



This is the 21st of a series of short Policy Briefing Notes
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POLICY BRIEFING NOTE 21 **19th September 2014**

Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance

1. The new Ofsted school inspection handbook

2. Ofsted Inspection Reports since September 2013

With thanks to CE Affiliate Members Anthony Barnes & David Ritchie

This Policy Briefing Note outlines the changes to the inspection of careers guidance in the Ofsted school inspection handbook, and implications for the work of schools, and especially sixth forms. It is supported by an appendix looking in some detail at how Ofsted has reported upon careers guidance since September 2013.

1. Careers guidance in inspections of maintained schools and academies

1.1 The Ofsted *School Inspection Handbook* has been revised for use from September 2014¹. It should be read alongside *The framework for school inspection*² and *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies*³.

1.2 The approach to inspecting careers guidance, along with Ofsted's overall inspection methodology⁴, remains basically unchanged. The focus of school inspections is on those factors that Ofsted believes will make the most difference to raising achievement. One of these factors is the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management. This is the

¹ School Inspection Handbook (Ofsted, August 2014)

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/inspection--forms-and-guides/s/School%20inspection%20handbook.doc>

² *The framework for school inspection* <http://ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-school-inspection>

³ *Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies* <http://ofsted.gov.uk/resources/inspecting-safeguarding-maintained-schools-and-academies-briefing-for-section-5-inspections>

⁴ Ofsted has published an article summarising the changes <https://cms4dm1n.ofsted.gov.uk/news/revised-guidance-for-inspections-of-maintained-schools-and-academies>

context in which Ofsted makes judgements about the quality of careers guidance. In school inspections, inspectors are not evaluating careers guidance for its own sake but for its impact on raising achievement and for what it reveals about the quality of leadership and management. Understanding that this is the role of careers guidance in school inspections, therefore, may go some way to explaining the apparent lack of consistency in the reporting of how well schools are implementing the careers guidance duty.

1.3 It is a welcome recognition of the contribution that effective careers guidance makes to raising achievement that the guidance to inspectors has been strengthened in the 2014 handbook. Paragraph 154 states:

Inspectors should explore:

- the extent to which the school has developed and implemented a strategy for ensuring that all pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive effective careers guidance
- the impact of this guidance in helping young people to make informed choices about their next steps
- how well the school meets the needs of all vulnerable groups of pupils, including reducing the numbers who do not continue to education, employment or training
- how well the school works with families to support them in overcoming the cultural obstacles that often stand in the way of the most able pupils from deprived backgrounds attending university.

1.4 The previous handbook (September 2013) simply stated that inspectors should consider how well leaders and managers ensure the curriculum “provides timely independent information, advice and guidance to assist pupils on their next steps in training, education or employment” (para 135).

1.4 Ofsted now refers explicitly to ‘careers guidance’ which is the term used in the statutory duty (and not ‘information, advice and guidance’ as before); but it has omitted the word ‘impartial’ which should be there and indeed is in the guidance on sixth-form provision (see para 211). Ofsted has also taken note of the revised statutory guidance (April 2014) by asking inspectors to explore whether the school has a career guidance ‘strategy’ for pupils covered by the new duty. Followers of policy-making in this arena will recall that the Education Committee in its inquiry into how well schools were implementing the new duty (2013)⁵ recommended that schools should have an annual careers plan. At the time, the DfE

⁵ *Careers guidance for young people: The impact of the new duty on schools* (Education Committee, January 2013) <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/news/substantive-careers-guidance/>

rejected the idea; but it is now clear that a reformulated proposal for annual career plans could help schools to develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of their careers guidance strategies in line with Ofsted's thinking.

1.6 Ofsted has highlighted for inspectors two continuing social and political priorities. One is meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils which they link to NEET reduction⁶. It is particularly important that schools relate this to their policy on the use of the Pupil Premium and the new arrangements they are putting in place for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. The second is helping the most able pupils from deprived backgrounds get into university. This is important but so too is raising awareness of other progression routes for all young people. At the next revision, Ofsted must balance this with a check on whether schools are meeting the statutory requirement to provide information on the full range of options for young people, including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways.

