



**OFFICE FOR STANDARDS  
IN EDUCATION**

**INSPECTING SUBJECTS AND ASPECTS 11-18**

**WORK-RELATED EDUCATION  
AND  
CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE**

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# INSPECTING WORK-RELATED EDUCATION

## THE WORK-RELATED CURRICULUM<sup>1</sup>

### The scope of the work-related curriculum

Through the curriculum, schools should give pupils opportunities to learn '**about work**', '**through work**' and '**for work**'.

Typically, these opportunities might come through: National Curriculum subjects; examination courses and courses leading to vocational qualifications such as General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) or National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ); personal, social and health education (PSHE) programmes; extra-curricular and optional activities with a vocational focus; school-business links; careers education and guidance and work experience.

- Explore how the school arranges its curriculum to provide education related to the world of work, and judge the priority it gives to this.

*The school's aims may give a starting point. The school may be involved in particular government initiatives or there may be evidence that it has responded to them in a direct way. 'Excellence in Schools' (Department for Education and Employment 1997) supports the partnership between schools and voluntary and public organisations in "motivating young people and helping raise standards of achievement" and as an "excellent means of preparing young people for the world of work". Opportunities to increase work-related activity come through the introduction of Education Action Zones, and the increasing flexibility for schools to modify the National Curriculum for pupils aged 14 to 16, under Section 363 of the 1996 Education Act.*

- Ensure that the deployment and responsibilities of the inspection team are such that, as far as possible, work-related aspects of the curriculum can be inspected and co-ordinated.

*This is likely to involve assigned responsibilities for some areas and a request for all inspectors to contribute what they can from within their other areas of responsibility.*

### Judging the quality of the curriculum

- Judge the quality of the curriculum by the extent to which it "prepares pupils for the next stage of education, training or employment". Consider whether the school:
  - ensures that its pupils have knowledge and understanding of the world of work and its demands, and the qualifications, skills and attitudes to improve their employability;

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<sup>1</sup> *Work related aspects of the curriculum in secondary schools, OFSTED 1998* provides an evaluation of the various aspects of the curriculum which contribute to work-related education. The report is based on section 10 and HMI inspections.

- helps pupils to understand the relevance of their work in school to the world of work;
  - teaches key skills (communication, application of number, and information technology, also having regard to the students' need for improving their own planning, problem solving, and working with others); and promotes understanding of the significance of these skills to employers;
  - promotes economic and industrial understanding;
  - provides comprehensive and effective careers education and guidance;
  - arranges well-organised work experience to help pupils understand the day-to-day expectations made of employees and their responsibilities and rights in the workplace.
- Evaluate the contribution which **school-business partnerships, vocational education and careers education and guidance** make to the work-related curriculum (see following sections).
  - Judge the contribution which **school subjects** and extra-curricular **activities** make in helping pupils to:
    - appreciate the relevance of individual subjects to the world of work, and recognise how they contribute to career opportunities;
    - understand the range of businesses and industries and their contribution to prosperity, the community and the environment, and the ways in which they are changing - for example, in manufacturing and production methods and in styles of working.

*Examples might be: in geography lessons, the study of factors affecting the location of industry and their impact on local employment patterns; in science, the industrial applications of chemicals; in mathematics, the use of algebraic techniques in solving business problems.*

- Assess how work-related issues are supported by the use of **specific resources**. Consider how well they do the intended job. How well do they build on what pupils have already learnt?

*Resources might be obtained from trade or product associations, agencies, or specific business or industrial organisations. Other materials will stem from educational projects.*

- Judge how well outside **speakers** are used. Does the planning ensure that their contributions fit well into programmes of work? Is the briefing sufficient, so that objectives are achieved? Is the presentation at the right level?
- Evaluate how much **visits outside the school** contribute to learning about the world of work.

*It is unlikely that you will be able to join one of these visits, but evidence of the impact of visits may be seen - for example, understanding of work-related issues may be apparent in pupils' reports of visits, discussion with them, or the use of visits as a context for work in a subject, such as a writing assignment in English.*

- Assess the effectiveness of work-related learning arising from **other activities** in the school - for example, trade fairs and Young Enterprise businesses.

