

Education and Training Inspectorate

A Report of an Evaluation

on

The Quality of Learning Guidance in Post-Primary Schools

February 2010



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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Quantitative Terms

A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:

More than 90%	-	almost/nearly all
75%-90%	-	most
50%-74%	-	a majority
30%-49%	-	a significant minority
10%-29%	-	a minority
Less than 10%	-	very few/a small minority

Grading System

PERFORMANCE LEVEL	DESCRIPTOR OF PERFORMANCE LEVEL
1	Outstanding
2	Very good
3	Good
4	Satisfactory
5	Inadequate
6	Unsatisfactory

PART ONE: SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In today's society, young people in particular, are presented with a complex range of choices and decisions to be made if they are to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live and to the local and wider economy. To achieve this they need to acquire the competences and transferable skills demanded by changes in technology, working procedures and employment practices. They need to be aware of the technical skills and knowledge required to meet the demands of their chosen career and, in addition, develop key employability skills. However, approximately 40% of year 12 pupils do not gain five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or equivalent at grades A*-C and around 5% of boys do not gain any qualifications. Nearly 10% of the year 12 pupils do not achieve A*-C in English and just over 10% do not achieve A*-C in mathematics; approximately half do not receive A*-C in both English and mathematics.

1.2 To address these statistics and in an attempt to ensure that young people have the skills and attributes to compete effectively in the market place, major initiatives have been introduced which affect almost every aspect of our education and training system from pre-school through to further education and training. For example, the development of the Early Years Strategy by the Department of Education (DE), the implementation of the Revised Curriculum and the Entitlement Framework, the ongoing Specialist Schools and Extended Schools initiatives, the re-structuring of the further education colleges and the introduction of revised programmes for trainees and apprentices, the development of the Youth Work Strategy by DE, and the development of Area Learning Communities in supporting implementation of the Entitlement Framework in 2013 and in exploring the benefits of area based planning.

1.3 The Chief Inspector's report 2006-2008, identified that we must prioritise the raising of the achievements and standards for children, young people and adult learners, at both personal and academic levels, identifying that the North of Ireland has the highest proportion of the working-age population with no qualifications in the United Kingdom. The report also identifies that those who are responsible for the education of our young people need to build more effectively on the skills, knowledge and attributes of the learner; educators need to help learners understand better the connections between their individual programmes of learning.

1.4 Access to high quality, well planned individualised learning guidance is essential in preparing pupils to make effective transitions between the various stages of their education, and into training and employment. High quality learning guidance makes an important contribution to raising achievement by motivating pupils, raising aspirations, equipping pupils to make informed decisions about progression pathways, and developing skills to manage future learning and transition into the work of work.

1.5 Learning guidance, as outlined in the DE, 'Preparing for Success' document, consists of three main strands; Educational Guidance, Personal Guidance and Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance. All of the strands are interlinked to enable learners make the most suitable choices in order to realise their full potential (Figure 1).

