



# North East Ambition Career Benchmarks: Primary Pilot

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## Year 1 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 is a 2 year project that build on the success of the transformational Good Career Guidance Benchmark Pilot (2015-17) that led to the Benchmarks forming a central part of DfE's 2017 Career's Strategy.

The aims of the Pilot are 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. We want to understand the support and capacity needed by schools to make measurable and rapid progress towards the achievement of the Benchmarks.

The Pilot explores 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. This aims to enable the schools to help broaden pupil's 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 end of year report is based on an ongoing independent evaluation of the Pilot. Comparisons have been made between audits and surveys completed by Career Leaders at the start of the Pilot and again at the end of year 1.

## The 8 Good Career Guidance Benchmarks:

The eight Benchmarks below 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 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

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

**88%** After one year 88% of Careers Leaders now rate their careers related knowledge, skills and understanding as good or very good.

**Auditing the Pilot schools against the Benchmarks framework shows that schools have made strong progress in the first year of Pilot activity.**

**39%** The regional average for fully achieved Benchmark characteristics at the end of Year 1 was 39%, up from 13% in July 2019.

Across all Benchmarks, more than 1 in 4 characteristics have now been fully achieved.

At least one school has achieved every single characteristic across all eight of the Benchmarks.



**It is too early to see evidence that the Pilot is having a positive impact on student outcomes but there is evidence to assume that these positive impacts may arise in future.**

**72%** of Career Leaders believe that pupils are now aware of a more diverse range of career options.

**81%** of Career Leaders believe that pupils better understand the links between what they are studying and future career options.

**89%** of Career Leaders believe that pupils are able to talk more about their career plans.

**School cultures in relation to careers related learning have been positively impacted by the Pilot.**

**82%** of Career Leaders say careers related learning is now part of their school's general curriculum, and no longer a stand-alone activity or an extra-curricular specialism.

**91%** of schools are delivering careers related learning for more pupils and at a quicker pace than at the start of the Pilot.

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



# Audit and survey insights

## The audit showed that schools have made strong progress in the first year of Pilot activity:

- During 2019/20, Pilot schools have fully achieved an average of 15 additional characteristics, with the average Pilot school having fully achieved 21 characteristics, partially achieved 22 characteristics, and not achieved 12 characteristics.
- The regional average for fully achieved characteristics at the end of Year 1 was 39%, up from 13% in the July 2019 audit.
- Across all Benchmarks, more than 1 in 4 characteristics have now been fully achieved.

## Percentage point change in characteristics achieved by Benchmark across all Pilot schools – July 2019 to July 2020

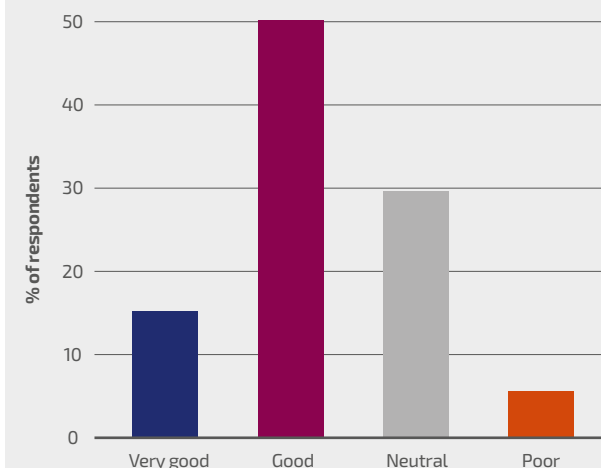
Characteristics:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Fully achieved	+29	+26	+27	+31	+30	+28	+17	+23
Partially achieved	+16	+8	+15	-9	+6	+11	+8	+21
Not achieved	-45	-34	-42	-22	-36	-39	-25	-43

Audit data suggests that the closure of schools in March 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a slowdown in the pace at which Pilot schools are fully achieving Benchmark characteristics but it has not stopped overall progress, which is extremely encouraging. Benchmarks 5, 6 and 7 are identified as being most affected by the closure of schools.