*These are intended to extend classroom experience with the support of business links. They should provide pupils with an appreciation of what is meant by 'professional' standards of work.*

- When judging the school's curriculum, give weight to the quality of the **teaching** and the **effect it has on pupils' learning**. Effective work-related learning stems from teaching which reflects the teacher's:
  - knowledge about the applications of the subject to employment, current practice and changing patterns of work, and the ability to draw on exemplification;
  - explicit planning to introduce work-related issues, using resources which are pitched at the right level and yet provide genuine insights into the relevance of subjects to industry and business;
  - use of methods which help pupils not only to gain knowledge, understanding and skills in the subjects, but to develop organisational, problem solving and personal skills which will help them in employment.

### **Reporting your inspection findings**

- Report your findings where they are most relevant and significant, but remember that the emphasis must be on the quality and impact of what is provided.

*Some reporting will be focused in the section on curriculum and assessment - for example, specific aspects such as careers education and guidance. The effectiveness of school-business partnerships will usually be reported in the section on partnership with parents and the community.*

*Sections on vocational courses should be included in Part B of the report and, of course, subject sections may include references to work-related dimensions where they are significant.*

- Make sure you include as many as possible of the elements which would be included in secondary school subject reporting, and show how they fit together to present a convincing picture. The scope is as follows:
  - the pupils' achievements and progress, identifying strong and weak features;
  - the impact which the curriculum, teaching and other factors, such as leadership and management, have on pupils' work-related understanding and educational standards;
  - pupils' attitudes to learning and their personal development;
  - the effect of key skills in literacy, numeracy and information technology;

- improvements or otherwise in pupils' achievements and the school's provision since the last inspection and the reasons for them;
- telling examples of the main judgements;
- clear indications of what needs to be done to increase pupils' achievements.

## **SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS**

These are formal partnerships between schools and businesses. They include 'compacts' and 'enterprise' projects, and are concerned with education **about** business and industry as part of vocational education and the cross-curricular theme of economic and industrial understanding. Together with more informal and occasional links, they can support a school's work-related learning in all its forms.

However, the purposes of formal partnerships go much wider than this and can include raising standards across the whole curriculum, by making schools more effective. There is a wide variety of activities, including projects to improve school management, the quality of teaching and learning, and the range and quality of resources.

Examples might include:

- an outside speaker contributing to teaching in a mathematics or leisure and tourism class;
- a group of industrialists helping with the organisation of an 'Industry day';
- a business person supervising a 'mini-enterprise' activity;
- a banker helping pupils to run their own bank;
- an employer contributing to the briefing and de-briefing for work experience, or taking part in mock interviews.

■ Focus and report on:

- the range and variety of the links;
- how well they are managed;
- **above all**, the contribution which the links make to pupils' attitudes to learning, to their personal development and to their knowledge and understanding of the world of work and the application of subjects across the curriculum.

## **VOCATIONAL COURSES: GENERAL NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Introduction to vocational courses**

These are **practical courses** which are specifically designed to prepare students for the world of work. They include GNVQs, GCSE and A-level or AS courses which have a strong vocational

component, and NVQ. They operate for students from age 14 to 16 and in the sixth form. **This guidance is concerned solely with GNVQs**, which are having an increasing prominence in schools. At the end of this section, information is provided on the equivalence of GNVQ courses with GCSE and A level.

## **Attainment and progress**

### **(a) Interpreting data**

- For students aged 16 and 18, make what comparisons you can with national data.

*National data for performance in vocational courses are not as extensive as for GCSE, or A-level and AS courses. However, with the increased participation in GNVQ courses from 14 to 16, accreditation is now 'counted' in the overall performance of pupils at 16 years (see PICS I annex for secondary schools). Post-16, the PICS I report includes the proportions of students achieving GNVQ qualifications at different levels; national data are available. As with all subjects and courses, you need to interpret performance data carefully.*

