



Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

November 2021

Prepared for the West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Authors: Tim Allan and Martha Julings (York Consulting)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 THE ENTERPRISE ADVISER NETWORK.....	5
3 RAISING ASPIRATIONS PILOT	10
4 KIRKLEES CAREERS HUB	18
5 SEND CAREERS HUB	25
6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	31
APPENDIX: RAISING ASPIRATIONS CASE STUDIES.....	33

1 INTRODUCTION

About this report

- 1.1 In September 2019, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority commissioned York Consulting LLP to evaluate a series of school-based Enterprise in Education activities being delivered across the Leeds City Region. The evaluation was based around a programme of primary research with school staff, Enterprise Advisers (EAs), Enterprise Co-ordinators (ECs) and school students, alongside analysis of school-level Gatsby Benchmark data. This is the draft final report from the evaluation.
- 1.2 The evaluators would like to thank everyone that agreed to be consulted for the purposes of the evaluation. Thanks are also owed to the client team at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority for their support and assistance throughout the work.

Context for the evaluation

- 1.3 The Leeds City Region covers ten local authority districts: Leeds, Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield. It has a population of approximately 3 million people, a resident workforce of approximately 1.4 million people and an economy worth more than £69 billion¹. Since 2012, the activities of the Leeds City Region have been co-ordinated by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.
- 1.4 The evaluation had within its scope four distinct strands of activity, each of which has a separate chapter in this report²:
 - **Enterprise Adviser Network:** a network of senior business volunteers supporting schools and colleges to embed employer engagement within their careers and enterprise provision.
 - **Raising Aspirations Pilot:** a £345,000 funding pot for schools and colleges to provide opportunities that aim to improve social mobility for disadvantaged young people.
 - **Kirklees Careers Hub:** a partnership of 35 schools and colleges in Kirklees working alongside universities, training providers, employers and careers professionals to improve performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks and improve outcomes for young people.
 - **SEND Careers Hub:** a partnership of 45 schools, colleges and alternative education providers in West Yorkshire working alongside universities, training providers and careers professionals to improve outcomes for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

¹ Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (2018) Leeds City Region and the Northern Powerhouse. Here: <https://www.the-lep.com/why-leeds-city-region/northern-powerhouse/>

² The original scope also included FutureGoals but this was taken out of scope following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- 1.5 The rationale for each of these strands of activity is grounded in research evidence. Mann (2012)³, for example, found that young people who could recall four or more employer engagement activities at school were five times less likely to be Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET). On average, they also earned 16% more than young people who could not recall any employer engagement activities. Hughes et al (2016)⁴ demonstrated that young people who underestimate the level of education required for their chosen career path are more likely to become NEET (highlighting the importance of good quality advice and guidance). The same authors explained the economic benefits of work experience, careers provision and mentoring, and demonstrated the link between good quality careers education and educational attainment.
- 1.6 The importance of good careers guidance was highlighted by the Gatsby Foundation's Good Career Guidance report⁵ in 2014 and subsequently recognised by government via the adoption of the Gatsby Benchmarks as statutory guidance in 2018. The Benchmarks provide a framework for schools and colleges to develop and improve their careers programme. The eight Benchmarks are:
1. A stable careers programme.
 2. Learning from career and labour market information.
 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil.
 4. Linking curriculum learning to careers.
 5. Encounters with employers and employees.
 6. Experiences of workplaces.
 7. Encounters with further and higher education.
 8. Personal guidance.
- 1.7 Schools and colleges can use the Careers and Enterprise Company's (CEC) Compass online tool⁶ to assess progress against the Benchmarks. As of March 2020, schools and colleges in England were fully achieving an average of 3.8 of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks⁷, the same as the average for schools and colleges in West Yorkshire at that time⁸.

³ Mann, A. (2012). It's who you meet: Why employer contacts at school make a difference to the employment prospects of young adults. London: Education and Employers Taskforce.

⁴ Hughes et al (2016) Careers Education: International literature review. Education Endowment Foundation: July 2016: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/publications/2016/hughes_et_al_2016_eef_lit_review.pdf

⁵Gatsby Foundation. (2014) Here: <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf>

⁶Careers and Enterprise Company. Evaluation and planning tools. Here: <https://tools.careersandenterprise.co.uk/oauth/login/classic>

⁷ Careers and Enterprise Company (2020). Careers education in England's schools and colleges 2020. Here: https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/osbd2av3/1244_careers_ed_2020_report18_0.pdf

⁸ Compass returns September 2018 – March 2020.

Evaluation objectives

- 1.8 The overall purpose of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness and added value of the four Enterprise in Education activities outlined above. Sitting beneath this were the following four objectives:
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Enterprise in Education activities in terms of their contribution to the achievement of key outcomes around career inspiration, career readiness, employability and academic attainment.
 - To assess the added value of a localised/personalised approach to Enterprise in Education in the context of the Leeds City Region.
 - To document the experiences of specific institutions and to identify specific items of good/best practice through the development of school case studies.
 - To review the effectiveness of the Enterprise in Education activities in targeting support at disadvantaged students and reaching those schools most in need of assistance with regard to careers and enterprise activities.
- 1.9 The evaluation was originally intended to conclude in December 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in particular the closure of schools, the timeframe was extended to September 2021.

Evaluation approach

- 1.10 Summarised in Table 1.1, the evaluation was structured into two phases. The first phase took place between November 2019 and June 2020 and culminated in the submission of an interim report. The second phase took place between April 2021 and August 2021.

Table 1.1: Summary of the evaluation work programme

Strand	Phase 1: Nov 2019 – Jun 2020	Phase 2: Apr 2021 – Aug 2021
Enterprise Adviser Network	<p>One-to-one qualitative consultations with four EAs.</p> <p>Facilitated focus group with ECs.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 Compass data.</p>	<p>One-to-one qualitative consultations with three EAs.</p> <p>Facilitated focus group with ECs.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 and 2020/21 Compass data and data on delivery volumes.</p>
Raising Aspirations Pilot	<p>Analysis of 2020 feedback forms from 13 participating schools (one form per school).</p> <p>One-to-one qualitative consultations with three non-participating schools.</p>	<p>Analysis of 2021 feedback forms from 13 participating schools (one form per school).</p> <p>One-to-one and group consultations with staff and (in one case) students at three participating schools.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 and 2020/21 Compass data.</p>
Kirklees Careers Hub	<p>One-to-one qualitative consultations with two strategic stakeholders.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 Compass data.</p>	<p>One-to-one and group consultations with staff at two participating schools.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 and 2020/21 Compass data and data on delivery volumes.</p>
SEND Careers Hub	<p>Online survey of Careers Leaders in schools (17 responses).</p> <p>One-to-one consultations with five stakeholders.</p>	<p>One-to-one and group consultations with staff and students at one participating school.</p> <p>Qualitative consultation with two ECs.</p> <p>Analysis of 2019/20 and 2020/21 Compass data.</p>

Source: York Consulting, 2021.

2 THE ENTERPRISE ADVISER NETWORK

Introduction

- 2.1 The Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) matches business volunteers – EAs – with schools and colleges such that they can provide strategic support and advice on careers and enterprise provision. Supported by ECs, the EA role may include helping schools and colleges to develop a careers strategy, facilitating links with businesses and/or providing advice about local and national skills needs.
- 2.2 EAs in the Leeds City Region come from a variety of industry sectors, the most common of which include manufacturing, science and technology, finance and construction. As at mid-2021, 139 schools and colleges – 70% of state-funded schools and colleges in the Leeds City Region – were matched with an EA.

Motivations and relationships

- 2.3 Based on the information provided for this evaluation, there appear to be four main reasons why people put themselves forward to become an EA. These are:
- To have a positive impact on the lives of young people from their local area.
 - To help young people develop a better and more accurate understanding of jobs and careers available locally.
 - To work with schools in a more structured and/or strategic way than they have been able to in the past.
 - To contribute to their organisation’s corporate social responsibility objectives and/or to raise the profile of their company in the local area.
- “I liked the idea of what it stands for in terms of providing direction and impact in young people’s lives.” (Enterprise Adviser)*
- “It’s about focusing on one school and doing it well, rather than trying to support lots of schools and doing it poorly.” (Enterprise Adviser)*
- 2.4 As at mid-2021, the consensus view from the EAs contributing to the evaluation was that:
- They had been matched with an appropriate school.
 - The school had shown an interest in developing and/or embedding the relationship and appeared to value the insight and experience the EA could bring.
- 2.5 Whilst the evaluation has only been able to obtain input from a small subset of EAs (a product of it covering several strands of Enterprise in Education), this is an encouraging finding. It is made more encouraging still by the fact the EAs’ views were notably less positive earlier in the evaluation, where they reported difficulties in forming relationships with schools and voiced concerns about the delay and drift. They attributed this mainly to staff turnover in schools, teachers’ workloads and their

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

nominated contacts within the schools requiring authorisation/approval for operational decisions.

“Some schools seem switched on and recognise how they can benefit from the opportunity, but others seem hesitant, or it shifts down their priority list as day-to-day pressures take over.” (Enterprise Adviser)

- 2.6 More recently, however, they reported improved communication and a willingness from schools to commit time and resources around shared objectives.

“The school has been fantastic. They genuinely interact and take on board ideas. It’s clear that they value the support, which is important.” (Enterprise Adviser)

- 2.7 EAs were also very complimentary about the support they had received from ECs. Whilst earlier in the evaluation some concern and frustration had been expressed about the turnover of ECs, the view in mid-2021 was more upbeat. In particular, the EAs highlighted:

- The regularity and promptness of communications from the ECs.
- The support and advice the ECs had provided, particularly in terms of establishing and maintaining relationships with schools.
- The contacts and networks they have formed with other EAs as a result of being introduced by the ECs.

