felt that students under 16 lack the maturity amongst some pupils and little support from their parents. They considered that this would make work experience problematic due to safeguarding issues for this group and the school took the decision to remove it from the curriculum for everyone in order to be fair to all.

In a second school, funding was the issue. This school was situated in a rural area with little access to a wide range of businesses however it did have a covenant with the Armed Forces and so whilst students were not able to undertake direct work experience, there were opportunities for learners to learn from a range of professionals and technicians providing a variety of roles to the Army.

### **Monitoring, review and evaluation**

Students interviewed during the research were generally very enthusiastic about work experience and understood the impact of this activity. One Year 13 student's comment was typical of many.

*'Everyone did work experience in June in year 12. It was helpful and helped me realise that Pharmaceuticals wasn't for me.'*

#### **Year 13 female student**

Many schools have processes for monitoring work experience. This is usually by way of a database of activities offered to students. That said, no evidence was provided where monitoring was completed in a systematic way for individual young people across all types of work experience provision offered in an organisation. In some cases, particularly in the sixth form, students were asked to log the days that they participated in work experience. In one school, the careers manager keeps a log of each pupil and tracks them through the process including which member of staff has visited them on placement.

**Recommendation:** Schools should develop systems and processes for monitoring all of the experiences of work places which students have during their learning journey. This will ensure fairness in the system and allow schools to identify where gaps in provision exist for some learners. This will be essential if schools are going to meet the requirements set out in existing guidance to provide all young people in Key Stages 4 and 5 with meaningful experiences of work places.

Review processes were evident in some schools and this was usually through work experience books or diaries. Where this is the case, students have individual de-briefing sessions with staff to review learning. On occasions, a debriefing activity is carried out by an external provider such as NYBEP.

Work experience diaries often include an evaluation in their work experience diaries which are used by a number of the schools. 'Student Voice' activities were also used to gather feedback about work experience. Several schools provide evaluation forms to parents, teachers and placement providers. There was little evidence of systematic evaluation of the impact of work experience.

**Recommendation;** Schools should explore ways in which work experience can be effectively evaluated so that they can ensure that their limited resources are used to gain maximum impact. This should include an exploration on the impact of young peoples' learning and development, progression and attainment.

### **Individualising work experience**

There was evidence that work experience was individualised in a number of ways. One school noted that work experience was used as a way of providing useful learning opportunities in the sixth form if a student had curriculum spaces due for example to dropping a subject. In many schools, young people on specialist programmes such as those with SEND, low achievers or disaffected students had programmes of individualised work experience. In other schools, work experience was targeted at those who had particular career aspirations such as in medicine or health care. In these cases, work experience was seen as providing useful additions to a student's CV and would help them be successful in their aspirations.

Most schools noted that students had some personal guidance to support them in choosing a work experience placement and in this way the process was personalised.

**Case study:** At Ripon Grammar School, students take part in the process of deciding where to go on placement. Students make telephone calls to find their placements, write a CV and covering letter and attend an interview.

### **Discussion and areas for development**

There has been an overall improvement in the delivery of work experience during the project with all schools offering some provision albeit for two schools, who do not offer this in Key Stage 4. There has been a noticeable shift in the types of provision with more schools offering experiences through the curriculum rather than as block placements. There was also an increase in the number of schools offering a targeted approach to work experience. Whilst the overall picture of work experience still falls short of the recommendations made to Government that all young people in Key Stage 4 should have the opportunity to take part in meaningful work experience (House of Commons Select Committee 2016), genuine progress has been made in this area. This is particularly positive as it directly addresses a recommendation from the interim report for the project for schools to re-examine their policies on work experience to ensure that it was compliant with government expectations and guidance.

Resourcing does remain an issue for some schools and this has a detrimental impact on what work experience can be delivered. Some schools have found ways to overcome these challenges for example by asking parents to pay insurance premiums.

Monitoring and review processes appear to be improving with good evidence that schools are tracking students through the process, but this concerns the activities surrounding block placements only. There was little evidence that schools had developed an holistic approach to monitoring all of the students experiences of work places across their learning journey and which this may seem an onerous activity, this will be necessary if schools are going to be able to demonstrate that they are providing a comprehensive offer of work experience which students are embracing.

