

# Disengagement from Education among 14-16 year olds

Andy Ross

National Centre for Social Research



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among 14-16 year olds*

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# Executive summary

## Background

This study uses data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) to carry out a quantitative analysis of disengagement from education among 14-16 year olds in England. Depending on how you measure it, it is estimated that between one fifth and one third of all young people aged 14-16 are disengaged from education (Steedman & Stoney, 2004). The implications of this for the young person and for wider society are well known, and lead to poor labour market opportunities (McIntosh & Houghton, 2005) and the risk of being “not in education, employment or training” (NEET), as well as other associated negative outcomes including, for example, teenage pregnancy (Hosie, 2007) and drug use (Beinart *et. al.*, 2002). The engagement of young people is particularly crucial in relation to recent legislation raising the participation age, first to 17 by the year 2013, and then 18 by 2015.

Disengagement can be expressed in different ways and have different meanings for young people, and can subsequently have different consequences and solutions. For this study an analytical approach was used that enables the capturing of different kinds of disengagement, creating a typology of engaged / disengaged young people.

## Key findings

The study identified four general types of engaged or disengaged young people:

- ‘Engaged’ young people, who were highly engaged with school and aspired to continue with fulltime education to degree level. They represented 40% of young people in Year 9, 33% in Year 10, and 34% of young people in Year 11
- Young people who were ‘disengaged from school not education’. They disliked school and were more likely to skip classes, but otherwise aspired to continue with fulltime education to degree level. They represented 23% of young people in Year 9, 26% in Year 10, and 25% of young people in Year 11
- Young people who were ‘engaged with school not higher education’. They were generally positive about school and aspired to continue with education or training in Year 12, but not higher education. They represented 25% of young people in Year 9 and 22% in Year 10 and 11.
- ‘Disengaged’ young people who had much lower aspirations, disliked school and were far more likely to play truant. They represented 12% of young people in Year 9, 19% in Year 10, and 20% in Year 11
- Those most at risk of disengaging were white, males, and young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds
- Factors that appear to make a difference include schools working with parents, parental aspirations, information and guidance, homework supervision, extra curricula activity, study support, quality of the relationship with teachers, the curriculum, reducing bullying, the school culture of truancy
- The majority of young people were either engaged or disengaged from education by the time they were in Year 9. Nevertheless about 14% of young people disengaged to some degree in Year 10 when starting their Key Stage 4 qualifications

## Methodology

A shortcoming of much of the previous quantitative research in this area stems from a narrow definition of disengagement. Most often disengagement has been defined as poor attainment, or high levels of truancy. However, these kinds of definitions fail to take account of the variation in young people's ability, or in the case of truancy, the large number of young people who continue to turn up at school but fail to really engage with their education. Instead, disengagement is arguably a multi-dimensional concept, which can be expressed in the form of young people's motivations, attitudes and behaviour (Morris & Pullen, 2007).

In order to identify a typology of engaged / disengaged young people a statistical technique called latent class analysis (LCA) was employed. Latent class analysis is appropriate for identifying types or groups of individuals which are not directly observable from the data, and is especially useful for measuring multi-dimensional concepts such as disengagement. The technique enables us to explore the hidden structure within a set of measures to identify underlying types which can account for the different kinds of engaged and disengaged young people within the general population. An extension of the standard latent class approach called latent transition analysis (LTA), which enables to the exploration of transitions between the different types over time, was used to identify when as well as why some young people disengage.

Data for this analysis comes from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) a comprehensive study following the lives of a cohort of young people completing their compulsory schooling in 2006. Data are collected on an annual basis beginning in 2004 when the young people were in year nine. For this analysis the focus on the first three years of the study which relate to school years 9, 10 and 11, although destinations in Year 12 are also examined.

## Results

Four main types of engaged / disengaged young people were identified. These were:

**'Engaged'**: 'Engaged' young people aspire to continue with their education in the long term. They also have very positive attitudes to school and show very few signs of truanting. The large majority (87 per cent) achieve Level 2 qualifications at Key Stage 4 and almost all (95%) continue with full time education in Year 12. They have very positive relationships with their teachers and are generally accepting of school rules and discipline. They are also more likely to enjoy the curriculum and feel confident in their ability to achieve well. Doing well at school is important to these young people, and they are by far the most likely to recognise the importance of working hard to improve their future prospects. 'Engaged' young people also report little misbehaviour in class, and are far less likely to engage in risky behaviours.

'Engaged' represented 40 per cent of the population of 13 / 14 year olds in Year 9, falling to 33/34 per cent of young people in Years 10 and 11.

**'Disengaged from school not education'**: Young people who are 'disengaged from school not education' are also very likely to aspire to continue with education in the long term. However they have more negative attitudes to school, and are more likely to play truant. The large majority still achieve Level 2 qualifications (71 per cent), and most (85 per cent) continue with full time education in Year 12. However, this is slightly fewer than the proportion who had intended to stay on (98 per cent) which suggests that disengaging from school may, for some, be associated with a failure to achieve the grades they required, or further disengagement in Year 12. These young people are more likely to have problems with school rules and discipline, are more likely to report misbehaving in class, and are less likely to report positive relationships with their teachers. They are less likely to believe that working hard at school will help them get on later in life. A third or more engage in risky behaviours including drinking, smoking, and trying cannabis.



Young people 'disengaged from school not education' represented 23 per cent of the population of 13 / 14 year olds in Year 9. This increased to 26 per cent in Year 10, and then fell to 25 per cent in Year 11.

**'Engaged with school not higher education':** Young people who are 'engaged with school not higher education' are reasonably likely to aspire to continue with fulltime education in Year 12, but not higher education. They are also very unlikely to play truant and have moderate to positive attitudes to school. Two fifths of these young people achieve Level 2 at Key Stage 4, but most achieved Level 1. Three fifths also continue in full time education in Year 12 and a fifth are in work with training. However a further fifth are either in work without training, or not in education, employment or training (NEET). They are generally accepting of school rules and discipline, and have very positive relationships with their teachers, although they are a little more likely to report misbehaving than 'engaged' young people. They prefer Information, Communication and Technology to academic subjects, and feel more confident in their ability for this subject. These young people are more likely to recognise the importance of working hard at school, although not to the extent of 'engaged' young people. They are also less likely to engage in any kind of risky behaviour.

Young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' represented 25 per cent of 13/14 year olds in Year 9, this fell to 22 per cent in Years 10 and 11.

**'Disengaged':** 'Disengaged' young people are far less likely to aspire to continue with full time education. They are also much more likely to play truant and have very poor attitudes to school. Although most of these young people achieve Level 1 qualifications, over a third leave school with little or no qualifications. The destinations of these young people are also much poorer, with two fifths in a job with no training, and over a quarter NEET in Year 12. 'Disengaged' young people are far more hostile to school than other young people. The majority believe there are far too many rules and over a third claim to like few, if any, of their teachers. On the curriculum, they are far more likely to enjoy and feel confident studying Information, Communication and Technology than traditional academic subjects. They are more likely to choose subjects they think they will do well in, but also those in which they like the teacher, or which their friends are also studying. In terms of their future careers, they are keener than other young people to get a job that pays well, and to be their own boss. They are actually a little more likely to think that any job is better than being unemployed. However, hardly any recognise the importance of working hard at school in order to fulfil their ambitions. Over two fifths of these young people don't think about their future much, and around one fifth will just 'wait and see' where they end up. These young people are also far more likely to engage in risky behaviour: 43 per cent drink regularly, and over half have tried cigarettes and / or cannabis. One fifth have also engaged in crimes against property, and nearly two fifths in fights or public disturbances.

'Disengaged' represented 12 per cent of 13/14 year olds in Year 9, but this increased to 19 per cent of young people in Year 10, and 20 per cent in Year 11.

## Disengagement over time

Most young people were already engaged or disengaged by the time they were in Year 9 and remained so throughout the last three years of compulsory schooling. However 14 per cent disengaged or further disengaged in Year 10. The three most common pathways of disengagement were:

- Fourteen per cent of 'engaged' young people became 'disengaged from school not education' in Year 10
- Twelve per cent of young people 'disengaged from school not higher education' became 'disengaged' in Year 10
- Fifteen per cent of young people 'engaged with school not higher education' became 'disengaged' in Year 10

This represents a critical point where young people start their Key Stage 4 qualifications, a transition that some young people might find more difficult than others. Starting new courses, young people may be split up from established friendship groups, and the increase in the volume and the significance of coursework might also prove a little too much for some. Procedures that schools have in place to monitor young people's progress might well benefit from paying particular attention during this period. There was also very little evidence of young people re-engaging over the period.

## Risk factors

**'Disengaged from school not education'**: More likely to be Black Caribbeans and young people with a Mixed background, whereas Indian, Pakistani, and Black African young people were the least likely to disengage from school. Young people whose father (or mother if no father figure was present) had never worked or was long term unemployed were a little at risk of disengaging from school, as were those living in a step or single parent family.

**'Engaged with school not higher education'**: More likely to be White, males, with a father (or mother if no father figure was present) in a routine or manual occupation, and a mother with a low education. Young people whose father was in an intermediate, or who had never worked or was long term unemployed, were also more at risk, as were those who lived in a step or single parent family.

**'Disengaged'**: More likely to be white males (they were especially unlikely to be Indian, Pakistani, or Black African). Young people whose father (or mother if no father figure was present) was in a routine or manual occupation or who had never worked or was long term unemployed, and whose mothers had a low education were most at risk of disengaging. Although less so, young people whose fathers were in intermediate occupations were also more at risk.

## **Factors that may help or hinder engagement**

### **Schools working with parents**

One key finding is the importance of the relationship between schools and parents. This relationship included providing parents with clear information on how the young person is getting on, but also information on the ways that they, as parents, could help in their child's education. Where there was evidence of a more positive relationship with parents young people were more likely to be engaged with school, but also with education in the longer term.

The importance of schools working with parents may be especially beneficial to young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly those whose parents have lower aspirations for them and perhaps for whom the advantages of continuing in education may not be so clearly visible.