“They [ECs] have such passion and commitment. They are very knowledgeable about what they do.” (Enterprise Adviser)

- 2.8 It is also of note that average attendance at EA network meetings has increased since the meetings were moved online following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK. This has benefited the EAN and has reinvigorated what had become, in the eyes of several stakeholders, a programme of meetings that was delivering relatively little added value.

Activities

- 2.9 EAs reported having delivered a range of activities with, and on behalf of, their partner schools. However, only in a minority of cases has this constituted strategic support, with examples including mapping careers provision across curriculum areas and providing critique and feedback on schools’ proposals for strengthening their employer interactions.

- 2.10 More commonly, the EAs’ input has tended to be more operational. Examples include (although are not limited to):

- Working with students to develop their coding skills and demonstrating typical roles and responsibilities of a software engineer.
- Running a mini-project with students through which they developed ideas for insurance products and how they could be marketed.

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- Giving presentations to students about different roles in their sector and the skills and attributes they require.
- Undertaking mock interviews with students and running workshops on employability skills and workplace professionalism.
- Hosting students for workplace visits and providing opportunities for work experience.

Impact of COVID-19

- 2.11 The COVID-19 pandemic had a fundamental impact on the volume and type of activities that could be delivered through the EAN. With schools prioritising remote learning and making their physical environments safe for those who were attending in person, it was inevitable that they would have less time to commit to careers work. By way of example, one EA explained that they had been matched with a school shortly before the onset of the pandemic but did not subsequently have any meaningful contact with them until November 2020. The EA in question was fully accepting of the situation, but it nonetheless highlights the significant hiatus imposed by the pandemic.
- 2.12 Many EAs also found themselves in situations where all available resources had to be channelled into their core business activities. They also had to manage furlough arrangements and ensure that staff could work from home, or could work safely in the workplace. Where EAs became less active during the pandemic, it appears not to have been because they lost faith or interest in the relationship they had established with their school, but because they (and the school) had little choice but to concentrate on other issues.
- 2.13 That is not to say that the EAN ground entirely to a halt in the Leeds City Region during the pandemic. It is testament to those involved that an array of careers-related activities, such as presentations, workshops and meetings, were moved online. Questions naturally arise about whether activities delivered remotely act as a genuine substitute for face-to-face interaction (the general consensus is that they don't) but at a time of almost unprecedented upheaval, it should be applauded that employer interactions remained available for a considerable number of students.

Outcomes

Compass data

- 2.14 The EAN has four intended outcomes, the first two of which relate to Gatsby Benchmarks:
- 70% of schools/colleges achieve Gatsby Benchmark 5 (encounters with employers and employees)
 - 55% of schools/colleges achieve Gatsby Benchmark 6 (experiences of the workplace)
- 2.15 Compass data for the 2020/21 academic year is available for 110 of the 139 schools/colleges matched with an EA during that year. Of these 110 schools/colleges,

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

60% report having fully achieved encounters with employers and employees (Benchmark 5), whilst 35% report having fully achieved experiences of the workplace (Benchmark 6).

- 2.16 As explained above, the COVID-19 pandemic had a fundamental impact on both the EAN and careers related activity in schools and colleges. Its impact on these Benchmarks should therefore not be understated. What is more, Benchmarks 5 and 6 have typically been the most challenging for schools and colleges to meet, even with a fully functioning EAN, so it comes as little surprise that these targets are not being met.
- 2.17 That said, average Benchmark 5 scores amongst the EAN schools and colleges, at 82 out of 100, are relatively high. The average Benchmark 6 score is 68 out of 100. Whilst notably lower than Benchmark 5, this is nonetheless higher than the average score for Benchmark 6 across schools that are not involved with the EAN (46 out of 100).

Qualitative insight

- 2.18 The third and fourth intended outcomes of the EAN are as follows:
- Careers education is more embedded within the curriculum and learning.
 - Stronger links exist between schools/colleges and employers.
- 2.19 It is difficult to objectively assess the first of these outcomes, as the evaluation has not obtained input directly from schools/colleges engaged with the EAN. Feedback from ECs is, however, largely positive, although the extent to which the ECs observe the delivery of the curriculum within school settings is understandably limited.
- 2.20 Anecdotal evidence against the second outcome is also positive, although once again the absence of direct input from schools has to be noted. EAs variously commented that:
- Since joining the EAN, they believe that the impact they are able to have on students' experiences of careers-related activity has increased significantly.
 - Schools have given them positive feedback on the activities they have arranged/delivered and, in several cases, are keen to run them again in the future.
 - They have been able to establish stronger and more productive relationships with schools than was the case before they became an EA.
- "[Without the EAN] we would have had less effective connections with schools, and activities would have been limited to CV writing and interview skills support." (Enterprise Adviser)*

Recommendations from EAs

- 2.21 EAs put forward a range of suggestions for how, in their view, the EAN could be strengthened or improved. Those cited with the greatest regularity are listed below:

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- Improve business-to-business links within the network.
- Provide more opportunities for EAs to share ideas, best practice and common challenges.
- Improve EAs' knowledge of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) strategy and its wider vision/priority for Enterprise in Education.

Looking ahead

- 2.22 The School Partnership team at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority will continue to recruit, train and deploy EAs in schools and colleges across the region (a clear finding from this evaluation is that the team has made significant progress over the past 12 months in retaining EAs and recruiting new ones).
- 2.23 The Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Framework outlines the importance of roles such as the EA in the 'Great Education Connected to Business' priority. To enable the role of an EA to assist in delivering the objectives linked to this priority, the Combined Authority will continue to deliver the EA Induction to better equip and prepare businesses to work alongside education in a strategic capacity. The Combined Authority will also look at the EA journey and how volunteers can be better utilised within the network.

3 RAISING ASPIRATIONS PILOT

Introduction

- 3.1 The Raising Aspirations Pilot aimed to increase social mobility for disadvantaged students by providing funding directly to schools and colleges for careers and enterprise activities⁹. The intention was that these activities would strengthen school and college engagement with employers and connect young people with local role models working in City Region's priority sectors.
- 3.2 A total of £345,000 was available for the Raising Aspirations Pilot. Schools and colleges could apply for between £7,000 and £50,000 to deliver projects that would help them to demonstrate progress against Gatsby Benchmark 5 and Gatsby Benchmark 6. Specifically, Raising Aspirations sought to fund projects that would provide:
- Work insight and experience days, in partnership with local employers.
 - Employer encounters for SEND students.
 - Opportunities to remove barriers to social mobility through parental engagement.
 - Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers related to local labour market information and activities that link careers to curriculum learning.
 - Encounters with further education, higher education and apprenticeship providers.
 - Support for students at key transition points.
- 3.3 Projects had to demonstrate employer input and benefit young people aged 11 to 18 (or up to 25 for SEND students) from disadvantaged backgrounds. Alongside standard measures of disadvantage (e.g. Pupil Premium¹⁰), schools and colleges could identify disadvantaged cohorts through other metrics, such as Post-16 bursary eligibility or higher education participation statistics¹¹. In addition, schools and colleges were required to have a named and sufficiently trained Careers Leader with direct links to their senior leadership team.
- 3.4 Funding totalling £277,917 was provided to 16 schools through the Raising Aspirations Pilot, at an average of £17,370 per school (whilst total funding requested in the applications exceeded £345,000, a number of applications did not meet the above eligibility criteria). The remaining funds will be allocated to five schools/colleges during a second phase of the Raising Aspirations Pilot, explained in more detail under 'Looking Ahead' at the end of this chapter.

⁹ West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Raising Aspirations Pilot: Guidance for secondary schools and colleges.

¹⁰ Pupil Premium is a government grant given to schools to improve education outcomes for disadvantaged children. Schools receive an amount of money per pupil based on certain eligibility criteria, such as whether a child receive free schools meals or is in local authority care.

¹¹ Office for Students. Young participation by area. Here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/young-participation-by-area/>

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- 3.5 Thirteen of the 16 schools funded through Raising Aspirations completed an evaluation feedback form capturing delivery volumes and qualitative insight into activities, challenges and outcomes. The feedback forms were submitted towards the end of the 2020/21 academic year.

Delivery volumes

- 3.6 Raising Aspirations had a target of supporting 6,500 disadvantaged students via direct encounters with employers (these students are termed 'direct beneficiaries'). As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, the 13 schools that submitted a feedback form reported a total of 5,847 direct beneficiaries (85% of which came from five schools) at an average of 450 direct beneficiaries per school. The data implies that 4,278 of these students were disadvantaged, although this figure will contain some double counting where students appear in more than one of the different categories of disadvantage.
- 3.7 Just over a third (36%) of the direct beneficiaries were Pupil Premium students, 19% spoke English as an Additional Language and 15% had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP¹²) or SEND. Nearly a quarter (23%) of the direct beneficiaries in Year 12 and 13 were eligible for the Post-16 bursary.

Table 3.1: Students benefiting from direct employer encounters

	Total no. students (including non-disadvantaged)	Pupil Premium	EHCP and SEND	English as an additional language	Post-16 bursary
Year 7	1,025	421	169	219	0
Year 8	933	359	137	134	0
Year 9	1,032	408	227	205	0
Year 10	1,122	408	161	304	0
Year 11	1,040	326	136	165	0
Year 12	348	96	35	59	81
Year 13	347	82	24	41	81
Total	5,847	2,100	889	1,127	162

Source: York Consulting. Base: 13 schools.