One area of concern is how work experience is evaluated. Although some feedback opportunities were in place in several schools, there seems very little systematic evaluation of the impact of work experience or indeed the return on investment that this represents. Many schools spoke of the work experience as a resource intensive activity often involving the commissioning of external providers. There was no evidence that schools were exploring the impact of their programmes on the learning of employability skills or work readiness nor was there any analysis on the extent to which work experience impacted on engagement or attainment in the wider curriculum subjects.

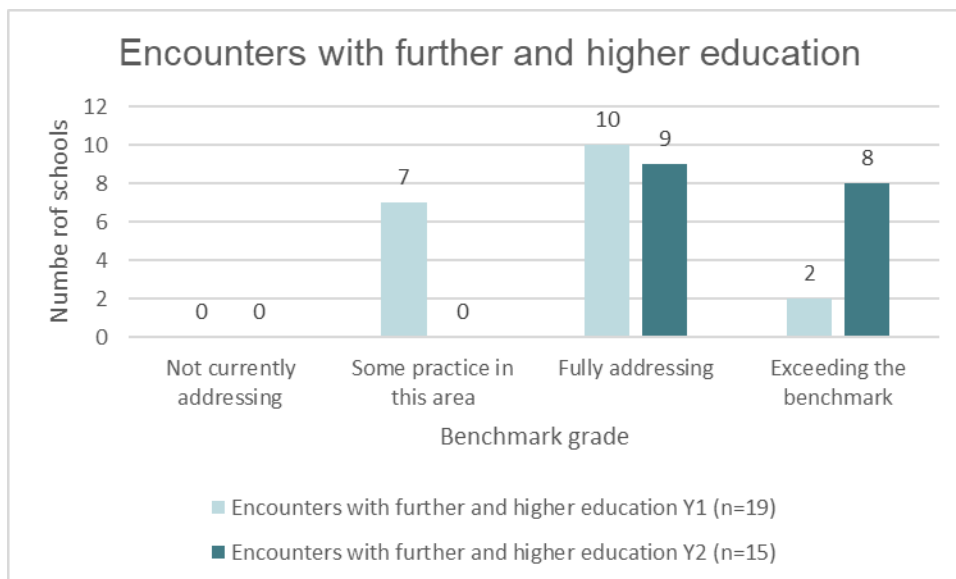
## Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education

*All pupils should understand 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.*

### Overall progress

Figure 10 below shows a comparison of schools' baseline self-assessment scores and the scores at the end of the project for the Benchmark *Encounters with further and higher education*. The data shows that satisfactory progress has been made in this Benchmark. Previously there were seven schools who assessed themselves as having some practice in this area. Now all schools are either fully addressing or exceeding the Benchmark.

**Figure 10: A comparison of schools' progress against Gatsby Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education**



N.B. Two schools, St Aidan's Church of England High School in partnership with St John Fisher Catholic High School have been assessed together as they share provision.

## Changes to providing experiences of further and higher education

Although this was an area of strength at the start of the project, schools have demonstrated further progress. This largely relates to an increase in the number of encounters which young people receive and that these encounters begin at a younger age. Some schools noted that visits to FE providers are often targeted at students who show an inclination towards vocational programmes rather than to all students. Student career surveys are used to identify which students might need to visit providers of vocational programmes or apprenticeships.

Opportunities for encounters with further and higher education providers include through university widening participation and outreach activities, careers fairs, UCAS events, and visits to individual institutions. Some schools noted that there appeared to be an improvement in the number of contacts which they received from local colleges and this was welcomed. This included better attendance by these organisations at their school's careers fairs.

**Case study:** Students at Selby High School have a variety of experiences of FE and HE providers from year 8 onwards. The school has links with York and Hull Universities and in some cases, the universities visit the school and run workshops. Tasters days are provided at colleges of FE in Selby and Pontefract for year 10 students and college providers are encouraged to provide Y11 assemblies. Selby College representatives attend parents' evenings and careers fairs.

One school noted that they had improved the information to students and their parents regarding financial support for further and higher-level study. One school provides a specific higher education event for students and their parents which includes workshops on student finance. Parents' feedback suggested that this was a well-received and popular event.

One school protects timetable time for students who wish to explore FE and HE options through visits.

**Case study:** Millthorpe School organises visits to a number of FE institutions and the Year 10 and 11 survey data is used to target the most popular institutions. Staff support small groups to attend. There are also two protected off-timetable days for year 11's to visit college/sixth forms for example they can attend taster days at York college where they can test out different courses/subjects that they are interested in.