### **Parental aspirations**

Parental aspirations were strongly associated with young people's engagement, particularly with their desire to remain in education. We must be cautious in imbuing too much causality to this relationship, as parents may simply be responding to and adapting their aspirations in accordance to their child's own preferences and achievements. Nevertheless, other studies have shown the importance of aspirations for helping some young people overcome disadvantage.

### **Information and Guidance**

'Disengaged' young people were especially likely to want a job that paid well, yet they appear far less likely than others to recognise the importance of working hard at school to achieve this aim. This supports a finding in a recent NatCen qualitative study on disengagement (Callanan *et. al.*, 2009) which found that young people expressed regret at not having understood sooner that a minimum number of GCSEs were required for most college courses, work-based learning settings, and 'decent' jobs. There is now an abundance of social science evidence illustrating the difference in outcomes associated with varying levels of GCSE qualifications. This information needs to be conveyed clearly to these young people in Year 9, before they start their GCSE qualifications. It also needs to be done in a way that is relevant to them, perhaps focusing on the associated financial rewards.

### **Supervision of Homework**

Low supervision of homework by teachers was identified as important for all types of disengagement, but was especially important for 'disengaged' young people. Supervision of homework is considered important to ensure that some young people do not disengage as a result of falling behind and feeling overwhelmed by their coursework.

It was also found that parents of young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' were more likely to provide this support whereas the parents of 'disengaged' young people were not. It may be that some young people, particular those from more disadvantaged backgrounds would benefit from a little extra support and supervision at home to help keep them engaged with their studies.

## **Extra Curricula Activity**

Making sports facilities available for young people to use outside of lessons, and providing school clubs and societies may reduce the risk of disengagement. Young people who used school sports facilities at least once a week were a little less likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' and less likely to be 'disengaged'. Those who participated in a school club or society at least once a week were half as likely to be 'disengaged'.

## **Study Support**

Participation in study support may also help with a young person's engagement. Attending additional teacher led classes in preparation for exams, simple 'drop in' classes where young people could study on their own or with friends, or attending classes in the school holidays were all associated with a reduced risk of disengagement. Of course, it is not possible to discern the direction of causality from these findings, however a study by Macbeth *et. al.* (2001) does suggest that study support improved attainment, attitudes and attendance.

## **Relationships with teachers**

Relationships that young people have with their teachers are especially critical to their engagement, particularly with school. Compared with the 'engaged', all young people were less likely to perceive their teachers as being in control, but especially those disengaged from school. They were also more likely to feel unfairly treated and blamed for any trouble in class, and less likely to feel their teachers took an interest in their work. Of course some young people may be particularly difficult to manage, but if teachers are able to foster positive relationships where pupils feel they are being fairly treated and are given appropriate praise, then this may well contribute to their engagement.

## **Curriculum**

Compared with 'engaged' young people, other young people were more likely to feel confident and enjoy studying Information, Communication and Technology than traditional academic subjects. Changes to the 14-19 curriculum including plans to expand the diploma system and offer more opportunities to study vocational subjects could help to engage more young people.

## **Bullying**

There was a clear association between being bullied in the last 12 months and disengaging from school. Schools need to ensure they have good policies for identifying and treating instances of bullying, as it can have such detrimental effects to a child's wellbeing, their engagement, and ultimately, as we have seen from the differences in the outcomes for these young people, their qualifications and future prospects.

## **School factors**

The amount of truancy that occurs within a school can have an impact on that school's culture of engagement. Young people are more likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged' in schools with greater levels of truancy. Thus not only does truancy impact on those who play truant, it might also impact on the educational engagement of other young people within the same school. Schools therefore need to ensure they have high quality strategies for dealing with truancy.

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# 1 Introduction

This study uses data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) to carry out a quantitative analysis of disengagement from education among 14-16 year olds in England.

Disengagement can be expressed in different ways and have different meanings for young people, and can subsequently have different consequences and solutions. An analytical approach was used that enables the capturing of different kinds of disengagement, creating a typology of engaged / disengaged young people. Having identified the different types the influence that a young person's background, and both their home and school life can have on their likelihood to disengage was also explored. In addition, as LSYPE is a longitudinal study, which means it follows the same cohort of young people over time, it was also possible to identify *when* as well as *why* some young people disengage from education. All of the findings are discussed in relation to policy recommendations for improving the long term engagement of 14-16 year olds.

## 1.1 Background

Young people's disengagement from school has long been a policy priority for Western governments. Depending on how you measure it, it is estimated that between one fifth and one third of all young people aged 14-16 are disengaged from education (Steedman & Stoney, 2004). The implications of this for the young person and for wider society are well known, and lead to poor labour market opportunities (McIntosh & Houghton, 2005) and the risk of being "not in education, employment or training" (NEET), as well as other associated negative outcomes including, for example, teenage pregnancy (Hosie, 2007) and drug use (Beinart *et. al.*, 2002). The engagement of young people is also crucial in relation to recent legislation raising the participation age, first to 17 by the year 2013, and then 18 by 2015.

Previous research has emphasised the importance of distinguishing between different kinds of disengaged young people. Steedman and Stoney (2004) identified three types of disengaged young people: a group which they called the 'out of touch' group (approximately 1-2 percent of the population) who for all intents and purposes had lost touch with schooling between ages 14-16, a 'disaffected but in touch' group (approximately 20 percent) who had few GCSE qualifications by the time they finished school, and a group characterised as just falling short of the 5+ A-C GCSE's benchmark, which they called the '1-4 A-C Grade' group (20 percent). Steedman and Stoney argue that some of these young people may be capable of much more if interest and enthusiasm could be aroused. For the 'out of touch group' they recommended one-to-one tuition outside of the school environment. The '1-4 A-C Grade' group appeared to respond well to opportunities for studying vocational topics. Unfortunately there was no similar 'magic bullet' for the 'disaffected but in touch group'.

There have also been studies with the specific aim of identifying the underlying factors which promote disengagement. McIntosh and Houghton (2005) carried out a quantitative study to explore why some young people played truant. The characteristics identified included being white, male, living in rented accommodation, living in a single parent family (especially where a mother was missing) and / or having a father in a non-professional occupation. They also found that young people who received careers advice or had opportunities to undertake work experience as part of their studies were less likely to play truant.

More recently the National Centre for Social Research carried out a qualitative study to identify why some young people underachieved between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (Callanan *et. al.*, 2009). Callanan *et. al.* identified a number of important factors including curriculum and learning style, workload and coursework, pupil-teacher relationships, school

and classroom environments, peer relationships, aspirations and future plans, as well as a young person's family context and life events. Similar to Steedman and Stoney, they also identified different 'types' of disengaged young people, distinguishing between those who underachieved but remained engaged, young people who moderately disengaged and those who severely or completely disengaged. They found that a young person's pathway to disengagement was marked by movement between these levels at different points in time, and that early intervention was crucial to preventing some young people falling into a downward spiral of disengagement.

A shortcoming of much of the previous quantitative research in this area stems from a narrow definition of disengagement. Most often disengagement has been defined as poor attainment, or high levels of truancy. However, these kinds of definitions fail to take account of the variation in young people's ability, or in the case of truancy, the large number of young people who continue to turn up at school but fail to really engage with their education. In addition, some young people may play truant for reasons other than being disengaged, such as caring for a family member, and may otherwise remain committed to achieving a good education (a point which McIntosh & Houghton recognise in their own study).

Instead, disengagement is arguably a multi-dimensional concept, the experience or expression of which can take many different forms (Morris & Pullen, 2007). For some young people their disengagement will be clear from their behaviour alone. They may skip classes, fail to complete homework and / or disrupt lessons. Others, however, may continue to engage with the process of learning, but otherwise remain unenthusiastic and unengaged with their studies, and simply not apply themselves to their full ability. Others still may engage with education, but lack the motivation or foresight to continue with their education beyond compulsory school leaving age. Therefore a consideration of the motivations, attitudes *and* behaviour of young people is needed if we are to gain a proper understanding of disengagement.

Until recently, data suitable for carrying out a thorough investigation of disengagement have not been readily available. Either the data have been relatively narrow in scope (e.g. the Youth Cohort Studies) or they have been out of date in terms of current policy and practice (e.g. the National Child Development Study which follows the lives of people born in 1958, or British Cohort Study of 1970). However the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) overcomes many of these limitations, providing a wealth of suitable measures both for defining and predicting disengagement from a sample of young people completing compulsory schooling in 2006. The study is longitudinal in design, meaning it follows the same cohort of young people over time. This enables an exploration of *when* as well as *why* some young people disengage. Data are collected on an annual basis beginning in 2004 when the young people were in Year 9. For this analysis the focus is on the first three years of the study which relate to school years 9, 10 and 11, although destinations in Year 12 are also examined. Data are sourced from the young person as well as their parents, and there are additional linked-in data from the National Pupil Database (NPD) providing information on the young person's attainment and their school. Further details about the study including the sample design can be found in appendix C and D.

## **1.2 Study aims and structure of the report**

The aim of this study is to identify a typology of engaged and disengaged young people using information on young people's behaviours, attitudes and motivations as measured in LSYPE. This is achieved by using a statistical technique called latent class analysis (LCA) which enables exploration of the underlying structure within the survey data to identify different types or classes of individuals.

- Chapter 2 describes this technique in greater detail, as well as the different types of engaged / disengaged young people that were identified.
- Chapter 3 further describes the characteristics of these different 'types' drawing on information about the young people's attitudes towards school, staff, the curriculum, learning, their future, what motivates them in terms of education and beyond, the types of behaviour they display, and their achievements and post 16 destinations.
- Chapter 4 explores whether young people's level of engagement changes over time, examining transitions across the different 'types' between Year 9 and Year 11.
- Chapter 5 examines the factors that predict a young person's level of engagement. This includes the young person's characteristics, their family background and parental relations, their personal experiences both at home and within the school, as well as the characteristics of the school they attend. In addition to identifying which factors are important, the chapter also explores when they are most important.
- Chapter 6 examines the influence of additional factors that were only measured in year 9 or in year 10, on young person's level of engagement in year 10. This includes further information on the young person's parents, as well as factors relating to disability, the school curriculum, homework, teachers, information and guidance, extra curricula activity and study support.
- Chapter 7 examines which factors are important for predicting the three most common transitions between the different engaged/disengaged types which were described in Chapter 4.
- All of the findings are discussed in relation to policy recommendations for improving the long term engagement of 14-16 year olds in Chapter 8.