- 3.8 By way of illustration, if the other three schools for which no data is available were representative of the 13 that completed a feedback form, the number of disadvantaged students supported through Raising Aspirations would rise to an estimated 5,265 (although potential double counting once again needs to be acknowledged). This would be 81% of the original target of 6,500 disadvantaged students.
- 3.9 Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 is the overriding reason behind the target for direct beneficiaries not being met. However, given the impact of COVID-19 across almost all

¹² An education, health and care plan (EHCP) is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support.

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

aspects of life and work, it is to be commended that four schools hit their own project-level targets and two actually exceeded them.

- 3.10 In addition to reporting on direct beneficiaries, schools were also asked to state how many ‘indirect beneficiaries’ they had supported. An indirect beneficiary is defined here as a student that did not participate in an employer encounter, but who may, for example, have participated in careers-related lessons delivered by a teacher who took part in a training session as part of the project¹³. As shown in Table 3.2, a total of 1,810 indirect beneficiaries were reported at an average of 140 per school.

Table 3.2: Students benefitting indirectly

	Total no. students (including non-disadvantaged)	Pupil Premium	EHCP and SEN	English as an additional language	Post-16 bursary
Year 7	288	137	133	31	0
Year 8	286	132	136	31	0
Year 9	526	217	214	51	0
Year 10	542	191	210	52	0
Year 11	97	54	38	9	0
Year 12	26	6	18	0	18
Year 13	45	5	14	20	37
Total	1,810	742	763	194	55

Source: York Consulting. Base: 13 schools.

Activities and target groups

- 3.11 Schools have delivered a diverse range of Raising Aspirations projects, reflecting the Combined Authority’s wish to have both variety and innovation within the suite of funded activities. Several of the projects have included school-based talks or workshops delivered by employers, but that aside there have been few common themes (a positive evaluation finding rather than a negative one).
- 3.12 Around half the participating schools established new, distinct projects that targeted specific groups of students. Examples include:
- A carpentry and bike maintenance workshop, providing work-related experiences for students with SEN or Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.
 - Mentoring and employer engagement activities for a group of Year 9 students at risk of becoming NEET.
 - Work experience activities delivered by local employers for Year 10 students.
 - A series of employer engagement activities and workshops for Year 7 Pupil Premium students.

¹³ Three schools reported the same numbers for direct and indirect beneficiaries. It was clear from their more detailed breakdown of beneficiaries per activity that the figure for direct beneficiaries was correct. For these three schools, we have therefore removed the number reported for indirect beneficiaries, to ensure the two categories remain mutually exclusive.

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- An after-school film making club run by Leeds Young Film.
- Production of virtual reality/360° employer engagement videos for students with SEN or SEMH needs.
- A programme of after-school enrichment activities focused on careers and employability.

3.13 The other schools used their Raising Aspirations funding to deliver a range of careers activities across several year groups. These included:

- Various workplace visits and, in one case, a career-focused residential trip to London for disadvantaged students.
- Whole year group enterprise days, with students designing, marketing and selling their own products.
- Careers fairs involving a range of local employers.
- Visits to local further and higher education providers.
- Mock interviews conducted by business volunteers.
- Staff CPD, e.g. training staff to become a 'Curriculum Careers Ambassador', with each staff member paired with a local employer.

Impact of COVID-19

3.14 Schools faced significant challenges in delivering their Raising Aspirations projects during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the considerable pressure on staff time, the pandemic severely limited opportunities for face-to-face engagement with employers and education providers. As this engagement was a core element of the Raising Aspirations projects, most schools were forced to either delay or significantly alter their delivery plans. Key challenges included:

- **Social distancing:** restrictions on student numbers and the need for student 'bubbles' led to reductions in the numbers of students engaging in planned activities. For example, fewer students were able to access the aforementioned bike maintenance workshop because of the need for social distancing.
- **Employer engagement:** a considerable number of workplace visits and in-school workshops and talks could not take place. This was not only because of the limits placed on face-to-face contact, but also because employers had to prioritise core business activities and could not dedicate the amount of time they had originally planned to Raising Aspirations.
- **Remote delivery:** it proved difficult to schedule online Raising Aspirations activity around schools' remote lessons. Some students (particularly those that are disadvantaged) had issues over IT connectivity and equipment. In addition, schools found that where remote sessions with employers could be scheduled, they needed several members of school staff to be involved in order to keep the students focused and engaged. There was a general acceptance amongst school staff that, whilst commendable efforts had been made, and whilst they feel that

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

value and benefit was derived from the remote sessions, they were not a like-for-like replacement for face-to-face delivery.

3.15 That said, almost half the schools also highlighted positive features of remote delivery. These included:

- Enabling more students to access employer talks/presentations than if they had been delivered in person.
- Giving more students the opportunity to experience workplaces and further/higher education providers (albeit remotely).
- Allowing students to access the above more than once and on-demand (e.g., via Google classroom).

Example: Joseph Norton Academy

Joseph Norton Academy is a KS2 – 4 special school for children with complex SEMH needs. Approximately 60 children attend the academy, 80% of whom are eligible for free school meals.

The school's Raising Aspirations project involved the production of 12 employer insight videos, featuring interviews with staff members and tours of the workplace filmed using a 360° camera. The aim of the project was to support the school in meeting Gatsby Benchmark 5. Due to the students' complex SEMH issues, it was felt they would struggle with in-person workplace visits or employer presentations. The virtual employer insight videos would give them the opportunity to experience different workplaces in a more secure environment, providing meaningful encounters and making future in-person visits easier to manage.

The school commissioned a local production company to engage employers and make the videos. The pandemic significantly disrupted filming, meaning only three of the 12 films had been made at the time of writing. However, filming restarted in July 2021 with the intention of completing the remaining nine videos by the end of the year. The school plans to integrate the films within the careers curriculum and share them with other schools.

For full case study, see appendix.

Outcomes

3.16 The Raising Aspirations Pilot had the following intended outcomes:

- Generate examples of innovative and good practice in targeting careers education at the most disadvantaged students.
- Students are in a better position to make informed choices about their future education and careers plans.
- Increased number of schools/colleges achieving Gatsby Benchmarks 5 and 6.
- Stronger links between schools/colleges and employers.

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- 3.17 Regarding the first of these, feedback from schools provided for the evaluation clearly points to careers education being targeted at disadvantaged students and, in some cases, of it being innovative or distinctly different from what might be considered the norm. Without a school-by-school deep dive of student characteristics and demographics, it is difficult to say objectively whether the *most* disadvantaged students have been prioritised, although the case studies (provided in the appendix to this report) suggest that is likely to have been the case.
- 3.18 The findings are also positive against the second intended outcome: ten of the feedback forms indicated that students are in a position to make more informed choices following the Raising Aspirations project. In addition, students interviewed for the case studies commented that their Raising Aspirations project had informed their current thinking about career options, either through helping them to rule out certain pathways or enabling them to better understand particular roles and sectors.

"Disadvantaged students have benefitted from visits to prestigious engineering companies which they would never have done before. This has given them insight into what is required in a modern engineering business to such an extent that two of them have applied for work experience in engineering." (Feedback form – secondary school)

"After an employer engagement event, a group of high ability Pupil Premium students are now attending an employability skills enrichment to receive support in applying for apprenticeship opportunities with the employer." (Feedback form – secondary school)

- 3.19 The third outcome is assessed via Compass data. As shown in Table 3.3, the number of Raising Aspirations schools meeting Benchmark 5 has decreased since the 2019/20 academic year, as is also the case for Benchmark 6. Linked to that, average scores against each of those Benchmarks have also reduced (Table 3.4).

Table 3.3: Number of schools achieving Benchmark 5 and 6 – Raising Aspirations

	2019/20	2020/21	Change
Benchmark 5	13	10	-3
Benchmark 6	8	5	-3

Source: Compass data 2019 - 2021. Base = 15 schools.

Table 3.4: Average Benchmark 5 and 6 scores – Raising Aspirations

	2019/20	2020/21	Change
Benchmark 5	97	93	-4
Benchmark 6	82	74	-8

Source: Compass data 2018-2021. Base = 15 schools.

- 3.20 COVID-19 is evidently the central reason for the above. A common theme across the feedback forms provided in 2021 was that the COVID-19 restrictions had prevented schools from achieving the outcomes they had intended through their Raising Aspirations projects. That said:

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- Ten schools reported that the aspirations of disadvantaged students had been raised.
- Ten schools also reported that disadvantaged learners have had more opportunities to learn about the world of work.
- Eleven schools reported that disadvantaged students have had more experiences of the world of work.
- Both of the schools that targeted their project specifically at students with SEND stated that it had raised the aspirations of those students.
- The three schools that identified parental engagement as an important feature of their Raising Aspirations projects all reported that, in their view, parents had become better able to support their children in making informed career decisions.

“Data from the careers tracker shows that our students have raised their aspirations and are making informed ‘good choices’ for their options and next steps.” (Feedback form – secondary school)

*“Students have been immersed in different activities. One student, who usually barely manages to complete half a day in school, stayed for the full day to complete her stop-motion animation.”
(Feedback form – secondary school)*

“All parents who attended [a parent and student trip to Leeds University] had never been to a university and were surprised that it could be a viable option for their children, as they believed prior to this that it wasn’t financially possible.” (Feedback form – secondary school)

- 3.21 There is also evidence of knock-on benefits and catalytic effects. For example, at one school, an employer who delivered a workshop through the Raising Aspirations project has since become involved with the school’s Year 12 enterprise club. At another school there has been a 60% increase in employer engagement activities since, and as a consequence of, the Raising Aspirations project.

