

Want to link the curriculum to careers? Focus on skills, not subjects

Since the government launched its careers strategy in December 2017, many educators are still grappling with how they can meet point four of the Gatsby Benchmarks – linking curriculum learning to careers. A topic usually reserved for careers leaders in schools or as part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum, this has now become a key requirement within all subject teaching.

As each subject can be applied to hundreds of roles and with the world of work changing dramatically, many of the jobs of the future are hard to predict. So how can educators bring up-to-date careers information to any subject?

Research and training charity [IGD](#) believes the best way to help students link curriculum learning to careers is through exploring the employability skills they're developing by studying a certain subject.

The future of work is rapidly changing, which is exciting, but it's also difficult to be precise about the jobs and skills that will be required over the next few decades. IGD's skills research, [Bridging the Skills Gap](#), shows that solid social and personal skills will become even more important to students' success in the workplace. In this ever-changing environment, companies are looking to ensure a continuous supply of skilled and resilient talent that helps them to respond to, and thrive, with change.

This research, which took place within the context of the food and grocery industry, UK's largest private sector employer, identified eight key transferable skills that are highly valuable and sought after:

- Entrepreneurial: curiosity to try something new, even if there is risk involved
- Creativity: thinking without limits and using initiative to form innovative ideas
- Practical: improving how things work and being adaptable in challenging environments
- Digital: passionate about tech and being agile enough to apply tech to solve problems
- Analytical: organising data to spot insight that can help inform key decisions
- Teamwork: working effectively with others and being collaborative
- Communication: making information clear for others and being resilient
- Leadership: confidently motivating others and learning by example

As 75% of recruiting managers surveyed found these employability skills hard to recruit for, students who can demonstrate how they have developed these skills will be a major asset to any organisation.



IGD's [Educator Hub](#) includes free resources that are designed to be used in lessons to encourage students to reflect on how they're developing key employability skills at school and how to translate them to real-life careers. Each activity is based on one or two case studies that take students through a 'day in the life of' a young professional within the food and grocery industry. It highlights how the subjects and skills they developed at school influence their day-to-day work and career choices.

Students can learn how professionals communicate by watching a video of an account manager at a healthy snack company, learn how analytical skills are applied when a food scientist investigates the texture of chocolate and many more through the engaging resources and activities. In addition to the skills the professionals use, the case studies explore how their school subjects have helped them develop.

These diverse roles and skills will help to spark students' imaginations to get them thinking outside the box and help them consider how their subjects are vital to developing key employability skills.

The Educator Hub also help educators to find out more about the food and grocery industry – the UK's largest manufacturing sector and the important role that science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects play.

IGD is a research and training charity that helps upskill people working in or looking to join the food and grocery industry and which manages initiatives driven by research and best practice relating to science, technology or economics in the food industry.

Unions mobilise after Hammond's disastrous budget

Chancellor Philip Hammond announced the budget, which includes a one-off payment for the education sector.

The money is worth, on average, £10,000 per primary school and £50,000 per secondary school, he said.

His announcement comes as England's school leaders have been campaigning for better funding for schools, saying their budgets have been squeezed.

Responding to the chancellor's £400m one-off cash injection, Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: "While we welcome any increased investment in schools, the £400m 'bonus' announced today hardly scratches the surface of what is needed.

"The chancellor's comment that this money will help schools to 'buy the little extras they need' shows a complete misunderstanding of the prevailing funding pressures.

"Many schools don't have enough money to provide a full curriculum or individual support to pupils, let alone provide 'little extras'. What they desperately need is improved core funding.

"It is a sign of the government's priorities that it is



spending more on fixing potholes than on fixing the school funding crisis."

School leaders' union NAHT said: "This is a budget that will infuriate school leaders. Schools and young people are most definitely much too far down the government's list of priorities.

"There's more money for potholes than for pupils. For schools and young people, austerity is most certainly not over."

Schools say their budgets have been squeezed by unfunded pay rises, national insurance payments, other cost pressures and rising pupil numbers.

Excluded children destined for gangs and prison

New research from Barnardo's Children's Charity says excluded children are serious risk of becoming involved in knife crime and are also at risk of being groomed and exploited by criminal gangs.

The charity said 47 councils, about one in three in England, had no spaces in pupil referral units (PRU), which look after excluded children.

The government said a review of school exclusions and their impact on children was ongoing.

The research, which was carried out in collaboration with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Knife Crime, shows a 56% rise in exclusions in England since 2014.