### **(b) Using evidence from observations**

- Look for evidence of the knowledge, understanding and intellectual skills gained, according to the level of the course and its stated equivalence (GCSE or A-level) and not just whether the completed work meets the GNVQ criteria. Make sure you are familiar with the course requirements and the standards against which tasks and assignments are assessed, and use your professional judgement of what is typical performance for the course in question.
- Bear in mind the relevance which the following characteristics have to vocational courses:
  - technical confidence, competence, knowledge and understanding in the vocational area;
  - the practical application of learning;
  - competence in skills of communication, numeracy and information technology.
- Give due weight to the products of tasks and assignments and take the following factors into account:
  - lesson observation, whilst important, will give only a partial picture;
  - a scrutiny of GNVQ portfolio work is crucial and should be planned carefully with the GNVQ co-ordinator (for inspections early in the autumn term, remember that second year GNVQ students will have their first year's work).
- Interview some students after looking at their portfolios.
- If time allows, make brief site visits where students are on placements as part of their GNVQ course.

## Students' attitudes to learning

- Since GNVQ courses demand particular styles of working, look out for the following characteristics in evaluating students' **attitudes to learning**:
  - their capacity to work successfully on their own, but also to engage in effective collaborative working;
  - the motivation for sustained, productive and increasingly self-organised work;
  - self-reliance and flexibility;
  - the effective use of evidence and clear presentation of findings;
  - enthusiasm and capacity for practical work and exploration.

## Teaching

- Judge the quality of the teaching by weighing its strong and weak features according to the criteria in the *Handbook*, and assess its **impact on educational standards**. Inform your views by reference to the characteristics of effective teaching on GNVQ courses:
  - a judicious balance between providing sound knowledge and information to students and enabling them to become active and reflective learners;
  - students are guided towards a manageable range of information sources at the right level for the work in hand, and they are taught how to use them;
  - individual tasks and assignments are demanding, and allow students to demonstrate achievement at the right level;
  - tasks are provided or determined with the student such that they can be undertaken co-operatively, with opportunities for group and class discussion and action;
  - the students are required to plan their work in advance, to evaluate the outcomes on completion, and to provide evidence of their evaluation.
- You should be alert to **weak teaching**, in which:
  - there is insufficient emphasis on developing knowledge and understanding and failure to ensure that students are applying the vocabulary and terminology of the vocational area or making the link between theory and practice;
  - the quality of experience in the work placement is not properly monitored and assessed in relation to its link with class work;
  - there is insufficient planning for students to apply number, communication and information technology skills in a range of activities;



- students have inadequate guidance and deadlines for the completion of their portfolios;
- there is over-emphasis on note taking and note making, and insufficient research.

## Other aspects of provision and management

### (a) Curriculum and assessment

- Evaluate how well the planning integrates fieldwork, visits and simulations into the programme, and whether these are effective in supporting the course objectives.
- Judge the effectiveness of the 'verification' and assessment of the students' work.

*There should be a system of internal 'verification' to check on the standards of students' work across vocational areas; as well as discussions with lead teachers in the vocational areas, you should talk with the internal 'verifier' to explore how standards are assured. You should evaluate how well teachers are assessing work in the vocational area and in the key skills, and recording evidence for grading.*

### (b) Management and efficiency

- In relation to **staffing**, judge whether the vocational units are staffed by teachers who have a good knowledge and understanding of the vocational and occupational areas which they teach, and assess the impact of any lack of specialist knowledge. Pay attention also to the teaching and management of key skills.

## Reporting on vocational courses

- Make sure that you are clear from an early stage how you will report GNVQ courses.

*The inspection of GNVQ courses is likely to involve a number of subject specialists as well as the team inspector identified to take responsibility for co-ordinating the inspection of the GNVQ programme.*

*How provision and standards in GNVQ courses are reported will vary depending on the contract for inspection, the range of provision in the school, the organisation of the inspection, and the extent of coverage. Where specific courses form part of the contract for inspection, these should be reported separately.*

*Usually, vocational courses, particularly in those courses which do not have a parallel A-level or GCSE subject title will be reported under a single heading. However, it is entirely appropriate to report on, say, GNVQ art and design in a section on art more generally. Here standards and provision for the different courses should be distinguished.*

*The key skills will be judged in the context of GNVQ provision and standards, but evidence from GNVQ provision will contribute to the broader picture of literacy, numeracy and information technology skills in the school.*

