



Guidance for Middle Schools

Completing the Compass
evaluation and meaningfully
achieving the eight Gatsby
Benchmarks

In light of the Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years report, this guidance is intended to support Careers Leaders in Middle Schools in applying the updated Gatsby Benchmarks meaningfully in their setting and feel confident when completing a Compass evaluation.

The unique nature of a three-tier system was carefully considered, both when developing the updated Gatsby Benchmarks and the accompanying Compass evaluation routing and scoring to ensure that Middle Schools were able to fully achieve all eight benchmarks.

At the start of a Compass evaluation, you will be asked to enter the number of students in each year group. Where there are questions only appropriate for settings that have Key Stage 4 or higher, these questions will not be posed to you as Middle School Careers Leaders. The scoring system is aligned with this, meaning that you are able to fully achieve a Benchmark based on your cohorts alone.



Gatsby Benchmark 1

Every school should have an embedded programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, employers and other agencies.

Requirements

- Every school should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of governors, the headteacher and the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained careers leader responsible for it.
- The careers programme should be tailored to the needs of pupils, sequenced appropriately, underpinned by learning outcomes and linked to the whole-school development plan. It should also set out how parents and carers will be engaged throughout.
- The careers programme should be published on the school's website and communicated in ways that enable pupils, parents and carers, staff and employers to access, and understand it.
- The programme should be regularly evaluated using feedback from pupils, parents and carers, teachers and other staff who support pupils, careers advisers and employers, to increase its impact.

Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 1 for Middle Schools

Benchmark 1 is applicable in its entirety for Middle Schools and should be implemented in line with statutory guidance. All questions and sub questions in Compass evaluation under Gatsby Benchmark 1 apply to Middle Schools.

Gatsby Benchmark 2

All pupils, parents and carers, teachers and staff who support pupils should have access to good-quality, up-to-date information about future pathways, study options and labour market opportunities. Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents and carers may require different or additional information. All pupils will need the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information.

Requirements

- During each Key Stage, all pupils should access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options or next steps.
- Parents and carers should be encouraged and supported to access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their support for pupils in their care.

Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 2 for Middle Schools

Benchmark 2 is applicable in its entirety to Middle Schools and Compass evaluation results are based solely on the Key Stages you teach and so if you are fully achieving the benchmark for learners by the time they leave your school, you will be achieving 100% at Benchmark 2.

Guidance on Completion of Compass Evaluation

Sub Question: 2.2: This sub-benchmark is about ensuring that learners understand the implications of pathways and labour market information on their future choices and insights – please note that support does not have to come from a careers adviser but could be a well-informed employer from a specific sector.

Gatsby Benchmark 3

Pupils have different careers guidance needs at different stages. Careers programmes should help pupils navigate their concerns about any barriers to career progression. In addition, opportunities should be tailored to the needs of each pupil, including any additional needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, young people with SEND and those who are absent.

Requirements

- A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge misconceptions and stereotypical thinking, showcase a diverse range of role models and raise aspirations.
- Schools should keep systematic records of the participation of pupils in all aspects of their careers programme, including the individual advice given to each pupil, and any subsequent agreed decisions.
- For pupils who change schools during the secondary phase, information about participation and the advice given previously should be integrated into a pupil's records, where this information is made available. Records should begin to be kept from the first point of contact or from the point of transition.
- All pupils should have access to these records and use them ahead of any key transition points to support their next steps and career development.
- Schools should collect, maintain and use accurate data for each pupil on their aspirations, intended and immediate education, and training or employment destinations, to inform personalised support.
- Schools should use sustained and longer-term destination data as part of their evaluation process and use alumni to support their careers programme.

Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 3 for Middle Schools

Benchmark 3 is applicable in its entirety for Middle Schools and should be implemented in line with statutory guidance. All questions and sub questions in the Compass evaluation under Gatsby Benchmark 3 apply to Middle Schools.

Middle Schools should ensure that they share records of participation in careers activities with Upper Schools or alternative onward providers. We would encourage Middle Schools to work with Upper Schools to understand where learners progress to and use this insight to inform planning and evaluation of the careers programme.

Guidance on Completion of Compass Evaluation

Sub Question: 3.7: Sustained (6 months) and longer term (3 years) destination data is useful to evaluate the impact of your careers programme.

Middle Schools should systematically collect aspirational, intended and immediate destination data and use this to inform the personalised support each of their current students need. Aspirational and intended destination data should be shared with Upper Schools.

Middle Schools should make use of sustained and longer-term destination data as part of their evaluation process. This requires collaboration with Upper Schools to track and understand the outcomes of former students.

Gatsby Benchmark 4

As part of the school's programme of careers education, all teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. Subject teachers should highlight the progression routes for their subject and the relevance of the knowledge and skills developed in their subject for a wide range of career pathways.

Requirements

- Every year, in every subject, every pupil should have opportunities to learn how the knowledge and skills developed in that subject helps people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers.
- Careers should form part of the school's ongoing staff development programme for teachers and all staff who support pupils.

Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 4 for Middle Schools

Benchmark 4 is applicable in its entirety for Middle Schools and should be implemented in line with statutory guidance. All questions and sub questions in Compass evaluation under Gatsby Benchmark 4 apply to Middle Schools. It is possible to indicate where a course/subject is not taught in your setting, and you will only be expected to report on the year groups you work with.

