

Getting ready for work

Following Lord Young's report in 2014, 'Enterprise for all', this report investigates the availability and effectiveness of enterprise education and work-related learning for pupils in secondary schools. In the course of their visits to 40 secondary schools, inspectors also looked at how well schools and businesses were engaging with each other and how these schools were promoting alternatives to university, including apprenticeships.

Age group: 11–16

Published: November 2016

Reference no: 160056



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Introduction

The question of how well our school system is preparing young people for the world of work has never been more important. The future success and prosperity of the UK in a post-Brexit world will increasingly depend on our ability to harness home-grown talent and to encourage the creativity and innovation of our young people. That will mean making sure that pupils from all backgrounds have access to an education that prepares them well for the next stage of their lives, be that higher education, entering employment or setting up their own business.

This report examines how secondary schools are preparing young people for the world of work through enterprise education and work-related learning. It looks at how schools are working with local businesses and, given the concerns we found in our recent report on apprenticeships, it also looks in detail at the way apprenticeship programmes are promoted in schools.¹

Enterprise education involves teaching pupils the knowledge and skills they will need to be future employees and potential employers. It includes, but is not limited to, teaching financial and organisational capability, while also providing opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of problems and solutions in the context of business and enterprise.

Previous Ofsted national reports have identified good, age-appropriate enterprise education in primary schools.² However, few of the 40 secondary schools visited by inspectors for this survey were building effectively on that strong foundation. In many of the schools visited, there was some peripheral work-related learning on offer, but this was not part of an overall enterprise and employability strategy. In some cases, school leaders simply told inspectors that it was not a feature of their curriculum and that they saw themselves as accountable only for achieving a narrow set of outcomes focused around examinations.

Inspectors also found that schools were often unsure about the support on offer from local and national organisations, while their links with local employers were often weak. In some cases, this had a particularly detrimental impact on the most disadvantaged pupils, who had fewer family contacts to draw on when expected to arrange high quality work experience for themselves.

Lord Young's 2014 report 'Enterprise for all' highlighted some of these concerns and, as a result, the Careers and Enterprise Company was set up to help coordinate relationships between schools and businesses.³ This was a positive development but

¹ 'Apprenticeships: developing skills for future prosperity', Ofsted, 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-developing-skills-for-future-prosperity.

² 'Economics, business and enterprise education', Ofsted, 2011; www.gov.uk/government/publications/economics-business-and-enterprise-education.

³ 'Enterprise for all: the relevance of enterprise in education', Lord Young, 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/enterprise-for-all-the-relevance-of-enterprise-in-education

during this survey, inspectors found that its work was still at an embryonic stage and providers were largely unaware of its existence.⁴

Key findings

- **The extent to which schools used their curriculum to prepare pupils for the world of work was largely dependent on whether school leaders considered it to be a priority.** This ranged from schools such as the one where a headteacher described enterprise education as ‘a luxury we can’t afford’ to others that saw the acquisition of knowledge and skills prized by employers as central to the school’s purpose. Schools often cited pressures on finance and curriculum time as reasons for not prioritising enterprise education.
- **Even where schools were delivering enterprise education, it was often unclear whether this was having any impact on pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills.** Under a quarter of the schools inspected formally assessed pupils’ learning in this area and even fewer used external validation, such as accredited award schemes, to verify pupils’ achievement.
- **Opportunities for pupils to take part in meaningful work-related learning or work experience were limited at key stage 4.** Local employers and their national representatives suggested that a lack of work-related learning was a major barrier to young people gaining employment. School leaders who offered well-managed work experience in key stage 4 reported that it had a positive impact on pupils’ attitudes to school on their return and was therefore well worth the investment in curriculum time.
- **Business involvement in some of the schools visited relied too heavily on the personal networks of teachers and parents, potentially resulting in disadvantaged pupils missing out.** Teachers and employers we spoke to for this survey said that they had little time to create and develop partnerships and, where partnerships did exist, they were vulnerable to staff leaving or changing roles. Where schools provided time for work experience, the responsibility for finding placements was often left to the pupil. While inspectors saw some very impressive examples of work-experience placements, some arose solely because the pupils’ parents were well connected.
- **A lack of coordination across local areas has created an environment for schools and businesses that business leaders described as ‘chaotic’.** Projects such as those sponsored by local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) are at the very early stages of development. Business leaders consulted for this report raised concerns that there is little coherence to provision and a lack of strategy by government, business organisations or individual schools. They were largely

⁴ This survey was undertaken in the early days of the company establishing its regional network. By March 2016, less than 5% of secondary schools were reported to have signed up to the Enterprise Adviser Network. According to the company, the network has grown quickly since then with around 1,200 senior business volunteers and more than 1,200 schools having signed up to work together to develop school/employer engagement plans.

unaware of the work of the Careers and Enterprise Company. School-business links were most productive when they were official and between organisations, rather than informal and between individuals. Relationships were often hampered by poor communication between school and business staff and a lack of clarity over what was wanted from the partnership.