Some schools highlighted the tensions which they faced in promoting alternatives to their own sixth form. This was particularly the case for small schools who feared undermining the success of their own provision if students left for vocational programmes or apprenticeships. Whilst there was an acknowledgement of the issues associated with being impartial, schools all indicated that despite the tensions they still made every opportunity to remain impartial.

**Recommendation:** Schools should re-visit their policies on careers education and guidance to ensure that the statutory duty to provide impartial careers education and guidance is evident and communicated to all staff.

## **Individualising experiences of further and higher education**

A development in the way schools tackle the individualisation of the careers programme has been the development of processes for monitoring and tracking learners' career interventions. This improvement directly addresses one of the recommendations made during the interim phase of the evaluation. In the case of encounters with further and higher education, this ensures that students' attendance at FE and HE awareness raising events are tracked so that students do not miss out. Some schools use Unifrog, a commercial software programme which allows students to access information about events and summer schools. These are also flagged to parents through school newsletters and emails.

## **Discussion and areas for future development**

Although schools reported early in the research that they provided adequate opportunities for students to have encounters with further and higher education providers, there has been an improvement in the number of opportunities and the age at which these begin. One of the significant developments has been the introduction of more rigorous and accurate monitoring systems which ensure that the number and type of interventions which all young people receive are monitored. This ensures that students who require targeted support for attendance at events and activities aimed at their specific interests and aspirations. There appears to be a wealth of opportunities for young people to have encounters with further and higher education providers but some schools noted that their relationships with institutions has improved and they are linking with a more diverse range of providers. This is to be welcomed as this increases the range of experiences which young people can receive. Where there are challenges in meeting this Benchmark, they relate to the tensions which some schools have in remaining impartial in the guidance they provide about alternatives to their own sixth form provision. This appears to be less of a problem as it had previously been as schools recognise the importance of young people progressing to the most appropriate provision which is more appropriately aligned to their interests, aspirations and abilities.

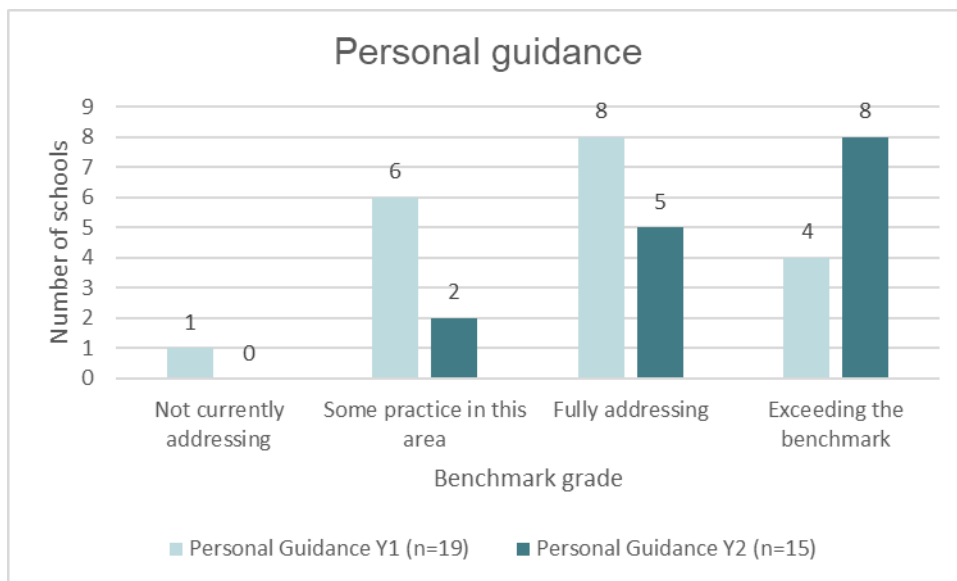
## **Benchmark 8: Personal guidance**

*Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed to meet their individual needs.*

## **Overall progress**

During early phases of the research, the self-assessments against this Benchmark showed that this was an area of strength with four schools exceeding the Benchmark and only one indicating that they were not addressing the Benchmark at all. The data collected during the final evaluation (Figure 11 below) shows that despite this being a strength, progress has been made with all schools demonstrating at least some practice and eight schools now exceed the Benchmark.

**Figure 11: A comparison of schools' progress against Gatsby Benchmark 8: Personal guidance**



N.B. Two schools, St Aidan's Church of England High School in partnership with St John Fisher Catholic High School have been assessed together as they share provision.

### Changes to the provision of personal guidance

#### Management:

No overall picture emerged from the data about changes which have been made to the management of personal guidance during the project however where schools have responded, this area remains the responsibility of the careers teams under the management of a middle leader.