1.7 As before, inspectors are required to collect evidence from a wide range of sources including observations. From this September no overall grade will be given for the quality of teaching in a lesson observation; but careers education activities can be coded 'CA' on the evidence form (EF) that inspectors use which helpfully gives Ofsted the capability to analyse evidence on the quality and impact of careers education activities across multiple inspections.

1.8 Inspectors are also encouraged to collect evidence on the quality and impact of careers guidance from talking to pupils and students as well as their parents (including extracting information from Parent View). The handbook makes reference to evaluating educational provision by finding out the contribution of partnerships with other providers and employers; but it would be helpful if the next revision encouraged inspectors to find out how partnerships with external careers guidance providers and 'inspirational' employers impacted on the effectiveness of careers guidance.

2. Sixth-form provision

2.1 The new handbook prompts inspectors to consider the contribution of high-quality impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) to the overall

⁶ This was a key theme in the speech by Lorna Fitzjohn, National Director for Further Education and Skills, at the Further Education and Skills annual lecture held on 10 September 2014
<http://ofsted.gov.uk/resources/further-education-and-skills-annual-lecture-2014-speech-securing-better-future-for-all-16-and-beyond>

effectiveness of the sixth-form provision and the quality of education provided in post-16 study programmes (see especially paragraphs 211 and 212). It emphasises the importance of looking at retention and success rates (a measure of whether young people received the support they needed to choose appropriate courses) and progression and destinations data. The handbook also gives prominence to the development of wider personal, social and employability skills including the contribution of non-qualification activities and/or work experience to preparing students for their next steps.

2.2 From September 2014, inspectors will award a single numerical grade for the effectiveness of sixth-form provision. The quality and impact of CEIAG contributes to this grade (see grade descriptors on p81-2). The tenor of the criteria for the award of 'outstanding' (grade 1) is that CEIAG is central to the purposes of 16-19 education.

3. Implications for the work of schools

3.1 The handbook for the inspection of schools will help schools develop their own approach to the evaluation of careers guidance. They should take note of the emphasis in the handbook on careers guidance as an important element in improving school performance and the recognition that it requires a whole-school strategy to bring this about and to deliver the statutory duty effectively.

3.2 The evaluation criteria for sixth-form provision are particularly strong in recognising that high-quality, high-impact CEIAG is central to successful post-16 education.

4. Conclusion

The new handbook is an improvement on the previous version as far as careers guidance is concerned; but for the reasons outlined above and the evidence we set out in the appendix, the current school inspection arrangements will not provide a means of consistently monitoring and improving careers guidance standards across the school system.

The added value benefits from schools and colleges working towards, and achieving, a nationally validated⁷ CEIAG Quality Award is recommended by Careers England to all School & College Leaders.

⁷ National validation of England's 12 CEIAG Quality Awards is undertaken through the QUALITY IN CAREERS STANDARD <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/quality.php?page=ceiag-quality-awards>

APPENDIX 1

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF OFSTED'S INTERVENTIONS IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CEIAG

Following the Education Act 2011 making schools responsible for 'securing access to independent careers guidance' for their students, and the Ofsted Thematic Survey of 2013, the clear statement from the Chief Inspector and from the DfE was that there would from September 2013 be a more focused attention given by Ofsted examining and reporting on careers guidance provision, leadership and management in all school inspections.

We asked Careers England members to report upon their experience of Ofsted inspections in schools where they provide services and, through research we have undertaken into published Ofsted Inspection Reports which have been carried out since September 2013, we are publishing the results and we offer the Select Committee this review of what is happening on the ground.

The evidence demonstrates that there is an urgent need to make Ofsted's work both more consistent and more effective in influencing school behaviour for the better.

HEADLINES ARE:

1. In 94 (only 43.7%) of the 215 OFSTED reports (published since September 2013 which we have reviewed) there was explicit reference to careers guidance.
2. Across the 215 reports reviewed, the qualitative nature of the Inspection Reports' references to careers guidance in 65 (30.2%) – as we have analysed below - varies.
3. Across the 215 reports there are only 17 explicit references, (7.9%) - in numbers 1-17 illustrated below - from which it is possible to infer that school leadership and management of CEIAG is effective in supporting young people to take their next steps.
4. Across the 215 reports there are 8 references, (4.18%) - in numbers 18-25 illustrated below - from which it is possible to infer that a school leadership team has been challenged to improve the quality of its careers provision.