Example: Project Altitude @ Parkside

Project Altitude aimed to provide early intervention support for 12 students in Year 9 at risk of becoming NEET. It involved one-to-one business mentoring, workplace visits and employability skills workshops. Delivered between November 2019 and February 2020, the project sought to inform students' GCSE decision-making and develop their employability skills.

The school had an existing relationship with a local engineering company (the managing director of the company supports the school as an EA). This provided the foundation for the project and enabled a range of activities to be undertaken between November 2019 and February 2020. These included visits to the employer's factory, business mentoring sessions, a visit to Jaguar Land Rover and the creation of StartProfiles¹⁴ for each student.

Students said the employer visits had given them an insight into different jobs. In the main, they expected this to benefit them when making decisions about post-compulsory study and career pathways. Staff at the school reported (what they consider to be) a direct link between the project and an increase in the self-confidence of the participating students. This was particularly apparent during the end-of-project presentations.

For full case study, see appendix.

Looking ahead

- 3.22 The Raising Aspirations Pilot Fund has been matched funded by the Burberry Foundation for 2021/22 academic year. This will enable five additional schools/colleges to deliver a Raising Aspirations project focused on inspiring learners with SEND to pursue roles in the creative industries.
- 3.23 It is hoped that the outcomes and learning summarised in this report will create an evidence base for building financial capacity within schools and colleges to deliver sustainable, innovative and effective careers programmes focussed on employer engagement with disadvantaged learners. The Combined Authority aims to use this evaluation report, alongside a report relating to the delivery in 2021/22, to showcase and share best practice amongst school and college networks both inside and outside of the region.

¹⁴ StartProfile. Here: <https://careers.startprofile.com/page/home-page>

4 KIRKLEES CAREERS HUB

Introduction

- 4.1 Co-funded with LEPs and the CEC, Careers Hubs are groups of between 20 and 40 secondary schools and colleges located in the same area, working in partnership with employers, universities, training providers and careers professionals to improve outcomes for young people. A primary focus for Careers Hubs is supporting schools and colleges to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks, with a particular focus on Benchmarks 5 and 6.
- 4.2 The Kirklees Careers Hub was launched in 2018 as part of the first wave of 20 Careers Hubs established across the country. Involving all 35 secondary schools and colleges in the Kirklees area, the Kirklees Careers Hub provides access to employer engagement opportunities and promotes collaboration between school and college Careers Leaders. Key features of the Kirklees Careers Hub include:
- A Hub Lead who, with ECs, supports schools and colleges to develop careers plans and forge relationships with employers.
 - A network of EAs providing strategic support to schools and colleges.
 - Cornerstone Employers who support school and college careers provision and encourage other businesses to engage with the Hub.
 - Access to training bursaries for Careers Leaders to participate in training programmes delivered by the CEC.
 - A Central Hub Fund equivalent to £1000 per Hub member.
 - A 'virtual wallet' of £3,700 per school or college, used to purchase activities from careers education and guidance providers.
- 4.3 The Hub includes a Lead School (Batley Girls School) that works closely with the Hub Lead and the ECs to facilitate collaboration with other schools and colleges. Other key stakeholders include Huddersfield University, Go Higher West Yorkshire, C&K Careers and the Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce.

Motivations and delivery volumes

- 4.4 The evaluation evidence suggests there are two main reasons why Careers Leaders wanted their school to become involved with the Hub:
- Opportunities for collaboration and partnership building with other schools.
 - Access to high quality resources, CPD and student opportunities.
- 4.5 Evidenced in part through the following data, there has been strong buy-in and engagement with the Hub from most of the schools in Kirklees:
- 34 schools have accessed the 'virtual wallet', mainly to fund work with local careers-related organisations such as C&K Careers and Ahead Partnership.

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- 29 schools were matched with an EA in the 2020/21 academic year.
- 13 schools have used digital careers packages such as Morrisby and CASCAID.
- 11 schools have accessed funding for Careers Leader training. This has included accredited qualifications at Level 6 and 7.

4.6 In addition, there has been strong engagement with the Hub’s CPD offer which aims to support teachers to embed careers within the curriculum. Table 4.1 shows the number of schools participating in 2019/20. Notably:

- Only one school did not take part in any of the CPD sessions.
- Most schools took part in more than one.

4.7 CPD activities were, in the main, put on hold following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. One session on delivering virtual work experience took place and was attended by representatives from 17 schools, whilst a session for Careers Leaders on preparing for Ofsted inspections was attended by 12 schools.

Table 4.1: Schools engaging with Kirklees Careers Hub CPD in 2019/20

CPD	No. schools
PSHE	9
Textile design	8
Geography	11
English	12
STEM	19
Physics	10
Maths	9

Source: Hub delivery data, 2019/20. Base: 35 schools/colleges.

Hub schools have also met on a termly basis to discuss the delivery of careers education, education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) delivery and to share ideas and effective practice. Table 4.1

4.8 Table 1.1 shows the number of schools represented at each of those meetings in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years. It is of note that five of the seven meetings for which data is available had representation from more than half the schools in the Hub. In addition, each school in the Hub attended at least one meeting in 2019/20. Attendance fell – predictably so – in 2020/21 – although an average attendance of 14 schools per meeting in that year should be seen as a positive outcome given the challenges and disruptions facing schools.

Table 4.2: Schools attending CEIAG meetings in 2019/20 and 2020/21

CEIAG meetings	No. schools 2019/20	No. schools 2020/21 (online)
Term 1	18	12
Term 2	20	17
Term 2 (online) ¹⁵	30	No meeting
Term 3 (online)	19	13

Source: Hub delivery data, 2019-21. Base: 35 schools/colleges.

Feedback on the Kirklees Careers Hub

- 4.9 The feedback gathered for the evaluation paints a very positive picture of the Kirklees Careers Hub. School staff expressed a high level of satisfaction, agreed that the Hub has a clear vision and that its activities are focused and purposeful. These would be important findings at any time, but are made more so by the fact that schools have been, and continue to be, faced with difficult choices about which activities and priorities to pursue and which to place on hold.
- 4.10 ECs appear integral to the effective operation and success of the Hub. Consistently highlighted by school staff as a key source of support, their responsiveness and flexibility has been noted and their weekly newsletters well received. In particular, school staff have valued the local labour market information contained in the newsletters, alongside funding information, Compass return deadlines and CPD opportunities.

“They send newsletters with lots of things to connect to. You can pick and choose aspects which work for your school, e.g. visits to universities or CPD courses.” (Careers Leader)

“You can often get bombarded with opportunities, but you know that things sent from the Hub are good quality.” (Careers Adviser)

- 4.11 The virtual wallet also appears to have been well received and in some cases has acted as the catalyst for schools to become involved with other aspects of the Hub’s offer. More generally, but of no lesser importance:
- School staff have valued the opportunity to grow their professional network, share ideas and discuss common challenges with their counterparts from other schools.
 - The Hub has, to quote one Careers Leader, a “genuinely collaborative feel”, with members invited to provide feedback and suggestions on new resources and materials (examples include the Kirklees Top 100 Brochure and plans for an employability skills programme aimed at girls). This is very important in the context of schools being able to justify their ongoing involvement and is likely to be central to the future success of the Hub.

¹⁵ Additional Term 2 meeting held shortly after the first UK lockdown in March 2020.

Example: networking

Through the Careers Hub, one school accessed a free trial of Morrisby advice and guidance tracking software to use alongside the CEC Compass tool. The school's EC also facilitated visits to other schools so the Careers Leader could find out about the guidance software other schools were using and discuss the pros and cons of the different options.

Impact of COVID-19

4.12 While schools have not been able to participate in Hub meetings and activities to the same extent during the COVID-19 period, the general consensus from those that contributed to the evaluation is that the support provided through the Hub has actually become more effective, rather than less. They attribute this to:

- Information and opportunities shared with schools becoming more targeted and purposeful (in recognition of the constraints on the time and availability of school staff).
- The transition to online delivery (for certain meetings and activities) making it easier for school staff to take part. One Careers Leader, for example, suggested that online meetings to share practice had been more productive and efficient than previous face-to-face meetings and had brought them into contact with schools from outside of their normal network.

“Really pleased with how the provision has been sustained and enhanced in spite of COVID. It’s the energy that’s gone into adapting the existing provision to an online infrastructure. It’s obviously very difficult to get off the ground, but now it is off the ground, it’s going to make things much easier for schools, employers and the Hub going forward.” (Careers Leader)

Outcomes

4.13 The Kirklees Careers Hub has five intended outcomes:

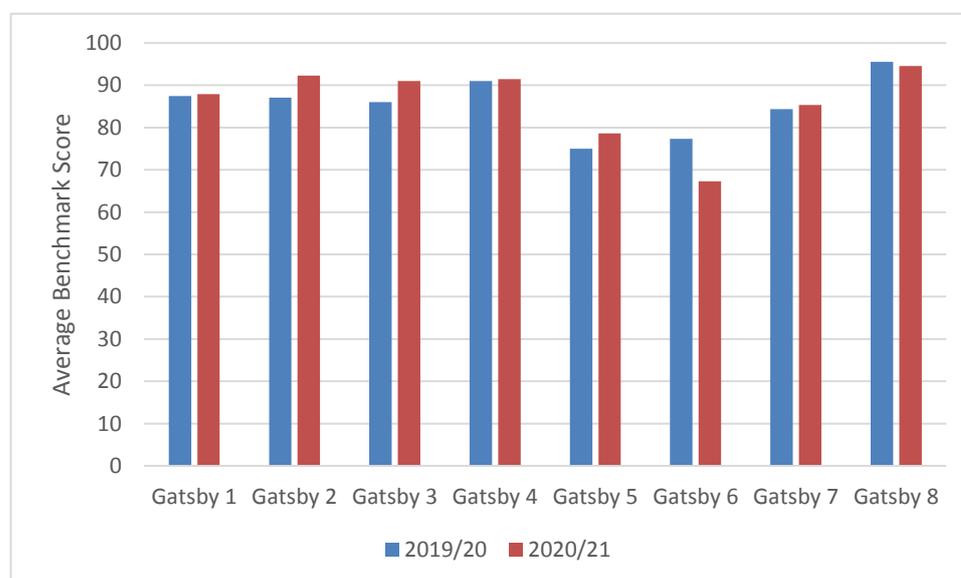
- Improved careers provision across the 35 schools/colleges.
- Increased number of schools/colleges achieving Gatsby Benchmarks 5 and 6.
- Students are in a better position to make informed choices about their future education and careers plans.
- Stronger links between schools/colleges and employers.
- Improved parental engagement with careers education.