#### Delivery:

Across all participating schools the main changes have been in the number of opportunities young people receive for personal guidance, the level of expertise of the staff delivering guidance, the accessibility of personal career guidance and an increased involvement of parents in the process.

There has been a change to the age which personal guidance is now offered with students in Year 8 regularly receiving an offer of personal guidance although in some schools this is offered as a drop-in session or small group work. Some schools now refer to students from Year 8 upwards as having 'an entitlement' to personal career guidance. This is a change from early in the project where Year 9 was the average time when students began a programme of personal career guidance. Personal guidance is also integrated in the work experience preparation in some schools.



**Case study:** Personal career guidance starts very early in Harrogate High School, students from year 8 receive guidance interviews. In this school, personal career guidance is integrated into an overall programme of personal support which includes mentoring, confidence building and strengths identification. Parents are also informed about career guidance interviews and this has been seen as a growing strength of the schools provision

In all schools, students receive face to face personal guidance and particularly all year 11 students but there is a difference in who delivers this across the project schools. In some, this is provided by internal non-guidance qualified staff, for example form tutors. Young people who have additional needs or who are targeted for support receive additional face to face guidance from specialist staff, some who are internal staff and some who are commissioned to provide the service. One school noted that it makes it explicit to staff that where career guidance is required for an individual student that a referral should be made to the schools' careers adviser. The school had provided training on referrals for all staff.

In other schools, all students receive face to face personal guidance from qualified staff although the extent of this qualification varies from level 4 to level 7. In some cases, qualified career guidance staff are also registered as professional career guidance practitioners with the Career Development Institute. One school provides all students from year 9 onwards with an annual interview with a qualified careers adviser whereas in other schools only year 11 students, or those who have been targeted for extra support, receive an interview with a qualified careers adviser. In other years this is provided by the pastoral team or an in-house careers teacher who may not have guidance qualifications. One school noted that as a result of the project they had increased the number of hours that their commissioned careers adviser spent in schools and this had improved access to professional guidance for all students.

The research found that one of the features of effective personal career guidance described by young people and their parents was the level of accessibility for students. Where personal guidance is provided by specialist staff this becomes easier as they had more time allocated to guidance rather than having this as one of many responsibilities. Many internally employed specialists had 'open door' policies, a feature which was valued by pupils.

*'We all know that you only have to come to the library and Miss. .... will be happy to help you at any time with any questions that you have. And we have a whole section in the library dedicated to it which must take up a tenth of the library, so really anything you need to know would be covered.'*

#### **Year 9 pupil**

*"I know its cringy when you say, 'the door is always open' but it really is!"*

#### **Year 11 female student**

The research suggests that one change has been an increase in the extent to which parents are invited to and involved in personal career guidance. In one school, the student planner has been used to help facilitate career conversations between students and their parents and is also used to engage parents in career guidance activities.

One school who works in close partnership with a second school in the project commissions expert career guidance from their partners thus ensuring that all students in this partnership have access to professional career guidance.

### **Staff expertise**

All teachers provide some personal career guidance and it has been previously noted that the mantra 'all teachers are careers teachers' has become common parlance in a number of schools. However, across the project schools there was an acknowledgement that there are different levels of personal guidance, and whilst subject teachers were not specialists, they still had an important role to play in career conversations with pupil, particularly around subject choice and links to possible careers.

Sixth form teachers were very likely to have more in-depth involvement particularly around university choice and UCAS applications which requires some specialist knowledge. One school has taken the unusual step of developing a group of para-tutors who do not have their own tutor groups but who work with small groups of identified students. They work with students who are both high and low achievers and for a range of other reasons. Evaluation of this programme has demonstrated a positive impact on learners and this initiative will now continue.

Support to develop staff expertise was varied. In some schools, bulletins and staff briefings were the main way of support for staff and in others, training was provided. In one school staff are encouraged to visit employers to improve their knowledge and understanding of the world of work.

### **Commissioning**

Support from external providers comes in several guises and can be both a paid and free service. Schools commission a costed service from companies or organisations such as Kookaburra<sup>9</sup>, Shine<sup>10</sup> Careers Inc. and the local authority. These services are negotiated at the point of contracting and are usually for targeted groups of students. On occasion, schools commission all of their one to one guidance from a company or a lone trader careers adviser. Schools also make use of free services offered by a number of providers such as local colleges, employers and third sector organisations.