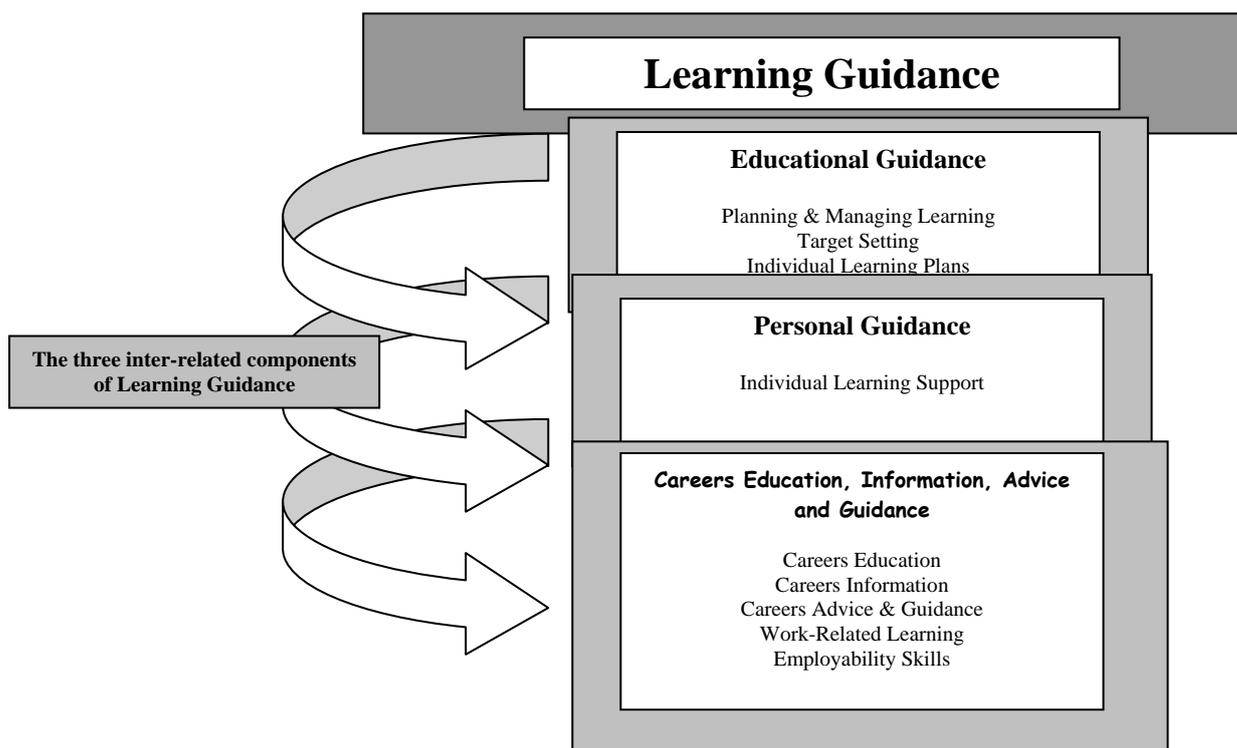


Figure 1: The Components of Learning Guidance

1.6 This report represents the findings of an evaluation of the quality of learning guidance provided for pupils in a sample of post-primary schools. The evaluation was undertaken by the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) in June 2009.

2. THE EVALUATION

2.1 The evaluation focused, in particular, on:

- the quality of the arrangements for the provision of educational guidance, personal guidance and careers education, information, advice and guidance;
- the quality of the arrangements for the use of the progress file to support learning guidance; and
- the effectiveness of the leadership and management arrangements for the provision of learning guidance.

2.2 During the period of the evaluation, inspectors visited 16 post-primary schools, which are listed in the Appendix. The inspectors observed 93 lessons, evaluated relevant documentation, including samples of pupils work, and held discussions with 189 pupils. Discussions were also held with 126 staff, including Principals, members of senior management teams, careers coordinators, special educational needs co-ordinators and a range of staff with related responsibility.

3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

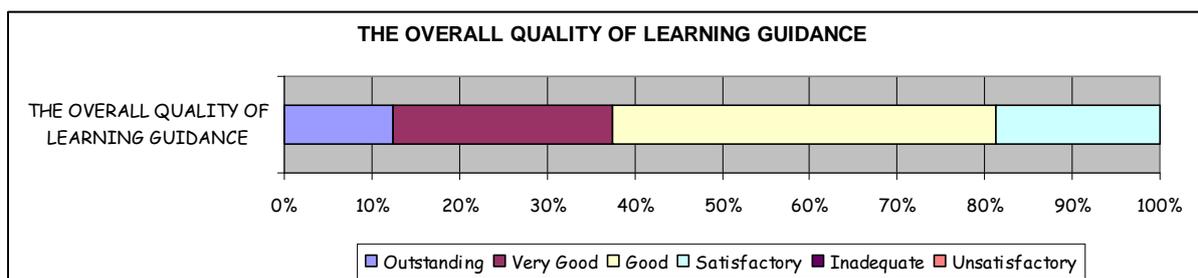


Figure 2: Graph showing the overall Quality of the Learning Guidance

3.1 The quality of the learning guidance provided for pupils, as outlined in figure 2, ranges from outstanding to satisfactory; almost 40% of the provision is very good or outstanding; there are many positive learning guidance initiatives being developed in the schools visited.

3.2 The quality of the arrangements for the provision of educational guidance for pupil's ranges from outstanding to satisfactory; just over 30% of the provision is very good or outstanding. The positive impact of the many educational guidance initiatives, however, is minimised in the majority of schools by their lack of alignment with other whole school strategies for raising achievement and standards.

3.3 The arrangements for target setting vary across and within the schools. In most of the schools visited, the pupils' have insufficient opportunities to develop an individual learning plan, however, a significant minority pupils are provided with opportunities to set targets in aspect of their learning programme.

3.4 The majority of schools are developing processes to involve pupils more directly in evaluating their progress and a minority of schools have developed innovative systems to help pupils reach their full potential.

3.5 In the majority of schools, the use of quantitative and benchmarked data, including the use of standardised tests for the tracking of pupils' individual standards, within and across organisations, is under-developed.

3.6 There are good or better transition arrangements in place for pupils transferring from the primary sector to the post-primary sector. In contrast, the arrangements for the transfer of information from post-primary schools to work-based learning providers, for those pupils who select this option as their post-16 pathway, are inadequate.