Our Survey in more detail:

(i) Areas of the country (Local Authority Areas) examined= 23

Ealing, Hillingdon, Suffolk, Shropshire, Kingston, Surrey, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell, Titan, Walsall, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole, Hertfordshire, Blackburn and Darwen, Derbyshire, Essex, Hounslow, Harrow, Leicestershire, Calderdale & Kirklees.

(ii) Number of Ofsted Inspection Reports examined (including all forms of secondary provision, Academies & Special) since September 2103 = 215 published Inspection reports

(iii) What evidence (or none) is there which demonstrates Ofsted has been giving careers guidance a higher profile in the inspection process?

In 94 of 215 reports (43.7%) there was some explicit reference to careers guidance. The quality of the references does not, however, indicate that careers guidance has consistently been given a higher profile in the inspection process.

Case Study analysis from one LA area:

“Of the 26 Ofsted reports, under Leadership and management 14 received positive comments; 2 received negative comments about their provision; 1 was not explicit; 3 did not receive any mention and 2 had recently converted so no report available. However, being on the receiving end as a governor at the Studio School the lead inspector was ex- Grammar School and certainly did not take into account the ethos or the curriculum offer.”

(iv) What evidence (or none) is there that careers guidance provision is directly referenced in Ofsted reports?

Across the 215 reports reviewed, the qualitative nature of the Inspection Reports’ explicit references to careers guidance in 65 (30.2%) of these is illustrated below, which demonstrates the need to ensure consistency in how Ofsted reviews careers guidance arrangements in schools. We conclude that there is evidently much urgent need for Ofsted to ensure that in 100% of inspections careers guidance is explicitly and consistently covered.

1. *“In the sixth form, a strengthening of leadership and management has benefited students, who have been provided with high-quality and impartial information, advice and guidance prior to starting post-16 courses, about where as well as what to study, and the range of post-16 courses available”*
2. *‘All learners are provided with excellent information, advice and guidance about the next stages in their career or education through the coaching programme.’*
3. *‘The school makes sure that students receive the individual guidance they need to make informed decisions about their future lives. ‘Retention rates in the sixth form are good, and students persevere with their courses because they receive good advice and guidance to enable them to choose their post 16 study programmes well.’*
4. *“The school has a very successful careers programme that runs throughout students’ time in the school. It offers independent and impartial advice from an external agency as well as ongoing support using the school’s own expertise. This has led to all students in the last two years moving on to further education, training or employment”*
5. *“The school has developed activities to prepare students for the next stage in their education and for the world of work. Attendance at a recent ‘post-16 pathway’ event,*

and visits to universities, have helped students in Years 9 and 10 to start planning the next stages of their education. A 'careers fair', well-supported by local and national businesses, together with other resources have helped students understand career options and the qualifications needed for entry to them. All students regularly update 'personal education plans' which focus them on what they need to do next to make progress towards those qualifications. These are shared with parents"

6. "The academy has effective strategies for care and guidance. For example students at the academy receive independent careers advice from Year 7 and throughout their time at the academy, which results in them being able to make good decisions about their future career choices"
7. "Students say that they receive good advice about courses of study in the school, and about options at age 16 and on leaving the sixth form. This advice is independent and unbiased, and the school encourages outside partners to discuss alternatives with students in assemblies"
8. "Students receive excellent impartial advice, information and careers guidance throughout their time at the school. Nearly all students go on to university at the end of Year 13"
9. "Students speak highly of the advice they receive for gap years and for their future careers and this is reflected in the school's achievement of the Investor in Careers Award"
10. "High-quality information, advice and guidance to help students make the right decisions about their future is provided through lessons, careers days, a specialist adviser, assemblies and tutor time. A high proportion go on to university and others have secured apprenticeships"
11. "Students have access to high quality advice, both from the school and other sources, that prepares them well for the next stage of their education and later life"
12. "A comprehensive careers guidance programme enables students to receive timely and appropriately independent advice about the opportunities open to them when they leave".
13. "Careers guidance in the college is comprehensive and there are several staff members assigned to offer advice. External, independent advice is available to students from professionals who visit the college though most support is offered by college staff"
14. "...excellent external careers advice aid student progression at different times in their education"
15. "Students are given excellent external careers advice, and almost all students move on to education, employment or training either at the end of Year 11 or Year 13"
16. "Strong links with universities, colleges of further education and local industries, together with excellent guidance mean that practically all students progress to career routes of their choice. ...students have access to a good range of advice and independent, specialist guidance to help them decide what to do when they leave the sixth form and at the end of Year 11"