### **Quality assuring personal career guidance**

During the earlier phases of the project, monitoring, review and evaluation was highlighted as an area for development. The data gathered in the later stages of the research has shown that this has improved, however some schools have identified this as an area where further improvement can still be made. As previously reported, systems to monitor careers education

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<sup>9</sup> [Kookaburra Associates Ltd](#). is Harrogate based, providing local delivery within North and West Yorkshire.

<sup>10</sup> [Shine](#) is part of the Aspire igen group. They provide independent career guidance in the north of England.

and guidance have developed. Some schools are now using commercial products to do this and others have adopted their own approaches. The monitoring of individual personal career guidance is included in the overall improvement in monitoring the interventions which young people receive.

Schools have demonstrated two main ways of reviewing the personal career guidance. In the first, schools have developed their own feedback sheets, and these are used as exit activities immediately after an interview. In other schools, the feedback is gathered at various periods of time after an interview. In both cases this approach is used to review personal guidance delivered by internal and external staff. A second model is through observation of personal career guidance. This is applied to internal staff and is done through two main approaches: one school adopts learning walks and personal guidance is included in this approach. In another school, a qualified careers professional uses an observation framework to review staff performance. One school noted that the purpose of such activities was to ensure impartiality of the guidance offered by school staff. Professional guidance delivered by external staff is quality assured by the companies which employ them. It was not clear how the personal guidance delivered by sole traders is reviewed.

The evaluation of personal career guidance is less systematic. Evaluation requires the examination of the impact of personal guidance and whilst there is activity which explores the extent to which personal guidance has immediate impact, for example through feedback sheets, the analysis of whether or not the intervention impacts on the medium and long-term outcomes for young people and the school is less clear. Where this is done it is usually through an examination of destination measures, an indicator linked to the wider programme of careers education and guidance rather than on the personal guidance intervention.

**Recommendation:** School senior leaders should consider ways of measuring the impact of their developing career guidance provision. This should go beyond monitoring destination information and should explore the extent that personal guidance has on young peoples' aspirations, achievement, attendance and progression.

### **Guidance qualifications**

The Career Development Institute recognises and endorses a range of levels of qualifications for those delivering personal careers information, advice and guidance (CDI 2015b), summarised below:

**Level 4:** This qualification is of relevance to practitioners working in a role where they provide career information and advice but not career guidance.

**Level 6:** This qualification is of relevance to practitioners whose role involves providing career guidance and development to clients.

**Level 7:** This leading professional vocational qualification is for those who want to make a real difference to improving the quality of people's lives through the design and delivery of effective career guidance.

The data gathered during the later phase of the project shows that there was a variety in the level of training and qualification that those delivering personal career guidance had achieved.

The qualifications of those providing career guidance were unknown in five schools, however, in two schools, guidance is offered through level four qualified staff, seven schools provide guidance through level 6 qualified staff and three schools (including two schools working in partnership) offer guidance at level 7. Three schools have career guidance professionals who are registered with the Career Development Institute.

**Case study:** Archbishop Holgate School has made a considerable investment in the delivery of professional career guidance. The Head of Careers is a teacher who has a level 6 career guidance qualification. She has used this programme of study to develop her own approach to supporting young people in their career decisions. She has also used the learning from the programme to develop the careers curriculum across school. One outcome of the training has been the development of an observation framework which is being used to review a range of practice in school including the observation of other staff including senior leaders providing guidance. She also observes careers lessons. This service has been valued by all staff who feel that this has contributed to a better service and better outcomes for learners.

Research in the early phases of the research had indicated that schools had a commitment to improving the level of qualification which guidance staff had. This appears to have been successful in some schools however there is still a lack of consistency in the level of professional guidance which students access across the project schools. Subsequently, this introduces a level of inequality in the experiences of learners in the region. This suggests that more needs to be done to achieve equity in the experiences of young people through more consistency in the training and qualification of those staff delivering and managing personal career guidance.

**Recommendation:** The local authority and other stakeholders should develop a regional vision and strategy about the quality of the personal career guidance provision which students receive in the area. The Career Development Institute can offer support to identify the most relevant programmes of training support to ensure that all young people

## Discussion and areas for future development

Despite previous research indicating that this Benchmark was a relative strength in careers education and guidance provision, there has been further progress in this Benchmark with twice as many schools indicating that they now exceed this Benchmark (a change from four to eight). Improvements have been made in a number of ways:

- There has been an increase in the number of interventions which young people receive due to making personal guidance available from an early age
- Parents are now more regularly invited to and attend career guidance interviews
- There are more robust systems in place for monitoring and reviewing career guidance
- Staff are more qualified to deliver personal career guidance

These changes are significant however what is less well developed are the processes of evaluation. This requires an examination of the short, medium and long-term impact of career guidance on learners and on schools. Given the increased emphasis on personal career guidance which the research has revealed, schools should develop more robust strategies to monitor the impact of these developments.