3.7 There is variation in the arrangements for the provision of learning mentorship. In the majority of the schools the mentoring programme focuses on key stage (KS) 4 and post-16 pupils. In a minority of the schools visited there is evidence of very good practice which has the potential to inform individual learning plans.

3.8 The quality of the arrangements for the provision of individual guidance and support ranges from outstanding to satisfactory; just over 30% of the provision is very good or outstanding. In the majority of schools, a wide range of strategies has been put in place to identify and address the individual learning support needs of the pupils.

3.9 There is an increasing awareness, in most schools, of the need to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of their pupils, and consequently a majority of schools have made good progress in matching the curriculum to meet the identified needs of their pupils.

3.10 In almost all schools, there are appropriate systems in place to provide guidance and support for pupils with individual learning needs. In a significant minority of the schools, the learning support assistants have a key role in supporting the pupils.

3.11 In a minority of schools, there is an emerging use of feedback from pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies in meeting the individual needs of the pupils.

3.12 Most schools link with external organisations to engage their pupils in their learning and in almost all schools, an effective multi-agency network has been established to provide specialist support for pupils. In a significant minority of schools, however, this support is not adequately contextualised within the pupils' individual learning plans and consequently the effectiveness of these arrangements is minimised.

3.13 The quality of the arrangements for the provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance for the pupils ranges from very good to satisfactory. A very good careers programme has been established in a third of the schools included in the evaluation. In these schools, a well coordinated careers programme which allows pupils to engage in personal career planning is fully integrated within the learning guidance process.

3.14 In the majority of schools, pupils have a range of opportunities to develop a personal career plan, however in the majority of schools the personal career plan does not inform the individual target setting process.

3.15 In a minority of schools there are effective arrangements in place for pupils to receive impartial careers advice and guidance at key transition stages. The quality of careers information is satisfactory or better in just over 50% of the schools.

3.16 All schools provide their pupils with opportunities to participate in a range of work-related learning opportunities, however, the range and quality of these opportunities vary across the schools.

3.17 There is undue variation in the quality of the arrangements for the use of the progress file. The quality ranges from outstanding to inadequate; approximately 25% of the provision is good or better, while just over 25% is inadequate. In the majority of schools, the progress file is not used to inform robust target setting and does not inform a regular, collaborative review process between the teachers and the pupils.

3.18 There is variation in the effectiveness of the leadership and management arrangements for the provision of learning guidance, in the schools visited. The quality ranges from very good to satisfactory; approximately 50% of the provision is satisfactory. A majority of schools have begun to develop a shared strategic vision, at senior management level, for learning guidance. However, there is insufficient attention given to the development planning and coordination of the various strands of learning guidance at a strategic level.

3.19 In most schools there is insufficient monitoring, review and evaluation of the provision for learning guidance, to inform action for improvement, in particular, insufficient use is made of feedback from pupils.

3.20 In the majority of schools, there are insufficient professional development opportunities to equip staff with strategies to provide a cohesive integrated programme of learning guidance.

PART TWO: THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LEARNING GUIDANCE

4. THE QUALITY OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

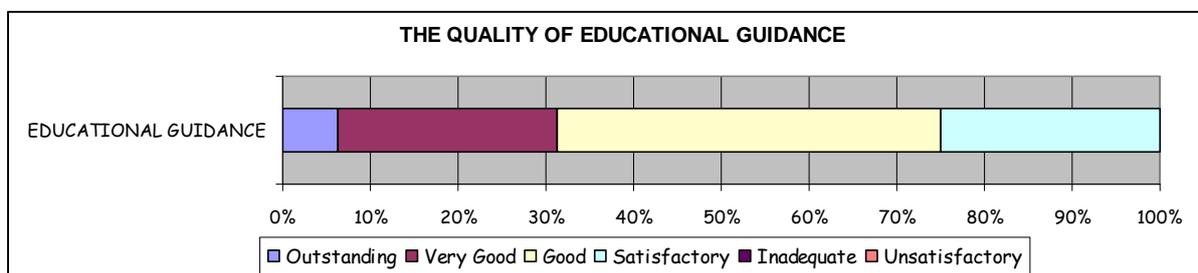


Figure 3: Graph showing the overall Quality of Educational Guidance

4.1 The quality of the arrangements for the provision of educational guidance for pupil's ranges from outstanding to satisfactory; just over 30% of the provision is very good or outstanding, as can be seen in figure 3. The positive impact of the many educational guidance initiatives is minimised, however, in the majority of schools by their lack of alignment with other whole school strategies for raising achievement and standards.

4.2 In most of the schools visited, the pupil's have limited opportunities to develop an individual learning plan. In contrast, in one school, every pupil has an individual learning plan which is being developed to focus on the transferable skills of using mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), communication, thinking skills and personal capabilities. Through rigorous evaluation, the school has demonstrated that as a result of this initiative, the pupils are more engaged in their learning.

