

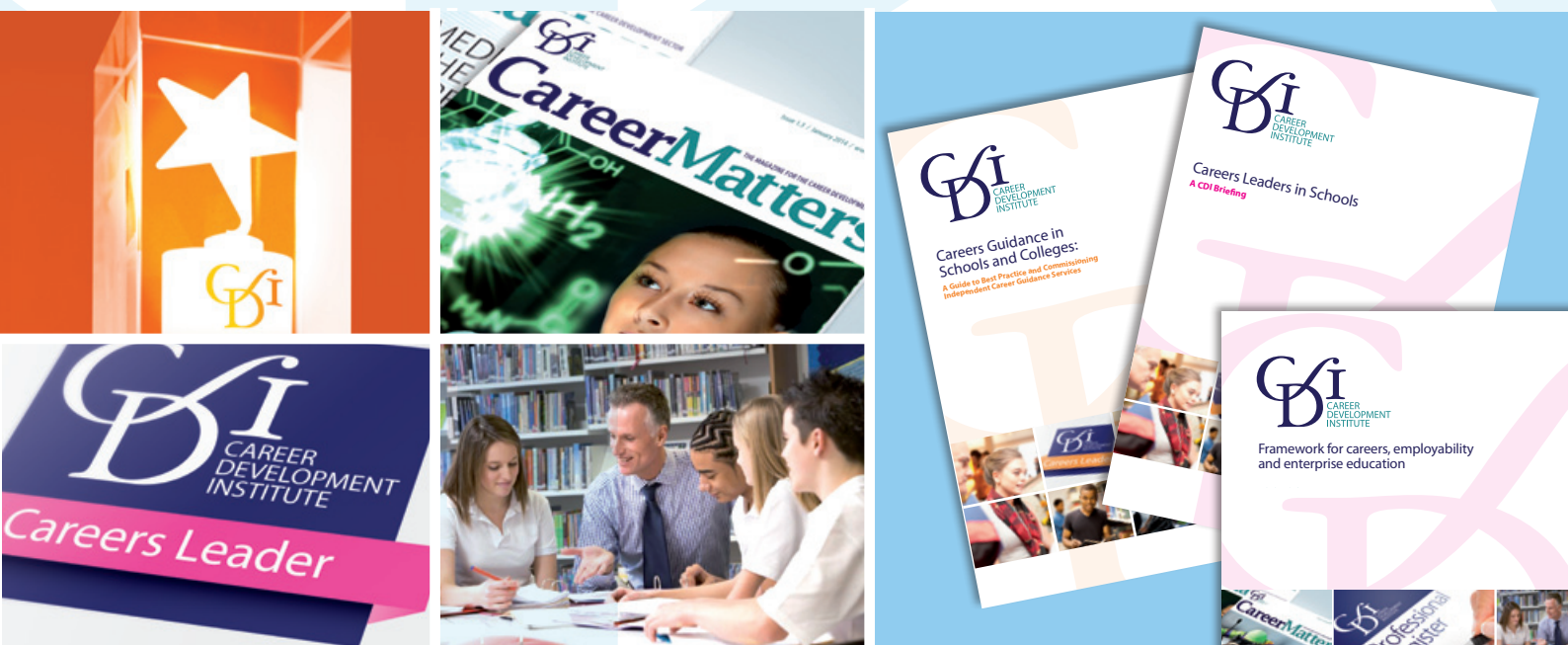


Briefing Paper

November 2019

Developing a careers policy: A briefing for schools, special schools and colleges

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Briefing Paper

Summary

- A careers policy is a concise statement of the guiding principles which underpin the school's careers programme. It should cover five main areas:
 - values and vision
 - statutory requirements and expectations
 - learner entitlement
 - management and delivery
 - engagement of stakeholders and partners.
- The benefits of developing a careers policy include:
 - clarification of roles and responsibilities
 - building commitment and relationships
 - sharpening the focus of activities and informing strategy and plans
 - making connections with other relevant policies
 - communicating and promoting the careers provision.
- An effective policy-making and management of change process amplifies the benefits of having a policy. The role of the careers leader is crucial.
- A careers policy underpins the school's careers strategy and plans and should be linked to the school improvement/development plan. It is a reference point for the school's annual self-assessment/self-evaluation review of the careers programme. The policy itself should be revised every two years.