## **1.3 Key questions the study seeks to address**

- What are the main types of engaged / disengaged young people in England, and what proportion of young people do they represent?
- Do these 'types' of engaged / disengaged young people remain stable between Years 9 to 11, or is there evidence that that new or different types develop over time?
- Do young people remain at the same level of engagement throughout Years 9 to 11, or is there evidence that they become more or less engaged?
- Is there a critical year at which young people are more likely to become more disengaged or engaged?
- What are the implications of a young person's disengagement for their Key Stage 4 qualifications and future outcomes?
- What factors are important for predicting whether someone is likely to be disengaged?
- What factors are important for promoting their engagement?



## 2 Identifying disengaged young people

This chapter describes the statistical method used to identify the typology of engaged / disengaged young people in greater detail. Also described are the measures that were used to define disengagement and their distribution across the population of young people in England in Year 9 through to Year 11. At the end of the chapter the four different types of engaged / disengaged young people which were identified are presented and described.

### 2.1 Methodology

In order to identify a typology of engaged / disengaged young people a statistical technique called latent class analysis (LCA) was employed. Latent class analysis is appropriate for identifying types or groups of individuals which are not directly observable from the data, and is especially useful for measuring multi-dimensional concepts such as disengagement. The technique enables exploration of the hidden structure within a dataset to identify underlying types which can account for the different kinds of engaged and disengaged young people within the general population.

The type or groups of young people are defined by their pattern of responses across a number of observed measures which are pre-selected by the researcher. For this study measures selected covered the different domains of disengagement outlined in Chapter 1, i.e. the young person's motivations or aspirations, their behaviour, and their attitudes to school or education. Depending on the way these measures combine together for different young people, the expectation is to identify different types which suggest qualitatively different styles of engagement / disengagement with education.

The analysis proceeds in stages: the first step was to identify a number of observed variables within the LSYPE dataset which measure a young person's motivations, behaviour and attitudes to education. Second, a number of latent class solutions were estimated and an optimal solution selected according to criteria which is detailed in the appendix A. In a third step the analysis was repeated in order to identify typologies for each of the school Years 9, 10 and 11. Finally, using an extension of the standard latent class analysis approach called latent transition analysis (LTA) all three solutions were estimated simultaneously. This represents a test of whether typologies identified are the same for each school year, and also enables measurement of the level of stability or change in young people's disengagement over time. Further detail about the analysis procedure is reported in Appendix A.

### 2.2 Measures for defining disengaged young people

The selection of measures to define disengagement was guided by two principles. Firstly, in order to adequately capture the construct of disengagement measures covering the three domains of motivations, behaviour and attitudes were needed. Secondly, because a key aim of the study is to identify *when* young people disengage it was critical to ensure that disengagement was measured in exactly the same way for each school year<sup>1</sup>. This second principle limited the range of available measures because of the restriction of only using those that were available in all of the first three waves<sup>2</sup> of LSYPE. Whilst LSYPE has a huge wealth of measures suitable for defining a young person's disengagement, fewer measures are available in all three waves.

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<sup>1</sup> Simply selecting the most suitable measures available in each school year would lead to the measurement of something slightly different each time and would prohibit a direct comparison of class sizes, for example, or the measurement of transitions across them

<sup>2</sup> In surveys that follow the same sample over time, a single point of data collection is termed a 'wave'

The measures used were as follows:

### **Motivations**

The plans young people had for Year 12 following compulsory schooling, distinguishing between wanting to continue with full time education (including vocational education); undertake a job with training or an apprenticeship; get a job without training; or do something different (which could include being unemployed, starting a family, or something else).

Whether the young person was likely to apply to university to do a degree, distinguishing between 'very likely', 'fairly likely', 'not very likely', or 'not at all likely'.

### **Behaviour**

How often the young person played truant in the last 12 months, distinguishing between never, skipping the odd day or lesson, regularly skipping particular lessons, or skipping several days or weeks at a time.

### **Attitudes**

A young person's attitude to school was measured by their response to the following ten items measuring their feelings about school. For each statement the young person was asked whether they 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'.

- I am happy when I am at school
- School is a waste of time for me
- School work is worth doing
- Most of the time I don't want to go to school
- On the whole I like being at school
- I work as hard as I can in school
- In a lesson, I often count the minutes till it ends
- I am bored in lessons
- The work I do in lessons is a waste of time
- The work I do in lessons is interesting to me

Responses to these statements were summed to create a scale from 0-30 measuring the young person's attitudes to school<sup>3</sup>. In order to improve the estimation of the latent class analysis a categorical measure was derived from this scale distinguishing between very negative, negative to moderate, moderate to positive, and very positive attitudes to school. Figure 8-4 in Appendix B illustrates the distribution of the original measure as well as the categorical measure derived.

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<sup>3</sup> The validity of the scale was confirmed using confirmatory factor analysis which tests statistically whether all ten measures are measuring the same underlying construct

## 2.3 The distribution of the measures for defining disengagement

Table 2-1 shows the distribution of the measures used for defining disengagement in the population of 14-16 year olds in England (2004 to 2006). The columns represent the school year the measure relates to covering Years 9 through to 11. As the figures show, the large majority of young people (around 85 per cent) aspired to continue in full time education when they finished their compulsory schooling. This is a particularly positive finding in light of new legislation to increase the participation age, first to 17 in 2013 and then to 18 in 2018. Approximately 15 per cent aimed to leave full time education in Year 12 (around 9 per cent aimed to get a job with training, 6 per cent a job without training, and about 1 per cent planned to do something else which could include looking after a family, being unemployed or 'other'). Generally, levels of aspirations remained high over the last three years of compulsory schooling<sup>4</sup>.

**Table 2-1 The distribution of the measures for defining disengagement in LSYPE (2004-2006)**

*Base: All young people in LSYPE wave 3*

Observed measures		Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
		%	%	%
Aspirations for year 12	FT education	84.8	84.2	85.3
	Job with training	7.8	9.8	8.9
	Job no training	6.0	5.2	5.1
	Something else	1.5	0.8	0.7
Likelihood of Applying to University	Very likely	32.9	30.9	34.7
	Fairly likely	35.0	31.6	25.4
	Not very likely	18.3	20.5	18.1
	Not at all likely	13.8	17.0	21.8
Level of Truancy	None	85.2	75.8	74.2
	Odd day / lesson	8.9	15.6	16.5
	Particular lessons	3.6	5.3	5.2
	Wks / several days	2.3	3.3	4.0
Attitudes to School (score)	26-30 (very high)	12.6	8.7	10.5
	21-25 (high)	39.7	34.1	35.6
	16- 20 (low)	33.7	38.1	34.1
	0-15 (very low)	13.9	19.2	19.8

The aspirations that young people had for applying to university to study a degree were more mixed and suggested clear evidence of change over time. About a third of young people reported that they were 'very likely' to apply to university, which increased slightly in Year 11. However, there was both a large decrease in the proportion of young people who stated that they were 'fairly likely' to apply to university, and a large increase in the proportion reporting that they were 'not likely to apply at all' from 14 per cent in year 9 to 22 per cent by Year 11. There was also a marked change in the proportion of young people who played truant, especially between Years 9 and 10. In Year 9 about 85 per cent of young people did not play

<sup>4</sup> The stability of these measures within individuals is not reported, so it is possible that there is some degree of change that is masked by these aggregate figures. For example, some young people may change their aspirations from a desire to continue with fulltime education to taking a job with training, but because other young people may change their aspirations in the opposite direction this change goes unnoticed. However, individual change will be picked up and described by the latent transition analysis.

truant at all; this decreased to 76 per cent of young people in Year 10 and then remained fairly stable. A lot of this increase in truancy relates to minor truanting, with an increase in the proportion of young people who skipped the odd day or lesson from 9 per cent in Year 9 to 16 per cent in Year 10. However, the proportion of young people who regularly skipped lessons also increased (from 4 to 5 per cent) as did the proportion truanting for several days or weeks at a time (from 2 per cent in Year 9, to 3 per cent in Year 10, and 4 per cent in Year 11).

Attitudes towards school also show a marked fall over time, again particularly between Years 9 and 10. The proportion of young people with very high (26-30) attitudes toward school dropped from 13 per cent in Year 9 to 9 per cent in Year 10, but recovered a little to 11 per cent. At the same time there was a marked increase in the proportion of young people reporting very low attitudes to school (0-15), from 14 per cent in Year 9 to 19 per cent in Year 10.

## **2.4 The typologies of engaged / disengaged young people**

The latent class analysis identified four different types of engaged / disengaged young people, which were named 'engaged', 'disengaged from school not education', 'engaged with school not higher education' and 'disengaged'. Table 2-2 below and the proceeding descriptions describe this typology in greater detail. The analysis was also replicated for school Years 9-11 identifying the same four types for each school year. There were some minor differences in the solutions however the level of similarity was high enough to merit constraining them to be equal. This enabled examination of transitions between the four types over time, which are described in Chapter 4. Further details of the estimation procedure is given in the Appendix A.

The columns in table 2-2 represent the four engaged / disengaged types that were identified. The figures in the columns are probabilities, and represent the probability that a young person of a particular type will respond at a given level on the observed measure on the left of the table (1 being the highest possible probability). These probabilities describe the nature of the types and are used for naming them. For example, young people who are 'engaged' have a very high probability (99.7 per cent probability) that they aim to carry on with full time education in Year 11, and very low probabilities associated with wanting to do a job with training, a job with no training, or something else. The figures at the bottom of the columns give the proportions of young people of each type in each school year. For example, 'engaged' young people represented 40 per cent of the population in Year 9, however this dropped to 33 per cent in Year 10, and remained fairly stable in Year 11. Below the four types are described in greater detail.