## Equivalence of qualifications

GNVQ accreditations have been assigned the following GCSE equivalences in the DfEE's figures of the percentages of pupils reaching various levels, for example the percentages achieving five or more A\*-C grades:

Vocational Qualification		GCSE equivalences	
Type	Grade	No of GCSEs	Grade
GNVQ Full Intermediate	Pass, Merit or Distinction	4	A*-C
GNVQ Full Foundation	Pass, Merit or Distinction	4	D-G
GNVQ Part 1 Intermediate	Pass, Merit or Distinction	2	A*-C
GNVQ Part 1 Foundation	Pass, Merit or Distinction	2	D-G
GNVQ Language Unit Intermediate	Pass, Merit or Distinction	1/2	A*-C
GNVQ Language Unit Foundation	Pass, Merit or Distinction	1/2	D-G

(GCSE short courses count half of the value of a full GCSE at the same grade.)

Points are assigned to GCSE and GNVQ grades on the following basis:

GCSE grade	Number of points	GNVQ grade	Intermediate level	Foundation level
A*	8	Distinction	7.5	4
A	7	Merit	6	3
B	6	Pass	5	1.5
C	5			
D	4			
E	3			
F	2			
G	1			

(Points need to be multiplied by four for a full GNVQ or by two for Part 1, to give total points for the GNVQ - see equivalences above.)

Full Advanced GNVQ counts as the equivalent of two GCE A-level subjects. Points are assigned to GCE A-level and AS and to Advanced GNVQ grades on the following basis:

<b>GCE grade</b>	<b>A-level points</b>	<b>AS points</b>	<b>Advanced GNVQ grade</b>	<b>Number of points</b>
A	10	5	Distinction	18
B	8	4	Merit	12
C	6	3	Pass	6
D	4	2		
E	2	1		

## CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE<sup>2</sup>

### The scope of careers education and guidance

Careers education and guidance is the range of activities to help pupils make informed and realistic choices about their future. It involves:

- careers education - the curricular provision to help pupils to develop (a) knowledge and understanding of themselves and of opportunities in education, training and employment and (b) the skills to aid them in making informed decisions about future careers;
- guidance to help them to apply their knowledge and skills and the information available to them to make realistic choices about future options.

*Good quality careers education and guidance depends on an effective partnership between schools and careers services. As a result of the Education Act 1997, schools are required to provide a programme of careers education to all pupils from the year in which they become 14 up to age 16 and access to careers advisers to enable careers services to fulfil their contract duties on behalf of the Secretary of State. Schools are also required to work with careers services to ensure that pupils have access to materials providing careers guidance and a wide range of up-to-date reference materials.*

- Establish how the school provides careers education and guidance.

*Careers education may be provided through:*

- *separately timetabled careers lessons;*
- *free-standing careers lessons within personal, social and health education courses;*
- *integrated activities, such as cross-curricular or permeated careers work organised in subject lessons, personal, social and health education lessons not designated as 'careers', tutor periods and assemblies; you are most likely to find examples of 'integrated' careers education and guidance in vocational courses for pupils aged 14 to 16 and in the sixth form.*

*Some activities cannot be fitted into the normal timetable. Work experience is usually provided by suspending the timetable for some or all students. Pupils will be withdrawn from lessons for careers interviews.*

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<sup>2</sup>

*National Survey of Careers Education and Guidance (OFSTED 1998) reports on a survey of careers education and guidance between September 1997 and April 1998.*

## Judging pupils' achievements and the quality of the school's provision

- Assess the quality of careers education and guidance **by its effectiveness** - how well the pupils:
  - **understand themselves**, their personal qualities and preferences, what they are good at, where their weaknesses lie, and what their attitudes to training and work are; and recognise how to develop their potential;
  - **explore careers and opportunities** by knowing and understanding about education, training, employment, paths towards different options, the world of work and how the workplace is organised; and find more information, as necessary;
  - **implement their career plans**, make effective choices, know the implications of their choices, understand how to make changes to new situations; and give explanations of their decisions.

