



NEWS: DECEMBER 2025

QUALITY IN CAREERS STANDARD AWARD HOLDERS AND COMPASS RESULTS

*“December 2025 analysis shows impact
of achieving the Quality Standard:
Award Holders fully achieved an average of 6.6 Gatsby
Benchmarks compared with the national average score of 6.0 Benchmarks”*

Published 11th December 2025

1. Background

The Quality in Careers Consortium provided the Careers & Enterprise Company with details of **695 schools and colleges** holding the national **Quality in Careers Standard** at the end of September 2025.

This enabled the Careers & Enterprise Company to match (via Unique Reference Numbers) the Compass data held for **578 State 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 in England to work towards achieving external accreditation for their careers provision through the national **Quality in Careers Standard**².

3. The Analysis

The Careers & Enterprise Company provided the Consortium with the analysis of the data matched for the State schools and colleges in England holding the Standard at the end of September 2025.

A copy of the analysis is provided as the Appendix to this news item.

¹ [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - GOV.UK](#) May 2025

² [Statutory Duty and the Guidance from the DfE on Careers Education & Guidance - Quality in Careers](#)

The headline outcome shows that:

- *Education institutions accredited under the Quality in Careers Standard in England achieved an average of 6.6 Gatsby Benchmarks in 2024/25. This is 0.1 benchmarks higher than the previous year.*
- *The average number of benchmarks achieved by all state-funded schools & colleges in England is 6.0 benchmarks which is 0.2 benchmarks higher than the previous year.*

The CEC analysis includes this helpful 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:

Proportion of schools and colleges achieving each Gatsby Benchmark in 2024/25



4. Commentary from the Quality in Careers Consortium Board

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

“This is the 4th year in which we’ve received this form of detailed analysis from the Careers and Enterprise Company. This independent analysis confirms the positive impact from the commitment of schools and colleges to high quality-assured careers education and guidance for their pupils and students.

We’re again particularly 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 evidence of the outcomes achieved when schools and colleges follow the DfE’s “strong recommendation” and work towards and achieve the national [Quality in Careers Standard](#).

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

We’re especially pleased to see the growth in the national average number of benchmarks being achieved, and with Quality in Careers Award Holders continuing to be at the ‘leading edge’ of these improvements we commend this analysis to all school and college leaders.”

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 website³ – 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 assured of receiving careers support which is of the quality of the best.***”

³ [Virtual Event - Quality in Careers](#)

APPENDIX

Compass evaluation results for the secondary schools and colleges in England with the Quality in Careers Standard 2025

This note describes the careers provision in the schools and colleges which achieved the Quality in Careers Standard during the 2024/25 academic year, as recorded in the Compass evaluation data held by The Careers & Enterprise Company. It has been produced by The Careers & Enterprise Company for the Quality in Careers Consortium.

Compass Data

The Compass data used for this analysis are the latest evaluation returns by Careers Leaders as of the end of July 2025 for the academic year 2024/25. It is the same data used in the Gatsby Benchmark Insight Briefing published in October 2025.¹

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 2025. To prepare the data for matching with Compass data, institutions in Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands were excluded, as were independent mainstream schools, primary and middle schools.

Analysis was carried out on 578 schools and colleges that were matched with Compass evaluation academic year-end data (84.4%, below the national proportion of schools and colleges completing a Compass evaluation [93.9%]).

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, 39.3% (N=227) fully achieved all eight benchmarks, equating to fully achieving the Quality in Careers Standard. The remaining 60.7% (N=351) were making good progress towards fully meeting the criteria of the Quality in Careers Standard.

¹ The Careers & Enterprise Company (2025). Insight Briefing: Gatsby Benchmark results for 2024/25. Online, available at: [Insight briefing - Gatsby Benchmark results for 2024/25 | The Careers and Enterprise Company](#)

Educational settings accredited under the Quality in Careers Standard achieved an average of 6.6 Gatsby Benchmarks in 2024/25, compared with a national average of 6.0. This is 0.1 benchmarks higher than the previous year (up from 6.5 Gatsby Benchmarks), compared with a national average increase of 0.2 Gatsby Benchmarks.