**Table 2-2 A typology of engaged / disengaged young people in years 9-11 (2004-2006)***Base: All young people in LSYPE wave 3*

Observed measures		Engaged	Disengaged from School not Education	Engaged with School not Higher Education	Disengaged
Aspirations for year 12	FT education	.997	.984	.763	.452
	Job with training	.001	.007	.153	.300
	Job no training	.001	.006	.066	.220
	Something else	.001	.003	.018	.028
Likelihood of Applying to University	Very likely	.658	.362	.011	.015
	Fairly likely	.319	.515	.239	.074
	Not very likely	.023	.117	.438	.310
	Not at all likely	.000	.007	.312	.601
Level of Truancy	None	.948	.668	.890	.464
	Odd day / lesson	.043	.238	.080	.263
	Particular lessons	.006	.069	.018	.141
	Wks / several days	.002	.024	.013	.133
Attitudes to School (score)	26-30 (very high)	.241	.001	.083	.004
	21-25	.601	.174	.446	.033
	16-20	.154	.582	.436	.328
	0-15 (very low)	.003	.243	.035	.635
Size of type in year: 9/10/11		.40/.33/.34	.23/.26/.25	.25/.22/.22	.12/.19/.20

NB: Probabilities greater than .1 have been emboldened to simplify interpretation

**‘Engaged’**

‘Engaged’ young people were very likely to aspire to continue with their education in the long term. There was almost a 100 per cent probability that they wanted to continue with full time education in Year 12, and a 66 per cent probability that it was ‘very likely’ they would also apply to university to do a degree. Truancy for these young people was extremely unlikely. There was only a 4 per cent probability they would skip even the odd day or class. They also had very positive attitudes to school, with an 84 per cent probability they would score in the upper half of the attitudes distribution. Clearly, for all intents and purposes, these young people were very ‘engaged’ with education. In Year 9, ‘engaged’ young people represented 40 per cent of the population of young people in England, however this dropped to 33 per cent in Year 10, from which point it remained fairly stable.

**‘Disengaged from school not education’**

Young people who are ‘disengaged from school not education’ are also very likely to aspire to continue with education in the long term. There was a 98 per cent probability they aspired to continue with full time education in Year 12. There was a 36 per cent probability they were ‘very likely’, and 52 per cent probability they were ‘fairly likely’, to apply to university to do a degree. However, these young people were much more prone to playing truant than their ‘engaged’ peers, with a 1 in 4 chance they would skip the odd day or lesson, and a 7 per cent probability they would skip particular lessons on a regular basis. In addition, they also disliked school, with an 83 per cent probability they would score in the lower half of the attitudes distribution. Because of these high aspirations for continuing education and yet a tendency to dislike school and skip classes this group was named ‘disengaged from school

not education'. These young people represented 23 per cent of the population of young people in Year 9, however this increased to 26 per cent in Year 10, falling back a little to 25 per cent in Year 11.

### **'Engaged with school not higher education'**

Young people who are 'engaged with school not higher education' are reasonably likely to aspire to continue with fulltime education in Year 12, but not higher education. There was a 76 per cent probability that they wanted to continue in full time education in Year 12. Otherwise there was a comparatively high probability that they would like to get a job with training or an apprenticeship (15 per cent probability), but also a 7 per cent probability that they aspired to do a job without training. In terms of aspiring to university to do a degree, these young people had much lower aspirations than the types previously described. There was only a 1 per cent probability they were 'very likely' and 24 per cent probability they were 'fairly likely' to apply to university to do a degree. Their experience and attitudes to school appear fairly positive. They were very unlikely to play truant, with only an 8 per cent probability they would skip the odd day or less. They also had moderate to high attitudes towards school. Although they had 52 per cent probability of scoring in the upper distribution of attitudes towards school, they only had a 4 per cent probability of having especially poor attitudes (0-15). Given their relatively positive relationship with school but lower aspirations for higher education this group was named 'engaged with school not higher education'. These young people represented 25 per cent of the population in Year 9, but dropped to 22 per cent in Year 10 and 11.

### **'Disengaged'**

'Disengaged' young people are far less likely to aspire to continue with full time education. There was a 45 per cent probability they wanted to continue with full time education, a 30 per cent probability they preferred to take a job with training, and a 22 per cent probability they wanted to get a job without training. Unsurprisingly their aspirations over the longer term were also much lower than they were for other types: there was a 60 per cent probability they were 'not at all likely' to apply to university. Truancing was also far higher for this group. There was a 26 per cent probability they would skip the odd day or lesson, a 14 per cent probability they would routinely skip a class, and a 13 per cent probability they would skip school for several days or weeks at a time. These young people were also very hostile to school, with a 64 per cent probability they scored in the very lowest part of the attitudes distribution. Clearly, in all respects these young people were turned off from education. In Year 9, 12 per cent of the population of young people were 'disengaged', this increased to 19 per cent in Year 10, and remained fairly stable in Year 11.

## 2.5 Summary

Four types of engaged / disengaged young people were identified which were the same in each of the last three years of compulsory schooling. An 'engaged' type who were highly engaged with school and had high aspirations for continuing their education in the longer term, a 'disengaged from school not education' type who were disaffected with school and skipped the odd day or lesson, but otherwise also remained highly committed to the principle of getting a good education. An 'engaged with school not higher education' type with reasonably high aspirations for continuing with education in the short-term, but not beyond this point, and a 'disengaged' type, who had much lower aspirations for continuing their education beyond 16, were much more likely to play truant, and had very little positive to say about school. As will be shown in the next chapter, these last two groups of young people also tend to have lower achievement (and in the case of the 'disengaged' much lower achievement) than the previous two, and clearly contained some young people who were underachieving, or under-aspiring.

There are some limitations to the typology outlined above. Firstly, latent class analysis will not capture all of the nuanced heterogeneity in the population. Instead these classes represent generalised types, which are useful insofar as they signify different kinds of individuals for which there will be different causes, consequences and ultimately policy solutions. Secondly, limitations in the availability of suitable measures for defining disengagement have given this analysis a slight bias toward valuing academic pathways through the inclusion of the measure of university aspirations. However, given the Government's aim to increase the proportion of young people embarking on a university career this is not seen as overly problematic. In addition, an estimation of the typology excluding this measure led to very similar results. However the inclusion of this measure improved estimation. The next chapter draws on a much greater range of measures available in the LSYPE dataset, enabling a far greater description of the types that were identified.

### 3 Describing the disengaged / engaged types

#### 3.1 Introduction

The last chapter presented the four types of engaged / disengaged young people identified in the population of young people in England in Years 9 through to 11. This chapter describes these types in much greater detail by drawing on other measures available in the LSYPE dataset. Thus the types are described in relation to young people's further attitudes towards school, attitudes to staff, curriculum, their future, learning, what motivates them in terms of education and beyond, the types of behaviour they display and their achievements and post-16 destinations.

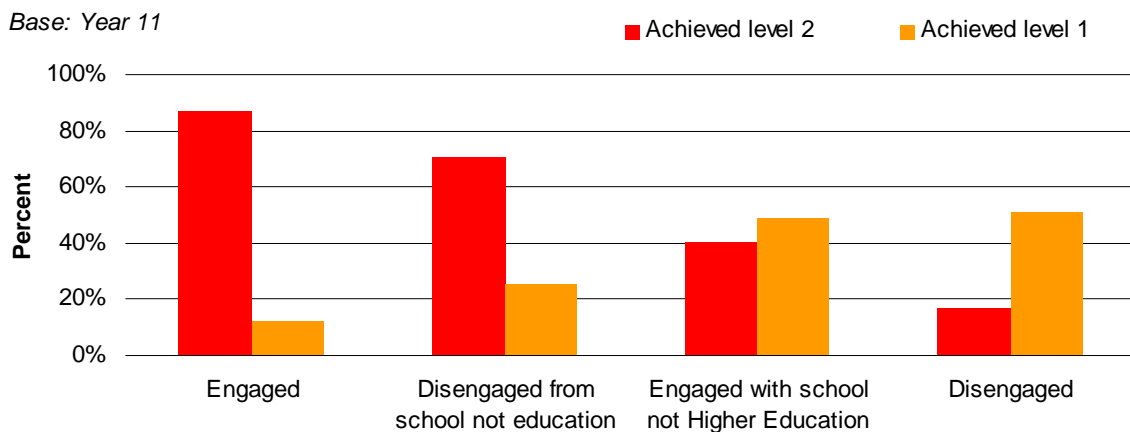
As observed in Chapter 2, some questionnaire items were only asked in specific years of the study. The descriptive analysis mainly draws on information from Year 9, however some of the analysis relates to Years 10 or 11 as indicated in the figures. Unless indicated otherwise, all of the findings were statistically significant at 5 per cent, meaning there was only a 5 per cent chance that a difference identified between the different types in the sample did not exist in the general population

#### 3.2 Achievements and post-16 destinations

Perhaps the most important question to ask is what are the implications of being one of these different 'types' for the young person's outcomes, both in terms of their achievements at school but also their destinations when compulsory schooling has finished?

Figure 3-1 and figure 3-2 show the GCSE outcomes and Year 12 destinations for the four types of engaged / disengaged young people. What is immediately clear is the difference in outcomes between the four types, particularly when comparing the 'engaged' young people and those 'disengaged from school not education' with young people 'engaged with school not higher education' and the 'disengaged'.

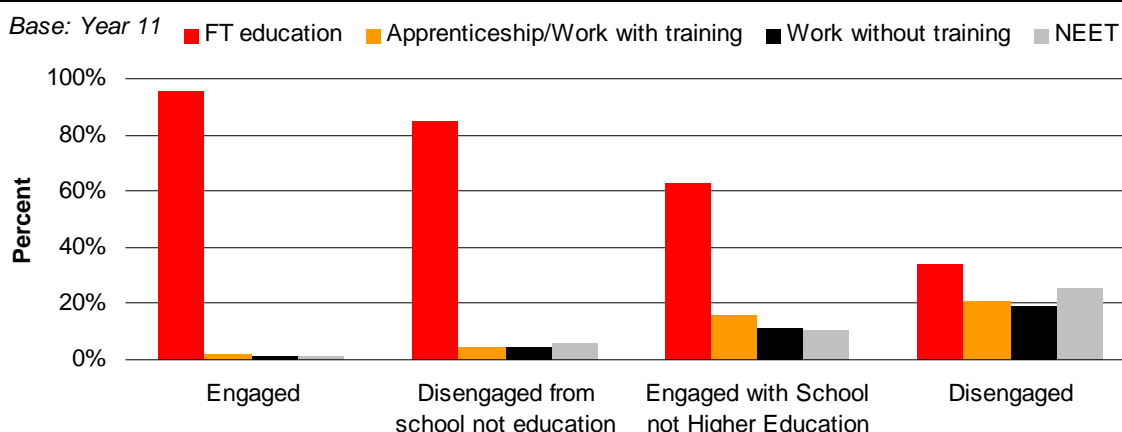
**Figure 3-1 Key stage 4 results (2006)**



The vast majority of 'engaged' young people (87 per cent) achieved Level 2 at Key Stage 4 (5 GCSE's graded A-C). Those 'disengaged from school not higher education' did almost as well with 71 per cent achieving at this level, however 29 per cent fell short of this mark. For young people 'engaged with school not higher education', the picture is a little different. Only two fifths of this type achieved Level 2, although the majority still achieved 5 GCSE's grades A-G (level 1). For the 'disengaged' less than one fifth achieved the Level 2 benchmark, but more importantly over a third of this type left school with few or no qualifications at all.



