



North East Ambition Career Benchmarks: Primary Pilot

Year 2 report



About the Pilot

Career Benchmarks: Primary Pilot

The North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) teamed up with the EY Foundation to deliver the Career Benchmarks: Primary Pilot.

Evidence tells us that high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance can help young people reach their potential and make a successful transition from school to further study and employment.

Evidence also tells us that children begin to form ideas about their futures when they're as young as five or six. By the age of 10, many young people have already made career limiting decisions, which are fixed by the time they're 14.

The Career Benchmarks: Primary Pilot was a 2 year project that built on the success of the transformational Good Career Guidance Benchmark Pilot (2015-17) which led to the Benchmarks forming a central part of the Department for Education's 2017 Careers Strategy.

The aims of the Pilot were to translate the Good Career Guidance Benchmarks for use and implementation in primary settings and to work with 70 primary schools to test how they work. In addition, we wanted to understand the support and capacity needed by schools to make measurable and rapid progress towards the achievement of the Benchmarks.

The Pilot explored how to sow the seeds of ambition from an early age by supporting schools to use the Benchmarks as a framework to strategically develop an age appropriate career and personal development programme. The Pilot aimed to enable the schools to help broaden pupils' horizons, raise their aspirations and support them to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to be successful in the next stage of their education and beyond, regardless of their starting point.

This report is based on an independent evaluation of the Pilot. Comparisons have been made between audits and surveys completed by Careers Leaders at the start of the Pilot, at the end of year 1 and again at the end of year 2. It also encompasses other data from additional in-depth research completed during the two years of the Pilot with seven of the schools involved.

The Good Career Guidance Primary Benchmarks

The eight Benchmarks, which incorporate 55 individual characteristics, have been adapted for primary settings and provide the framework for delivering good career guidance. The Benchmarks are:

1. A stable careers programme

Every school has an embedded programme of careers and personal development that seeks to raise aspirations, broaden horizons and is age appropriate. This programme shows progression through the key stages and is known and understood by pupils, parents/carers, teachers, governors and other key stakeholders.

2. Learning from career and labour market information

Every pupil, and their parents/carers, should have access to basic labour market information to help expand their awareness of future possibilities and opportunities.

3. Addressing the needs of each pupil

Pupils will have different needs and so opportunities for support should be tailored to the requirements of each pupil. A school's careers and personal development programme should embed equality and diversity throughout and actively challenge stereotypical thinking.

4. Linking curriculum learning to careers

All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers and future learning possibilities. The importance of literacy, numeracy and digital awareness should be emphasised and pupils should have the chance to explore STEM related opportunities and understand the skills they will need for the future.

5. Encounters with employers and employees

Every pupil should have the opportunity to have meaningful and age appropriate encounters with a range of different employers and understand the importance of skills in the workplace. This can be through a range of different activities including visiting speakers and/or enterprise schemes.

6. Experiences of workplaces

Every pupil should have the opportunity to experience a variety of workplaces. These experiences of the world of work could be either direct or indirect and might include role plays, challenge days or visits to local employers.

7. Encounters with further and higher education

All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that will be available to them. This includes both academic and vocational/technical routes and learning in schools, sixth forms, colleges, training providers, universities and in the workplace.

8. Personal guidance

Every pupil should have the opportunity to have 'careers conversations'. Their aspirations and personal development progress should be recorded and shared with parents/carers, as well as the transition leaders of the next place of education.

Key findings at the end of year 2

The knowledge, skills and understanding of Career Leaders has improved as a result of their involvement in the Pilot:

89%

of Careers Leaders now rate their careers-related knowledge, skills and understanding as good or very good (*up 79 percentage points from the start of the pilot*)

89%

of Careers Leaders rate their awareness of careers-related learning opportunities their school can access as good or very good (*up 76 percentage points from the start of the pilot*)

87%

of Careers Leaders rate their ability to design and deliver careers-related learning across all year groups as good or very good (*up 75 percentage points from the start of the pilot*)

83%

of Careers Leaders rate their ability to monitor and demonstrate the impact of careers-related learning activities as good or very good (*up 77 percentage points from the start of the pilot*)

The Pilot is felt to have had a strong positive impact on pupils' knowledge, abilities and access to careers information:

93%

of Careers Leaders say that pupils believe they can achieve their career goals if they work hard (*up 30 percentage points from the start of the pilot*)

91%

of Careers Leaders believe pupils are able to talk about their career plans (*up 56 percentage points from the start of the pilot*)

87%

of Careers Leaders believe pupils understand the link between skills they develop in school and their future career options (*up 53 percentage points from the start of the pilot*)

83%

of Careers Leaders believe pupils are aware of diverse range of careers and pathways (*up 62 percentage points from the start of the pilot*)

There were 70 schools involved in the Pilot from across the North East LEP area



93% of Careers Leaders plan to continue careers-related learning in their school.



92% of Careers Leaders said they found the framework of Benchmarks to be very useful or useful. The requirement to develop a careers action plan was the most valued element of the pilot delivery model.