## 6. Impacts on the outcomes for young people

As the research has demonstrated, schools in the pilot have made good progress in developing their careers education and guidance provision. However, the investment made by North Yorkshire County Council and their partners was predicated on the need to improve outcomes for young people. The qualitative aspects of this research have indicated that young people value careers education and guidance and understand their relevance to their own career thinking and decision making. The research approach included an analysis of publicly available data on student attainment (for 2014 and 2017), attendance (2014 and 2016<sup>11</sup>) and progression for the project schools these have been used as indicators of an improvement in outcomes for young people. These indicators were chosen because they align with research conducted for the Sutton Trust (Hooley, Matheson and Watts, 2014). This research noted that where schools (2014 and 2016) had good careers education and guidance (determined by their having obtained a nationally recognised quality award for career guidance) young people tended to have better attainment, attendance and progression outcomes than their counterparts in schools without quality awards. Table 7 below shows the attainment, attendance, and progression data for the project schools compared to the averages for England and North Yorkshire

**Table 7:** A comparison of the outcomes for young people in the projects schools with England and North Yorkshire

	England Average	North Yorkshire Average	16 Participating Schools Average			Difference from 2014 - 2017
			2014	2016	2017	
<b>Attainment (%)</b>						
English (A*-C/9-4)	74.8	79.8	74.31	76.72	81.47	7.16
Maths (A*-C/9-4)	68.9	76	75.94	77.52	77.55	1.61
<b>Attendance (%)</b>						
Overall Absence*	5	4.4	4.64	5	N/A	0.36
<b>Destinations (Individual Numbers)</b>						
NEETs 16*	5 (%)	4 (%)	0.69 (n=11)	1.25 (n=20)	0.93 (n=15)	0.24

\*National Average and North Yorkshire Average data was calculated using the 2014/16 Government statistics because this was the latest available data at the time of writing the report.

<sup>11</sup> Data for the attendance and progression of students during the academic year 2016/17 was not available at the time of writing the report

Causality cannot be inferred from the *Progression for Success* school data because there are various external factors which could not be controlled in the project, for example, socio-economic influences. That said, the 2017 data does seem to suggest a link between the improvement in careers provision across all schools in the project and pupil's attainment. Since the project began in 2014, the average number of pupil's achieving grades A\*-C in GCSE English has risen by 7.16% in the 16 schools that participated. These schools now, on average, have a higher number of pupils achieving A\*-C GCSE English grades (81.47%) compared to the national average (74.8%). A similar pattern has also emerged in GCSE Maths attainment. Since 2014 the number of pupils achieving A\*-C GCSE Maths grades in the 16 participating schools has risen by 1.61%. This likewise means pupils, on average, are achieving a higher number A\*-C GCSE Maths grades (77.5%) compared to the national average (68.9%). These figures compare favourably with those from previous research for the Sutton Trust (Hooley, Matheson and Watts, 2014) which found that controlling for other factors, schools with quality awards had a two-percentage point advantage in the proportion of pupils with five good GCSEs, including English and Mathematics.

The attendance and progression data is less conclusive. It reveals that the 16 schools overall pupil absence, on average, rose by 0.36% (to 5%) from 2014 to 2016; this is now the same as the national average of 5%. It should be noted, however, that the number of absent pupils across the country also increased, rising from 4.6% in 2015 to 5% in 2016. When comparing to the national increase of 0.4% to the increase in the 16 participating schools of 0.36%, it therefore becomes apparent that the project schools simply mirror the national trend. It should also be mentioned that this data does not include the 2017 absence data because it is not yet publicly available.