**Figure 3-2 Year 12 destinations (2007)**



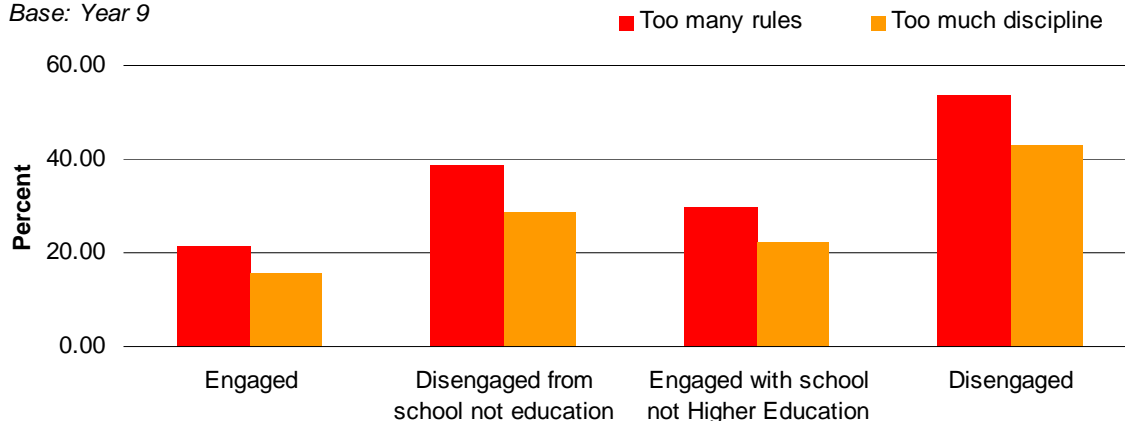
As reported elsewhere, one of the greatest predictors of successful destinations is achievement at Key Stage 4. It is not surprising then that the pattern of destinations follows a similar pattern to those seen for GCSE qualifications. The vast majority of those 'engaged' and 'disengaged from school not education' have followed their original intentions and continued with full time education in Year 12 (95 per cent and 85 per cent respectively). However it is worth noting that this is still a little fewer than had originally intended (99.9 % and 98.0%), particularly among the latter, suggesting that disengaging from school can have implications for longer term outcomes regardless of the young person's intentions (perhaps some of these young people didn't quite get the grades they needed, or perhaps there was further disengagement among this type following compulsory schooling). The majority of young people 'engaged with school not higher education' also continued with full time education (63 per cent) in Year 12, or otherwise were employed in a job with training, or on an apprenticeship (16 per cent). One fifth however were either in a job without training or not in education, employment or training (NEET). Among the 'disengaged' the situation was quite a lot worse: one fifth were in a job without training, and slightly over a quarter were classified as NEET.

### 3.3 Further attitudes to school

Young people were asked about their views on the level of rules and discipline within their school: whether they felt it was about right, too little or too much. Figure 3-3 presents the proportions of each type who felt the level of rules or discipline was too much. The pattern of results is quite clear; those who were disengaged from school (both 'disengaged from school not education' and 'disengaged') were more likely to perceive that the level of rules and / or discipline was too much. Young people who were 'disengaged' were especially likely to think this was the case (54 per cent felt there were too many rules and 43 per cent felt there was too much discipline compared with just 22 per cent and 16 per cent of 'engaged' young people).

**Figure 3-3 Attitudes to rules and discipline within school (2004)**

Base: Year 9

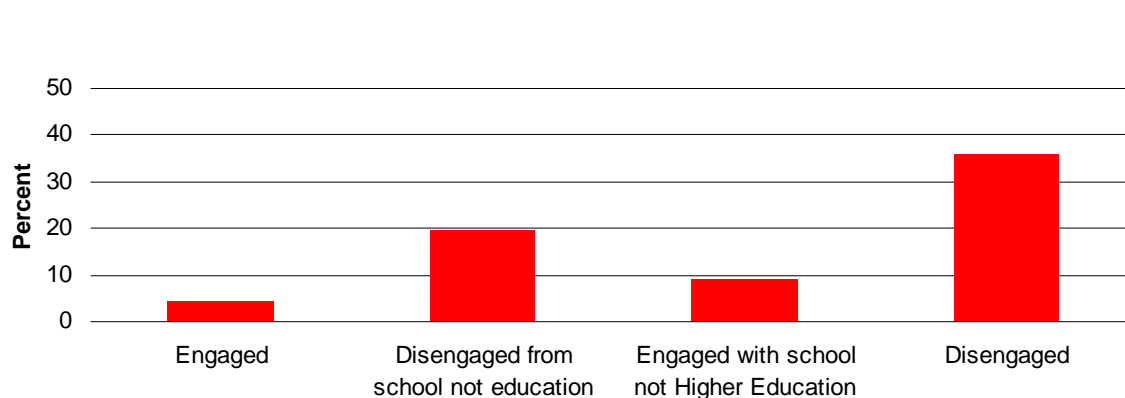


We cannot be certain how much of these differences are because disengaged young people are more prevalent in schools with more rules and discipline<sup>5</sup>. However it is probable that these differences are at least in part to do with the young person's perception of rules and discipline and because their disengagement means that they are more likely to fall foul of these rules and discipline. For example, looking at figure 3-14 at the end of this chapter, which presents the different levels of misbehaviour among the four different types, young people who are 'disengaged from school not higher education' but especially 'disengaged' young people are also more likely to report misbehaving in at least half of their classes.

### 3.4 Attitudes to staff

**Figure 3-4 Percentage claiming to like 'hardly any or none' of their teachers (2004)**

Base: Year 9



Young people were also asked how many of their teachers they actually liked. Figure 3-4 shows the proportions of each type who claimed to like 'hardly any or none' of their teachers. What is quite clear from this graph is that disengagement from school is associated with more negative relationships with teachers. Over one third of 'disengaged' young people and

<sup>5</sup> A multilevel analysis would enable distinction between the variation in responses which is associated with the individual and that which is associated with the school. This would allow a better understanding of how much of the relationship we see in Figure 3-3 relates to the differences between the young people themselves, and how much relates to the differences in the schools they attend. However this was beyond the remit and resources of the current study.

one fifth of those 'disengaged from school not education' claimed to like hardly any or none of their teachers compared with just 5 per cent of 'engaged' young people and 9 per cent of those 'engaged with school not higher education'. Again we cannot be certain of the direction of causality from this association. It is likely to vary among individuals and will be to some extent reciprocal.

Qualitative research (Callanan *et. al.*, 2009) has illustrated the importance of positive teacher-pupil relationships for fostering engagement, and has identified pathways in which a breakdown in relationships can feature as part of a downward spiral of increasing disengagement. Teachers who are able to overcome this breakdown and foster more positive relationships are likely to help reengage young people with their education. Chapter 5 examines a number of factors measuring the teacher / pupil relationship in a prediction of disengagement.

### 3.5 Attitudes to curriculum

**Figure 3-5 Percentage saying they 'liked the subject a lot' (2004)**

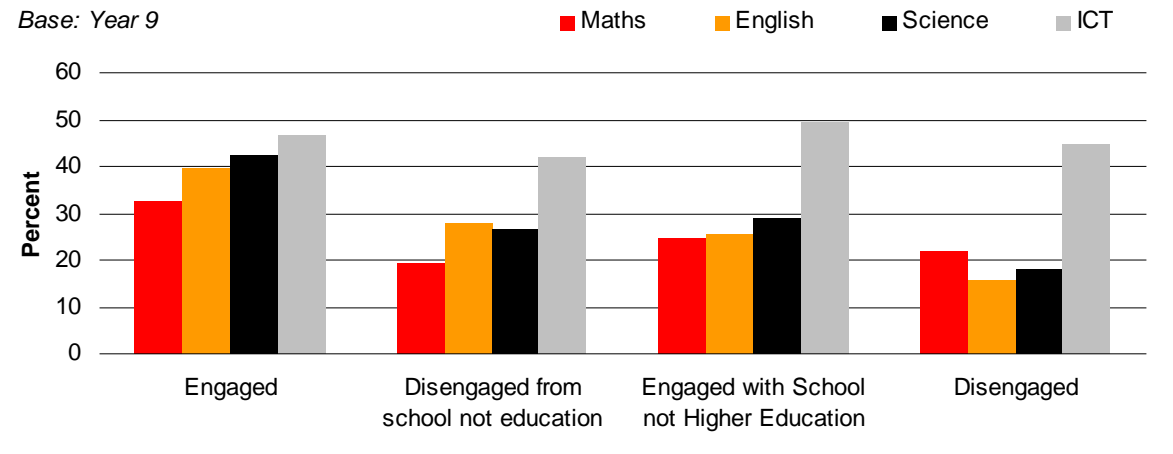
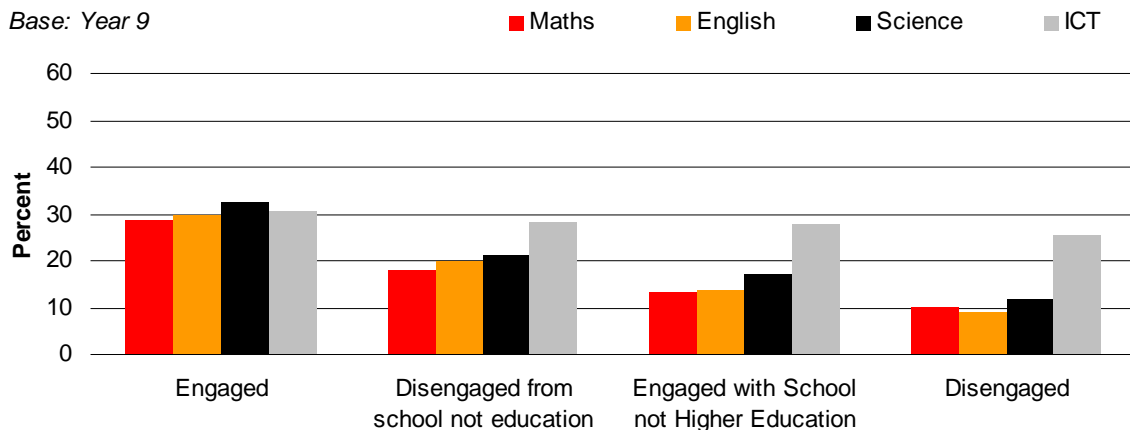