4.14 Compass data and feedback from careers staff at schools in the Hub enables an assessment of progress against the first four of the outcomes listed above. It is more difficult to provide commentary on the outcome relating to parental engagement.

Improved careers provision

- 4.15 Whilst there is no individual Benchmark that provides an indication of overall improvement in careers provision, change in average scores per Benchmark can be used as a proxy. As is shown in Figure 4.1, average scores have increased against five of the eight Benchmarks for schools within the Hub between 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Figure 4.1: Average Benchmark scores for schools in the Kirklees Careers Hub



Source: Compass data 2019-2021. Base = 31 schools.

- 4.16 Alongside the above, qualitative feedback from school staff suggests that their involvement with the Hub has helped raise the profile and priority of careers education. They also point to the benefits of the Hub-led CPD in terms of enabling them to stay abreast of new developments and opportunities, developing a better understanding of different industry sectors and better embedding careers in the curriculum.

“Schools needed a lever and push to make careers a priority and the Hub has done this.” (Careers Leader)

It’s about being part of something much bigger and there are a lot of opportunities that come with that. It’s the culture it creates.”

(Careers adviser)

“The shift in careers has been massive. Compass returns have improved.”

(Careers Leader)

- 4.17 Gatsby Benchmarks 5 and 6

- 4.18 Table 4.3 shows that the number of Hub schools achieving Benchmark 5 decreased by one between 2019/20 and 2020/21. Over the same period, the number of Hub schools achieving Benchmark 6 decreased by six.

Table 4.3: Kirklees Careers Hub schools achieving Benchmarks 5 and 6

	2019/20	2020/21
Benchmark 5	17	16
Benchmark 6	18	12

Source: Compass data 2019-2021. Base = 31 schools.

- 4.19 The COVID-19 pandemic has evidently contributed to this decrease. Despite the measures taken by the Hub during the COVID-19 period, it has been challenging for schools to prioritise careers provision – either strategically or operationally – to the extent they would have liked, especially where that involves direct contact with employers. A truer test of the Hub will therefore be the number of schools achieving Benchmarks 5 and 6 over the medium term.

Students making informed choices

- 4.20 Whilst there is no individual Benchmark related to student choices, Benchmark 2 (learning from career and labour market information) acts as a reasonable proxy. Between 2019/20 and 2020/21, the number of Hub schools meeting Benchmark 2 increased by two schools, from 21 to 23. In addition, the average Benchmark 2 score for Hub schools increased from 87 to 92 (out of 100).
- 4.21 Alongside the Benchmark 2 improvements, Careers Leaders provided examples of how their engagement with the Hub had supported students in making more informed choices. These include more students expressing an interest in, and applying for, apprenticeships and the Hub facilitating connections with organisations providing individual careers guidance.

Stronger links between schools/colleges and employers

- 4.22 The decrease in the number of schools achieving Benchmarks 5 and 6 could indicate poor progress against this outcome. However, examples exist of where employer engagement has worked very well during the pandemic. One such example is summarised in the shaded box below.

Example: opportunities for students

During the pandemic, one school took advantage of a range of opportunities promoted through the Hub and now regularly accesses resources available through the PwC Employability Hub. Feedback from students about these resources has been positive, particularly regarding virtual interviews.

The school has also provided virtual work experience opportunities through the Springpod platform. These opportunities have reportedly been very well received by those involved.

Looking ahead

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- 4.23 A central priority of the Kirklees Careers Hub is to integrate new members from the neighbouring local authority area of Calderdale, with these schools and colleges being invited to join the Hub from September 2021. Alongside this, the Hub will focus on gaining a consistent standard across schools and colleges, and ensuring that resources are embedded through the sharing of 'what works' and good practice. In addition, the Hub is in a strong position to lead on good practice in parental engagement and will continue to develop this and share across the wider network.
- 4.24 Senior leadership and governor engagement remains an ongoing area for development, as does ensuring that each Hub member has an effective Careers Link Governor.
- 4.25 Wider priorities include the expansion of Careers Hubs to other areas in the Leeds City Region. The January 2021 Skills for Jobs White paper proposed the roll-out of Careers Hubs everywhere and, building on current successful Careers Hubs, the Combined Authority has recently finished a consultation exercise with Hub members to support this ambition. In addition to the expansion of the Kirklees Careers Hub and the SEND Careers Hub, funding has been secured for a third Careers Hub comprising secondary schools and colleges across Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield. After a transition period in the 2021/22 academic year, all EAN members will be invited to join a Careers Hub during 2022/23.

5 SEND CAREERS HUB

Introduction

- 5.1 Established in 2019, the SEND Careers Hub is based on a similar model to the Kirklees Careers Hub but has a specific focus on improving careers provision for SEND students. The SEND Careers Hub aims to create a network of mainstream and special schools and colleges that work together with employers, universities and training providers to share resources, learning and good practice. The SEND Careers Hub's Cornerstone Employers support employer engagement activities tailored to SEND students and provide strategic support through the Hub's steering group.
- 5.2 The SEND Careers Hub covers the local authority areas of Leeds, Wakefield, Calderdale and York. As at mid-2021, 29 schools and colleges were engaged with the Hub, with a further 16 schools set to join during the 2021/22 academic year. The lead school for the Hub is the Lighthouse School – a special free school for students with an autism diagnosis.
- 5.3 Like the Kirklees Careers Hub, the SEND Careers Hub is supported by ECs who facilitate partnerships between schools, colleges and employers. These ECs work solely with SEND Careers Hub schools and colleges, co-ordinating working group and networking meetings and promoting relevant opportunities through a half-termly newsletter.

School and employer engagement

- 5.4 In the first year of the SEND Careers Hub, the main priorities were stakeholder engagement and establishing a forward programme of work. ECs worked with a consultant (a former headteacher) to secure buy-in from schools and colleges and recruit Cornerstone Employers. A stakeholder engagement event was held in January 2020 which, based on information gathered for the evaluation, proved useful for networking and sharing practice. Following the event – and influenced significantly by on the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic – progress on the SEND Careers Hub slowed. Whilst recognising the reasons for this, the stakeholders that contributed to the evaluation nonetheless expressed some disappointment that the early momentum had been lost.
- 5.5 Covered in turn below, the SEND Careers Hub's activities in the 2020/21 academic year were focused on three key themes (feedback gathered during the evaluation suggests that this clarity of focus helped with school engagement and participation):
- Establishing a SEND alumni network.
 - Improving employer engagement.
 - Developing a community of schools and colleges that can support each other to improve careers provision for SEND students.
- 5.6 The first two of these themes were led by working groups comprising school Careers Leaders and employers (with support from ECs). The third theme was led by the ECs.

SEND alumni network

- 5.7 The SEND Careers Hub worked with the University of Derby to develop a toolkit of resources to support schools in establishing a SEND alumni network. The aim was that the network would help schools to inspire their students by giving them insight into the range of career paths that their predecessors had followed.
- 5.8 The resources are based on a four-stage model for creating and maintaining an alumni network (develop, recruit, retain and review). Training on the model was delivered in October 2020 and was attended by representatives from approximately half the 29 SEND Hub schools. The intention was to formally launch the resources at this event, but a delay in finalising them meant that this was pushed back to January 2021. ECs felt that this contributed to the loss of momentum described above.
- 5.9 Nonetheless, both the training and the resources have been well received by schools and have since been used by Careers Hubs in Lancaster and the South East of England. At the time of writing, the only notable recommendation put forward by schools for improving the resources was to make them less text-heavy.

Employer engagement

- 5.10 The SEND Careers Hub commissioned Lighthouse Futures Trust to develop resources to support schools and employers to deliver successful employer engagement activities with SEND students. The resources included a calendar of national career-related events, letter templates for outreach work with employers and employer insight videos.
- 5.11 The resources are set to be launched in the winter of 2021 and will be available on the FutureGoals website. Building on the learning from the alumni network project, this launch will coincide with dedicated training sessions to support the use of the resources.

Developing a community

- 5.12 This project has focused primarily on the creation of a directory of Careers Leads to facilitate networking across the Hub. The directory contains the names and email addresses for each Careers Lead, shows how long they have been in post and lists their areas of expertise. It also indicates whether they have resources to share and if their school or college has a Careers Link Governor.
- 5.13 The directory was officially launched in the spring of 2021. At the time of writing, use of the directory was still in its early stages, although the intention is that it will be used more widely in the 2021/22 academic year and will help to foster new partnerships and working relationships across the Hub. In particular, it has the potential to engender practice sharing between special and mainstream schools.