4.3 In most schools, pupils are provided with opportunities to set targets in aspects of their learning programme. The priority afforded to establishing a systematic approach to target setting, is variable. In one school, for example, the normal timetable is revised on certain day's at all key stages to allow the pupils to reflect on their personal interests, strengths and to set individual learning targets. In this case the pupils have a good understanding of the process and the support it provides in enabling them to realise their full potential. The pupils value opportunities to set targets for their learning. They feel that it enables them to plan for improved standards in their work. The majority of pupils, however, report that individual target-setting is not systematic across their school; it is being carried out by subject departments and not as a whole school strategy.

4.4 The majority of schools are developing process to involve pupils more directly in evaluating their progress. In one school, for example, pupils in mathematics are directly engaged in improving their own learning through a review of recently completed examination paper. The pupils can interpret the mark scheme and annotate their own paper with specific comments on how they could have achieved better marks. The pupils discuss in pairs the errors they have made and what they could have done to achieve a better grade. Pupils are provided with a well designed self-evaluation pro-forma and respond to three self evaluative questions. This is discussed and signed by the form teacher and sent home for an accompanying comment by the parent.

4.5 A minority of schools have developed innovative systems in an attempt to help their pupils reach their full potential. One school, for example, has developed a 'Ready to Learn Register' to identify pupils who are underachieving and experiencing difficulty with preparation for learning. The system allows for monthly reports on individuals and provides all staff with a consistent approach to improving pupils' academic success and behaviour.

4.6 In the majority of schools, the use of quantitative and benchmarked data, including the use of standardised tests for the tracking of pupils' individual progress and achievement, is under-developed. However, there are examples of well developed systems to track pupils, monitor their learning and identify individual support needs. In one school, data is used effectively to set individual learning targets. The progress of all year 12 pupils is monitored and evaluated by their teachers and head of subject departments against baseline data. Underachieving pupils are identified and monitored weekly by their form teachers who report weekly to their year head regarding key areas such as attendance, behaviour, commitment, coursework and homework. Of the 12 pupils mentored last year 11 achieved the target of five GCSEs at grades A*-C with the remaining pupils achieving four GCSEs at grades A*-C. In addition, the school collates and analyses a range of data to identify under-achievement and to inform reviews of learning, teaching and curriculum planning.

4.7 A significant minority of the post-primary schools visited retests the pupils at the beginning of their first year; this approach does not reflect an effective use of time as the information being sought is readily available from the feeder primary school.

4.8 The quality of the arrangements for transition planning ranges from outstanding to satisfactory. In almost all schools, there are good or better transition arrangements in place for pupils transferring from the primary sector to the post-primary sector. In contrast, the arrangements for the transfer of information from post-primary schools to work-based learning providers, for those learners who select this option as their post-16 pathway, are inadequate.

4.9 The excellent relationships between the post-primary school and their feeder primary schools ensure that in the majority of schools comprehensive pupil information is provided to the post primary school. Effective communication at all levels within the post-primary school enables thorough dissemination of appropriate information to relevant staff. For those pupils with individual learning support needs, a transition team comprising representatives from key agencies and organisations, including the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Careers Advisers, the health trusts and the school's special educational needs co-ordinator, share information at annual reviews and transition planning meetings.

4.10 In the majority of schools, there are well developed transition arrangements in place at the end of KS3 and KS4 to support pupils in making informed careers choices. In most schools, year 10 and year 12 "option information evenings" are held for parents and pupils, with representatives present from the local further education colleges and DEL Careers Advisors. In one school, there are very effective arrangements for the transition of pupils from KS4 to post-16. The school hosts a year 13 induction programme for approximately 250 pupils from schools within their area learning community. The day is well structured with a range of sessions looking at roles and responsibilities, team building and study skills. Importantly, teachers from other schools within the area learning community are involved in the delivery of the sessions. The feedback from the pupils is very positive; they report that the induction programme enables them to settle into their course of study much earlier. Evidence indicates that it effectively prepares pupils for the different demands of A-Level study and removes social barriers as pupils are introduced to prospective class-mates from different schools.

4.11 In the majority of schools with post-16 provision, there is very good preparation for progression to further or higher education. However, in a significant minority of schools, the focus on higher education has resulted in other routes not being explored for those pupils who do not wish to enter higher education.

4.12 There is variation in the arrangements for the provision of learning mentorship. In the majority of the schools the mentoring programme focuses on KS4, and post-16 pupils. In a minority of the schools visited there is evidence of very good practice which has the potential to inform individual learning plans.

