



The Quality in Careers Standard >>>>

NEWS: JANUARY 2025

QUALITY IN CAREERS STANDARD AWARD HOLDERS AND COMPASS RESULTS

“January 2025 analysis shows impact of achieving the Quality Standard: Award Holders fully achieved an average of 6.5 Gatsby Benchmarks compared with the national average score of 5.8 Benchmarks”

Published 21st January 2025

1. Background:

The Quality in Careers Consortium provided the Careers & Enterprise Company with details of schools and colleges holding the national **Quality in Careers Standard** at the end of September 2024. This enabled the Careers & Enterprise Company to match (via Unique Reference Numbers) the Compass data held for schools and colleges across England which had achieved the Standard – and to compare them with the full cohort of state-funded institutions nationwide.

2. Statutory Duty and national policy for careers education and guidance

The Department for Education¹ expects all schools and colleges to work towards meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks for ‘Good Careers Guidance’, and **‘strongly recommends’** all schools and colleges to work towards achieving external accreditation for their careers provision through the national **Quality in Careers Standard**.

3. The Analysis

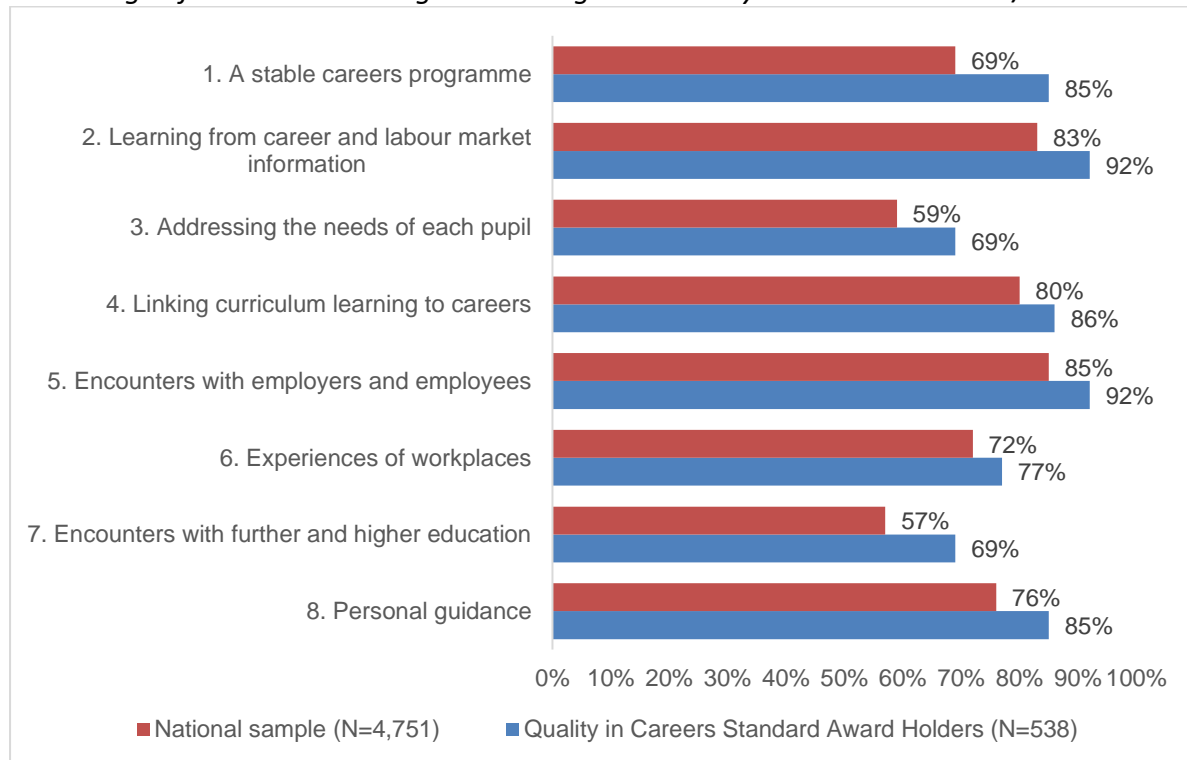
The Careers & Enterprise Company provided the Consortium with the analysis of the data matched for the schools and colleges holding the Standard in January 2025. **A copy of the analysis is provided as the Appendix to this news item.**

The headline outcome shows that **Education institutions accredited under the Quality in Careers Standard achieved an average of 6.5 Gatsby Benchmarks in 2023/24. This is 0.4 benchmarks higher than the previous year. The average number of benchmarks achieved by all state-funded schools & colleges in England is 5.8 benchmarks.**

¹ [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/careers-guidance-and-access-for-education-and-training-providers) January 2023.