Impact of COVID-19

- 5.14 The COVID-19 pandemic has placed significant constraints on the capacity of schools to engage with the SEND Careers Hub, as it has on employer engagement and

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

participation more widely. One of the Cornerstone Employers, for example, felt it necessary to reduce their involvement with the SEND Careers Hub and focus on core business operations (they are a hospitality business).

- 5.15 However, the shift to online working has, in one regard, benefitted the SEND Hub. Prior to the pandemic, working group meetings were held face-to-face and were usually in Leeds. This could make it challenging for schools from other areas to attend and meant that numbers were often quite low. With the meetings now held online, attendance is typically much higher and includes both Careers Leaders and employers. The breakout-room facility within the video conferencing software has also allowed for focused discussion around specific topics.

Outcomes

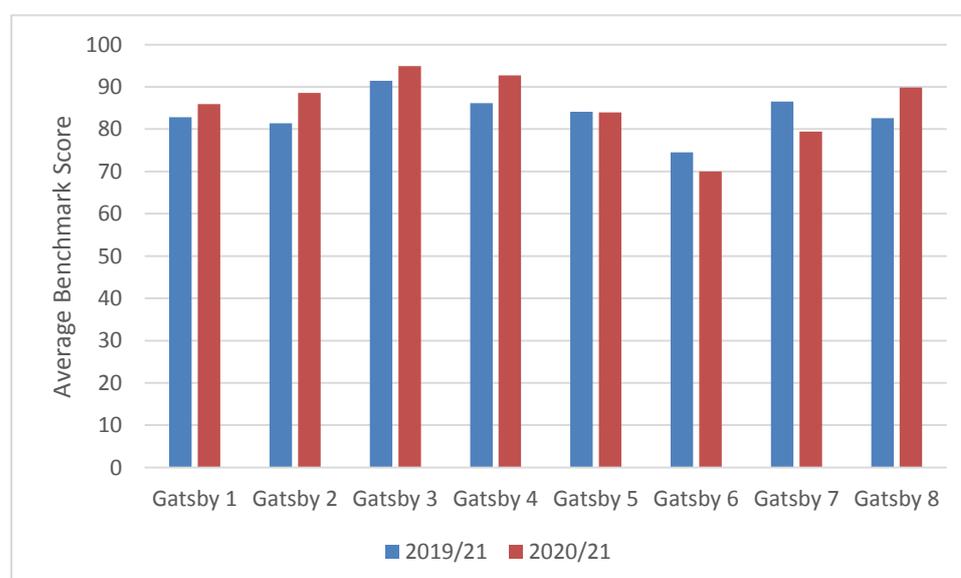
- 5.16 The SEND Careers Hub has five intended outcomes, the first two of which are as follows:

- Improved careers provision across the participating schools/colleges.
- Increased number of schools/colleges achieving Gatsby Benchmarks 1, 5 and 6.

Improved careers provision

- 5.17 Between 2019/20 and 2020/21, the average number of Benchmarks achieved by SEND Careers Hub schools has increased by half a Benchmark, from 4.0 to 4.5 Benchmarks¹⁶. In addition, the number of schools meeting Benchmark 3 (addressing the needs of each pupil) has increased from 14 in 2019/20 to 18 in 2020/21.
- 5.18 Over the same period, average scores for five of the eight Benchmarks increased amongst SEND Careers Hub schools (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Average Benchmark scores for the SEND Careers Hub schools



Source: Compass data 2019-2021. Base = 28 schools/colleges.

¹⁶ For 1 of the 29 SEND Careers Hub schools, Compass data was not available for the 2019/20 academic year.

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- 5.19 The inference from this data is that, overall, careers provision at SEND Careers Hub schools has improved between 2019/20 and 2020/21. It is not possible, within the confines of this evaluation, to prove that conclusively, nor to comment on the extent to which the SEND Careers Hub is responsible, but the signs nonetheless appear encouraging.

More schools/colleges achieving Benchmarks 1, 5 and 6

- 5.20 As above, Compass data shows that, on average, SEND Careers Hub schools have improved against Benchmark 1, but not against Benchmarks 5 and 6. This is explored in more detail in Table 5.1, which shows that two more schools had fully achieved Benchmark 1 in 2020/21 than in 2019/20, whilst three and one fewer schools respectively had achieved Benchmarks 5 and 6.

Table 5.1: Number of SEND Careers Hub schools achieving Benchmarks 1, 5 and 6

	2019/20	2020/21	Change
Benchmark 1	9	11	2
Benchmark 5	19	16	-3
Benchmark 6	13	12	-1

Source: Compass data 2018-2021. Base = 28 schools/colleges.

- 5.21 COVID-19 is once again the overriding reason behind the Benchmark 5 and 6 data. If anything, and bearing in mind the disruptions to all aspects of school life caused by COVID-19, it is a positive finding that average Benchmark 5 scores actually remained the same across the two years, while the reduction in average Benchmark 6 scores was relatively small.

Qualitative insight

- 5.22 The other three intended outcomes of the SEND Careers Hub are as follows:
- Improved employer engagement links with schools/colleges to support students with SEND.
 - Increased range of positive destinations and pathways represented to students with SEND.
 - Students are in a better position to make informed choices about their future education and career plans.
- 5.23 It is difficult to comment on the extent to which these outcomes have been achieved, given that the evaluation scope enabled only very limited interactions with SEND Careers Hub stakeholders in the 2020/21 academic year.
- 5.24 That said, there are clearly some positive messages. For example, the shaded box below provides school-level insight into how effective employer engagement has led to high quality support for SEND students (more detail is provided in the appendix to this report). If such examples are, or can become, commonplace across the schools involved with the Hub, then its outcomes and impact over the coming years could be considerable.

Example: Cockburn John Charles Academy

Mock interview day

The school worked with Ahead Partnership to organise a day of mock interviews for Year 10 SEND students. Volunteers from NatWest conducted the interviews with 44 students, providing verbal and written feedback on their performance.

“They were nervous but it’s good for them, it brings the outside world closer. It’s helpful for them to work on professional language, to put that into practice.” (School staff)

“The volunteers were so impressed with the students’ professionalism.” (School staff)

Partnerships with colleges

The school has developed strong links with Leeds City College and Go Higher West Yorkshire to support the provision of information, advice and guidance for SEND students related to further education. This has also included campus tours of the college for SEND students from the school.

Business partnerships

The SEND Careers Hub EC has helped the school develop a relationship with a local bed manufacturing company. Discussions are now taking place about bespoke activities for SEND students in the 2021/22 academic year, including visits to the workplace and mock interviews.

For full case study, see appendix

Refocusing EC resource

- 5.25 During the first year of the SEND Careers Hub, four ECs each worked with approximately five schools in the Hub as well as other schools outside of it. During the second year, this was changed such that two ECs supported all 29 SEND Careers Hub schools (a third EC is joining the team for the 2021/22 academic year) whilst not working with any other schools. Feedback from the ECs suggests that this has enabled them to provide more focused and effective support to schools, as they are able to focus solely on SEND Careers Hub activities.

Looking ahead

- 5.26 Focusing the work of the SEND Careers Hub on three core themes over the past year means the SEND Careers Hub team have greater confidence and direction going into the 2021/22 academic year. Key priorities going forward are:
- Diversifying the range of employers engaged with the SEND Careers Hub and improving the relevance and quality of employer engagement opportunities for students with SEND.
 - Supporting the 16 new schools and colleges joining the SEND Careers Hub.

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

- Supporting careers provision and strategy for students with SEND by continuing to develop communities of practice and providing bespoke training and development opportunities for school and college leaders.
- Supporting schools and colleges to shape regional sustainable projects which seek to solve problems faced by SEND learners in careers education and the world of work.
- Through the alumni project, increasing the aspirations of SEND young people within schools and colleges.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

- 6.1 The evaluation concludes that the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Enterprise in Education activities have been, and continue to be, a valuable addition to the careers landscape across the Leeds City Region. Whilst each of the four strands within the scope of the evaluation has experienced challenges, each also enjoys strong stakeholder support. This support is underpinned by a shared view that each strand has delivered positive outcomes and should be continued going forward.
- 6.2 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a fundamental impact on the Enterprise in Education programme. It has affected delivery volumes, delivery models and school and employer engagement. It has resulted in lost momentum and has forced the postponement or cancellation of exciting and innovative activities to which schools and employers had committed valuable time. It is to the credit of all those involved, and to the ECs in particular, that virtual/remote activities could take place and that a dialogue about careers provision could be maintained, despite all the constraints.
- 6.3 The pandemic has also impacted on the design and delivery of this evaluation and, in particular, on the conclusions that can be drawn about impact. Where Enterprise in Education activities have been delivered, the feedback provided to the evaluators has been almost unanimously positive. An array of anecdotal examples has been provided about student benefits which, without doubt, should be celebrated. However, that does not constitute an objective assessment of impact, which ideally would require control groups, larger research samples and multiple episodes of primary research with the same individuals. None of this has been possible, so whilst the overall tone of this evaluation is rightly positive, it is difficult to talk definitively or accurately about impact.
- 6.4 What can be said with certainty, however, is that the pandemic has generated valuable learning in the context of managing and delivering Enterprise in Education programmes. Remote meetings for example, while initially viewed only as a fallback, have actually stimulated greater participation amongst both schools and employers. Remote sessions involving students and employers have tended to work less well, either because of technological issues or because they have required schools to commit a considerable amount of supervisory resource. These are, however, very useful experiences that can be built into the future design and delivery of Enterprise in Education activities across the Leeds City Region.
- 6.5 On that topic, it is encouraging that a clear plan and set of priorities is in place for each of the four strands. Equally encouraging is the willingness of the Combined Authority team to learn from stakeholder feedback, acknowledge challenges and translate those into development priorities. The plans will not necessarily be straightforward to achieve, especially if the COVID-19 situation worsens once again. However, the proactivity and enthusiasm of the teams responsible for implementing the plans is a significant finding from this evaluation.