4.13 In the best practice, a mentoring programme is available for all pupils. The needs of the pupils are carefully matched to the expertise and interests of their learning mentors. The mentor meets regularly with each pupil to review progress against clearly defined and agreed personal targets. In the most effective practice, the mentor has in-depth knowledge of the pupil and brings strong pastoral support to their role. The roles and responsibilities of the mentor and mentee are well-defined and time is allocated to enable the mentor to effectively carry out their duties. The success of this strategy is borne out by pupils volunteering for inclusion in the scheme. In contrast, it is unsatisfactory that in a significant minority of the schools, a mentoring programme is only made available to those pupils identified as having special educational needs.

4.14 In another school, a significant investment in establishing a staff mentorship programme for pupils in year 12, who have been identified as just on the borderline of achieving five A*-C grades at GCSE, or those who are disaffected, has resulted in pupils increased self-esteem and confidence. The school facilitates meetings with individual pupils, which is supported further by contact with parents, revision classes and through teacher/pupil mediation. Progress reviews are undertaken at key stage 4 on an individual basis with the year head and subject teachers. The head of year 12, who is taken off timetable, carries out review and target setting interviews with individual pupils. In one school, where all year 12 pupils have access to a learning mentor, the mentoring and monitoring role of the teacher has led to increased numbers of pupils achieving five A*-C grades at GCSE. In addition, the mentoring system is also having the overall effect of raising teacher expectations.

4.15 A small minority of schools have successfully trained non-teaching staff as mentors. For example, in one school, classroom assistants undertake the role of learning support mentors and work as part of a team to support individual pupils in their learning. In another school, year 13 pupils act as peer tutors in supporting a number of year 8 pupils who have been identified as having difficulty in their learning. The mentors, who are carefully matched to their mentees, support each pupil in reflecting on their progress and in setting their personal targets. The schools who have developed these programmes can demonstrate that it has resulted in greater pupil engagement in their learning, and in almost all cases greater pupil achievement at the end of year 8.

4.16 In a significant minority of schools, there is evidence that additional and targeted funding has a positive impact on the provision of mentoring programmes/support available to pupils. For example, in one school, through the extended schools initiative, a learning mentor was appointed whose role was to identify social barriers preventing access to school, work experience and leisure opportunities. However, due to the nature of the funding for extended schools, this role could not be sustained.

5. THE QUALITY OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF PERSONAL GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

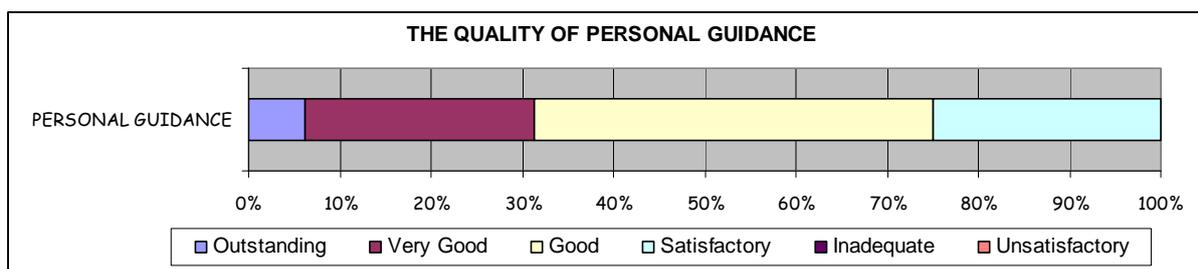


Figure 4: Graph showing the overall quality of the arrangements for the provision of personal guidance and support

5.1 The quality of the arrangements for the provision of personal guidance and support, for the pupil's, ranges from outstanding to satisfactory; just over 30% of the provision is very good or outstanding, as can be seen in figure 4.

5.2 In almost all of the schools, there is very good communication between class teachers, form teachers and year tutors. In one school, for example, the group tutor, the head of year and subject tutors carry out individual pupil interviews to review progress and identify and address emerging individual learning needs. In another school, the special education needs co-ordinator (SENCO), who is also a year tutor, attends all year tutor meetings. This provides good opportunities for the transfer of information regarding the needs and progress of individual pupils. Almost all of the pupils report that this effective communication enables their teachers to be increasingly responsive and supportive.

5.3 There is an increasing awareness, in most schools, of the need to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of their pupils, and consequently a majority of schools have made good progress in matching the curriculum to meet the identified needs of their pupils. In one school, subject option groupings are designed to facilitate a wide range of aspirations and ability. For example, in one school the KS4 options have three pathways, one for those taking 9+ GCSEs, another for those taking seven GCSEs and a third pathway for those who require support in English, mathematics and science. The latter group is provided with additional learning support for two hours fortnightly in these key subject areas. In another school, the staff liaises closely with the local college of further education to tailor individual learning programmes for pupils with specific needs. In another school, a comprehensive vocational and life skills programme is offered to enable individual pupils to develop the skills they need to progress to employment, further education or training. The school reports that the staying on rate for these pupils in their post-16 destination is improving significantly.