- **Schools appear to be more likely to promote apprenticeships than in recent years, but parents and pupils are concerned about the quality and reputation of apprenticeships.** Inspectors found that a relatively high proportion of schools – 68%, or 27 out of 40 – were good or outstanding in this regard. However, some parents and pupils were concerned about the current state of the apprenticeship market and were reluctant to pursue a route that they thought would narrow their options in the future.

Recommendations

The Department for Education (DfE) should:

- re-visit Lord Young’s report from 2014 and promote the importance of well-planned provision for enterprise education, including the promotion of economic and business understanding and financial capability
- ensure that the availability of apprenticeships is communicated well to parents and pupils, and that the potential value of apprenticeships as a viable alternative to traditional university routes is promoted
- further promote the Careers and Enterprise Company to encourage schools and businesses to work together in delivering enterprise education.

Ofsted should:

- ensure that inspection judgements take greater account of the coherence and rigour with which schools prepare pupils for employment and self-employment.

Secondary schools should:

- ensure that there is a coherent programme to develop enterprise education, including the economic and business knowledge, understanding and skills of all pupils
- develop stronger links with business by using local networks provided by, for example, the chambers of commerce and LEAs, and set clear objectives for the intended outcomes of these partnerships
- make the most effective use of the expertise of their specialist teachers in delivering these programmes and ensure that all teachers involved in delivery have access to appropriate professional development
- ensure that these programmes have effective mechanisms for monitoring and assessing progress in relation to developing knowledge, understanding and skills.

Employers should:

- support local schools in greater number by offering activities such as mock interviews, participation in careers fairs and careers talks
- provide well-planned and constructive opportunities for pupils to gain work experience and an insight into a range of roles and occupations through work shadowing.

Methodology

1. Inspectors carried out 40 thematic inspection visits in the spring term 2016 to interview staff and pupils about the types and impact of enterprise activity found in schools. These visits included a mix of inner city, urban and rural settings. The schools were selected to broadly reflect the range of schools in England and included comprehensive, selective, 11 to 16 and 11 to 18, mixed or single gender establishments. Their overall effectiveness judgements ranged from outstanding to requires improvement. Inspectors also visited two university technology colleges (UTCs) to collect evidence.
2. Further evidence was collated by inspectors leading routine inspections during the first two months of the spring term 2016. There were 109 contributions from these inspections.
3. Ofsted established two expert engagement groups representing employers' organisations including the CBI, Institute of Directors, the British Chamber of Commerce, the Trades Unions Congress (TUC) and organisations involved in work with schools and businesses.
4. Individual meetings were held with a wide range of organisations involved in supporting school and business links. Employers and businesses that contributed to the focus groups included Business in the Community, The Peter Jones Foundation, Education and Employment, the Economics, Business and Enterprise Association (EBEA), Founders 4 Schools, The Institute of Directors, The Royal Society, The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) and the TUC. Discussions were also held with representatives of Barclay's Life Skills, The Careers and Enterprise Company, Enterprise Village and Teach First.
5. Telephone interviews were carried out with 12 headteachers of schools that had previously been judged by Ofsted to be outstanding for their enterprise provision. Additionally, 338 responses from Ofsted's parent panel have contributed to the findings. Evidence from Ofsted inspection reports and previous reports on enterprise, employability and apprenticeships was also considered alongside the primary evidence.

Findings

Enterprise education

6. This survey updates and confirms the findings of successive Ofsted reports that the key factors promoting successful enterprise education are:
- a commitment by school leaders to enterprise education and having a sufficiently senior member of staff to champion it throughout the school
 - a common understanding of what enterprise education is, based on an agreed definition
 - ensuring that there is a coherent programme that embraces all pupils; that learning outcomes are clearly identified and that there is progression in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills
 - having systems in place to assess pupils' progress in relation to enterprise education as well as to monitor the quality of provision in this area
 - having an effective programme of training to develop teachers' understanding of enterprise education and their expertise in delivering it
 - making effective use of links with employers to ensure that the content of courses is up to date and reflects current business activity.⁵
7. Inspectors found all of these characteristics in just four of the 40 schools visited. In these schools, leaders and governors had taken a strategic decision to offer enterprise education that meets the needs of their pupils and the local economy.

Fulham Cross Girls' School and Language College (URN139365) – This school has a clear strategic plan and proactive approach for the development of enterprise and employability that sit at the heart of the school's ethos of high aspiration for pupils. And as the school states, it aims 'for pupils to have the attributes, skills and behaviours which are the same as those in an employable person – intelligence, application of knowledge, a thirst for learning, showing initiative and enterprise and excellent interpersonal skills.' Regular evaluation of initiatives and activities, with subsequent adjustments to the provision, has enabled the quality to be both sustained and improved over time.