Recommendations

- 6.6 The evaluation does not have sufficient evidence to propose fundamental or strategic changes to any of the Enterprise in Education activities within its scope. That is not to suggest that any such changes are needed, just that the light-touch nature of the evaluation means that any programme-wide recommendations are unlikely to be well informed.
- 6.7 Operationally, the Combined Authority is advised to consider the following:
- **Blended approaches:** it has been proven during the pandemic that certain aspects of Enterprise in Education delivery can work well when administered remotely and, in particular, that remote communications/meetings are preferred by many stakeholders. Blended approaches would therefore seem advisable going forward and may lead to a reduction in running costs.
 - **Scope of the EA role:** the evaluation evidence suggests that many EAs take an operational or hands-on approach to the role. That is not unusual and mirrors findings from elsewhere, plus it can give students greater exposure to the world of work. However, it can also prevent schools from receiving strategic, private sector-led input that would benefit their careers programmes over the longer term and across the whole school. Taking steps to ensure that the EAs putting themselves forward for the role are not attracted *only* by the operational or hands-on aspects is therefore advisable.
 - **Longer term outcomes:** some of the Raising Aspirations projects have the potential to generate significant positive outcomes over the longer term, e.g. through follow-on or repeat projects undertaken with employers, through students progressing into different study/career options, or through the outputs from the projects being cascaded across the City Region. It would be a shame for these outcomes to go unnoticed and the Combined Authority may therefore wish to repeat the feedback form exercise at the end of the 2021/22 academic year. This would not require additional evaluation activity, but would be a less formal exercise and could be administered in-house. It has the potential to demonstrate that Raising Aspirations has generated positive outcomes well beyond the end of its funding period – something which would stand the Combined Authority/LEP and its partners in good stead when preparing future funding bids.

APPENDIX: RAISING ASPIRATIONS CASE STUDIES

Parkside School: Project Altitude

About the school
<p>Parkside School is a maintained 11–18 secondary school in Cullingworth, near Bradford. At 17%, the proportion of SEN students at the school is above the national average, whilst the proportion of students eligible for free school meals (20%) is slightly below the national average.</p>
Project summary
<p>The aim of Project Altitude was to provide early intervention support for Year 9 students at risk of becoming NEET. The school was already running successful employer engagement activities for Year 10 students through its Aspire2Be programme, and felt that a similar intervention targeted at Year 9s (prior to them selecting their GCSEs) would be beneficial.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“If we get them engaged with what’s out there in the world of work, they’re going to be more engaged in school and they’ll ultimately be more successful learners.”</i> (School staff)</p> <p>Suitable students were identified based on various factors including Pupil Premium eligibility, deprivation (using home addresses), academic progress and ‘risk of NEET’ indicators. This generated a long-list which was then reduced to a group 12 students which senior leaders thought would derive the most benefit from being involved.</p> <p>The school had an existing relationship with a local engineering company (the managing director of the company supports the school as an EA). This provided the foundation for the project and enabled a range of activities to be undertaken between November 2019 and February 2020. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A launch event at the school featuring students, parents and staff from the employer. • Two visits to the employer’s factory, with a focus on the development of employability skills. • Three business mentoring sessions with staff from the employer. The mentors helped students to consider different job and career options and supported them to develop CVs. • A visit to the Jaguar Land Rover factory at Halewood. • Creation of StartProfiles for each of the students. • A celebration event where the students gave presentations on what they had learned over the course of the project.
Impact of COVID-19
<p>The pandemic did not significantly affect the project as most activities had been completed by February 2020. However, neither parents nor staff from the employer could be invited to the celebration event. In addition, the school had intended to run more mentoring sessions with the</p>

employer in mid-2020, and had planned to repeat the project in the 2020/21 academic year, but neither of these could go ahead.

Engagement and outcomes

Staff at the school reported strong engagement from parents (attendance at the launch event was very good). Student interest in the project at the outset was mixed, but increased significantly following the first employer visit.

Students providing feedback for the evaluation described the mentoring as “helpful” and said the employer visits had given them an insight into different jobs. In the main, they expected this to benefit them when making decisions about post-compulsory study and career pathways.

Staff at the school reported (what they consider to be) a direct link between the project and an increase in the self-confidence of the participating students. This was particularly apparent during the end-of-project presentations.

“Had we said to them at the beginning that they were going to give a presentation, well over half of them would have said ‘absolutely not, there’s no way I’ll stand up in front of people’. But they prepared really well and practiced at home. To be able to stand up and speak in front of their peers, to reflect honestly about what they’ve taken away from the project – that speaks volumes of them and the progress they’ve made.” (School staff)

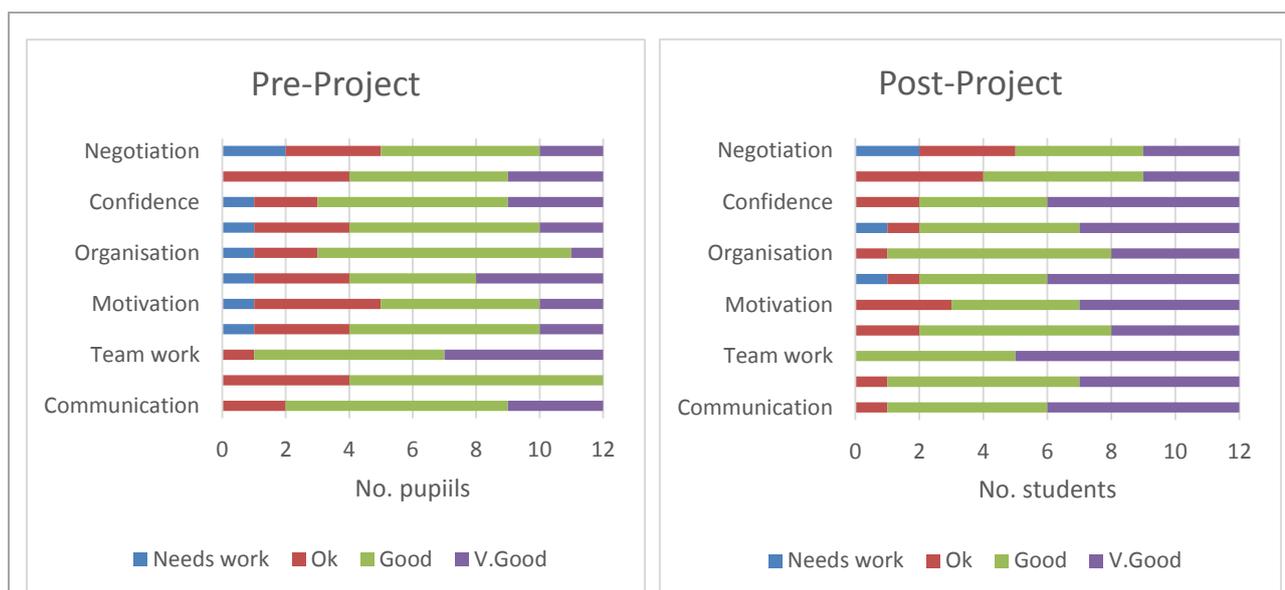
Parents were similarly positive, commenting on improvements in behaviour, motivation and decision making. One parent explained that the project helped their child to decide on a career in graphic design and that they are now actively researching apprenticeship opportunities in that field.

School evaluation

The school undertook an internal evaluation of the project, asking students to complete a questionnaire at the start and end of the project. Students gave a score out of 10 to indicate how motivated they felt to pursue a career, with the mean score across the group of students increasing from 6.3 to 7.3 between the start and end points.

The graphs below show that across the different employability skills covered by the questionnaire, students were more likely to rate themselves ‘good’ or ‘very good’ at the end of the project than at the start. ‘OK’ and ‘needs work’ responses became less common.

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region



Success factors

Funding: the Raising Aspirations funding helped pay for the employer's staff time, the mentoring training provided by the local authority, expenses associated with the visits and a three-year subscription to StartProfile. Without the funding, the project would have had to rely much more heavily on the good will of the employer's staff and is unlikely to have had such regular or high-quality input.

Employer engagement: strong buy-in and engagement from the employer was central to the project's success. In recognition of this, the school nominated the managing director for a local Outstanding Business Engagement award, which she won.

School project lead: the Assistant Careers Leader at the school clearly committed (and was able to commit) a considerable amount of time to the project. Without this support from senior leaders at the school, it seems unlikely that the project would have been as successful.

Looking forward

The school would like to embed a project of this kind within the Year 9 careers programme, although they recognise that without the funding, certain aspects of the project (such as workplace visits) may need to be delivered differently.