Figure 3-5 shows the percentage of young people reporting that they liked a subject a lot. Generally 'engaged' young people were more likely to report that they 'liked a subject a lot' than others. The exception to this rule was in subjects in Information, Computing and Technology (ICT). All young people were more likely to prefer this subject, however outside of the 'engaged' group, there was a much stronger preference for this subject compared to Maths, English and Science. For example, among 'disengaged' young people, forty-five per cent reported liking ICT a lot, double the proportion who reported they liked English a lot. This clear difference in subject preferences suggests that one way of attempting to engage some of these young people would be to provide greater opportunity for studying more hands on, practical type subjects of which Information, Communication and Technology is an example. In 2008 the government began introducing diplomas in industry sector subjects, which combine practical and theoretical learning. As the diplomas become more widely available it will be useful to see whether this helps to engage more young people with their education.

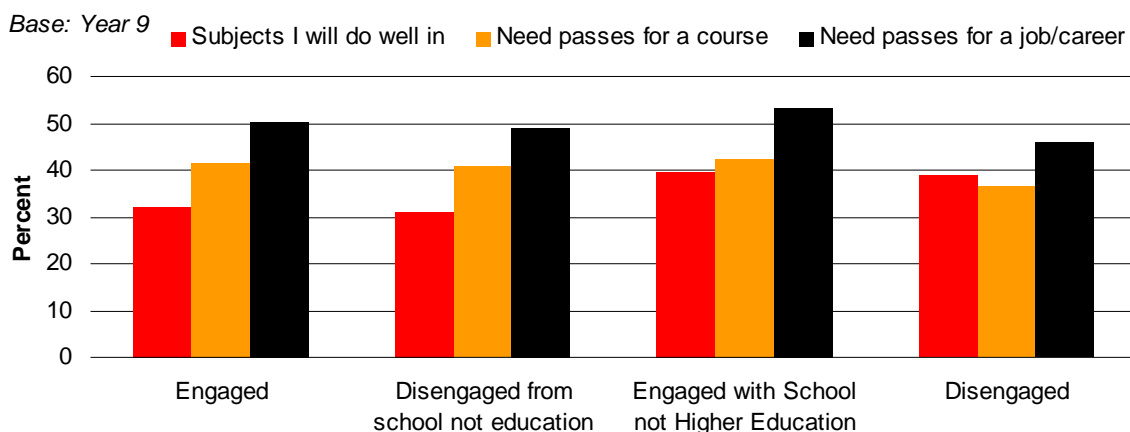
**Figure 3-6 Percentage saying they were 'very good' in the subject (2004)**



This point is further supported in figure 3-6 which shows the percentage of young people agreeing that they were 'very good' at a subject. Again, 'engaged' young people were more likely to report that they were 'very good' at all four subjects, especially compared with 'disengaged' young people. But again, the exception to this rule was in subjects in Information, Communication and Technology. Not only were others almost as likely to report being 'very good' at this subject as 'engaged' young people, they were also more likely to be confident of their ability in this subject compared with Maths, English and Science. For example, twenty-five per cent of 'disengaged' young people felt they were 'very good' in ICT compared with 12 per cent reporting a similar level of confidence in Science. This indicates a relationship between the confidence that a young person has in their ability in a subject, and the likelihood they will enjoy it. The aim to make more subjects available that cater to a range of different learning styles and abilities could therefore prove fruitful in improving the engagement of more young people.

### 3.6 What motivates them in terms of education

**Figure 3-7 Extrinsic reasons for year 10 subject choices (2004)**

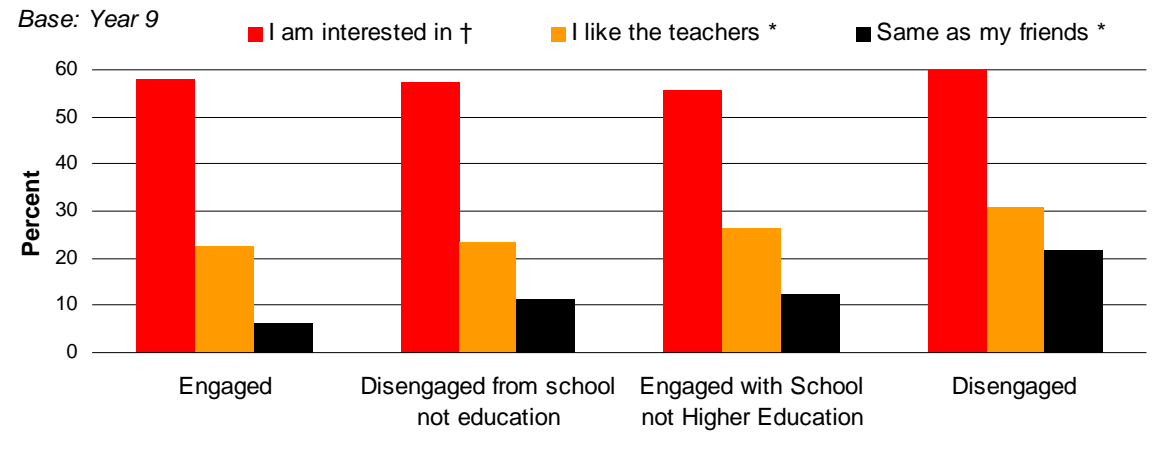


Young people were asked about the reasons behind their choices for GCSE subjects in Year 10. Six possible reasons were suggested. Here distinction is made between extrinsic reasons in figure 3-7 (reasons relating to an external reward) and more intrinsic reasons in figure 3-8 (reasons to do with personal enjoyment). The bars represent the proportion of young people of each type who 'strongly agreed' that this was a key reason for their subject

choices. Overall the differences are fairly small, however they are statistically significant, and to a certain degree revealing. Young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged' were more likely to choose subjects they would do well in. This might suggest at least one, but possibly two things. That they recognise as much as any other pupil that achievement is an important part of the learning process. However, it might also suggest that these young people are less confident in their ability to achieve well in any subject (see figure 3-6 above), and are therefore more likely to consider this when selecting their Year 10 subjects.

Young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' were slightly more motivated by the future needs of a job or career, which is perhaps not especially surprising as they were more likely to aspire to take employment when they were age 16 than 'engaged' young people, or those 'disengaged from school not education' (see table 2-2). There were very little differences regarding young people's desire to study subjects that would enable them to undertake further courses in the future.

**Figure 3-8 Intrinsic reasons for year 10 subject choices (2004)**



NB: Bars with “\*” represent young people who strongly agreed or agreed (only very few young people strongly agreed that their choice of subjects was motivated by liking a teacher, or because their friends were also studying these subjects)  
 † differences are not statistically significant

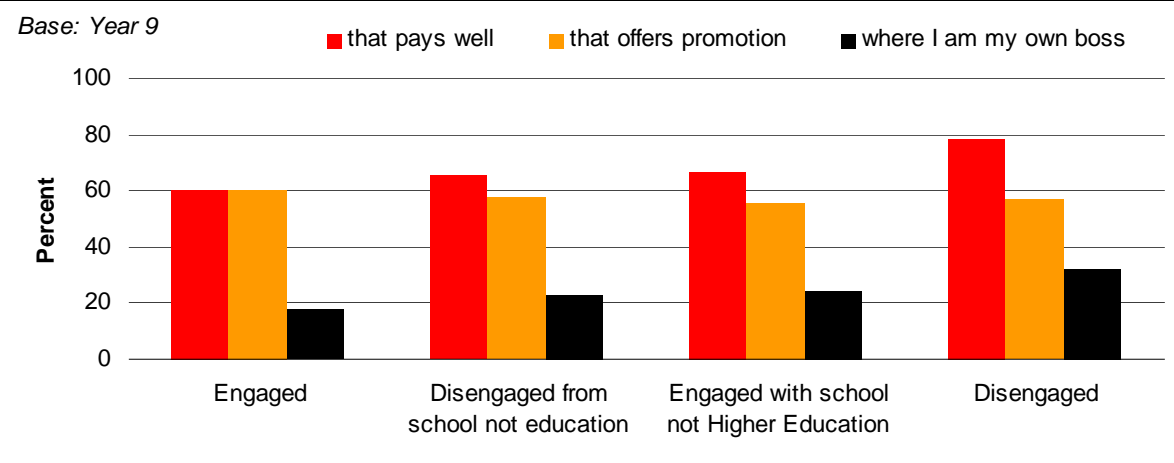
'Disengaged' young people, and to a certain extent, young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' were more likely to be motivated by intrinsic reasons. In particular, they were more likely to report choosing subjects for which they liked the teacher, or that their friends were also studying. For example, one in five 'disengaged' young people agreed that they chose subjects their friends were studying, compared with 1 in 10 young people who were 'disengaged from school not education' or 'engaged with school not higher education' and 1 in 20 'engaged' young people. This might suggest these young people were more interested in seeing their friends than studying. However the desire to take classes with friends, and those for which they liked the teacher might also indicate a greater sense of vulnerability among this group.