Interestingly, the data does reveal that the average number of post-16 NEET individuals from the participating schools has risen by 0.24 since 2014. However, because the number of NEET pupils in these schools was already very low (9 in 2014 and 15 in 2016/17), any slight changes in this number causes a large increase in the overall average. For example, one school in particular had an increase in NEETs, rising from 1 to 6 individuals. This can, however, be explained by a number of factors: (1) this school is currently deemed as inadequate in their most recent Ofsted report and (2) this school is located in an area associated with economic deprivation. These factors may therefore disproportionately affect the young people in this area. If this school were to be removed from the analysis, then what we find is that the average number of post-16 NEET individuals would remain the same across the lifetime of the project. Nevertheless, when this school is included in the analysis, the average number of NEET pupils per school (0.9) is still considerably lower than the national average (5%).

Overall, the picture which has emerged is that attainment has improved substantially when seen across the lifetime of the project. The data for attendance and progression is less conclusive but it should be noted that the available for the final year of the project was not available for analysis and so it is not possible to draw any conclusions for this data. What's more, this project has been in part about creating a culture change and although two years is a substantial period of time to embed a project it is possible to speculate that it will not be possible to understand the full impact of the *Progression for Success* project on learner outcomes until data for cohorts who have received the newly revised provision during the full span of their education (years 7-11) can be compared to that from cohorts who did not have the enhanced provision.

## 7. Conclusions

The North Yorkshire County Council project 'Putting the learner first - *Progression for Success*' is a timely intervention aimed at improving schools career provision and the outcomes for young people across the county. The project context is one of recent and ongoing change influenced by a number of factors including the global economic downturn, national and local skills shortages and changes in government and subsequent changes in educational policy.

*Progression for Success* was conceived as an action research project which provides schools with a small sum of money (£2,745), and a funded programme of 4 Careers Guidance continuing professional development days to develop their career guidance provision. Schools were required to pursue a career guidance quality award as part of the process. Schools have readily embraced the projects as one which can provide funding to improve provision and gain recognition at a time of financial austerity.

The evaluation was conducted using the framework of good practice outcomes known as the 'Gatsby Benchmarks' and involved qualitative research using case studies of each of the 16 schools in the project (See page 4 for an explanation of the numbers involved in the final case study visits) alongside publicly available data on attainment, attendance and progression. The findings of the research set out in this report provide an opportunity to reflect on the impact of the project and to consider a number of recommendations which could be applied across The City of York and North Yorkshire schools and beyond.

The schools in North Yorkshire and York City experience some very specific challenges in delivering high quality career guidance. The rural nature of the area means that schools are often quite small, isolated and struggling to maintain their sixth forms. This has meant that they have had to develop innovative approaches to developing their career guidance provision. This has not always been easy and has required the development of collaborative post-16 provision, engaging in new ways with employers and other providers and working very hard to find ways of providing learners with meaningful experiences of the full range of educational providers and industrial sectors which are often not represented within easy travelling distance. That said, the schools in the project have enthusiastically embraced the challenge and have demonstrated some significant developments in their provision during the lifetime of the project. This has resulted in ten schools having achieved quality awards and two further schools preparing for assessment.

The research has found variation in schools' provision across the Gatsby Benchmarks (Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014) although significant progress has been made during the lifetime of the project. Since the beginning of the project all schools now have at least some provision in all Benchmarks where as previously there were six Benchmarks which had at least one school with no provision in that area. There has been progress made in every Benchmark although this was less so for some Benchmarks than others. The picture which emerges is that benchmarks which were previously strong have developed less and schools have clearly been allocating their energies to areas which were previously areas of weakness. The only Benchmark which does not demonstrate this pattern is 'Linking curriculum to careers' which has shown the least gain and remains an area for further work.

Schools in North Yorkshire and York City demonstrate some innovative excellent and emerging practice from which other schools can learn. The key findings from this research are listed below.

### **Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme**

Schools have:

- Developed their policies, reaching out to stakeholders to provide feedback on their provision and providing strong messages to school staff and stakeholders about the roles and responsibilities required to manage good career guidance successfully.

### **Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information**

Schools have:

- Facilitated opportunities for careers staff to come together regularly to share knowledge and expertise is valued and popular.
- Utilised the expertise of external stakeholders to help them to select the most relevant information for a variety of curriculum and guidance reasons.
- Developed ways of engaging with and managing networks of alumni.

### **Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil**

Schools have:

- Adopted career development activities as one significant way of tackling the social injustices which are derived from low ability and social deprivation.
- Encouraged parents to raise their aspirations for students based on a full understanding of their abilities and interests including the full range of academic and vocational programmes.

### **Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers**

Schools have:

- Utilised existing resources to link careers into the curriculum during development and delivery activities.
- Found ways of sharing good practice with career development practitioners in other schools.