Introduction

The purpose of this briefing is to:

- explain what a policy is for and the benefits of having one
- underline the importance of having an effective policy-making process
- suggest an adaptable template for structuring a careers policy
- discuss key content for inclusion in a policy statement.

It is intended for schools, special schools and colleges (for convenience, abbreviated to 'schools' in this briefing).

The term 'career guidance' refers to the full range of approaches to promoting career learning and development including informing, teaching, learning, assessing, helping and advising.

What is a careers policy?

A careers policy is a concise and accessible statement of the guiding principles which underpin the school's approach to the career learning and development of its students. It should cover the school's commitments in five key areas:

- values and vision
- statutory requirements and expectations
- learner entitlement
- management and delivery
- engagement of stakeholders and partners.

Why have a careers policy?

A careers policy is non-statutory but is associated with a range of potential benefits which include:

Responsibilities

Having a policy helps teams and individuals to clarify and meet

their responsibilities, e.g.:

- The governing board owns the policy and can use it to advise the school on strategy for career guidance
- The senior leadership team can use the policy to ensure that the school is meeting its statutory duties, has a clear commitment to career guidance and the careers provision contributes to the achievement of the school improvement plan
- Careers specialists can use the policy to guide them in making decisions about the design and implementation of the careers provision
- Staff can understand their shared role in career guidance. A policy is invaluable for new staff who as part of their induction can find out how the careers provision works and their role in it
- Parents/carers can find out what they can expect, but more importantly, how the school intends to support and engage them in helping their own children in making career choices
- Students can find out about the school's commitment to them and how the school intends to actively involve them in the design, development and evaluation of the careers programme
- External partners who become involved in the school or have an agreement with the school can find out what is expected of them. (The range of partners includes other learning providers, career guidance providers, enterprise coordinators and enterprise advisers (England only), employers and community partners).

Commitment

The policy is a mission statement. It enables the school to be as ambitious as it wants to be in setting goals for its careers provision and then work towards achieving them.

Focus

The policy gives those responsible for managing and delivering the careers programme a sense of direction and purpose. Career guidance is a complex and hybrid provision which includes stand-alone, cross-curricular and co-curricular/extra-curricular activities and individual and small-group help and support.

Connections

The policy is a means of making connections with other related policies such as those for teaching and learning, assessment, PSHE, citizenship and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Relationships

The effort that goes into building a consensus around the need for a policy can strengthen relationships. Collaborating and sharing responsibility for the careers policy improves staff collegiality and teamwork. It can also promote partnership with parents/carers, other local education providers, including HE, apprenticeship providers, employers and career guidance services.

Communication

The policy statement is an effective way of informing interested parties what you are trying to achieve. Parents/carers, for example, can read the policy on the school website and, at a glance, see your commitment to them and their children. It can contribute to the evidence base for Ofsted inspectors and assessors for the Quality in Careers Standard when they are making their judgements.

Action

Having a policy contributes to informed decision-making and a sound basis for developing a careers strategy and plan of action.

Having a good policy-making process

An effective policy-making process (see Box One) enables you to raise staff awareness of the scope and value of career guidance and involve them in identifying needs and priorities. It helps to build consensus around what might otherwise be a contested area of the curriculum and to raise the profile of careers. Policy-making is an exercise in educational change and, therefore, needs to be

carefully managed. Above all, an effective process leads to a better policy.

The process of developing, implementing and reviewing your policy should be seen as a cycle. A two-yearly cycle ensures that the policy remains a living and working document.

The role of the careers leader

The careers leader is crucial to the success of policymaking in this area. It is usual for the senior leadership team to delegate the drafting of the policy to the careers leader. They have the advantage of their position, expertise and established relationships to provide confidence and clarity in the process of formulating a policy. Key responsibilities include liaising with the senior leadership team, producing drafts, consulting with staff and disseminating the policy once agreed.