⁵ 'Economics, business and enterprise education', Ofsted, 2011; www.gov.uk/government/publications/economics-business-and-enterprise-education. 'Careers guidance in schools: going in the right direction?' Ofsted, 2013; www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-in-schools-going-in-the-right-direction.

Trinity Catholic School (URN125756) – Enterprise and employability have high priority with the school leaders. They recognise the importance of developing soft skills/enterprise skills and attributes and work hard to maintain a broad curriculum that includes a strong focus on this aspect. A detailed strategic plan ('careers and work-related learning pathway') has been produced that links provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), additional provision for disadvantaged students, general curriculum provision, wider careers curriculum provision and extra-curricular activities to the 17 areas of learning for careers, employability and enterprise education from the Career Development Institute's (CDI) framework. As a result, there is a coherent plan of provision for each year group from Years 7 to 13.

8. In the four schools where enterprise education was a strength, leaders were able to describe the impact of their development of employability knowledge and skills. These schools used external awards, which helped them to evaluate their provision. As a result, these four schools had more coherent programmes of study and were able to assess and improve the quality of the provision.
9. Across the four schools, assessment information had been developed to monitor pupils' achievement. Assessment of pupils' starting points was particularly important in these schools, as this allowed staff to take into account and reflect on pupils' progress in developing employability skills. This was especially useful for identifying when groups of pupils were deemed to be falling short on a given area of expertise, allowing managers to introduce specific interventions to help them catch up. For instance, one school used information from pupils' records of achievement to target upcoming enterprise events for a selected group of pupils to attend that was based on their needs.
10. Evaluation of enterprise learning was generally stronger in these four schools as it did not just look at pupil progress in isolation. Checks on the effectiveness of teachers in delivering the curriculum were also considered by senior leaders to be an important factor. In one of these schools, the embedding of enterprise and employability knowledge and skills was integral to the whole-school approach to staff's continuing professional development.
11. Two of the four schools providing high-quality enterprise education had some form of external validation that evaluated all aspects of careers and work-related learning across the school, including work experience. One had received the Investors in Careers award in 2014 and the other successfully embedded the RSA's Opening Minds competence framework as the main vehicle to cover enterprise capability and employability skills.

12. In five of the remaining 36 schools visited, inspectors found careers advice and guidance were well embedded in the schools' provision but enterprise learning was not as clearly coordinated. For example:

'Employability has a very high priority in this school. The new leader has undertaken a Gatsby audit and a LEP audit. As a result, an action plan is in place and the impact of some of the actions can be seen. For example, each Year 11 pupil now has a career action plan that is shared with parents and pupil. Better information has also been provided to parents about apprenticeships. Priorities are clear in the action plan. However, the priority for enterprise is less obvious. There are enterprise opportunities, but they are not carefully mapped or monitored.'

13. Schools that were less successful at evaluating their enterprise education provision tended to describe what they did and the activities pupils undertook. Leaders often claimed to be evaluating the effectiveness of enterprise activities by collating data from pupil questionnaires. Too often, however, the questionnaires required pupils to reflect on whether they enjoyed the activity, but rarely reflected on the knowledge and skills acquired.

Weaknesses in enterprise education

14. The biggest weakness across the schools visited was a lack of coherence in planning enterprise education and a failure to identify what the pupils should learn and be able to do as a result of the teaching. Pupils who spoke to inspectors during the visits frequently said that their experience tended to be a series of one-off events that lacked any sense of progression. Leaders were not clear about the knowledge, skills and understanding that they expected pupils to gain from these events. In 32 of the 40 schools visited, there was no monitoring to check whether opportunities to gain enterprise knowledge or employability skills were taken up by different groups of pupils.
15. Where schools were partly successful in providing pupils with enterprise knowledge and skills, senior leaders had often placed a high priority on promoting this learning, but had no clearly defined strategy for delivery. Enterprise was often delivered through a series of unlinked activities. When inspectors talked to pupils, they found it difficult to link different experiences and inputs whether from expert visitors, assemblies, tutor activities or days when the normal timetable was collapsed.
16. In general, the absence of an overarching plan led to a lack of coherence in these schools, which meant that leaders were frequently unable to effectively monitor the impact of these activities. This is shown by the following examples.

Case study 1

'There has been no curriculum mapping to identify what knowledge or which of these skills are taught in curriculum areas. A range of materials has been produced that describe and provide information about personal employability skills, but these are not all linked. As a result, information introduced is not then followed up to see how it has had an impact on the pupils' knowledge and skills. For example, when preparing for work experience, pupils carry out a self-assessment of personal skills prior to the placement, but their progress on developing these during the placement is not evaluated.'