### **Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees**

Schools have

- Strengthened the processes required to manage employer engagement so that they are more formalised and robust.



- Increased the number and range of employer engagement activities.
- Improved communication with parents regarding employer engagement.

### **Benchmark 6: Experiences of work places and work-related learning providers**

Schools have:

- Increased the opportunities for students to receive experiences through the curriculum rather than as block placements.
- Developed the targeting of work experience so that it aligns more accurately to individuals career development needs.
- Introduced new ways of securing the resources required to provide work experience opportunities.

### **Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education**

Schools have

- Increased the opportunities for learners from younger age groups to receive experiences of further and higher education providers.
- Improved their systems for recording and monitoring the number of experiences which students receive.

### **Benchmark 8: Personal guidance**

Schools have

- Increased the number of interventions which young people receive due to making personal guidance available from an early age.
- Invited parents to attend career guidance interviews more frequently.
- Improved the systems for monitoring and reviewing of personal career guidance.
- Increased the number of staff with qualifications to deliver personal career guidance

## 8. Recommendations

The *Progression for Success* project has been an innovative. In drawing stakeholders together and providing a small amount of funding to schools, North Yorkshire County Council have created a culture change which has resulted in improved career development provision for young people in pilot schools. This in turn has improved the experiences of learners and whilst it is still early in the life of this culture change appears to have a positive impact on learner attainment. An overarching recommendation for all concerned is to continue to maintain the focus on career development across the region and to monitor the developments in the outcomes for young people as this culture change becomes thoroughly embedded across the county. That said, there are recommendations which schools and stakeholders can adopt which will continue the improvements in provision and these are set out below.

### Recommendations for schools

- Continuity and succession planning should be reviewed by all schools to ensure that momentum is not lost when there is a change in leadership and management of careers work.
- Schools and colleges should investigate the options for developing and managing their alumni network. This is an important and effective resource for career learning and guidance and when managed effectively enhance the experiences of young people.
- Schools should explore the range of options for developing tracking systems for employer engagement activities to ensure that they are providing students with at least one meaningful experience of employers and employees before the end of year 11.
- Schools should develop a more strategic approach to evaluating employer engagement. This should include an analysis of both the short term and long-term impacts of these activities. The results of evaluation should be integrated in to the school planning cycle.
- Schools should develop systems and processes for monitoring all of the experiences of work places which students have during their learning journey. This will ensure fairness in the system and allow schools to identify where gaps in provision exist for some learners. This will be essential if schools are going to meet the requirements set out in existing guidance to provide all young people in Key Stages 4 and 5 with meaningful experiences of work places.
- Schools should explore ways in which work experience can be effectively evaluated so that they can ensure that their limited resources are used to gain maximum impact. This should include an exploration on the impact of young peoples' learning and development, progression and attainment.
- Schools should re-visit their policies on careers education and guidance to ensure that the statutory duty to provide impartial careers education and guidance is evident and communicated.
- School senior leaders should consider ways of measuring the impact of their developing career guidance provision. This should go beyond monitoring destination information and should explore the extent that personal guidance has on young peoples' aspirations, achievement, attendance and progression.

## **Recommendations for local authorities and stakeholders**

- Support to develop coherent, consistent approaches to monitoring, review and evaluation which links career guidance to schools' strategic aims will inevitably lead to improvement in provision. The project offers a unique opportunity to bring schools together to work on this area and to learn from schools where good or excellent practice is evident. This could result in a more effective process of gathering and sharing monitoring, review and evaluation data across the North Yorkshire area and lead to more effective reporting and allocation of resources.
- Centrally produced information on the local and regional career and labour market are a valued curriculum resource however these need to be regularly maintained and updated. The local authorities and their partners should explore ways of maintaining the resources necessary for this.
- The local authorities should ensure that resources continue to be made available for careers staff to come together to share information and good practice. This is a valued and effective resource and needs to be co-ordinated centrally to be most effective.
- Key stakeholders including the Local Authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnerships should consider further research into the specific career aspirations and development needs of young people in rural and isolated areas. This will help inform a more strategic approach across the region to supporting the needs of this group.
- Local authorities and their partners should explore how support can be provided through centrally organised training events. These are particularly valued and have had an impact on schools' approaches in this Benchmark.
- The local authorities and other stakeholders should develop a regional vision and strategy about the quality of the personal career guidance provision which students receive in the area. The Career Development Institute can offer support to identify the most relevant programmes of training support to ensure that all young people.

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