**3.7 What motivates them in terms of work**

Young people were also asked about their motivations for future career choices. Again, a distinction is made between motivations considered extrinsic (figure 3-9) and more intrinsic motivations (figure 3-10). The bars represent the proportion of young people who claim a quality matters a lot to them. Compared with the other three types, 'disengaged' young people were more likely to claim that being well paid or being self-employed was a very

important quality in a job. Nearly 80 per cent of 'disengaged' young people said that having a job that paid well mattered to them, compared with 60 per cent of 'engaged' young people, and about 65 per cent of those 'disengaged from school not higher education' or 'engaged with school not higher education'. This is an important finding as it illustrates one way in which these young people might be encouraged to engage a little more with their education.

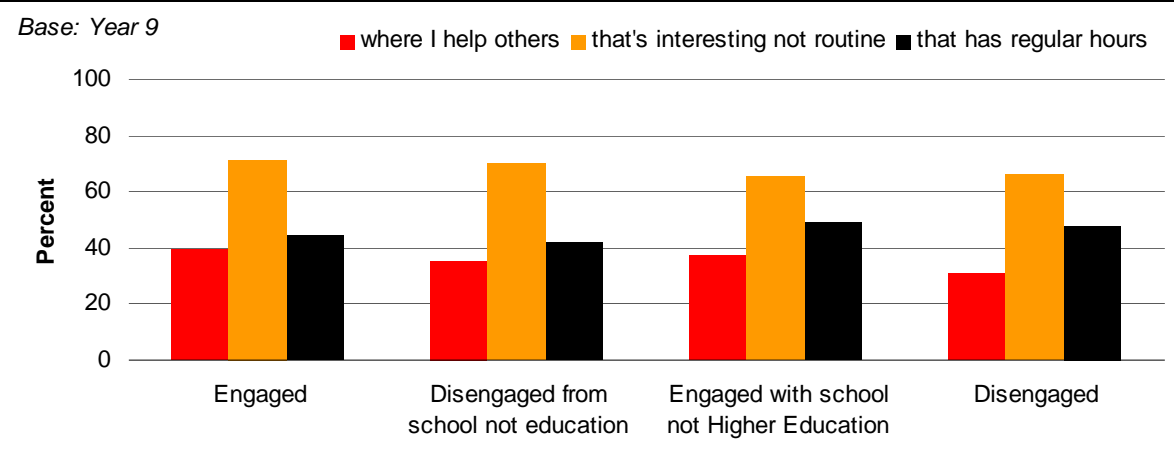
**Figure 3-9 Extrinsic qualities desired in a job (2004)**



Part of a general strategy of engaging young people is to convince them of the importance of gaining a good education for their future prospects. Given the evidence above it might be worth focusing some of this effort on the financial rewards associated with their GCSE qualifications. There is now an abundance of social science evidence illustrating the difference between gaining some GCSE qualifications and having no qualifications at all for young people's life long earnings (for example see McIntosh 2006). If this information could be delivered to young people, perhaps as part of a formal lesson, it might prove useful in convincing at least some young people to be a little more engaged.

There were little differences in young people's desire to get a job that offers promotion. About 60 per cent of all young people said this mattered a lot to them.

**Figure 3-10 Intrinsic qualities desired in a job (2004)**



In relation to the intrinsic qualities desired in a job, differences between the four types were quite small. 'Disengaged' young people were a little less likely to want a job where they helped others. Thirty per cent of disengaged people considered this as an important quality compared with 39 per cent of 'engaged' young people (the other two types fell in between).

In addition, around two thirds of all the young people wanted a job that was interesting and not routine, although this was slightly less likely among those who were 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged'. These young people were also slightly more likely to want a job with regular hours.

### 3.8 Attitudes to work

**Figure 3-11 Attitudes to work (2004)**

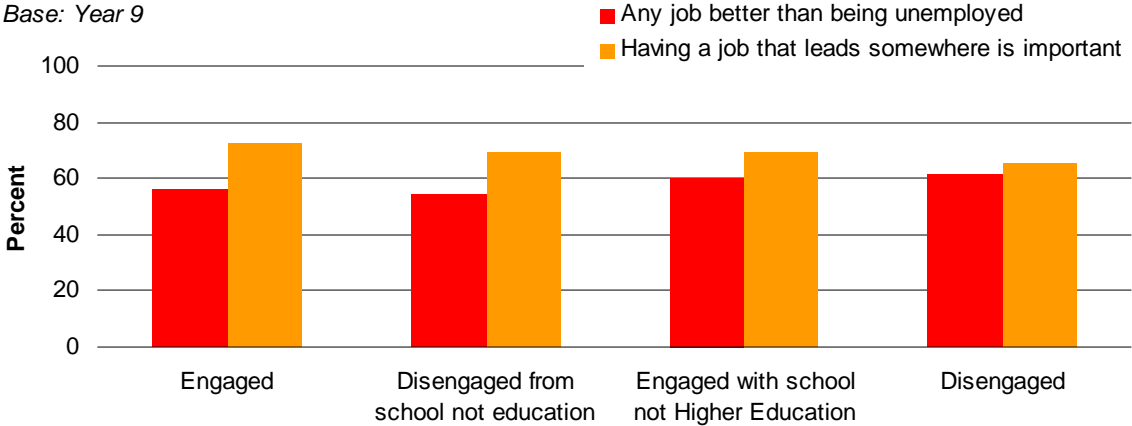
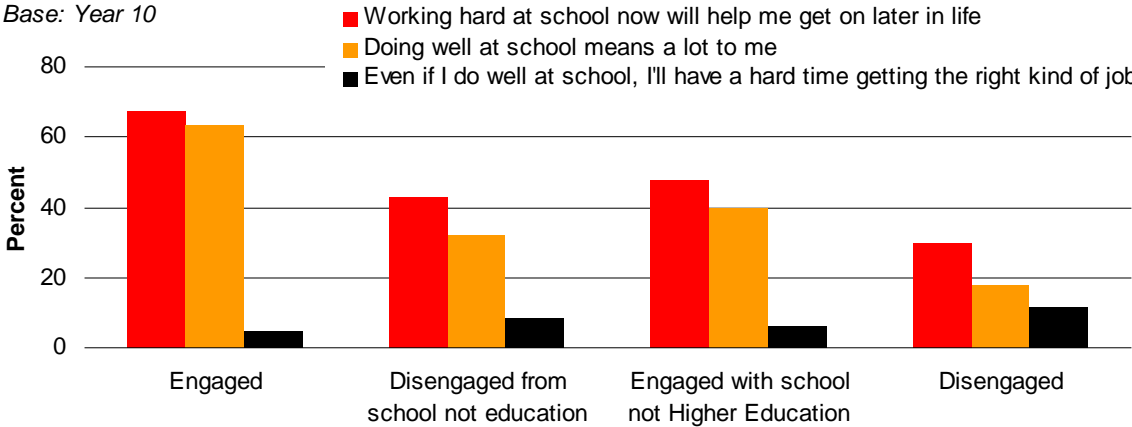


Figure 3-11 illustrates young people’s attitudes to work. Almost all young people agreed at least ‘a little’ with each of the statements relating to work ethic. The bars in the figure represent those young people who strongly agree with each statement. Overall the differences are small, but young people who were ‘disengaged’ or ‘engaged with school not higher education’ were actually slightly more likely to feel that having any kind of job is better than being unemployed. 61 per cent of ‘disengaged’ young people, and 60 per cent of those ‘engaged with school not higher education’ strongly agreed with this statement, compared with 56 per cent of ‘engaged’ young people and 54 per cent of those ‘disengaged from school not education’. Having a job that leads somewhere was considered slightly more important, although a little less so among ‘disengaged’ young people, but again, these differences are very small.

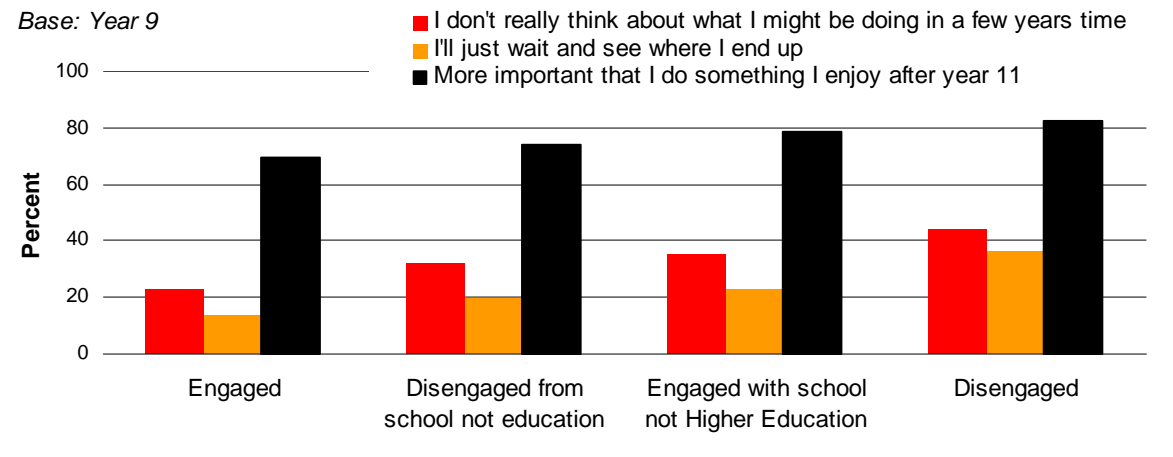
**Figure 3-12 Attitudes to learning (2005)**



There are much greater differences between the different engaged / disengaged types in relation to the importance they attributed to working hard and doing well at school. 'Engaged' young people were far more likely to believe that working hard at school would help them get on in life (67 per cent), considered doing well at school as important (63 per cent), and less likely to think they would still have a hard time getting the right kind of job even if they did do well at school (5 per cent) than 'disengaged' young people for which the equivalent figures are 30 per cent, 18 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively. Young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' had a more positive view of school work, which was a little more positive than the views of those 'disengaged from school not education'. Repeating what was said above, if it was possible to convince young people that working hard and gaining qualifications would have implications for their future earnings, then it might just convince some young people to recognise the importance of working hard at school.