Case study 2

'There is no mapping of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE), enterprise or work-related learning opportunities across the curriculum. Although leaders have a secure knowledge of the multi-faceted provision for enterprise learning and the development of employability knowledge and skills, they have yet to develop a clear overview or means by which these can be tracked and quality fully evaluated.'

Case study 3

'There is no policy or strategic plan for enterprise and employability. There is coverage of enterprise and employability for all year groups, but there is a far greater emphasis on acquiring enterprise skills rather than deepening pupils' business and economic knowledge and understanding. Learning outcomes are not assessed, unless the course is externally assessed, such as through GCSE.'

17. The delivery of the most successful enterprise education was at times dependent on having people in post who were passionate about work-related learning. For instance, in three schools, inspectors identified improvements to the delivery of enterprise education that were linked to the recent arrival of new senior leaders. In one case, this was a headteacher (18 months in post) and in another an assistant principal (in post for one term and a trustee of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Association). Both were taking steps to embed enterprise education in their schools, but they simply had not had the time to deliver enterprise and employability learning across the school.

This is a school that is just recovering following years of chaos. The new management team has designed a new approach to the curriculum, but it is too soon to see impact. So, while leaders of the school talked

enthusiastically about the value of the life skills programme they had developed in key stage 3, not all pupils in the school have experienced it because it is, now, only just being implemented.

18. Where commitment in delivering an enterprise curriculum was as a result of key individuals, there was considerable impact on the schools' provision when these individuals left the school. For example, when a senior leader in one school, who was a strong advocate of providing enterprise and employability knowledge and skills for their pupils, went on maternity leave. With no one similarly passionate about this aspect to pick up this work, there was a loss of drive in the delivery of enterprise learning. The strategic framework that had been established was not used to sustain this area of the curriculum across the school.
19. In the schools where there was limited focus on enterprise learning, school leaders told inspectors that they see themselves as accountable for outcomes narrowly focused around examinations. The development of enterprise was often seen as potentially distracting from delivering improvements around examination results. This was particularly acute in the schools visited that had most recently been judged as requires improvement or inadequate. For example, in one school judged to require improvement, the headteacher explained that his priority was on improving academic achievement and behaviour and that enterprise education was no longer a priority.
20. The evidence from this survey suggests that the delivery of enterprise education is likely to be piecemeal across the secondary school sector. A small number of schools in our sample have made a real commitment to its delivery. As a result, they have helped pupils to gain business and financial knowledge, understand basic management information techniques and develop leadership skills; all of which will stand them in good stead for the world of work. In many of the other schools visited, however, enterprise education had not begun or was in its infancy. Some of these schools had some peripheral work-related learning, such as work experience or careers guidance, but these appeared as one-off instances rather than being part of an overall enterprise and employability strategy.

Work experience

21. In 2012, the government removed the statutory duty on schools to provide pupils with work-related learning at key stage 4, including compulsory work-experience placements. Ministers acknowledged its importance, but told the delegated legislation committee that 'schools are best placed to decide what is appropriate to suit the needs and circumstances of their pupils.'
22. In order to gauge what is now happening in practice, inspectors on 109 routine secondary school inspections collected additional information on work

experience provision in the spring term 2016. Of these schools, 63 were found to have work experience as an expectation for all pupils at key stage 4. In these schools, work experience was seen as important in order to develop personal skills, build confidence and self-esteem and widen pupils' horizons. For example, one headteacher told inspectors:

'We wish to raise the aspiration and broaden the horizons of our students by giving them a real experience of the world of work before they leave school. For many of our students, their world is very narrow and this is an opportunity to mix with people beyond their own community. It also begins to embed some of the real world skills, which students need, to engage effectively with college and work i.e. independence, interpersonal skills, organisation, time management etc.'

23. In the 46 schools not offering work experience at key stage 4, leaders typically indicated that the high costs of delivery and a lack of resources were a barrier, particularly where finding appropriate placements for pupils was difficult. In these circumstances, a few leaders suggested that many pupils were likely to receive a poor experience of the world of work. As such, programmes that were previously in place had been discontinued.
24. Other leaders expressed that the advice given in the 'Wolf report: recommendations final progress report' had led them to move opportunities for work experience into their sixth form provision.⁶ Several leaders acknowledged that they were reluctant to give up teaching time for all key stage 4 pupils to engage in work experience. Again, this was linked to the perceived limited value that leaders and staff in these schools attached to work experience and the related perception that time spent on enterprise activities and not on examined subjects was wasted.
25. Among the 40 secondary schools visited specifically for this survey, inspectors found a wide variety of approaches to work experience and its quality. In the 19 schools that had retained a period of work experience for all key stage 4 pupils, the traditional two weeks had sometimes been reduced to one week. Some of these schools sought to mitigate the use of curriculum time by arranging work experience in the last week of the summer term so that placements could extend into the summer holidays. However, this removed the opportunity to immediately build on learning from the work experience back in school.
26. Overall, the schools visited with good and outstanding judgements at their most recent inspection were more confident in using curriculum time for work experience. However, a few weaker schools were also embracing the perceived