5.4 In almost all schools, there are appropriate systems in place to provide guidance and support for pupils with individual learning needs. In a significant minority of the schools, the learning support assistants have a key role in supporting the pupils. For example, in one school, the learning support staff are very effective in supporting the pupils through their involvement in the delivery of the personal development programme, and in the literacy club while in another school, the learning support assistant and the librarian have received accredited training in reading partnership; good use is made of their expertise to support the pupils and in providing a very well attended after-schools reading partnership programme.

5.5 In a minority of schools, there is an emerging use of feedback from pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies in meeting the individual needs of the pupils. For example, in one school, the curriculum manager has used a structured programme of pupil consultation with the purpose of encouraging pupils to engage in reflective discussion, to obtain feedback on the experience of the pupils generally, and specifically within her classroom. This has enabled the teacher to build on strengths, and to consider areas for improvement as suggested by her own pupils. For example, the pupils reported positively regarding effective preparation, classroom organisation and helpfulness, while a number identified the pace of lessons as a negative feature. On reflection of the views of the pupils, the teacher has developed an effective range of differentiated teaching and learning strategies.

5.6 Most schools link with external organisations to engage their pupils in their learning. In one school for example, the Knowledge through Enterprise for Youth (KEY) programme is used very effectively to motivate pupils. The pupils who participated in this programme report that they had an increased interest in their career goals and a higher level of motivation towards attaining them. They also reported an increase in their self-confidence and their capacity to consider wider careers choices.

5.7 In almost all schools, an effective multi-agency network has been established and is responsive in providing specialist support for pupils. However, this support is not adequately contextualized within the pupils' individual learning plans and consequently the effectiveness of these arrangements is minimised.

6. THE QUALITY OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF CAREERS, EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

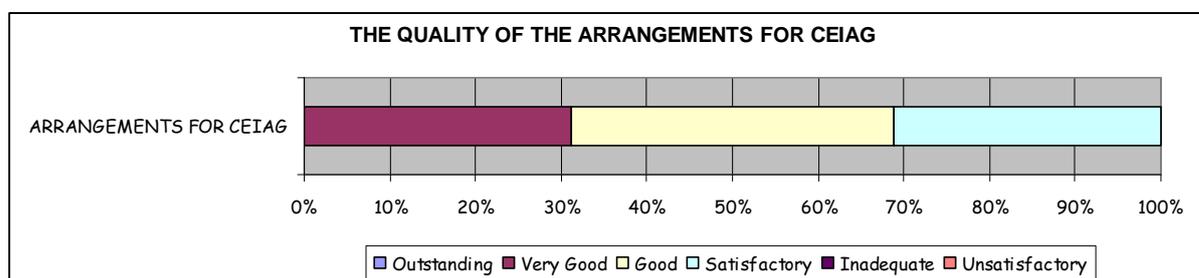


Figure 5: Graph showing the overall quality of the arrangements for the provision of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

6.1 The quality of the arrangements for the provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance ranges from very good to satisfactory, as can be seen in figure 5. A cohesive careers programme is in place in one third of the schools surveyed. In the best practice, a well-co-ordinated careers programme, which allows pupils to engage in personal career planning, is fully integrated within the learning guidance process.

6.2 In the majority of schools, pupils have a range of opportunities to develop a personal career plan. In the schools where the process is well-developed, pupils develop effective research, evaluation and decision-making skills. However, in the majority of schools, the personal career plan does not inform the individual target setting process or support the pupil's individual learning plans.

6.3 In a minority of schools, there are effective arrangements in place for pupils to receive impartial careers advice and guidance at key transition stages. A significant strength in these schools is the role of the subject teacher in providing appropriate careers advice and guidance to the pupils. Subsequently pupils are better prepared to make appropriate and informed career decisions. Consequently, in a majority of schools, staff has a limited understanding of progression pathways and there are insufficient opportunities to link the careers advice and guidance to the pupils personal careers plan or their individual learning plans. There is insufficient linkage between the provision of careers information, and the provision of impartial advice and guidance for pupils on an individual basis, which informs their career aspirations and enables them to plan for realistic and achievable progression.

