

The Value of participation in a Careers Impact internal leadership review

Emma Shakespeare, Vice Principal at Thomas Rotherham College, Inspire Learning Trust

South Yorkshire Careers Hub



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Why did you get involved with the Careers Impact System?

We first heard about the Careers Impact internal leadership review through The CEC & AoC Strategic Careers Network. We were immediately excited by the opportunity to engage in a deeper, more structured reflection process than Compass alone offers.

The internal leadership review provided a valuable framework to help us identify key focus areas and drive meaningful improvement in our careers provision across the college.

We were also keen to access the collaborative opportunities offered through the peer-to-peer initiative, which aligned perfectly with our college's commitment to continuous development and outward-facing shared learning.

What was your approach to the Careers Impact internal leadership review?

The internal leadership review was both comprehensive and collaborative and enabled us to reflect on the maturity of our careers leadership across the college.

We convened a wide range of stakeholders from the Careers and Work Placement Team to Heads of Faculty, SEND leads, Careers/Skills Governor, and SLT each contributing their insights through structured discussions based on the Maturity Model.

While the process initially felt quite complex, we were well supported by our Careers Hub and resources from The Careers & Enterprise Company, including a helpful definitions document.

The review prompted deep reflection and rich dialogue, often challenging assumptions and provoking debate for example, around ethics and confidentiality in parental engagement. It felt like a truly systematic, 360-degree approach to self-evaluation, and although progression wasn't always linear, the process helped us uncover nuanced insights and areas for growth.

“The internal leadership review gave us a meaningful space to align careers leadership with student needs, social mobility goals, and our broader college priorities.”

Emma Shakespeare, Vice Principal

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How has this impacted on your careers provision?

The impact has been significant and far-reaching. We have developed new student career learning journeys underpinned by clear outcomes aligned with Gatsby Benchmarks, CDI Framework, and our TRC Top 10 Skills (based on the World Economic Forum skills taxonomy).

Our strategic careers plan now brings together our vision, self-evaluation, quality improvement and action planning into one coherent document, providing clarity and direction.

We've also improved how we use intended destinations data - for example, targeting work experience opportunities directly to students based on their aspirations. Our careers provision now feeds directly into our social mobility strategy, with prioritisation categories that ensure targeted support for vulnerable groups of learners, including High Needs, Looked After Children and disadvantaged.

“We completed a second Careers Impact internal leadership review in December, and we found it just as impactful. It’s enabled us to make a seamless transition to the new benchmarks.”

Emma Shakespeare, Vice Principal

Other developments include:

- Careers adviser attendance at EHCP reviews.
- A structured parental engagement plan with evaluation mechanisms.
- A revised internal quality assurance approach incorporating student voice to track perceptions of career readiness over time.
- A bespoke infrastructure system to record and report on Gatsby Benchmark progress and provide student-facing records.

What has been the impact on whole college priorities?

The internal leadership review has reinforced the strategic importance of careers across the college. It has helped us better evaluate and embed a whole-college destinations culture (one of our four college priorities), ensuring that careers is recognised as a key driver of student success and social mobility. Careers is now firmly positioned within our SLT framework as a cross-college priority, with clear links to curriculum, skills development, wellbeing and long-term outcomes for learners.

Why take part in a Careers Impact internal leadership review?

Drive whole-institution improvement through careers leadership.

A Careers Impact internal leadership review uses the **Careers Impact Maturity Model** to help you:

- **Engage leadership**
Engage SLT and governors with a clear, strategic vision for sustainable careers leadership.
- **Align priorities**
Position careers as a key driver of whole-institution improvement through distributed leadership.
- **Develop excellence**
Deepen understanding of what high impact careers leadership looks like and how to meaningfully achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- **Celebrate success**
Recognise and showcase the strengths and impact of your careers provision.
- **Sustain quality**
Build robust internal quality assurance and impact evaluation into your annual review cycle.

Find out more here:

[Careers Impact system internal leadership review](#)