⁶ 'The Wolf Report: recommendations final progress report', Department for Education, 2015; www.gov.uk/government/publications/wolf-recommendations-progress-report.

value that work experience could bring to the school. In one notable case, a new senior leader with experience of school improvement identified the expansion of work experience as a key component of the journey for the school. This headteacher told inspectors:

‘We are really trying to build up our employer engagement activity because it was one of those things that got sidelined when the school went into special measures. We are well placed to capitalise on local businesses as we have Eddie Stobart, Sainsbury’s, Tesco, Cummins and other large players in the retail and logistics sector. We do very well for work-experience placements at Year 10 and Year 12 and have just started a work-readiness programme with Year 10 ahead of work experience in the summer term.’

27. Another headteacher of a school where key stage 4 pupils undertake two weeks of work experience told inspectors that he valued highly the improved maturity and attitudes to learning seen on the pupils’ return. However, he added that if he was the headteacher of a school judged inadequate or requires improvement by Ofsted, rather than outstanding, he would feel a lot less confident about giving up curriculum time.
28. Some schools offered work experience to a small group of pupils, often selected on the basis of not achieving well in academic subjects. Where this was the case, school leaders frequently suggested that arranging work experience for all pupils was too time-consuming and impractical to administer on a large scale. For example, completing health and safety checks on each potential employer had become a particular barrier for a few schools. Other schools prioritised their resources to enable this to happen, sometimes contracting this out to specialists. However, it was regularly pointed out to inspectors that this used to be centrally organised, but is now a cost to the school among competing financial pressures and priorities.
29. Some of the schools visited required pupils to find their own placements. In one such school, leaders argued that this encouraged ‘independence and resilience’. However, while this may be true to a certain extent, it also reinforces advantages for those pupils with parents who have good connections in industry and business. For instance, inspectors spoke to pupils who enjoyed exciting opportunities such as spending time in a district attorney’s office in the United States or working in a major financial business in the City of London, arranged through family contacts.
30. Those pupils who had access to quality work experience benefited from exposure to real life examples of careers. Pupils’ next steps and career choices were often refined by the practical experience. In some cases, not enjoying a particular role was as important in forming their career choices as enjoying it.
31. For many pupils, these opportunities were valuable because of the different knowledge and skills they learned to those in the rest of their school lessons:

'Well, I had to be organised and sorted – you do here too, but it doesn't matter that much. But on work experience you feel on your own'.

32. Work experience offered pupils insight into the day to day of a working environment – something that most have yet to experience. Gaining these work place skills, such as communicating with a variety of different people, team work and independence, in turn, gave pupils confidence.
33. However, even where schools did provide the opportunity for work experience, they were not always embedding the learning opportunities in the classroom. Only four of the schools visited had arrangements in place for fully assessing the quality of the work-related learning that pupils received. The strength of evaluation was often linked to other factors, such as how much of a priority enterprise and employability learning were for senior leaders and whether these aspects were successfully embedded in the curriculum.

Employer engagement

34. Inspectors met employers who were keen to work with schools. For some businesses that were working with the schools visited by inspectors, it was about helping to secure their future workforce. Employers also spoke about altruistic motives or meeting their corporate social responsibility objectives.
35. However, this enthusiasm is clearly not universal. A survey by the British Chamber of Commerce found that, while more than three quarters of firms believe a lack of work experience is the reason young people are unprepared for work, more than half of businesses (52%) say that they do not work with schools to offer work-experience placements. Reasons for this included:
 - cost and time (25%)
 - too much school administration (23%)
 - a lack of information (22%).
36. Employers were critical of schools that approached them without a clear agenda or objectives. When schools lacked clarity over the time commitment needed, employers were less likely to agree to work with them. Employers reported that the approach was more likely to be successful if schools asked them for a specific input that was time limited.
37. Our focus groups concluded that schools and employers work together most effectively when:
 - there is very little or no cost involved
 - business cases and expectations on both sides are sharp and schools feel they are doing something important and valuable
 - schools are clearly the consumer – ensuring that what the employers offer meets the different needs of their pupils.