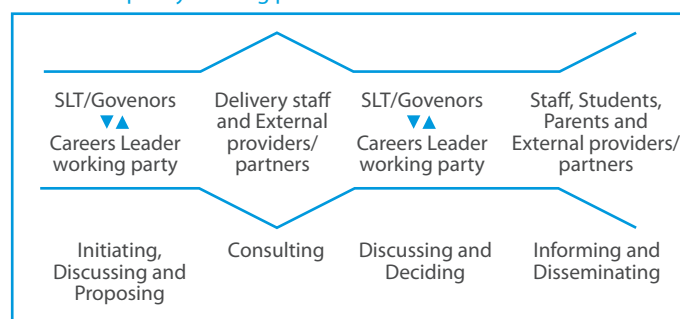
Key steps for careers leaders

1. Clarify the expectations of the senior leadership team. You need to be clear about:
 - the vision and overall strategy of the governing board for careers
 - the priorities in the school improvement plan so that you can make strong connections
 - the future levels of specialist staffing and funding for careers
 - the planned curriculum, timetable and teaching arrangements that could impact on the delivery of the programme
 - the contracts and partnerships that will be maintained or developed
 - the school's preferred approach to developing, approving and reviewing policy
 - the timescale for finalising the policy.
2. Make use of your school's past experience of policymaking (and running a careers programme), particularly if your school has a tradition of excellent practice going back a number of years. Use the last policy that your school had as a blueprint, if appropriate, but be prepared to radically re-write it if the internal and external situation has changed markedly.
3. Go online and look at examples of policy statements on other school websites for ideas and inspiration. Join online communities such as the CDI Community of Practice for Careers Leaders on LinkedIn and CareersLeadersUK on Facebook and get advice. Investigate free sources of information about what to include in a policy. Above all, get to know career guidance inside out. If you are new to careers work, take advantage of every training opportunity to improve your knowledge and expertise, e.g. the careers leader courses run by the CDI and other providers on behalf of the Careers & Enterprise Company. Get involved in your local careers forum or Careers Hub to share information and ideas about developing a policy.
4. Identify a small team or working party to develop a draft policy. This could include:
 - members of staff involved in careers work (e.g. the previous careers leader, the careers adviser, the careers administrator)
 - the link governor for careers, if you have one (they can oversee the passage of the policy through the governing board)
 - interested members of staff
 - a parent/carer representative
 - a student representative
 - employers engaged with the school/college
 - enterprise coordinator or enterprise adviser.

The role of this group is to discuss ideas for the policy statement and clarify the issues on which to consult others; but not to write the draft itself which is best left to the Careers Leader.

5. Consult with staff who will have a role in the implementation of the policy. This could take the form of discussions in meetings with staff or a questionnaire on the draft that staff are asked to complete.
6. Involve the small team or working party in shaping the policy proposals following the consultation and submit to the relevant committee/senior leadership team for final review and signing off and then to governors for approval.
7. Disseminate the policy to all those who will be affected by it. Make sure that the version of the careers policy on the website is the latest one.
8. Monitor and review progress and achievement annually as part of the school's formal self-assessment/self-evaluation processes; and revise the policy every two years. Check who is responsible for reminding you to update the policy. Make it easier for governors to approve proposed changes by highlighting them or showing them as tracked changes in the policy document.