6.4 All schools provide their pupils with opportunities to participate in a range of work-related learning activities; the range and quality of these opportunities varies across the schools visited. In one school, for example, the work experience programme is well planned, including the setting of personal pupil objectives, to meet the needs of pupils and support the development of their personal career plan. The work placement programme includes rigorous preparation including the setting of personal objectives. On completion of the placement the pupils review and evaluate their experience and if necessary modify their personal career plan. In contrast, in another school, the work-related learning opportunities are mostly limited to a work placement for pupils in year 13. The preparation is limited and there is little evidence that the outcomes supporting the pupil's careers decision making. In the majority of schools, the arrangements to link the outcomes from the pupils work-related learning experiences to their individual targeting setting and personal career plans are underdeveloped.

6.5 The quality of the provision of careers information is satisfactory or better in just over half of the schools. In the majority of schools, this is supplemented by appropriate opportunities for pupils to attend a range of careers related events. In almost all schools there is insufficient use of current and accurate labour market information to inform pupils' career planning.

7. THE QUALITY OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE USE OF THE PROGRESS FILE

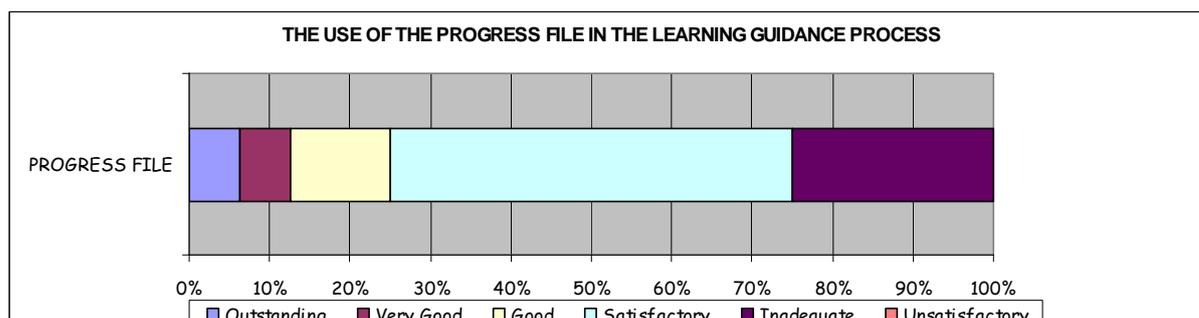


Figure 6: Graph showing the overall quality of the arrangements for the use of the progress file

7.1 There is considerable variation in the quality of the arrangements for the use of the progress file, in the schools visited. The quality ranges from outstanding to inadequate; approximately 25% of the provision is good or better, with just over 6% being outstanding, as can be seen in figure 6.

7.2 In the majority of schools, the progress file is not used well to inform any robust target-setting, and does not inform a regular collaborative review process between the teachers and the pupils. In these schools the management of the progress file has not developed sufficiently from that of the record of achievement and there is a persistent lack of integration between the progress file and other aspects of the curriculum; there is little evidence that the progress file is valued by pupils.

7.3 In a minority of schools the progress file is used effectively by pupils to reflect on their achievements, to set targets for progression and achievement in their learning and to inform their career decision making. In the best practice, the progress file works effectively because it is fully supported by the senior management team, and is sharply focused on developing the pupils target setting skills. This is achieved through a well planned series of lessons which is embedded within the pastoral programme and includes the year 8 pupils completing a review of their KS2 achievements, and using this information as a baseline from which to set targets for their new post primary school. Pupils are given a sound understanding of the principles and practices of target setting from year heads, all of whom have received the same training in this area. Homework diaries contain useful information on action planning. The target setting process is reviewed with the form teacher at the twice-yearly pupil appraisal interviews. In discussions with these pupils, they reported a strong sense of ownership of the process.

7.4 Those pupils who were enabled to engage in the progress file process report that they are more aware of how they learn, how to review their progress, and are skilled in setting personal targets and goals. The progress file process complements the careers education, information, advice and guidance curriculum; pupils continually update their career plan, and at each transition stage complete a standard career plan for inclusion in the progress file. The progress file is then used to inform careers advice and guidance, the selection of work-related learning opportunities, mock interviews and the development of personal statements.

8. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF LEARNING GUIDANCE

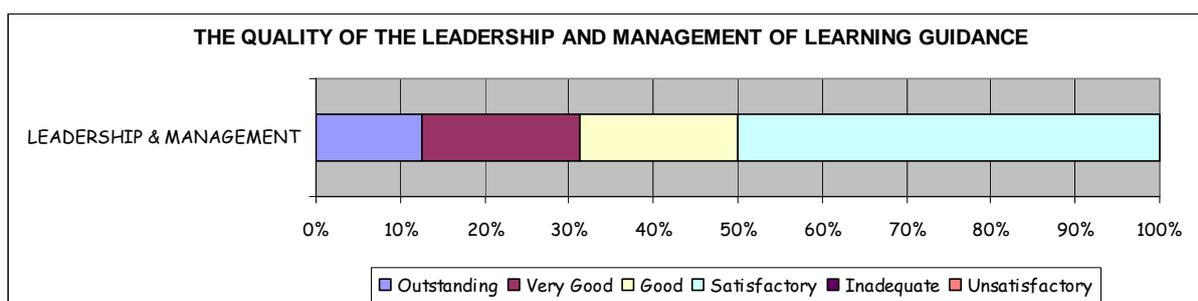


Figure 7: Graph showing the effectiveness of the leadership and management arrangements for the provision of learning guidance