38. Engagement between schools and businesses was most successful when it was a key strategic priority for leaders and governors, where a non-teaching member of staff had time to make the contacts and when there was an obvious mutual benefit. For example, at Plymstock School, Plymouth, a headteacher's challenge to a group of students to raise the profile and desirability of studying languages in the school led to the creation of an award-winning social enterprise that benefits local businesses and helps raise students' achievement. Success depended on ensuring that partnerships existed between organisations rather than individuals. Otherwise, in both schools and businesses, when key people changed roles, this led to frustration of both parties.
39. One of the schools visited had a very strong relationship with a local business. It was an example of a two-way, mutually beneficial relationship that has been sustained over many years.

Innovia Films Ltd is a global company that produces cellophane film and other packaging. It is a major local employer and has other production sites in the UK, USA, Belgium and Australia. The human resources manager of its Cumbrian plant at Wigton views the relationship with the Norton Thomlinson School as essential to the survival of the local plant and not just a 'nice to have' corporate responsibility boast. As a globally successful company, it has to recruit the finest people at every level in the business to remain competitive. Based in this relatively isolated part of the UK, it must employ people who are committed to the community as well as to the company. To do this, it endeavours to recruit locally and, in order to do this successfully, it nurtures and values its relationship with the school. Having the school leadership on board is crucial to the success of this relationship. A liaison meeting between the human resources manager and a deputy headteacher of the school takes place every half term. This enables the relationship to adapt and develop. The company provides work experience for approximately 40 students every year. Placements are in electrical and mechanical engineering, research and development, IT/IS, and overseas sales and administration.

Innovia employees attend assemblies throughout the year to talk to pupils about GCSE subject choice and the link to careers, the value of work experience and Innovia's work-experience scheme, apprenticeships and the company's university sponsorship schemes. The company also attends parents' evenings and welcomed a Year 10 technology class to its engineering workshops.

40. Another school has developed excellent employer engagement through the creation of business mentors and providing networking opportunities for local businesses using the school site and involving pupils.

This is a partnership of local organisations interested in supporting the successful transition of young people from education to the world of work. It was established in 2011 by teaching staff at Mark Rutherford School (Bedford, East of England region). The partnership was set up to encourage better communication between schools and businesses, particularly in relation to the needs of the local labour market. Over time, the aim is to have a comprehensive understanding of the recruitment needs and skills gaps faced by local businesses and for this to inform the careers advice and work experience provided within schools. In the long run, the intention is to see what impact this information could have on a school's curriculum, where the need for particular skills could be met with specific courses in different subject areas. Additionally, individual partners get involved with Mark Rutherford School in a variety of ways, from offering work-experience placements and visits to running workshops or attending careers events. Some partners also develop specific business projects for students to tackle in their curriculum or spare time, while other partners act as mentors to students during their time in education.

41. During the survey, some schools were working well with local employer organisations to identify opportunities in the local economy. Ofsted has previously published a report on the success of Treviglas Academy in Cornwall and its imaginative approach to preparing students for these opportunities:

The Surf Academy awards its learners with the equivalent of four A Levels and professional qualifications. The core programme of study includes BTEC Business, Travel and Tourism, Enterprise and Sport. If learners prefer to mix their learning with more traditional A levels, they are encouraged to do so.

42. In successful UTCs, business involvement is an essential element of the curriculum. At Aston University Engineering Academy (a UTC), subject experts from local businesses teach elements of the technical and vocational courses. These experts are able to raise the pupils' awareness of problems and solutions from the business world to provide a real focus for pupils' learning.

A team of six Year 12 boys were making a presentation to business executives. The project was given to improve the safety of workers on the railway. The team had developed their schematic at the sponsoring university using a 3D printer. It was a very confident, professional presentation. There was a clear explanation. Learners delivered the presentation without a script showing good confidence in their proposal. They were presenting to the UK's largest provider of on-track warning systems. They had developed, from scratch, a system that was very similar to the one the company actually uses. The feedback was that it could be developed into the next generation of safety equipment. The team was offered opportunity to test the product on the business's own test track. The academy's vice principal followed-up the presentation with enquiries about what professional qualification in rail engineering would be possible (given their age) for learners to do.

43. There are many organisations offering help to make things easier for schools and businesses to connect. For example, one charity's website enables schools to very quickly assemble a team of successful and local entrepreneurs to inspire pupils. Many schools in our survey were finding that Barclays Lifeskills provided invaluable resources. However, some schools reported being bombarded with organisations trying to offer them a service. Without an external body to offer some degree of quality control, they struggled to find effective support.
44. The extent to which good relationships depended on the personal contacts of teachers and leaders in individual schools is a concern. For example, one school visited that was in an area of economic disadvantage and faced with low expectations found that the lack of contacts available to them directly was a barrier. They overcame this by developing effective partnerships with their local independent school to benefit from their contacts. Not all schools in similar positions have this option.
45. Inspectors also identified the fact that school location can be a barrier for engaging with local employers. In schools that were geographically isolated, with a relatively narrow local employment base, delivering such provision was generally a challenge. This was linked to additional costs from school finances for running events (work placements or external visitors for instance) due to the extent of travel required.

