



POLICY BRIEFING NOTE: 5

This is the fifth of a series of short Policy Briefing Notes prepared by Patrick Watson, MONTROSE PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONSULTANTS LTD, and published by Careers England.

OFSTED REPORT FINDS CAREERS GUIDANCE IN SCHOOLS

- NOT WORKING WELL ENOUGH (September 2013)

- Ofsted's thematic review of Careers guidance in schools finds its not working well enough
- Three quarters of schools are not meeting their statutory duty

Comments

1. Three quarters of the schools visited for an Ofsted survey published today, 10.9.2013, were not implementing their duty to provide impartial careers advice effectively. The survey also finds that guidance for schools on careers advice is not explicit, the National Careers Service is not promoted well enough and there is a lack of employer engagement in schools.
2. The report examines the quality of careers advice since September 2012 when schools were given the legal responsibility to provide this service to students aged 14 – 16. The survey looked at the extent to which young people in this age-range, in the 60 schools that inspectors visited, were receiving impartial careers advice in order to make informed decisions about their future.
3. Very few of the schools visited knew how to provide a service effectively or had the skills and expertise needed to provide a comprehensive service. Few schools had bought in adequate service from external sources.
4. The report findings show schools were not working well enough with employers to provide students with direct experience of the world of work in order to help broaden their minds about realistic employment opportunities in their local area.
5. Vocational training and apprenticeships were rarely promoted effectively, especially in schools with sixth forms. Instead, the A-Level route remained the 'gold-standard' for young people, their parents and teachers.
6. Few schools were promoting the **National Careers Service**, the body responsible for providing independent and impartial careers advice to young people from the age of 13. Its telephone service and website were also rarely promoted and therefore significantly underused. Nearly all of the students interviewed who were aware of



the website, told inspectors that it offered nothing different from other similar sites and the large majority felt it was mostly aimed towards older students and adults.

7. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw said:

'It is vitally important that young people have access to information on the full range of career pathways available so they can make informed choices about their next steps. Our findings show that too few schools are doing enough to ensure all their students receive comprehensive advice about the breadth of career opportunities available to them.'

'It is worrying that the new arrangements are failing to provide good guidance or to promote vocational training options and apprenticeships. Given the high levels of youth unemployment, even amongst graduates, it is important the Government, schools, local authorities and other agencies all work to improve the quality of careers advice in schools.'

8. The report makes a number of recommendations to the Government, schools, Local Authorities, The National Careers Service as well as for Ofsted itself.

9. **It recommends:**

- **The Government provide more explicit guidance to schools on careers advice.**
- **The Government monitor students' progress and achievement when they leave school through accurate collection of 'destination data' to give a better understanding of a young person's journey to employment.**
- **The National Careers Service markets its services more effectively to all young people aged 13-18 and does more to disseminate information on national skills shortages so that young people gain a greater understanding of where there are likely to be greater employment opportunities.**
- **Ofsted also recommends that its own inspectors take greater account of careers guidance and students' destinations when conducting future school inspections.**

10. It was also revealed today that the CIPD, a professional body for human resources experts, says that its research has shown that more than half of employers believe that young people are not receiving good enough careers advice.

11. The CBI has also issued hard-hitting warnings, saying that careers advice is on "*life support*" in many schools.

12. Earlier this year the House of Commons Education Select Committee warned of a "*worrying deterioration*" in careers services.

13. Jan Hodges, Chief Executive of the Edge Foundation – an independent education charity commenting on the Ofsted report said:

- *"It's clear that many schools are failing to deliver impartial careers advice to their students. The best support goes to students aiming for university. They get help to choose courses and fill in UCAS applications."*



- *“There’s much less help for young people considering vocational options such as apprenticeships and full-time courses at further education colleges.*
- *“One reason is that teachers know much less about apprenticeships than other options. In our last YouGov survey, only one in five of all secondary school teachers (22%) rated their knowledge of apprenticeships as good or very good.*
- *“Worryingly, teachers in the 25-35 age group are even less well-informed – only 10% have a good understanding of apprenticeships. Faced with findings like these, it’s obvious we need to improve careers education for all young people.*
- *“All young people should be entitled to meet an independent careers adviser face to face. That’s a given. But it’s not enough.*
- *“From primary school onwards, young people should find out about careers by meeting people from all walks of life, both in school and in the workplace. They should also visit further education colleges, universities and apprenticeship training providers to learn about the choices that lie ahead.*
- *“They say seeing is believing. That’s why it’s vital for young people to learn about careers first hand as well as from professional advisers.”*

Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/going-right-direction-careers-guidance-schools-september-2012>

Note 1: Statutory Duty

Section 29 of the Education Act 2011 placed schools under a duty to secure access to independent careers guidance for their pupils in school years 9 to 11. From September 2013 this was extended to years 8-13 and revised statutory guidance has been published to reflect this change.

‘Headteachers, school staff and governing bodies must have regard to this statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State in exercising their functions under this section’.

Note 2: Careers support for adults and young people is provided by the National Careers Service, which in 2012-13 was funded by £84.4m from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, £14m from the Ministry of Justice and £4.7m from the Department for Education.

Note 3: GOVERNMENT’S REACTION TO OFSTED REPORT ON CAREERS GUIDANCE IN SCHOOLS

3.1 HMG has issued a ‘Vision’ statement in response to an Ofsted review of careers guidance in schools



3.2 The Government's response to Ofsted's damning report on the state of careers guidance in schools was basically steady as she goes, combined with a commitment to issue new guidance. Given most schools ignored the initial guidance it is not clear what sanctions will be in place to ensure that they abide by any new guidance, when it appears later this year. And destination measures are regarded by professionals as a weak accountability tool and will take time to provide a clear picture of the state of play.

3.3 The Government says it *'has an important role to play in setting out a strong framework for information, advice and guidance. **We will publish revised statutory guidance to better equip schools to meet their duty later in the year.** We will extend and improve the National Careers Service resources to help schools make links into employment for their students. We will make sure young people can understand the pathways others have taken to work and what they have achieved through better, more joined up destinations data. The National Careers Service should also play an important role in linking employers, schools, colleges, social enterprises and others, and in enabling young people to do independent research to inform their own decisions.'*

3.4 *'We will produce Destination Measures to show what happens to young people after they leave education and ask schools to publish on their websites what they do to help their pupils go on into education, training or work. We will learn from what works by trying different interventions in different places.'*

3.5 The Minister, Matthew Hancock, says *'Schools will also be held to account through Ofsted for the support they deliver. As Sir Michael Wilshaw has set out, from September Ofsted will give greater priority to the inspection of careers advice. I welcome this commitment from Ofsted, along with the commitment to consider young people's destinations when judging the quality of a school's leadership and management. I believe this is an important step for holding schools and colleges to account on the quality of provision for young people.'*

3.6 The key issue remains how many young people will have easy access to face to face high quality careers advice and guidance given by an independent professional. That is the type of advice that is most appropriate for, particularly, disadvantaged pupils who are supposed to be a priority. At the moment access to face to face advice is, at best, patchy.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/238841/bis-13-1176-inspiration-vision-statement-R2.pdf