



The Business Case for Work-Related Learning in Primary Schools

In support of school governors helping drive the employability agenda

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Why is it important?

London currently has a higher than average rate of youth unemployment and those considered to be NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) aged 16-24.ⁱ There are already many initiatives underway to address youth unemployment, it remains incredibly important to engage young people early on in their education with the world of work, the importance of learning to get there and the raising of aspirations at a young age.

Research shows that primary aged children often have fixed ideas about career options and what careers options are available to them.ⁱⁱ Large numbers of primary school aged children live in areas of high socio-economic deprivation where adult unemployment is high, which leads to less exposure to professional work and understanding of what the world of work looks like.

Work-related learning is something that can be overlooked within a primary school setting or dismissed as not yet being relevant. A Governors for Schools survey of its governors placed in London schools received many responses which suggested work-related learning was something which should begin later in a student's education. It is a preconception which requires challenging, and we hope to help address this preconception by providing guidance to school governors.

Engaging primary school-aged students with different examples of what work looks like is key in helping challenge their preconceptions and widening their aspirations. Schools can also provide access to different projects designed to highlight skills and knowledge used in the professional world and the opportunities to ask questions and develop wider understanding and aspirations.. A 2015 report from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) refers to employers not engaging with primary schools as being the 'blind spot' in engagement and urges the need to do more.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Aspire Toolkit developed by Ealing Grid for Learning states that at Key Stage 2 the objectives of work-related learning are to:

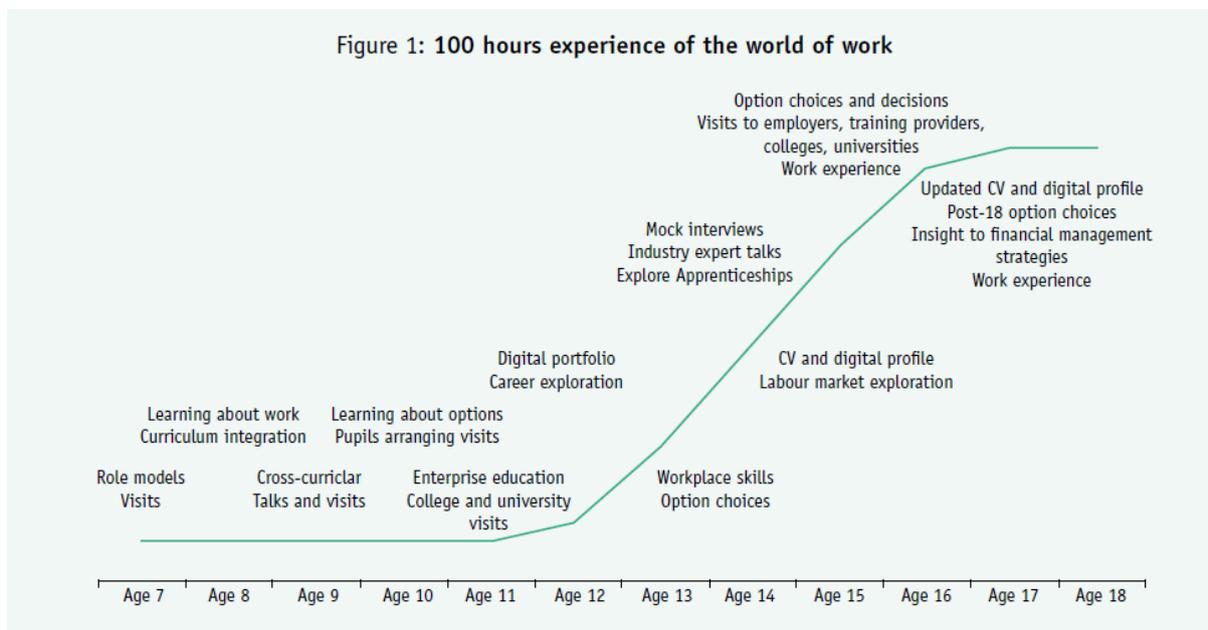
- Enable pupils to learn about themselves and develop a better view of their self-efficacy
- Increase pupils' awareness of career/work opportunities
- Increase pupils' understanding of the link between education, qualifications, skills and work opportunities, prepare pupils for adulthood from the earliest years
- Recognise gender stereotypes and identify opportunities to overcome barriers
- Develop pupils' evolving perception of their own potential place in a future world of work
- Expose pupils and teachers to businesses and the world of work to develop a realistic view of differing occupations and sector skills gaps
- Ameliorate restricted views broadening horizons, raise aspirations for pupils with special

educational needs and disabilities

- Engage parents/carers' attitudes, perceptions and aspirations relating to their children's education and career users

iv

The below graph from a 2015 London Enterprise Panel report highlights the recommendation that children should experience 100 hours experience of the world of work by the age of 16, this starts at the onset of KS2 and serves to highlight the important role primary schools can play in beginning to develop the awareness and aspirations of their young people.



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What does career provision at primary school look like?

Work-related learning in primary schools can be delivered many ways and is defined in the [London Ambitions](#) as 'Awareness About Careers Now and In The Future: Widening Horizons and Not Closing Down Options.'

Engaging students between the ages of 7-11 with people from as many different professions and backgrounds in targeted activities can play a huge part in this. Schools hosting 'Professional Weeks' where students get to meet, network and ask questions of volunteers from different professions can begin to develop a better understanding of the world of work in primary aged students. Enterprise projects can also play a key role in developing business skills in young children and boosting their



confidence and interest in numeracy and strategic thinking.