Financial capability as a key component of enterprise

46. Financial capability is a key element of enterprise education, enabling young people to make informed decisions as consumers, employees or self-employed individuals.⁷
47. The development of young people's financial capability in the schools visited was inconsistent. It often depended on the enthusiasm of individual staff to teach this well and even include it in the curriculum. This resulted in pupils having a good grasp of particular aspects of personal finance, but significant gaps in their understanding elsewhere.
48. The pupils spoken to identified financial capability as the most common weakness of their school's enterprise provision. A Year 11 pupil in a school in Norfolk said, 'I think it happens in posh schools'. In another school, some areas of enterprise or PSHE/citizenship were addressed less systematically than others. For example, financial capability was identified by pupils as a gap that they really wanted to be plugged. In a group discussion, there was complete agreement when a pupil was concerned that we 'don't learn how to grow up'.
49. In addition, evidence from the schools visited indicated that financial education was not always relevant to the young people receiving it because teachers frequently failed to adapt it to the needs of the pupils being taught. For example, pupils from disadvantaged economic backgrounds were often more familiar with irregular and high interest loan providers than some of the more corporate financial institutions. Unfortunately, the teaching did not take this into account and so failed to highlight the potential problems with using credit providers such as so-called 'pay-day loan companies'. Some schools, even those with a large number of pupils of different faiths, rarely adapted their teaching about subjects such as loans and borrowing to take account of varying religious views, for example on usury. In some cases, teachers and leaders had not considered this to be an issue.

Promotion of apprenticeships

50. The government is looking increasingly to apprenticeships to provide a trusted and reliable route into work. Inspectors found that a relatively high proportion of schools – 68%, or 27 out of 40 – were good or outstanding in promoting apprenticeships. They also saw, however, divergent practice in the schools visited in relation to the promotion of apprenticeships, with some schools encouraging all pupils to consider vocational and technical courses and others only steering lower-ability or lower-attaining pupils towards these routes.

⁷ Financial education is currently on the curriculum and around 2.5 million 11- to 16-year-olds should now be receiving financial education. However, the IfS University College Young Persons' Money Index showed that the majority of 15- to 18-year-olds still receive no financial education from their school or further education providers, despite the fact that 97% of them are considered financially active.

One school offers two distinct curriculum pathways that start in Year 9, one of which has more access to work-related/technical/vocational courses. It is clear, though, that students are not restricted by these pathways. In an options assembly, students were given the clear message that they must think about their future careers when choosing courses. Inspectors witnessed one most-able pupil doing the motor vehicle course alongside their EBacc subjects.

51. With regards to younger pupils generally, some schools were working at key stage 3 to improve pupils' knowledge of career choices. In the nine schools that told us they promoted apprenticeships from key stage 3, this usually took the form of a careers service providing one-to-one interviews from Year 7. Some schools used options events and careers fairs for children from the age of 11. Starting early is associated with well-performing schools, as a higher proportion of these schools had a judgement of good or better for pupil knowledge compared with that of the whole sample (80% compared with 68%).
52. This work, however, was not a key feature across most schools. In too many, technical and vocational education was generally associated with lower-attaining pupils or even those with challenging behaviour, as illustrated in the following example:

The school does not have 'pathways' as such, but tailored curriculum advice. BTECs tend to be for students of middle or low ability. Pupils who wish to follow apprenticeship routes are 'identified' by progress leaders and given support to follow this route. It is unclear how this identification takes place. The World of Work course is offered to a group of 12 middle-ability boys only. There are eight pupils on external work-based learning courses. These pupils are of middle/low ability and exhibit challenging behaviours.

53. Inspectors found that despite schools reporting an increased interest in apprenticeships among 18-year-olds, most pupils wanted to go to university. Reasons given to inspectors included:
- subject and career interests not being linked to known apprenticeships
 - going to university is what everyone else does and is 'shown in the media as normal'

- a view that there are no apprenticeships available in the local area and so pupils would have to live away from home and they would rather do that in a university setting with other students.

54. In some of the schools visited, the apprentice route for 18-year-olds was promoted well. It appeared that an increasing minority of pupils were calculating the financial costs of taking a traditional university degree and were therefore choosing an apprenticeship. These tended to be especially popular with pupils seeking a career in engineering or finance. In many of the schools with sixth forms, students told inspectors that university applications were prioritised by their school and then direct entry to work or apprenticeship was supported later in the year. Some schools worked hard to avoid this.