Box One: A policy-making process

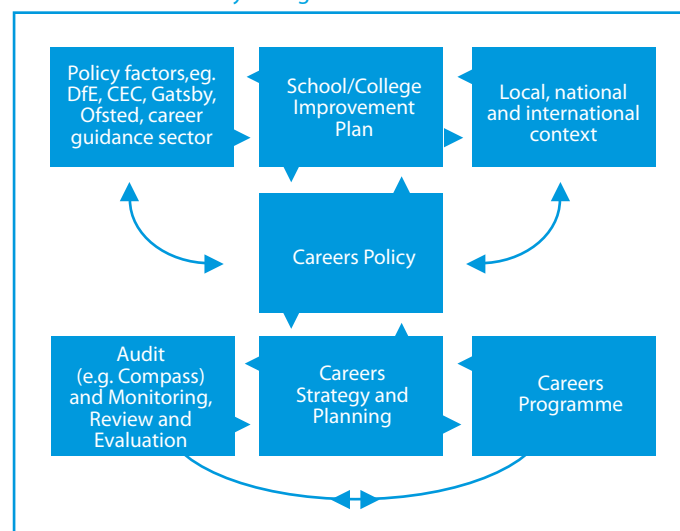


The management of career guidance

Policy has a central role in the management of career guidance in a school (see Box Two below). It contributes to the stability of the careers programme (Gatsby benchmark 1) by serving as the main reference point for the overarching goals of the programme. It is particularly important in relation to the school strategy for careers. The strategy is the top-level plan of action to achieve the intentions and goals of the policy and the priorities identified in the careers improvement plan.

In multi-academy trusts (MATs), it is important that the trust has an overarching careers policy and strategy which sets out its ambitions for its schools and the support available to enable them to develop their bespoke policies and approaches.

Box Two: Careers Policy linkages



A careers policy template

The template (see Box Three below) can easily be adapted by schools to suit their particular circumstances and existing practice. Many will already use a standard format which helps staff to familiarise themselves with what's in the policy and to make connections with other relevant policies. The main features of this template are:

- Suggested section headings and sub-headings
- Prompts to assist with the wording of the policy
- Tips and useful information on the content of the policy

Box Three: A careers policy template

Headings	Prompts	Tips
Title	<p>"XX School – Careers Policy"</p> <p>"Career Education and Guidance Policy"</p> <p>"Career Learning and Development Policy"</p>	<p>Opt for a transparent title – Acronyms such as 'CEIAG' can be off-putting to parents.</p> <p>Decide whether to have a joint policy for careers (non-statutory) and provider access (statutory) or keep them separate, but either way make sure they are well-signposted on your website.</p> <p>Some schools may wish to broaden the scope of the policy by combining it with PSHE for a more holistic approach to personal wellbeing and/or with enterprise, work-related learning, employability, work experience, financial literacy and education-business understanding for a more integrated approach to economic wellbeing. There are pros and cons to doing this. The most important consideration is not to lose the specific focus on career guidance.</p>
Vision and values	<p>"This policy is underpinned by our long-term vision and core values. ..."</p> <p>"We are committed to implementing a careers programme that..."</p> <p>"The aims of this policy are..."</p>	<p>Show how the policy relates to the ethos and culture of the school and makes your careers provision distinctive, e.g. whether it is in fostering wellbeing, promoting success, unlocking potential, raising aspirations or improving the life chances of children.</p> <p>You may also identify as part of your vision aims that are related to the wider context, e.g. local issues, social justice, decent work, sustainable living and the future of work.</p>
Statutory requirements and expectations	<p>"The school is committed to fulfilling its statutory duties in relation to..."</p> <p>"We will also..."</p>	<p>Your policy provides a framework for meeting national requirements and expectations (see Box Four). The policy-making process will help you to identify any gaps. You must give priority to meeting statutory requirements.</p>
Learner entitlement	<p>"Every student is entitled to high quality career education and guidance as part of their overall education which..."</p> <p>"Students in Year 7..."</p> <p>"Students in Year 8..."</p> <p>Etc.</p>	<p>The CDI Framework for Careers, Employability and Enterprise Education (2018) (https://www.theccdi.net/Careers-Framework-2018) is a useful resource to help you write statements of entitlement for different groups of students. The entitlement can be expressed in terms of intended outcomes/impact and access to informational, educational and guidance activities/inputs and processes.</p>
Management and delivery	<p>"We recognise the importance of putting in place effective arrangements for the management and delivery of the programme."</p>	<p>This section is about what is being put in place to support the achievement of the goals of the policy.</p>