The CEC analysis includes this detailed breakdown of the comparative benchmark scores for Quality in Careers Standard “Award Holders” compared with the national average for each of the eight benchmarks:

Percentage of schools and colleges achieving each Gatsby Benchmark in 2023/24



4. Commentary from the Quality in Careers Consortium Board

Paul Chubb, Quality in Careers Director, publishing this analysis today on behalf of the Consortium, said:

“This is the third year in which we’ve received this form of detailed analysis from the Careers and Enterprise Company. This independent analysis confirms the commitment of schools and colleges to high quality-assured careers education and guidance for their pupils and students.

We’re again grateful to the research team at the Careers & Enterprise Company for their work undertaking the analysis and providing us with the results.

The analysis demonstrates the positive impact of schools and colleges following DfE’s “strong recommendation” and achieving the national [Quality in Careers Standard](#).

By doing so, the clear evidence is that schools and colleges increase their achievement in respect of the Gatsby Benchmarks – achieving the highest Compass scores in the country and therefore providing better careers education and guidance for their pupils and students.

We commend this analysis to all school and college leaders.

Following the Gatsby Foundation’s review of the benchmarks in 2024 and the publication of a revised set, we’re currently reviewing our national criteria for the Quality in Careers Standard, and plan to launch an update after Easter 2025, which we plan to implement for all Quality in Careers accreditations from September 2025.”

5. Invitation to Schools & Colleges not yet engaged with the national Standard

Paul added:

*“We invite all schools and colleges not yet engaged with the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) to view the **Virtual Event** on our website² – which provides testimonials from schools (Secondary and SEND) and colleges (SFC and FEC) holding the Standard alongside video introductions to our Awarding Bodies.*

*The event includes a **downloadable PowerPoint** about the Standard so that busy Career Leaders have a resource they can use to present Quality in Careers to SLTs and Governors.*

All of the school and college testimonies emphasise that commitment to achieving the highest quality careers provision brings real benefits for their students.

We hope that these testimonials will inspire others to commit to work towards and achieve the national Standard.

*The evidence, as shown by the Careers & Enterprise Company’s detailed analysis, is that **by working towards and achieving the Quality in Careers Standard schools and colleges achieve the highest results in their Compass scores against the Gatsby Benchmarks – which in turn means their students are receiving careers support of the quality of the best.**”*

² [Virtual Event - Quality in Careers](#)

APPENDIX

Compass results for the secondary schools and colleges in England with the Quality in Careers Standard 2024

This note describes the careers provision in the schools and colleges which achieved the Quality in Careers Standard during the 2023/24 academic year, as recorded in the Compass data held by The Careers & Enterprise Company. It has been produced by The Careers & Enterprise Company for the Quality in Careers Consortium.

20th January 2025

Compass Data

The Compass data used for this analysis are the latest evaluation returns by Careers Leaders as of the end of July 2024 for the academic year 2023/24. It is the same data used in the Gatsby Benchmark Insight Briefing published in October 2024.³ The results reported in this note are the average number of Gatsby Benchmarks fully achieved and the proportion of schools and colleges achieving each of the eight benchmarks. To fully achieve a benchmark, schools and colleges must meet all the sub-benchmarks (approximately 44 in total across the eight benchmarks, depending on the age range of students in the education institution).

Matching process

The Quality in Careers Consortium provided The Careers & Enterprise Company with a list of over 600 schools and colleges that had gained external accreditation under the national Quality in Careers Standard as of September 2024. To prepare the data for matching with Compass data, institutions in Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands were excluded, as were those in primary/middle schools. Analysis was carried out on 538 schools and colleges that were matched with Compass academic year end data (89.6%, below the national proportion of schools and colleges completing a Compass evaluation).

Results

The Quality in Careers Standard has two categories for achievement - 'Achieving the standard: making good progress towards fully meeting criteria' and 'Achieving the Standard: fully meeting the national criteria'. Fully achieving the Quality in Careers Standard depends on full achievement of all eight Gatsby Benchmarks. Of the award holders, 39.4% (N=212) fully achieved all eight benchmarks, equating to fully achieving the Quality in Careers Standard. The remaining 61.6% (N=326) were making good progress towards fully meeting the criteria of the Quality in Careers Standard.