UCAS and VTAS are run as parallel programmes. All students have access to both processes and some apply for both. High expectations are promoted through High Quality Destinations Days, where students are inspired by professionals and their journeys, exploring possible routes into careers. Opportunities are targeted to individuals based on early analysis of potential career pathways. All students, irrespective of their academic profile, are encouraged to engage in enrichment activities, such as work experience. Students' progress onto their preferred pathways is reviewed continually through one-to-one academic reviews, skills audits and monitoring of applications to both programmes. Alumni links facilitate mentoring programmes and provide a source of inspiration for current students. The sixth form careers and apprenticeship adviser ensures employer engagement with all students and the sixth-form team works collaboratively to support students with their destinations management.

55. Inspectors found evidence of good systems that fully prepared pupils for their post-16 choices and provided them with a range of alternatives in eight of the schools visited. All of these schools have developed vital links to external institutions in order to develop their pupils' understanding of their options. In most cases, these were direct links to local businesses. In some of these schools, visiting speakers from local businesses contributed to pupils' knowledge in forums such as assemblies. In Mark Rutherford School, for example, the strong promotion of apprenticeships is delivered through 'business breakfast' meetings with local employers. These have previously covered topics such as employability and careers in sport.
56. Two schools were found to have made particularly good links with further education (FE) providers. For example, Harrow Way Community School works very closely and effectively with the local FE college and benefits from the links that the college has with businesses. Pupils from the school participate in events at the college while they are in years 10 and 11. Those who are

considering a technical/vocational pathway benefit from several visits from the business.

57. In the more effective schools, the promotion of apprenticeships and alternative routes at post-16 is part of a wider strategy and prolonged approach. At Fulham Cross Girls' School and Language College, for example, apprenticeships are promoted through visits to a school in their federation, Fulham Enterprise Studio. These visits begin in Year 7 and pupils are supported by careers interviews throughout their secondary education. The good practice in these schools has resulted in the pupils having positive attitudes towards apprenticeships with little mention of any barriers and the feeling that their parents would support any decision to take an apprenticeship.
58. At the other end of the scale, there are too many schools where apprenticeship knowledge is poor to non-existent. In these schools, there was little evidence of a coherent strategy for helping pupils make their post-16 choices. In the worst cases, schools lacked a single point of contact or a careers adviser and pupils were simply told to attend local FE open evenings to find out more.
59. Many pupils leaving Year 11 in the schools visited showed little interest in apprenticeships, irrespective of how well they were promoted by the school. While at post-18 there are clear economic incentives to pursue an apprenticeship, this is not the case at 16. Indeed, in three of the schools visited, leaders provided examples of pupils who had successfully been recruited for an apprenticeship but who could not take it up due to family pressure. Headteachers in a few of these schools told inspectors that parents had a preference for academic study (regardless of their child's ability, attributes or interests) and thought that alternatives, whether post-16 technical/vocational courses or apprenticeships, were second rate.
60. The perception of apprenticeships as a worthier route for less-able pupils was still evident right across the views of the pupils themselves. One school's pupils said, 'It used to be for a trade like hairdressing', and 'It's safer because it's more traditional to go to university'. Furthermore, pupils in four schools thought their parents would have negative views of them doing apprenticeships; one school said that 10 out of 11 of its pupils said it would be unacceptable. This was not limited to schools judged to have poor information on apprenticeships; two out of four schools had good standards in this respect.
61. Six schools suffered from a lack of access to quality apprenticeships in the area. This lack of opportunity can mean that a school's efforts to raise enthusiasm and knowledge have little impact. Although some of these schools struggle with pupil engagement with apprenticeships, others used their resources to counter this. One school, for example, had a studio school post-16 option in their federation. As a result: 'Pupils visit the studio school as they move through the school, starting in Year 7 to gain insight into vocational learning, the specialised curriculum and different career pathway, including apprenticeships'.

62. Finance was a barrier for some pupils. One even deemed apprenticeships to be merely 'cheap labour'. Often, disadvantaged pupils believed they would lose their family benefits from being on an apprenticeship. For these pupils, their part-time job paid more than an apprenticeship could offer them. For many pupils who live in rural areas, apprenticeships do not pay enough to cover transport.

Pupils know about apprenticeships and have a good understanding. Some Year 11 pupils are planning to do one post-18, but the general view of pupils was that, at post-16: a) they want to keep their options open; and b) the money is a real barrier. For example, responses to the inspector, when told what the apprentice pay-rate included, 'my part-time job pays me double for washing dishes' or 'I earn £5 an hour stacking shelves in a newsagents. They are having a laugh'.

63. While the apprenticeships that are available to 16-year-olds are proving unattractive, some school leaders have reported a new potential issue for 18-year-olds. They saw a context developing where level 2 apprenticeships have low status, but level 3 and higher apprenticeships have high status and attract science and technical students who gain top A-level grades. However, there is little high-quality vocational training for middle attainers, who as a result may drift into inappropriate university degree programmes.

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