<p>Roles and responsibilities “The governing board are responsible for ...” “The senior leadership team are responsible for...” “The careers leader is responsible for...” “The careers adviser is responsible for...” “Subject leaders are responsible for...” “Heads of Year...” “All staff...” Etc.</p>	<p>The purpose of this section is to provide clarity about who does what.</p> <p>Since September 2018, the DfE has expected all schools to appoint a Careers Leader to deliver the careers programme and to name this person and publish contact details on their website (<i>Careers strategy: making the most of everyone’s skills and talents</i>. DfE, 2017. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664319/Careers_strategy.pdf)</p> <p>Ask each department to produce a written statement in their own improvement plans explaining what they are going to do to embed career learning in their schemes of work.</p>
<p>Staff development “All staff are expected to contribute to the career learning and development of students in their different roles. To meet the training needs that arise from this, we will...”</p>	<p>It is good practice to meet staff training needs through the staff development plan and to commit to meeting staff needs within a reasonable period of time.</p> <p>All staff and education partners should be expected to have regard to the 2019 code of ethics of the Career Development Institute (https://www.thecdi.net/Code-of-Ethics)</p>
<p>Funding and resourcing “Funding for careers will be allocated in the school budget in accordance with...” “The school will explore sources of external funding...”</p>	<p>As far as possible, the school should aim to resource the careers provision at the level needed to achieve the aims of the policy.</p>
<p>Teaching, learning and assessment “We recognise the importance of basing our approach to teaching, learning and assessment on evidence of what works in career education and guidance...”</p>	<p>The CDI Framework and <i>Careers in the Curriculum</i> (Careers & Enterprise Company, 2017)(https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/research/careers-curriculum-what-works) emphasise the importance of creating rich learning environments and designing compelling learning experiences for students. Dialogic teaching, enquiry-based learning, first-hand experiences and reflective learning are an important part of this. Assessment as and for learning is also important.</p>
<p>Information, advice and guidance “We will ensure that all students have access to...”</p>	<p>Schools are required to provide independent and impartial career guidance and to ensure that students have access to information and advice about all pathways – not just HE. The policy should also affirm the school commitment to career guidance delivered by a Level 6 or above qualified career development professional (careers adviser) who upholds the professional standards of the Career Development Institute.</p>
<p>Monitoring, reviewing, evaluating and reporting “The implementation of the careers programme will be monitored and reviewed by...” We will evaluate and report on the programme...”</p>	<p>Monitoring the programme can be achieved through record-keeping, tracking and observation. The purpose of reviewing is to identify improvements that could be made.</p> <p>The policy should explain the evaluation and reporting cycle that you have put in place. It is helpful to identify methods that are manageable such as focus groups and surveys and to carry out evaluations that promise a good return on investment. It is also important to be realistic about what can be achieved by the careers programme and what is dependent on socio-economic and other factors outside the school’s control. The outcomes which it is appropriate to measure are often small transformative learning steps such as an increase in confidence, reduced anxiety or an improved attitude.</p>

Stakeholders and partners	Parents/carers “We recognise the important role that parents have in their child’s career development. ...”	Parents and carers should be recognised as co-partners in the career development of their child and be supported in developing the confidence and capability to support their child’s planning and decision-making.
	Careers support agencies “The school has an annual agreement with...”	Outline the agreements and co-operation that you have with external services/agencies such as a career guidance company, the Careers & Enterprise Company or the 14-19 local authority support team. If you are commissioning independent careers guidance services from an external provider, check that they meet the standard recognised by the CDI and the Quality in Careers Standard (practitioners qualified to Level 6 or above and organisations holding the matrix Standard.
	Employers, community partners and learning providers	Outline your commitment to collaborative working with employers, HE, local learning providers, apprenticeship providers, LEP, etc. The policy needs to explain the principles underlying engagement with partners. In colleges, for example, the vocational and technical education courses and qualifications offered are labour market led so the policy will emphasise the commitment to designing career and employment pathways for students with and for employers, helping students on their employability journey and the college’s expectations around respect for equality, diversity and inclusion and access to decent work.
Date approved	“Adopted by the governing board on...”	
Date of next review	“Review date:”	Many schools review their policies on a two-year cycle.
Annexes	“This policy should be read in conjunction with...” “Links to other relevant documents...”	So that the policy document does not become too long, it is useful to include additional information as an annex, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glossary/Definitions of careers terms • Gatsby benchmark summary grid (showing the progress you are making towards meeting the benchmarks) • Pupil Premium Report • Links to related policies, e.g. PSHE & SRE; citizenship; Looked after Children; SEND; Gifted and Talented; Young Carers; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. <p>Looked After Children – The local authority is required to ensure that every looked after child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) to support the child in achieving the best possible educational and career outcomes (See p.15 and 17 of <i>Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children: Statutory guidance for local authorities</i>. DfE, February 2018)</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf</p> <p>Every looked after child must have a designated teacher in the school who has a key role in ensuring the quality of the PEP.</p>

