

Education and Employers



The case for employer engagement in state schools

RESEARCH FINDINGS



“The careers fair gave me a chance to investigate different careers before I had any idea of what jobs existed or what I wanted to do”.

ABIGAIL, Y9 STUDENT

The UK labour market is increasingly changing, complex and competitive, and the current generation of young people face a significantly greater challenge in making informed decisions about their futures.

GLOBAL REACH

Education and Employers research team work closely with scholars from around the world to improve understanding of the impacts of employer engagement and how it can be made to happen as efficiently, effectively and equitably as possible.

The team have made a compelling case that the quality and quantity of

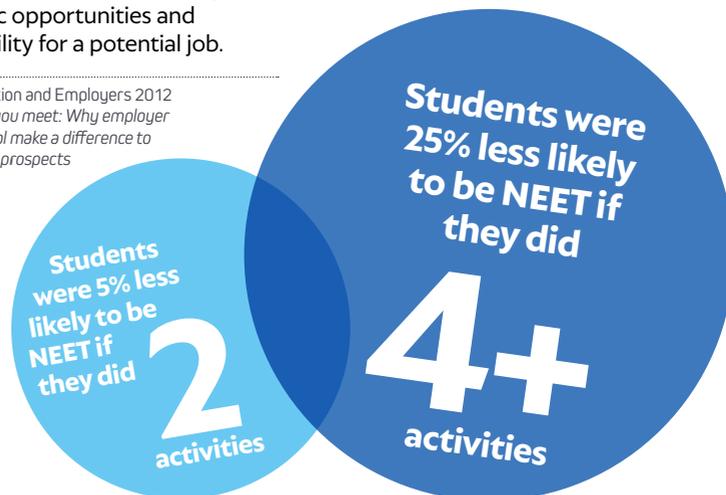
employer engagement experienced by young people while in school and college make it easier for them to navigate the increasingly difficult move from school to sustained, successful employment. It helps them to compete more effectively, make more informed decisions and makes a significant difference to how well they do in the world of work in early adulthood.

How it makes a difference

RAISES ASPIRATIONS AND BROADENS HORIZONS

Through employer engagement young people often gain access to new and trustworthy information and also useful networks. A high number of brief employer engagements with varied types of experience play a significant role in helping young people to explore, clarify and confirm career choices and give young people the chance to access 'relevant, trusted information' about the availability of economic opportunities and their suitability for a potential job.

SOURCE: Education and Employers 2012 report: *It's who you meet: Why employer contacts at school make a difference to the employment prospects of young adults*



REDUCES NEET OUTCOMES

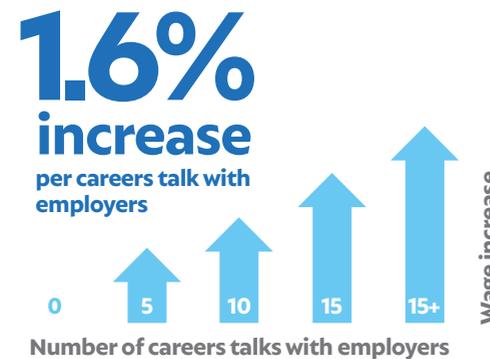
There is strong evidence that students who took part in higher volume of work related learning activities while they were in school were less likely to become not in employment, education or training (NEET).

SOURCE: Journal of Education and Work 2014: *School-mediated employer engagement and labour market outcomes for young adults: wage premia, NEET outcomes and career confidence*

WAGE PREMIUM

Our evidence shows that young people who had participated in a careers talk with employers could expect, on average, a 1.6% wage premium compared to their peers who did not participate.

SOURCE: Journal of Education and Work 2016: *Career education that works: An economic analysis using the British Cohort Study.*



TACKLES GENDER AND OTHER STEREOTYPING FROM AN EARLY AGE

Our research has shown that children come into schools with assumptions about jobs and careers which have emerged out of their own day to day experiences: experiences which are routinely shaped by their gender, ethnicity, social class and who they know.

Our Drawing the Future project, which asked 20,000 primary school children aged 7 to 11 to draw a picture of the job they want to do when they grow up, also revealed that the difference between children's career aspirations from age seven to 17 are marginal.

SOURCE: Education and Employers 2018 report: *Drawing the Future, exploring the career aspirations of primary school children from around the world*

How it makes a difference

DEMONSTRATES THE LINK BETWEEN SCHOOL AND WORK

The evidence suggests that giving children the chance to meet volunteers talking about their jobs from primary school age also helps them to see the meaning and relevance of the subjects they are studying at school work.

It can improve the knowledge and skills of children, influence children's attitudes and aspirations and develop children's social and emotional behaviours. Behaviours that become useful in a child's development and progression especially as they face an often-daunting transition from primary to secondary schooling.

SOURCE: Education and Employers 2017 report. *Primary futures: Connecting life and learning in UK primary education*

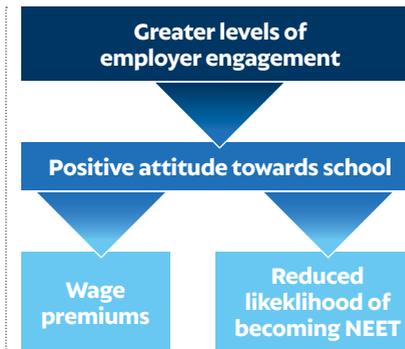
"It opens their minds to possibilities, creates a sense of aspiration and an engaging and exciting context for learning."

DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER STATE PRIMARY SCHOOL, SOUTH EAST

TEACHERS AGREE

In a survey in 2017 we asked nearly 500 teachers for their views on whether employer engagement can have a positive impact on academic outcomes. We found:

- 90% of primary school teachers thought that engaging children with employers/employees and the world of work has an impact on their academic achievement.
- 80% agreed that engagement with the world of work can change young people's attitudes positively towards school.



ENCOURAGES A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TO SCHOOL

There is a strong relationship between participation in different types of employer engagement activities and forming more positive attitudes towards schooling.

In a study which tracked thousands of young people through adolescence to adulthood, we found that teenagers, who agreed that 'school was a waste of time' earned on average 16% less at age 26 than those who disagreed. Additionally, teenagers who agreed that 'school is a waste of time for me' were two times more likely to be NEET than those who disagreed.

SOURCE: Education and Employers 2016 report *The impact of career development activities on student attitudes towards school utility: an analysis of data from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)*

GIVES RELIABLE, FIRST HAND EVIDENCE ON DIFFERENT ROUTES INTO WORK, INCLUDING THE VOCATIONAL

We undertook research into why such a small number of school leavers chose to start apprenticeships and found that young people often rely on the stigmatised advice of their parents and teachers when making such decisions. Reliable information from employee volunteers was shown to mitigate these influences and help young people to consider the wide variety of roles and options available to them prior to making decisions about their future.

SOURCE: Education and Employers 2018 report. *Teenage apprenticeships: Converting awareness to recruitment*

What can schools do?

Based on our research findings, here is how schools can get the best out of employer engagement activities.

MORE IS MORE

Young adults who have 4 or more contacts with employers whilst at school are less likely to become NEET, and can expect, when in full-time employment to earn more than peers who did not. Schools and colleges should give students the opportunity to take part in as many interactions with Employers as possible. Inspiring the Future enables schools to self manage this quickly, efficiently and for free.

LISTEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Ask your students what activities would be most helpful to them. Students who find employer engagement activities helpful, earn more in later life, and are less likely to become NEET.

START IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

The early years of a child's life are a key time in the formation of their attitudes and expectations. Children start to rule career options in or out at an early age and girls and boys hold stereotypical views about male and female careers by age seven. One way of tackling this is to make sure they meet professionals of both genders who work in a variety of roles and sectors. Inspiring the Future has developed activities that work particularly well for primary school children to inspire them, broaden their horizons, challenge stereotyping in career aspirations and make the link between what they learn at school and work.

KEEP IT REAL – TELL PERSONAL STORIES

Research suggests, and both students and practitioners agree that it matters who delivers information within careers events. It is important that the people providing information to pupils about jobs and careers can draw on personal, first-hand experience of the same professions.

MIX IT UP

Teachers argue that a range of different employer engagement activities will achieve the best outcomes for young people, but the emphasis needs to remain on real-life experiences. Inspiring the Future can help schools find volunteers willing to do a range of activities including career networking, assembly talks, career fairs, one to one or small group discussions, mentoring, work experience and much more.

LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD IN LESS AFFLUENT AREAS/AREAS OF POOR SOCIAL MOBILITY

Where a pupil is from (socially, economically, geographically) influences their access to, and interaction with, employers and the wider business community are often less formalised. Young people can't aspire to be what they don't know exists. Schools can facilitate these encounters and help young people from a variety of backgrounds accumulate more social capital and improve their understanding of their own capabilities and skills.

CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS

Young people make assumptions about what they can do in later life. Assumptions shape attitudes. Attitudes guide decisions. The assumptions teenagers have about jobs are often very deeply held but exposure to people from different roles and backgrounds is a perfect way to challenge often unspoken assumptions, as well as build confidence through speaking and listening. This includes assumptions about vocational routes.

PREPARE

Students consistently find employer engagement activities more useful if they have had time to think about their wider ambitions and prepare themselves. Schools should consider preparing students and contextualising any careers activities they run beforehand.

Leading the research into employer engagement

INSPIRED RESEARCH YOU CAN TRUST

The Education and Employers research team, since its creation in 2009, has been responsible for more than 40 publications on the subject of employer engagement in education. A series of peer review articles have presented new quantified research demonstrating the impact of employer engagement in education on future earnings and employment. These articles have influenced government policy in this area, being cited most recently in the 2017 Careers Strategy.

The team sits at the heart of a global community of researchers and policy advisors working to improve the understanding of employer engagement in education. It runs conferences and seminars

showcasing high quality new research and presents an online library of key research publications covering employer engagement and career development activities. The team published with Routledge the first collection of Research Essays on Employer Engagement in Education in 2014 and a new collection in 2018.

www.educationandemployers.org/research/ Visit our free, online research library to access resources relevant to anyone interested in helping young people make the most of its research contacts.

[@Edu_EResearch](https://twitter.com/Edu_EResearch) Follow us on Twitter for our latest research updates, for leading-edge research, free resources and international developments on employer engagement in education.

inspiring
the
future

Education and Employers volunteering programme Inspiring the Future helps state primary and secondary schools and colleges connect with volunteers from the world of work to take part in activities to inspire, motivate and broaden the horizons of young people. It's free for schools, and allows them to self-manage employer engagement activities in their schools easily and efficiently. www.inspiringthefuture.org @InspiringTF

“Talking to the children about my job was really fun. Their questions were really honest and their enthusiasm was infectious”.

ROSIE, LAB TECHNICIAN

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Inspiring the Future is run by the charity Education and Employers
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