Education institutions accredited under the Quality in Careers Standard achieved an average of 6.5 Gatsby Benchmarks in 2023/24. This is 0.4 benchmarks higher than the previous year (up from 6.1 Gatsby Benchmarks), similar to the proportional increase across all schools and colleges in England since 2022/23.⁴

³ The Careers & Enterprise Company (2024). [Insight briefing – Gatsby Benchmark results for 2023/24](#). London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

⁴ The Careers & Enterprise Company (2024). [Compass results for secondary schools and colleges in England with the Quality in Careers Standard 2023](#). London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

Table 1. Average number of Gatsby Benchmarks fully achieved in 2023/24

	Average number of Gatsby Benchmarks fully achieved	Number of schools and colleges
Schools accredited through Quality in Careers Standard	6.5	538
All state-funded schools and colleges in England completing Compass	5.8	4,751

Fig. 1 Percentage of schools and colleges achieving each Gatsby Benchmark in 2023/24

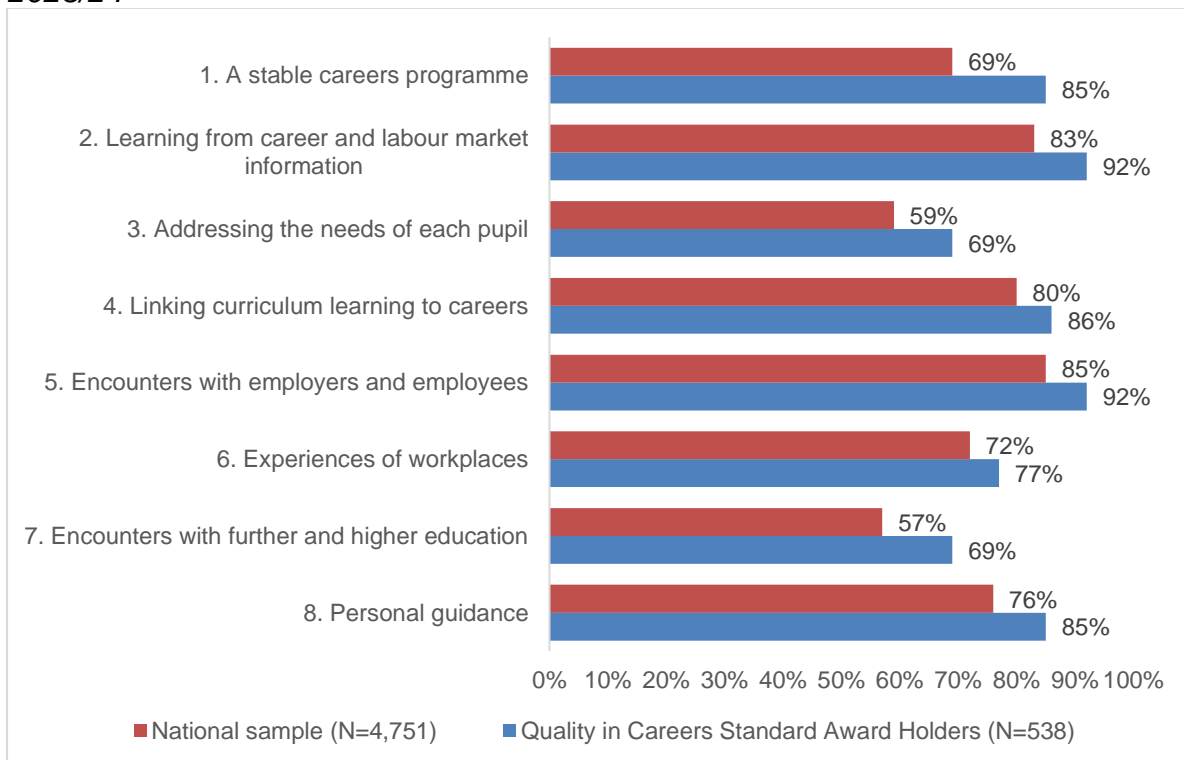


Table 2. Average number of Gatsby Benchmarks achieved by institution type

	Schools accredited through Quality in Careers Standard		All state-funded schools and colleges in England completing Compass	
	<i>Average number of Gatsby Benchmarks</i>	<i>Number of institutions</i>	<i>Average number of Gatsby Benchmarks</i>	<i>Number of institutions</i>
Alternative provision	6.1	13	5.2	276
Mainstream	6.5	422	5.9	3,305
Post 16	6.5	51	5.9	266
SEND	6.7	52	5.9	901
Total	6.5	538	5.8	4,751