17. *"The academy is the first academy in Birmingham to achieve the Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Quality Mark"*
18. *"The advice and guidance students receive do not steer them all towards the best courses for their career choices nor are they matched to their abilities".*
19. *"The school's systems for offering independent information, advice and guidance to students are inadequate. This has led to students being badly advised – or not advised at all – in terms of their progression after Year 11. As a result, many students have wasted one or two years by attending unsuitable sixth form courses and either failing or not completing them. There is a more coherent strategy being put in place for the main school but it is too early for it to have had an impact".*
20. *"Life skills lessons are not always sufficiently challenging"*
21. *"Students in the sixth form students feel the advice and guidance they are given are useful and impartial. Students in Key Stage 4 feel that advice has, at times, not taken into account their preferences and this concern is being addressed by the academy"*
22. *"Careers education has not yet fully adapted to new requirements introduced last September. Opportunities for students not wishing to follow a GCE A-level route after the age of 16 are very limited. The school seeks and sometimes gains apprenticeship opportunities with local small employers"*
23. *"Sixth formers say there is good guidance for those who wish to apply to universities but not enough careers information and advice for those who might wish to follow a different career path. Nevertheless, all students in the sixth form complete one week work placements".*
24. *'Students say they appreciate the careers advice offered from Year 9 on. However, it is expected that careers advice would start in Year 8; the school plans to begin this in September 2154 as it has only recently made the transition to an academy and is currently heavily engaged in preparing for its first cohort of post-16 students.'*
25. *"The quality of information, advice and guidance is improving, particularly at post-16. There are systems to advise students on appropriate routes taking into consideration their starting points and career aspirations. Despite this, very few students eligible for pupil premium funding choose to follow an academic route at GCSE, even though they have the ability to do so"*
26. *"...provides opportunities for older students to gain independent help about different career choices as well as advice about careers through the school's 'Learning to Live' programme"*
27. *"...provides opportunities for students to gain independent help about different career choices"*
28. *"Students have access to good quality advice, both from the school and other sources, to prepare them for the next stage of their education and later life"*
29. *"Preparation for work is achieved through accredited courses, working with a careers advisor on mock interviews and work placement weeks".*

30. "The school ensures students, both in the sixth form and in the main school, receive independent advice about their career options and consequently, they are well-prepared for and informed about life after they leave"
31. *"(6th form) "The school ensures that students receive appropriate independent guidance and advice to help prepare them for the next stage of their education and the world of work"*
32. "Careers guidance is independent and impartial and there are frequent visits to places of work and to universities"
33. *"Independent and impartial advice on careers, training, sixth form and further education is available to all students as they move through the school"*
34. "Older pupils are given impartial careers advice and guidance to prepare them for future education, training or employment"
35. *"At each stage of their education students are given excellent external advice about the requirements for future education pathways and careers."*
36. "Preparations for moving on after Year 11 are equally effective, reflected in the very positive links with the Connexions service. Last year only one leaver did not successfully transfer to college or to a work placement"
37. *"Special sessions encourage students to apply for the most prestigious universities and are well attended and have a positive impact".*
38. "Very few of the 6th form do not move into education or training"
39. *"The proportion of students leaving who do not continue in education, employment or training is low which reflects the good quality of IAG they receive and promotion of equal opportunities"*
40. "Receive good IAG to help make decisions about their careers" and "Links to local business and universities contribute to effective careers education".
41. *"Pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their lives. Virtually all remaining in learning"*
42. "The guidance they receive, both from the academy and outside, helps them move on to training and apprenticeships after Year 11"
43. *"The school offers advice and guidance on what students want to do when they leave school in Years 9, 11, 12 and 13, and the majority of students think it is impartial and helpful"*
44. "The curriculum has been designed to provide programmes of study that build upon sound guidance and offer opportunities for all students to progress onto further or higher education, training or employment as appropriate."
45. *"The quality of information, advice and guidance is good. Students are supported in developing career plans and advice given is impartial"*
46. "In Year 11, students have a good understanding of the range of opportunities post-16 as a result of the independent careers information they receive"
47. *"Older students praised the way in which they were helped to make appropriate course choices for Key Stage 4 and were grateful for the advice they received, both from the*