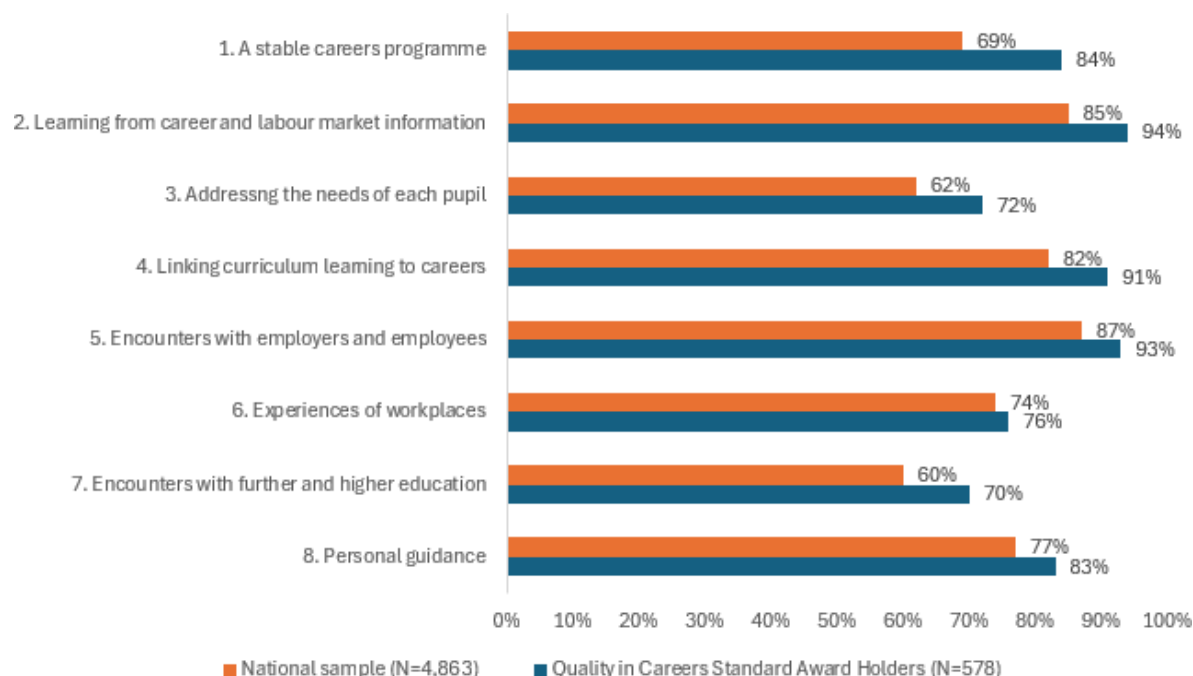
Table 1. Average number of Gatsby Benchmarks fully achieved in 2024/25

| | Average number of Gatsby Benchmarks fully achieved | Number of schools and colleges |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| State-funded schools and colleges accredited through the Quality in Careers Standard | 6.6 | 578 |
| All state-funded schools and colleges in England completing Compass | 6.0 | 4,863 |

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

| | State Schools & colleges accredited through the Quality in Careers Standard 2024/25 | | All state-funded schools and colleges in England completing Compass 2024/25 | |
|-----------------------|---|------------------------|---|------------------------|
| | Average number of Gatsby Benchmarks | Number of institutions | Average number of Gatsby Benchmarks | Number of institutions |
| Alternative provision | 5.4 | 12 | 5.3 | 284 |
| Mainstream | 6.6 | 454 | 6.0 | 3,330 |
| Post 16 | 6.4 | 55 | 6.0 | 270 |
| SEND | 7.4 | 57 | 6.0 | 979 |
| Total | 6.6 | 578 | 6.0 | 4,863 |

Table 3: Proportion of schools and colleges achieving each Gatsby Benchmark in 2024/25



(p) 10th December 2025