Gatsby Benchmark 5

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 opportunities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, and could include pupils' own part-time employment where it exists.

- Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer.

Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 5 for Middle Schools

Benchmark 5 is applicable in its entirety for Middle Schools and meaningful employer encounters should take place a minimum of once per year for every learner. You will only be expected to report on the year groups appropriate to your setting. We would encourage close links with Upper Schools, to ensure that the careers journey for your learners is progressive and meaningful and that records of participation are shared.

Gatsby Benchmark 6

Every learner should have first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.

Requirements

- By the age of 16, every pupil should have had meaningful experiences of workplaces.
- By the age of 18, every pupil should have had at least one further meaningful experience.

Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 6 for Middle Schools

Benchmark 6 is applicable in its entirety for Middle Schools and every learner should have at least one meaningful experience of the workplace in Key Stage 3. Schools will be required to report only on the Key Stages they deliver.

We would encourage close links with Upper Schools, to ensure that the careers journey for your learners is progressive and meaningful and that records of participation and intended destinations are shared.

The equalex framework is a multi-year, multi-experience model supported by the curriculum and accessible to ALL learners. It defines learning outcomes and objectives to support embedded meaningful workplace experiences from Key Stage 3. This approach supports the government's plan to expand access to work experience.

The vision is for all learners to complete two weeks' worth of work experience across Key Stages 3 and 4. Specifically, during Years 7–9, learners should accumulate approximately one week of experience, meaning that by Year 8, students should have participated in multiple workplace activities totalling 3–4 days.

Gatsby Benchmark 7

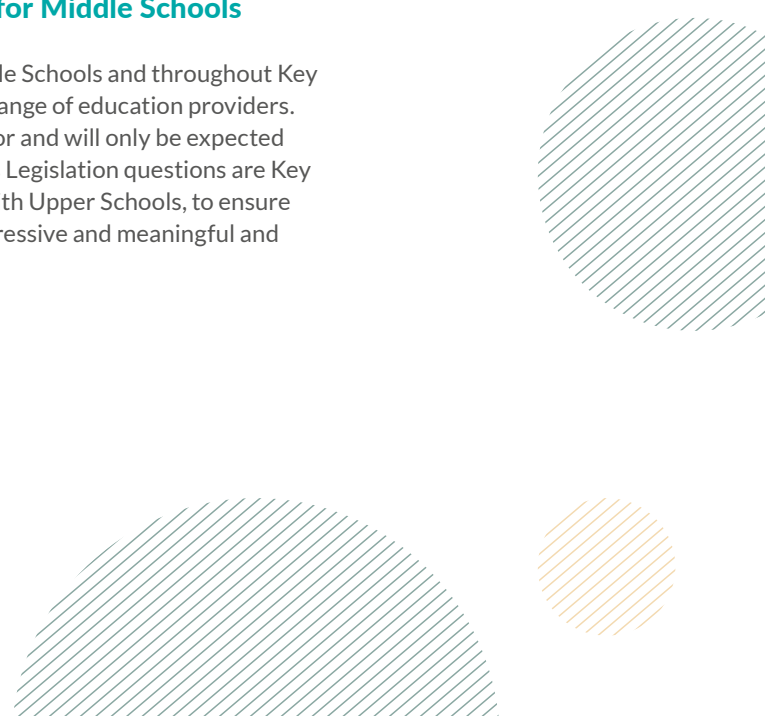
All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including academic, technical and vocational routes. This should incorporate learning in schools, colleges, independent training providers (ITPs), universities and in the workplace.

Requirements

- By the age of 16, every pupil should have had meaningful encounters with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including sixth forms, colleges, universities and ITPs.
- By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying to higher education should have had at least two visits to higher education providers to meet staff and learners.

Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 7 for Middle Schools

Benchmark 7 is applicable in its entirety for Middle Schools and throughout Key Stage 3, learners should have encounters with a range of education providers. You will be asked which Key Stages you provide for and will only be expected to report on this phase. Similarly, Provider Access Legislation questions are Key Stage specific. We would encourage close links with Upper Schools, to ensure that the careers journey for your learners is progressive and meaningful and that records of participation are shared.



Gatsby Benchmark 8

Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance meetings with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These meetings should be available for all pupils whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be scheduled to meet their individual needs. The careers leader should work closely with the careers adviser, SEND coordinator and other key staff to ensure personal guidance is effective and embedded in the careers programme.

Requirements

- Every pupil should have at least one personal guidance meeting, with a careers adviser by the age of 16, and a further meeting by the age of 18. Meetings should be scheduled in the careers programme to meet the needs of pupils.
- Information about personal guidance support, and how to access it, should be communicated to pupils and parents and carers, including through the school website.

Interpretation of Gatsby Benchmark 8 for Middle Schools

The statutory duty on schools to secure access to independent careers guidance for all learners whenever significant study or career choices are being made will be particularly important in areas where the local upper school starts its GCSE courses in Year 9. Middle school staff will work with the upper school staff to provide information and advice on option choices. For those pupils who wish to talk to a careers adviser at that point, the upper school could make their careers adviser available.

Guidance on Completion of Compass Evaluation

Middle Schools will not be penalised for only having a Key Stage 3 cohort and will be scored accordingly, so please answer this question as appropriate to your setting. We would encourage all schools to ensure that students and parents/carers have the support they need at key transition points.

THE CAREERS &
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