- school and from other agencies. Year 11 students agree that the school ensures they are well prepared when choosing options Post-16"*
48. "The school provides high quality advice and guidance to students in Year 11 about the options open to them at school and beyond".
 49. "Students report that visiting specialist staff give helpful individual advice on career pathways"
 50. "Students feel the guidance they receive both from the school and from outside agencies on future career and education opportunities is very helpful"
 51. "The sixth form focuses on academic subjects. Students who wish to pursue more vocational courses are directed to appropriate local providers".
 52. "Students receive helpful guidance from careers advisers and school staff. The advice given enables them to make informed choices about their options throughout the school and at age16"
 53. "The range of regular work experience for students in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is broad"
 54. "Appropriate guidance on careers and future pathways is provided for students by an independent local company."
 55. "Over 80% of students gained university places at their first choice last year. This is one indication of the school's effective arrangements for providing independent information, advice and guidance to prepare students for the next stage in their education".
 56. "Students are given good support as they move from one stage of their education to another. This helps them to make informed choices about what are the best courses for them"
 57. "Students are well informed about progression routes as they move through the school. Links with other providers and employers mean students are able to make informed choices about future pathways"
 58. "Careers advice and guidance, which is regular and builds-up throughout the school, ensures that the girls are very well equipped with the skills needed for activities such as work experience and presenting for interview"
 59. "Students are well prepared for the next stages in their education; they feel the guidance they receive on future career and education opportunities is very helpful"
 60. "...there is developing provision for careers advice at present"
 61. "Students in all key stages told inspectors that they value the good advice and guidance provided for them about which courses to study and the work experience and career opportunities available to them"
 62. "Students receive good information and guidance about course and career options."
 63. "In the sixth form, students say that the advice and guidance on offer give them good information about careers options, either at university or in employment or apprenticeships"

64. “A wealth of careers advice, both by the school and from independent sources, is provided and students acknowledge the quality of the advice they receive”
65. “Independent and impartial advice on careers, training and further education is available to all students as they move through the school”.

(v) What evidence (or none) is there from Ofsted reports that school leadership and management of CEIAG is effective in supporting young people to take their next steps?

Across the 215 reports there are only 17 references, (7.9%) in numbers 1-17 above from which it is possible to infer that school leadership and management of CEIAG is effective in supporting young people to take their next steps.

(vi) What evidence is there that, following an Ofsted Inspection, a school leadership team has been challenged to improve the quality of its careers provision

Across the 215 reports there are only 8 references, (4.18%) in numbers 18-25 above from which it is possible to infer that a school leadership team has been challenged to improve the quality of its careers provision.

All references in respect of careers guidance were recorded under the heading “Leadership and Management”. There were no references to careers guidance in any of the other report sections and in particular the following:

- × **Summary of key findings for parents and pupils**
- × **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

A substantiated reference in respect of careers guidance in either of these categories would demonstrate a commitment from Ofsted to identify and celebrate good practice and challenge poor or ineffective practice.

Careers guidance provision is rarely referred to by “name” – however there are references to “external” or “independent” advice in some of the reports.

Only in two cases were references made to an institution having achieved or working towards a nationally accredited CEIAG quality award, begging the question ‘does every Ofsted inspector know these awards exist, what they require and the proven added value they bring?’

(p) Careers England, September 2014

www.careersengland.org.uk

Paul Chubb, Executive Director, Careers England

paul.chubb@careersengland.org.uk