Box Four: Statutory responsibilities and expectations

Colleges have a legal requirement to provide all college learners with guidance materials and a wide range of up-to-date reference materials relating to careers education and career opportunities. (Section 45 of the 1997 Education Act).

The 2002 Education Act requires schools to provide a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which:

- a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- b) prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Schools and colleges have a public sector duty to promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations across all people, eliminate harassment and discriminatory practices and support children with protected characteristics (2010 Equality Act).

The statutory career guidance duty (2011 Education Act, subsequently extended) requires schools to ensure that all students are provided with independent careers guidance from year 8 to year 11 which is presented in an impartial manner, provides information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways and is guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the students to whom it is given.

Statutory guidance: Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (DfE, 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>

All 16- to 18-year-olds (and 19- to 25-year-olds with a current EHC Plan) in college must have access to independent careers guidance (as set out in their funding agreement).

Guidance: Careers guidance for colleges (DfE, 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-for-colleges--2>

All young people in England are required to continue in education or training between the ages of 16 and 18. They can do this in three ways: full time study in a school, college or training provider; an apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship; full time work or volunteering (20 hours or more) combined with part time accredited study.

2018 Access to Providers - New legislation (2018, paras 61-69) requires all maintained schools and academies to provide opportunities for a range of education and training providers to have access to pupils from Y8-13. (For further details and an example of a policy statement see Statutory Guidance 2018, pp. 29-31, 33).

All ESFA funded education for 16 to 19-year-olds should be delivered as a study programme which combines qualifications and other activities, and which is tailored to each student's prior attainment and career goals.

Every school and college is expected to publish information about their careers programme, including the name of their Careers Leader (Statutory Guidance, 2018).

Ofsted

Schools and colleges are expected to be accountable to Ofsted for their performance. In full inspections, inspectors are required to make judgements about careers. Inspectors are legally required to comment on the careers guidance provided to learners at colleges.

The education inspection framework (2019) (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/801429/Education_inspection_framework.pdf) provides clear evidence of what inspectors expect. Included in the Quality of Education judgement on impact, for example, they are looking for evidence that "learners are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. Where relevant, they gain qualifications that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests, aspirations and the intention of their course of study". The Personal Development judgement has much that is implicitly related to personal career development and an explicit statement that inspectors will evaluate the extent to which "at each stage of education, the provider prepares learners for future success in their next steps". Similarly, the Leadership and Management judgement has much that is implicitly related to careers including the statement that inspectors will evaluate the extent to which "leaders engage effectively with learners and others in their community, including – where relevant – parents, carers, employers and local services".

Gatsby

The DfE's guidance to schools and colleges states that all schools and colleges should aim to meet the Gatsby Foundation's Benchmarks of "Good Career Guidance" by the end of 2020 (para.17, p.14)

For further information:

Gatsby Good Career Guidance <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>

The Careers & Enterprise Company Gatsby benchmark toolkits for:

- schools https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/gatsby_benchmark_toolkit.pdf
- special schools https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/1051_the_send_gatsby_benchmark_toolkit.pdf
- colleges https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/1073_thegatsbybenchmarktoolkit_colleges_online3.pdf

Quality in Careers Standard

The DfE guidance strongly recommends that all schools should aim to achieve accreditation under the Quality in Careers Standard (para.22, p.16).

Quality in Careers Standard <http://www.qualityincareers.org.uk>

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About the author

Anthony Barnes is a careers education specialist. He is a NICEC Fellow and an honorary life member of the CDI.

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