The group's chairwoman, Sarah Jones, said knife crime was at its highest level on record and "our schools are on the front line."

She added: "Exclusions are rising and in many cases there is literally nowhere for those children to go. This is heartbreaking."

She said excluded children were "marked as failures," and

added that professionals often talk about the "PRU to prison pipeline."

Barnardo's chief executive, Javed Khan, said: "We know children excluded from mainstream schools are at serious risk of being groomed and exploited by criminal gangs."

He urged the government to reduce the number of pupils excluded from schools and to improve alternative provisions so "vulnerable young people get the help they need to achieve of positive future."

A government spokesperson said: "Permanently excluding a child from mainstream school should only ever be a last resort, and we support teachers in making these difficult decisions where they are justified."

They added the government was undergoing a review of exclusions led by the former education minister Edward Timpson.

The spokesperson said: "We are transforming alternative provision to improve outcomes for these children which helps them to flourish, backed by our £4m innovation fund that has created nine new projects around the country."

More than a third of NQTs experiencing mental health issues

Two in five newly qualified teachers (NQTs) have experienced mental health problems in the last year, a new study by Charity Education Support Partnership has found.

Teachers with less experience in the profession are more likely to experience panic attacks, insomnia and mood swings than their colleagues, a report from an education support charity reveals.

The majority (52%) of NQTs, and those in the profession for less than five years, have recently considered leaving due to health and wellbeing pressures.

The survey findings show that 40 per cent of NQTs have experienced a mental health issue in the past 12 months, compared to 31 per cent of all teachers, suggesting that personal mental health and wellbeing training should be made statutory within Initial Teacher Training.

Unless urgent action is taken over rising mental health issues, the retention and recruitment crisis in UK schools will worsen and children's education will suffer, the Charity Education Support Partnership has warned.

Long periods of sick leave – which have to be covered by supply teachers – and overwhelmed staff struggling on despite feeling unwell can impact pupils' outcomes, teachers say.

High workload, poor student behaviour, and mental health concerns are the most cited reasons for why these recently qualified teachers have considered quitting the profession, the report finds.

One teacher, who wished to remain anonymous, was signed off by her GP due to stress. She was given four months of sick leave from school after she had a breakdown.

Before becoming a teacher, she had no mental health issues. "I was a very happy graduate and I was full of enthusiasm," the now 24-year-old said.

But the poor treatment she received from senior staff during her first few years in the classroom left her feeling undermined and bullied. She said: "I had night terrors which left me exhausted. I would need to pull my car over to the side of the road to be sick before I arrived at school."

"In front of the children I became a stern and fierce teacher out of fear from the headteacher. Sadly, I began to take my feelings out on the children.

"I would often cry, breakdown and shake in my classroom reading tent."

On her decision to leave the school due to her health, she said "I was torn between my personal feelings and my professional duty. If it hadn't been for the children I would have left long ago."

She added: "It has taken 18 months of therapy and long-term leave to feel normal again."

Around three-quarters of the teachers have experienced behavioural, psychological or physical symptoms due to work – and around one in four said they have experienced depression and anxiety.

In the last 12 months, there has been a 35 per cent



increase in teachers calling the charity's support helpline. From April 2017 to March 2018, a total of 8,668 cases were managed through the helpline.

Julian Stanley, CEO of the Education Support Partnership, said: "The expectations of NQTs are quite high from leadership teams and colleagues.

"Sometimes younger teachers can feel quite vulnerable saying what they are struggling with. Especially if they're in a school where there are gaps and vacancies, or particular pressures."

On the risks if no action is taken, he added: "I think we will see continual struggles to recruit new people into the profession and we will see teachers leaving far sooner than they might have done."

Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary, said: "It is deeply concerning that the government's mistreatment of our teachers is leading to serious mental health issues.

"This Tory government has caused a teacher recruitment and retention crisis that is stretching our education system to breaking point.

"More and more teachers are fed up and demoralised after years of rising workload and falling real terms pay, while cuts to school budgets have made their jobs even harder.

"If the government really cared about our teachers, they would put an end to the cuts immediately, get workloads under control and invest in recruiting the staff we need."

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "The education secretary has been clear that there can be no great schools without great teachers and we have committed to tackling issues that could affect teachers' mental health and wellbeing.

"We understand that teacher mental health and wellbeing can be affected by a whole range of issues – we are considering these as part of our teacher recruitment and retention strategy.

"The department has also taken a number of steps – collaborating with teachers, unions and Ofsted – to strip away excessive workload, which is one of the factors that can affect wellbeing."