Careers day at Cleadon Academy

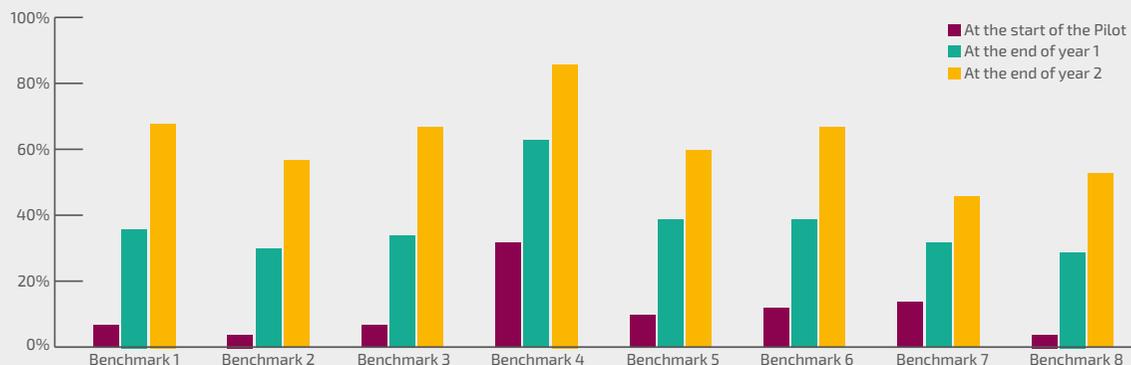
"I have learnt that it is extremely important and relevant to be talking about it [careers] at a primary level and that for a First or Primary School it is not as daunting as it seems. At a simplistic level it is about making that connection to the children between the curriculum and the visits/visitors and the conversation – 'well that could be you!'"

Career Leader

Audit and survey insights

- At the end of year 2, the Pilot average for fully achieved characteristics was 65%, up from 40% at the end of year 1 and 13% at the baseline audit.
- The average number of fully achieved Benchmarks was 2.3 at the end of year 2, up from 0.6 at the end of year 1, and 0.0 at the baseline audit.
- A Pilot school's Ofsted rating was not correlated to the percentage of fully achieved characteristics at the end of year 2.
- Benchmarks 4, 1, 3 and 6 recorded the highest percentages of fully achieved characteristics by the end of year 2 (86%, 68%, 67% and 67% respectively).

Percentage of characteristics fully achieved by Benchmark across all Pilot schools:



Over the course of the Pilot, careers-related learning has become embedded within the general curriculum or other subjects and treated less as an extra-curricular activity.

89%

of Careers Leaders on the Pilot said their careers-related learning provision now covers 'all year groups in the school!'

88%

of Careers Leaders said they are spending more time on careers compared to before starting on the Pilot.

High percentages of Careers Leaders have consistently rated engagement in the Pilot from their Senior Leadership Team (SLT), other staff, and governors as very good or good:

- SLT (98% good or very good)
- Other staff (92% good or very good)
- Governors (84% good or very good)

98%

of year 2 survey respondents were satisfied with the support they received from the Pilot team.



Portable careers library at Pelton Community Primary School

"The [Pilot team] have provided great CPD, communication and support is excellent, and they respond quickly to any queries."

Career Leader

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

All three Pilot aims have been fully achieved:

- To translate the eight Good Career Guidance Benchmarks for use and implementation in primary settings
- To embed the Benchmarks in 70 primary schools in the North East LEP area
- To test the Benchmarks in action; documenting the conditions, support and capacity needed by schools to make measurable and rapid progress towards the achievement of the Benchmarks

Three of the four Pilot objectives have been fully achieved:

- Build capacity within and between the pilot schools to deliver a consistent, comprehensive and high-quality career education for all pupils that meet the standards of the Benchmarks
- Test the impact of the Benchmarks on pupil outcomes and whole school culture in a diversity of settings over two academic years
- Identify the problems and barriers to the comprehensive implementation of the Benchmarks within different schools and localities and identify solutions and opportunities to overcome these issues

And one has been partially achieved:

- Create a sustainable and replicable approach to the implementation of the Benchmarks that can be applied at scale in other areas of England

Recommendations

The independent evaluators made 10 recommendations:



Extend the Pilot



Continue to support schools to achieve and go beyond the Benchmarks



Retain the audit process



Conduct research into why certain groups of schools have struggled more than others to achieve specific Benchmarks



Expand the work of the Pilot by partnering with multi-academy trusts



Re-start face to face peer learning opportunities as soon as possible



Continue to develop online careers-related learning resources



Link careers-related learning to COVID-19 recovery plans



Support primary schools to develop their online engagement with employers



Forge stronger links between primary schools and secondary schools involved in the North East Ambition programme

The impact of COVID-19

Over three quarters of survey respondents mentioned COVID-19 or related issues as the biggest challenge they faced during the two years of the Pilot.

However, despite the challenges it created, some respondents noted that the pandemic had led to a number of pilot schools rethinking the skills their pupils would need to be resilient and successful, and the importance of careers-related learning to support the development of these skills.



Alumni display at Hetton Lyons Primary School

The future

We are committed to continuing to support our existing network of primary schools. Our North East Ambition website will continue to host our Benchmark Audit and provide a range of resources, including our Benchmark toolkits, to support schools to achieve the Good Career Guidance Primary Benchmarks.

In addition, we will engage multi-academy trusts, secondary school clusters and other individual schools to scale up this work and further embed a sustainable and replicable approach to the implementation of the Benchmarks across the region and beyond.



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