Just under two-thirds of Careers Leaders who responded to the Year 1 survey feel good or very good about the progress they have made in achieving the action plan they developed at the start of the Pilot.

## How do you feel about your progress towards the action plan you developed at the start of the Pilot?



Source: Year 1 survey (n = 56)

Careers Leaders' priorities during Year 2 of the Pilot predominantly relate to two things: continuing to embed careers related learning throughout their school through continued use of the Benchmarks as a framework; and building their personal networks and engagement strategies.

Covid-19 was the most cited future barrier for schools identified by Careers Leaders that will prevent them from making further progress against the Benchmarks. 69% mentioned their concerns regarding the pandemic and how this could create multiple barriers during Year 2.

# Impact and engagement

**82% of schools confirmed that they now deliver careers related learning as part of the general curriculum – this should not be underestimated as it suggests a fundamental culture change is taking place and that the Benchmarks are being embedded within the schools.**

Most Careers Leaders on the Pilot have mapped careers against the existing curriculum and, where needed, rewritten medium to long-term school curriculum plans to embed the Benchmarks within their school.

Careers related learning delivery methods	Baseline	Year 1
As an extra curricular activity/event	54%	68%
As part of the general curriculum/ other subject lessons	54%	82%
As a stand-alone lesson	23%	64%

Sources: Baseline survey (n=56) and Year 1 survey (n = 56)  
– respondents could tick more than one answer

**93%** of Careers Leaders rate the quality of the careers related learning activities they have undertaken as good or very good.

**97%** of schools feel that their pupils' interactions with careers related learning activities have been good or very good.

There has been an increase in the range of pupils who are participating in careers related learning activities, with a strong increase in the delivery of careers related learning activity for children in Key Stage 1.

Working towards achievement of the Benchmarks appears to have helped schools to deliver careers related learning for more pupils and at a quicker pace.

When asked if they would have undertaken careers related learning activities if their school had not been involved in the Pilot:

31% of schools say they would have undertaken these careers related learning activities, but for fewer pupils. 30% say they would have undertaken these careers related learning activities, but not as quickly. 30% of schools say they would not have undertaken careers related learning activities without their Pilot involvement.

 **100% Pilot schools say they are either very satisfied or satisfied with the support they have received from the Pilot team.**

**When asked how satisfied Careers Leaders are with the contact they have had with other Pilot schools/ their clusters:**

**73%** of Careers Leaders feel satisfied or very satisfied.

This shows the increasing benefit of developing a network of Careers Leaders who meet regularly to discuss embedding the framework and to share best practice.

**The survey highlighted the positive impact on pupils. Three of the 'pupil impact' statements that saw the largest increases were:**

Statement	Baseline	Year 1	Progress
Pupils are able to talk about their career plans	35%	89%	+54%
Pupils are aware of a diverse range of careers	21%	72%	+51%
Pupils understand the link between the skills they develop and their future career options	34%	81%	+47%

**Careers Leaders rated the engagement of the following groups as good or very good:**

**93%** Senior Leadership Team

**76%** School staff

**74%** Governors/trustees

**67%** Employer

## Conclusions

During Year 1, the Pilot has achieved its aims of translating and embedding the Benchmarks within primary school settings.

Evidence shows that the Pilot is making good progress in building the capacity of schools to deliver a consistent, comprehensive, and high-quality career education for all pupils.

School cultures in relation to careers related learning have been positively impacted by the Pilot with 82% of Careers Leaders indicating that careers related learning is now part of their school's general curriculum.

There is evidence to assume that the Pilot may positively impact pupil outcomes in the future with 89% of Careers Leaders indicating that pupils are able to talk more about their career plans.



Funded by



**European Union**  
European  
Social Fund

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The Career Benchmarks: Primary Pilot is supported by funding from the European Social Fund, EY foundation and the Local Growth Fund.

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