Work-related learning can be built into lesson plans which can be delivered by classroom teachers – a whole host of resources exist aimed at enabling teachers to do this successfully across a range of subjects which also help develop the STEM agenda and inspire more young people to investigate these subjects further.

Successful provision of work-related learning has a clear need for strong employer engagement within schools. **There is a real opportunity for governors** to provide further support to their schools through providing opportunities within their own workplaces. By organising events such as half-day trips, volunteer speakers and other tailored support governors can provide schools with valuable relationships to help deliver diverse work-related learning opportunities to their students.

The below table outlines some career-related activities and approximate time to complete them.

Employer engagement activity	Time to complete
Classroom speakers	1 hour
Workplace visits	2-4 hours
Career fairs	Half day
Enterprise projects	As required
Mentoring able and talented pupils	1 hour per week, ongoing
Life skills session – financial management etc.	2 hours

What is the governor role?

As with the wider responsibility of school governors it is not the role of the employability link governor to lead on the provision of work-related learning within their school.

The role of the governor is:

- To champion the importance of work-related learning within the school
- To identify ways in which improvement of this provision can be achieved using their own knowledge and personal knowledge
- To be the point of contact for staff member in charge of wider curriculum on the Governing Body

A more detailed suggested role description for the Link Governor for Employability in primary schools can be downloaded as part of this resource pack.



How can governors improve the experience of the students at their school?

By opening up work-related learning opportunities for students at schools governors can improve the experience of the students at their school by:

- Developing their wider understanding of what work looks like
- Developing their knowledge of the link between their learning and the world of work
- Deepening their understanding of how people behave in workplaces
- Improving their understanding of the economy, personal finance and the structures of business

Aside from the active opening up of employer engagement opportunities governors engaged in work-related learning will improve the experience of students at their school through ensuring the school has a well thought out plan for careers/employability provision that best serves the needs of **all** students at the school.

What works at Primary level?

At Primary schools the key focus for work-related learning is on the widening of aspirations and the development of key employability skills.

As a guideline this could include:

- Running enterprise projects – involving staff working with students to develop ideas and provide solutions
- Participating in career days and week of work activities
- Hosting school visits to offices
- Offering mentoring to students expressing interest in STEM subjects
- Helping deliver lessons which connect to future work possibilities
- Supporting schools deliver extracurricular activities such as Coding Clubs,

Detailed information on different ideas for the provision of these can be found in the Aspire Toolkit which can be found [here](#). Where



The CBI guidelines on primary school engagement for business highlight the fact that with so many possible ways for businesses to work with primary schools it is vital for business to consider what

they can offer and how best this can be delivered in schools. Discussions with experts in work-related learning in primary schools such as Young Enterprise can help develop how this can be best delivered by a company and its volunteering workforce.

What support is there?

There is a wide range of organisations that support delivering work and skills-based education for primary children. These range from organisations such as [Enabling Enterprise](#) which can work with schools to embed work-related learning into the school to [Livery Schools Links](#) which provide inspiring volunteers from varied fields to come into schools and speak with students.

Please see our dedicated support for primary schools section, included with this resource pack, for comprehensive information on organisations that can help primary schools as well as resources designed to help teachers deliver lessons with a focus on ready to work skills which are aligned with key elements of the curriculum.

How do students benefit?

In line with the Aspire Toolkit mentioned earlier, a CBI guide into primary school engagement for businesses released in 2016 states that employer engagement in work-related learning helps students by:

- Raising aspirations and broadens the minds of children, exposing them to all career opportunities available
- Creating a real-life context for learning, building life skills in areas and industries previously unknown to children of primary school age.^{vi}

Governors seeking to link in schools with their own employers to create additional engagement opportunities can be of key importance to schools – in employer engagement more is always better and the more varied and consistent these engagements are for primary aged children the better their understanding of the world of work will be.

How do schools benefit?

Increased employer engagement helps schools in delivering a wider curriculum and helps them



better prepare their students for future challenges. Working with employers provides schools access to expertise which they would not otherwise be able to provide or fund and helps develop staff within the schools through increasing their knowledge in new areas. .

Having a link governor responsible for employability will help the school incorporate work-related learning into its curriculum, as well as provide a strategic focus for careers provision. Schools will also benefit from forming new relationships through the link governor's professional networks.

How do employers benefit?

Engaging with primary schools has clear benefits to employers, including:

- Investing in the local economy
- Developing the future workforce
- Engaging and developing current employees
- Improving brand image and trust
- Enhancing reputation in the local community.

Employers have a clear interest in the quality of careers provision and work-related learning experienced by students throughout their education, and the decisions students make which will impact their career prospects. By providing opportunities for students to learn about different industries and the different skills required in each of these will allow employers to play an important part in the development of a work-ready workforce in years to come.

ⁱ Figured cited in City of London Corporation youth employability documents

ⁱⁱ Flouri, E. & Panourgia C. (2012). Do primary school children's career aspirations matter? The relationship between family poverty, career aspirations and emotional and behavioural problems. Centre for Longitudinal Studies Working Paper 2012/5. IOE, London

ⁱⁱⁱ CBI, 2015, Business must engage with more schools: www.cbi.org.uk/news/business-must-engage-more-with-schools-cbipresident/.

^{iv} *Aspire Toolkit: A practical resource to inspire school leaders*, (2016) Ealing Grid for Learning

^v London Enterprise Panel (2015) *London Ambitions: Shaping a successful careers offer for all young Londoners*, London Council

^{vi} CBI, 2016, *Principles & Practices for Primary Engagement*:
www.bitc.org.uk/sites/default/files/principles_v14_comp.pdf