- Judge the extent to which the school, in relation to careers guidance, provides impartial and well-informed advice, drawing on the expertise of the careers service companies.

- Sample careers interviews, where possible.

*This needs to be done sensitively, and particular care should be taken to obtain the agreement both of the interviewer and of the interviewee before the observation.*

- Through your inspection, form a view of the effectiveness of careers education and guidance for the range of pupils in the school.

*This also includes the provision of careers education and guidance for pupils with special educational needs. Some of these may require provision which concentrates on the transition to adult life rather than to the world of work.*

- Judge the effectiveness of the partnership agreement between the school and the local careers service companies in providing careers education and guidance.

- Evaluate how well pupils develop knowledge, understanding and insights from **work-related activities** and **the world of work**. The following are examples:

- work experience placement;
- work shadowing;
- work simulation, such as mini-enterprises or designing and making business games.

***Work-related activities** are an important part of the curriculum for careers education and guidance. In many areas they are supported by education-business partnerships. Sometimes, the careers service provider, or careers company, is also the provider of education-business support services, especially for work experience.*

*Work experience is a major element of the programme for careers education and guidance in almost all secondary schools. About 95 per cent of pupils aged from 14 to 16 are involved in some kind of work experience, and for many it is their first encounter with the workplace and its demands. Currently, about half of students post-16 undertake work experience or work shadowing.*

- If you cannot see such activities directly, do what you can to **tap into** briefing and de-briefing sessions, **talk with** groups of pupils and **look at** reports or assignments. In this way you should gain insights into the effectiveness of planning and preparation and into the benefits which the pupils have gained in:
  - knowledge and understanding of the world of work, and the qualifications, skills, attitudes, aptitudes and training needed in the area of work they have been involved in;
  - awareness of their own qualities, their strengths and weaknesses, and the relevance of their work in school to improving their employability or preparation for the next stage of their education or training;
  - understanding something of the health and safety implication for employees and employers, and their rights and responsibilities in the workplace.

In careers education and guidance, '**teaching**' applies to the 'classroom' contributions of careers teachers, tutors, careers advisers, support staff and visiting speakers. 'Classroom' activities could include group activities taking place away from the classroom base.

- Inform your judgements by reference to the characteristics of effective teaching in careers education and guidance, where teachers:
  - have secure and current knowledge of opportunities, trends and patterns in study, training and work, including recognition of the impact of technology and economic change on work and occupational patterns (*knowledge*);
  - possess the ability to challenge the perceptions and assumptions which pupils have about work, education and training opportunities, and develop in pupils a critical understanding of the opportunities open to them (*assessment, expectations, knowledge, methods*);
  - recognise and respond to immediate transitions and decisions that pupils need to make and to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs (*assessment, knowledge, match to need, methods*);
  - provide pupils with skills and techniques, including those needed for research and handling information, to support their thinking about careers and to enable them to make informed decisions (*knowledge, expectations, methods*).

*You should be alert to the ways in which training opportunities have been taken up by teachers, how designated funding - for example, through the careers service companies or the standards fund - has been used, and how these have enhanced the skills and effectiveness of careers teachers.*

## **Reporting your findings on careers education and guidance**

- Report on careers education and guidance as fully as possible in the section of the report dealing with the curriculum.

*A distance learning pack 'The Inspection of Careers Education and Guidance' was produced by OFSTED/DfEE in 1997 (available free of charge, while stocks last, from The OFSTED Publications Centre, tel 0171 510 0180).*

## ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This is one of a set of booklets which make up *Inspecting subjects and aspects 11-18*. The set consists of:

- an introductory booklet, *General guidance*, which is for all inspectors who evaluate the work of secondary age pupils - it is mainly about inspecting subjects;
- separate booklets on inspecting specific subjects and aspects; the contents page of *General guidance* shows the subjects and aspects which have booklets.

The main points in the *General guidance* are summarised in each subject, but if you are inspecting the work of secondary age pupils you should read the introductory booklet so that you are fully in the picture of what you have to do.

The contents of all the booklets are on the Internet and can be accessed from OFSTED's website [<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>]. This will allow you to obtain guidance for individual subjects or aspects.

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