8.1 There is variation in the effectiveness of the leadership and management arrangements for the provision of learning guidance, in the schools visited. The quality ranges from very good to satisfactory; approximately 50% of the provision is satisfactory, as can be seen in figure 7.

8.2 In the majority of schools, a good start has been made to the development of a shared strategic vision, at senior management level, for learning guidance. There is, however, insufficient attention given to the strategic planning for, and co-ordination of, the various strands of learning guidance. This results in a lack of cohesion of the learning programmes, often characterised by duplication and dilution of the quality of experiences of the pupils. While there are numerous references to learning guidance provision in a range of other strategic and operational documentation, in almost all schools, there is no specific development plan for learning guidance.

8.3 In the best practice, there is a coherent, comprehensive and purposeful blend of pastoral support, regular academic target-setting and well-integrated careers provision. In one example, the school timetable is reorganised on two occasions in the year to facilitate one-to-one interviews with every pupil in key stages 3 and 4. Christmas and mock GCSE reports form the basis for the interviews in years 8 to 11, and year 12 respectively. In addition, to comparative performance data, the interviews take account of personal information about the pupil. In the case of year 12 pupils the reports are used as a bridge or link to discussing how sixth form choices can support careers aspirations. The interviews are supported by the strong linkage between staff with pastoral and academic roles, in addition to the contribution from the SENCO. Targets are agreed and filed so as to provide an ongoing record of progress and personalised goals.

8.4 In most schools, there is insufficient monitoring, review and evaluation of the provision for learning guidance to inform action for improvement; in particular, insufficient use is made of feedback from pupils. In the best practice, the school is utilising the pupil voice communicated through the student council and consultative surveys. For example, the findings of a survey of year 10 pupils have been collated and analysed to inform the careers education, information, advice and guidance development and action planning.

8.5 In the majority of schools, there are insufficient professional development opportunities to equip staff with strategies to provide a cohesive integrated programme of learning guidance. There are opportunities for staff development in discrete aspects of learning guidance. For example, in one school, the designated careers education, information, advice and guidance staff undertake appropriate and regular professional development in which all staff are involved in appropriate staff development. The designated careers education, information, advice and guidance staff are provided with a well planned induction, regular professional review and support which contributes to the improvement of the learning guidance provision. In another school, there is annual up-skilling of teachers to ensure they can conduct effective pupil appraisal interviews. In most of the schools, the training needs of staff for this aspect of the curriculum, are not systematically audited or analysed to inform a programme of continuous professional development.

8.6 In almost all the schools, the discrete strands of learning guidance are effectively led by a dedicated, hard-working and committed co-ordinator who provides clear strategic direction for the aspect of learning guidance they manage. Almost all of the co-ordinators spend the majority of their time delivering other curricular subjects and, as a result, the opportunity for the co-ordinators of the various aspects of learning guidance to meet, plan and co-ordinate an integrated programme of learning guidance, is overly constrained.

PART THREE: CONCLUSION AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 In the areas evaluated, the overall quality of the provision for learning guidance is good. The evaluation has identified important strengths in many aspects of the provision for learning guidance. The evaluation has identified areas for improvement the schools involved in this evaluation have demonstrated the capacity to address the areas for improvement identified within this report. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

10. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

10.1 To promote continuous improvement in the quality of learning guidance this evaluation has identified a number of key priorities for development, which includes the need for schools to:

- incorporate the various strands of learning guidance into a coherent programme, that provides the pupils with the appropriate opportunities to develop the skills to manage their learning and career development;
- establish rigorous and robust systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning guidance, including the opportunities for the pupils to provide feedback on their experiences; and
- systematically audit and analyse the training needs of all staff to inform the provision of a coherent and continuous professional development programme.

THE ORGANISATIONS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE EVALUATION

Arvalee Special School
Belfast Royal Academy
Castleberg High School
Coleraine High School
Dungannon Integrated College
Glastry College
Limavady Grammar
Lurgan College
Parkhall High School, Antrim
Rathfriland High School
Regent House Grammar School, Newtownards
St Benedict's High School, Randalstown
St Joseph's High School, Belfast
St Patrick's High School, Keady
St Patrick's High School, Lisburn
St Paul's High School, Kilrea

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