Joseph Norton Academy: Virtual Employer Insight

<p>About the school</p>
<p>Joseph Norton Academy is a 7-16 special school for children with complex SEMH difficulties. It is located near Huddersfield and is run by the Wellspring Academy Trust. Approximately 60 children attend the academy, 80% of whom are eligible for free school meals.</p>
<p>Project summary</p>
<p>The school’s Raising Aspirations project involved the production of 12 employer insight videos, each featuring interviews with staff members and workplace tours filmed using a 360° camera.</p> <p>The aim of the project was to support the school in meeting Gatsby Benchmark 5 – meaningful encounters with employers and employees. Due to the students’ complex SEMH difficulties, it was felt that physical workplace visits would not be suitable for most of the students and had the potential to heighten their anxieties and trigger what an employer might construe as poor behaviour. The school’s Careers Lead therefore proposed virtual employer visits through film. The idea was that students could watch the films numerous times and become familiar with the environment, which in turn would make a future ‘physical’ visit more manageable.</p> <p>A local film company was awarded the contract following a competitive tendering exercise (a key factor in them winning was that they offered to recruit the employers – something which would have been very time consuming for the school).</p> <p>Each of the films covered (or will feature) a different sector/area of work: textile manufacturing, insurance, engineering, television, film production, emergency services, horticulture, hospitality, digital, transport, construction and distribution. The first three films are already made and available to watch here.</p> <p>Each film features a short clip of a senior employee introducing the organisation, as well as a 360° view of the workplace and footage of employees at work. Funding for the project included the purchase of virtual reality headsets, which enable the students to watch the videos in a more immersive way.</p>
<p>Impact of COVID-19</p>
<p>Three of the 12 films were completed prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. After this, government restrictions meant that employers could not allow film crews into the workplace. Even after some of the restrictions were lifted, filming remained a challenge as many companies were relying on home-working and/or found it hard to commit time to non-essential activities. On occasion, film shoots that had been arranged had to be postponed at short notice due to members of staff testing positive for COVID-19. Despite these setbacks, most of the employers remain committed to the project. The intention is to have all 12 films completed by December 2021.</p> <p>Initial plans for the project also included selected students gaining work experience through being involved in producing the films. However, the pandemic made this too difficult to achieve in practice.</p>

Engagement and outcomes

At the time of writing, the school had shared the three completed films via the school's blog, Twitter and on the Leeds City Region LEP website. They have also been promoted across the other 24 schools in the Wellspring Academy Trust and with nearby special schools. Feedback has been almost universally positive.

"They [staff at another school] loved using them with the students. It may not be an option for them in terms of employment, but it's nice for them to have a look round just like every other child." (School staff)

"The students tend to have quite a limited view of the world, so it's about creating an awareness of what the world of work is like." (School staff)

When all 12 films are complete, they will be integrated into the careers curriculum. A launch event is being planned, to which all the featured employers will be invited.

Leeds Co-op Academy: Film Club

About the school

Leeds Co-op Academy, part of the Co-operative Academies Trust, is an 11–18 secondary school in Leeds. It has approximately 900 students, 50% of whom are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of students at the school who speak English as an additional language, at 73%, is well above the national average.

Project Summary

The school's Raising Aspirations project was developed from a four-year programme (Burberry Inspire) in which they were already involved. This programme, delivered by Burberry in partnership with the Ideas Foundation, aims to give Year 7-9 students an insight into creative careers. In the first year of the Burberry Inspire programme, the school worked with Leeds Young Film to develop students' filming and photography skills. This proved such a successful partnership that the school was keen to continue the relationship beyond the Burberry Inspire programme.

*"Trying to increase the number of students going into creative careers doesn't stop in Year 9. And if you do stop in Years 10 and 11, they'll pick something else."
(School staff)*

Film Club

Delivered by two film makers from Leeds Young Film, the aim of the club was for students to create their own fictional short films, from concept development and scriptwriting, to filming and editing. Through this process, the students would develop an understanding of the different stages of film making and the variety of roles involved. Prior to the pandemic, the intention was for a wider group of students studying GCSE drama, music and art to be involved in the later stages of film production.

Staff CPD

Leeds Young Film delivered staff training on how film can enhance classroom-based learning and engagement.

Movie Con

Movie Con aimed to bring aspects of the Leeds Young Film Festival to the school through workshops on stop motion animation, stunt fighting, stage make-up and special effects. The workshops were repeated so that each student in the school took part in at least one activity. Each workshop involved a talk from the workshop leader about their own career and how they got into the industry. The foyer of the school was also decorated with a red carpet alongside a 'magic selfie mirror' that sent students' selfies to their email inbox.

Impact of COVID-19

The project was placed on hold during the 2020-21 academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Attempts were made to deliver Film Club online through Google Classroom, but this proved difficult due to technology issues.

Engagement and outcomes

Film Club

Between 15 and 20 students regularly attended Film Club, with high levels of engagement and enthusiasm reported by staff. Students would often come to the sessions with ideas they had written down or been working during the preceding week.

“It was so nice to see them engaged and really wanting to do something.” (School staff)

The students developed a strong sense of ownership over the film-making process and a good group dynamic emerged.

“If you’d asked me to pick the students, I wouldn’t have put them together. But they worked so well as a group.” (School staff)

One student was said to have completely changed her career aspirations as a result of being involved in Film Club. Described as “very able”, the student had not previously considered a career in film, but is now studying film studies at A-level and applied for a paid position with a film crew. She was selected for interview from more than 70 applicants, and although she was not offered the position, she was nonetheless offered a work shadowing placement.

“It unlocked skills she didn’t know she had.” (School staff)

As well as greater awareness of creative careers, the students involved in Film Club are reported to have gained new skills in:

- **Problem solving, teamwork and communication:** the students often had lots of ideas for what to include in the story and worked well together to fit these within the constraints of the project (budget, location, available resources etc.).
- **Literacy:** students learnt what makes a good character and a compelling narrative through discussing ideas and script writing.
- **Digital:** students learnt how to use the cameras and film editing software. Some have since put these skills into practice in other areas of the school by volunteering to take and edit photos for school trips and events.

Staff also reported that Film Club provided some of the more isolated students, who perhaps did not have a large friendship group, to share their ideas and have a ‘voice’ in the school. For example, staff described the impact Film Club had on one Year 8 student who, when she first joined, was quite isolated and appeared to lack confidence:

“She joined film club and she was like a different person. You could see a spark; she was given space to be herself and have her ideas valued by the group.” (School staff)

Movie Con

Staff commented that students engaged well with Movie Con, due in particular to the interactive nature of the workshops. They also appreciated having been given insight into the different roles available within the creative industries.

Staff CPD

One staff CPD workshop was delivered prior to the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020. Whilst staff felt the workshop was useful, they did not feel able to comment on its impact.

Success factors

Funding

The project would not have been possible without the Raising Aspirations funding, not least because of the technical expertise and equipment involved. Despite Leeds Young Film offering a lot of their time on a pro bono basis, there were still significant expenses.

The school plans to run the project next year, including Movie Con, using funds saved whilst the original project was on hold during the pandemic. The school's Careers Co-ordinator is looking to source additional funding to sustain the project over the longer term.

Project management

The school Careers Co-ordinator has been key to the success of the project, handling a host of important issues such as securing consent for filming, engaging students and reminding them of tasks and deadlines, and completing health and safety checks. The project is unlikely to have had the momentum or success in their absence.

Cockburn John Charles Academy (SEND Careers Hub case study)

About the school

Cockburn John Charles Academy is an 11-16 secondary school in Leeds, and is part of the Cockburn Multi Academy Trust. Approximately 1,100 students attend the school, 47% of whom are eligible for free school meals and 22% of whom have SEND. Over half of the students speak English as an additional language.

Engagement with SEND Hub

Staff from the school attended the SEND Hub launch event in January 2020. Since then, their involvement with the Hub has involved the following:

Mock interviews

The school worked with Ahead Partnership to organise a day of mock interviews for Year 10 SEND students. Volunteers from NatWest conducted the interviews with 44 students and provided verbal and written feedback on the students' performance. Students were asked questions about their favourite subjects and hobbies, their future aspirations and how their teachers were likely to describe them. The interviews were undertaken online due to COVID-19 restrictions (although school staff also noted that more interviews are likely to be undertaken remotely in the future and it was therefore a valuable learning exercise).

Links with colleges

The school works with Leeds City College and Go Higher to provide students with information, advice and guidance about further education. Plans are also being made for face-to-face campus tours at Leeds City College for SEND students from the school.

Business partnerships

The SEND Careers Hub EC has helped the school develop a relationship with a local bed manufacturing company. Discussions are now taking place about bespoke activities for SEND students in the 2021/22 academic year, including visits to the workplace and mock interviews.

Outcomes

Staff spoke very positively about how well the students engaged with the mock interviews. Every student was on time for their interview and the NatWest volunteers were impressed with their professionalism.

"The students were amazing; there was a real buzz about the school." (School staff)

Staff commented that a significant benefit of the activity was that the interviews were conducted by people from outside of the school. Their view was that, had the interviews been conducted by teachers or other school staff, students would not have taken them as seriously.

"They were nervous, but it's good for them, it brings the outside world closer. It's helpful for them to work on professional language and to put that into practice." (School staff)

Evaluation of Enterprise in Education Activities in the Leeds City Region

The students that contributed to the evaluation said they enjoyed the interviews and felt comfortable (after some initial nerves) speaking with the NatWest volunteers. They found the opportunity to prepare in advance very helpful – one student practiced her answers with a friend whilst another wrote down how he might answer the practice question.

The students were pleased with the feedback they received from the volunteers. They were told that they had given good answers and had been polite and professional. The most common advice they received was to try and speak with greater confidence when answering questions.

The students agreed that they would feel more confident in a real-life interview having taken part in the activity.

Success factors

Coordination of the mock interview process by the school Careers Adviser was key to the success of the activity, especially given the challenges associated with them being online. Staff also commented that the enthusiasm of the NatWest volunteers was key and helped to put the students at ease.

“The volunteers were phenomenal.” (School staff)

The school hopes to repeat the activity with future Year 10 groups.