### 3.9 Attitudes to their future

**Figure 3-13 Attitudes to their future (2004)**



NB: Bars represent the young people who strongly agreed or agreed with each statement

Figure 3-13 shows the attitudes the young people have about their future; the bars represent the percentage of young people agreeing with each statement. Overall it suggests that the large majority of young people do think about what they will be doing in a few years time, and are not just 'waiting to see' where they end up. However there is a clear relationship between engaged / disengaged type and a tendency towards laissez-faire attitudes regarding their futures. Twenty-three per cent of 'engaged' young people don't really think about their future, and 14 per cent prefer to 'wait and see'. This increases across the engaged / disengaged types to 44 per cent and 36 per cent respectively among 'disengaged' young people.

This is important because it suggests that these young people are not just disengaging from their school and education, some are also disengaging from their future, and are therefore at greater risk of being not in education, employment or training (NEET) when they leave school. The majority of young people did agree that if they had a choice, then it was more important they did something they enjoyed in Year 12 rather than something that might help their future employability. Again this was slightly greater among 'disengaged' young people, but also among those who were 'engaged with school not higher education'.

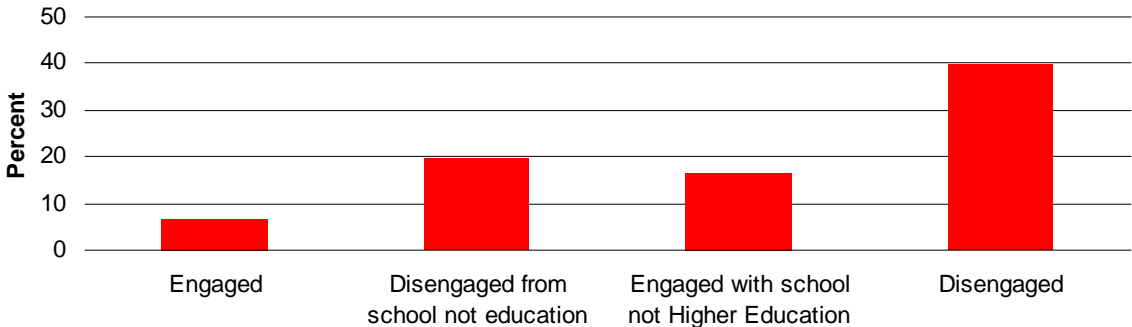


### 3.10 Behaviour

Figure 3-14 shows the percentages of young people in each group claiming to have misbehaved in at least half or more of their classes. ‘Disengaged’ young people were far more likely to report misbehaving than other young people. Forty per cent reported misbehaving in half or more of their classes compared with just 7 per cent of ‘engaged’ young people. Those ‘disengaged with school but not education’ show a slightly higher tendency to report misbehaving than those ‘engaged with school not higher education’ (20 per cent compared with 17 per cent), although the difference is relatively small.

**Figure 3-14 Percentage reporting misbehaving in at least half of their classes (2004)**

Base: Year 9

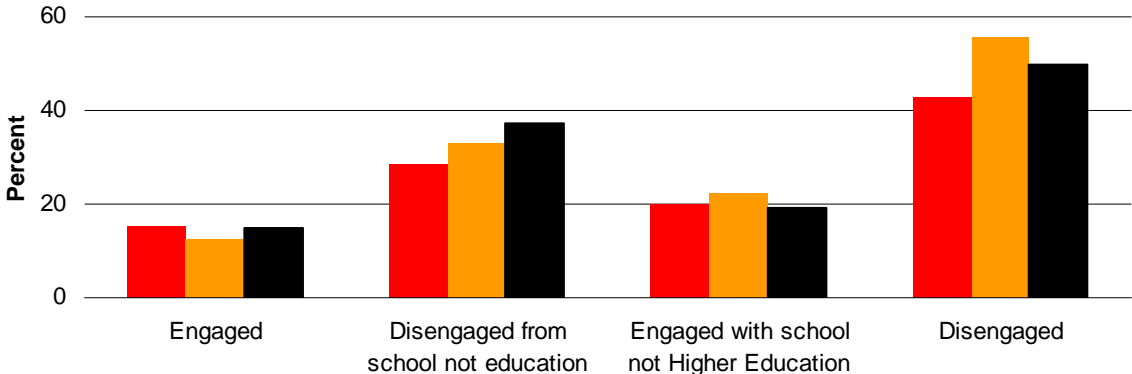


As well as the associated risks of poor educational qualifications, and destinations following compulsory schooling, disengagement is also associated with other poor outcomes, including a higher propensity to engage in risky type behaviours. Figure 3-15 shows the proportions of young people in each group who engaged in activities considered harmful to the self.

**Figure 3-15 Percentage engaging in risky behaviour (2006)**

Base: Year 11

■ Drinks at least once a week ■ Has smoked cigarettes ■ Has tried cannabis



Over two fifths of ‘disengaged’ young people consumed alcohol on a regular basis despite being only 15 or 16 years old. Over half of them had tried smoking cigarettes (38 per cent smoked more than 6 cigarettes a week - results not shown), and half had tried smoking cannabis. Engagement in risky behaviours was also a little higher among young people ‘disengaged from school not education’, 28 per cent were regular drinkers, 33 per cent had smoked cigarettes and 37 per cent had tried cannabis. Among ‘engaged’ young people and those ‘engaged with school not higher education’, the figures were at or less than one fifth for

all risky behaviours. Overall therefore, the findings suggest that disengagement from school in particular, is associated with engaging in risky behaviour.

Of course we cannot be certain that disengagement from school causes young people to engage in risky behaviours, it is probably a reciprocal relationship. Young people who are bored and disillusioned with school may be more likely to engage in risky behaviours, but also, engaging in these types of behaviour might lead some young people to disengage from school. Engaging in risky behaviours can also lead to the development of friendships with other disengaged young people.

**Figure 3-16 Percentage engaging in risky behaviour (2006)**

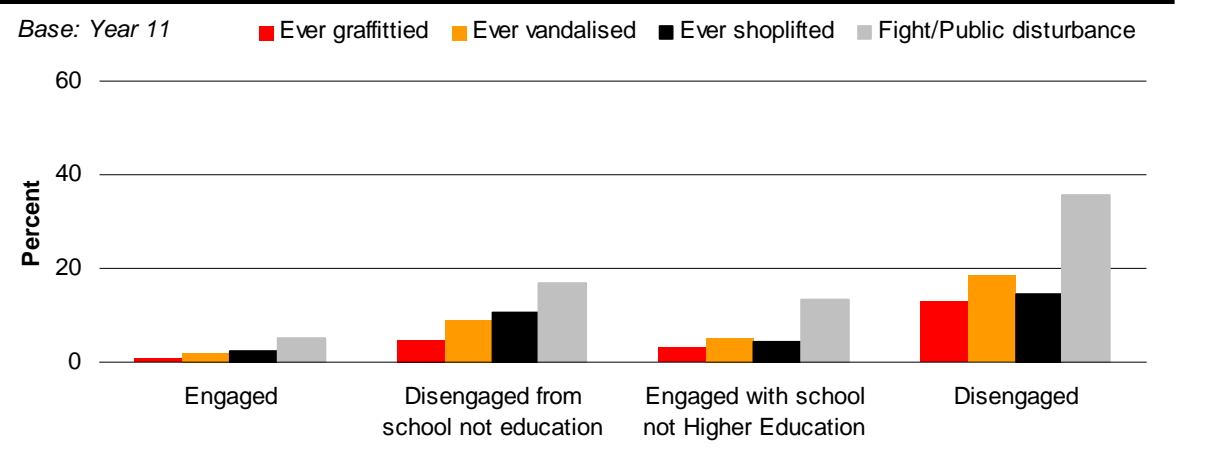


Figure 3-16 shows the proportions of young people in each group who have engaged in types of risky behaviour considered harmful to property or others. Far fewer young people had engaged in these types of behaviour. The pattern of findings however is very similar to figure 3-16; that is, ‘disengaged’ young people, but also those ‘disengaged from school not education’, are more likely to engage in graffiti, vandalism, shoplifting and fights than those engaged with school. A concern is the large proportion (over one third) of ‘disengaged’ young people purporting to have engaged in fights or causing a public disturbance. The figures for young people ‘engaged in school not higher education’ are a little higher than those for ‘engaged’ young people, but nevertheless remain fairly low. Again, although we cannot ascertain that disengagement is a direct cause of risky behaviours from this analysis, policy initiatives to try and engage or re-engage young people with their education may have an impact on young people’s engagement in risky types of behaviour.

## 4 Disengagement over time

This chapter explores changes in young people’s level of disengagement over time. The aim is to discover whether young people remained engaged or disengaged throughout the last three years of their compulsory schooling, or whether there was a particular critical point at which young people were at more risk of disengaging, or alternatively, more likely to engage with their education.

Chapter 2 outlined four different ‘types’ of engaged / disengaged young people that were identified in the three years of schooling examined. The relative sizes of these types suggest a slight increase in the proportion of young people who were ‘disengaged’ or ‘disengaged with school not education’ over time, and a slight decrease in the proportion of ‘engaged’ young people and those who were ‘engaged with school not higher education’ between Years 9 and 10.

Table 4-1 and Table 4-2 provide a far more detailed illustration of this change, indicating the actual pathways of increasing engagement or disengagement that were most likely to occur. The rows represent the engaged / disengaged types in the preceding year, and the columns, the same types in the follow up year. The figures in the table represent the proportion of young people of each engaged / disengaged type who remained the same type, or otherwise changed type over time.

### 4.1 Transitions between year 9 and year 10

**Table 4-1 Transitions in engaged / disengaged type over time: year 9-10**

*Base: All young people in LSYPE wave 3*

Year 9	Year 10			
	Engaged	Disengaged from School not Education	Engaged with School not Higher Education	Disengaged
Engaged	82.4	13.6	4.0	0.1
Disengaged from School not Education	0.0	87.9	0.0	12.1
Engaged with School not Higher Education	2.7	1.2	81.6	14.5
Disengaged	0.0	1.5	0.6	97.8

The first thing to note from Table 4-1 is the high level of stability in young people’s engagement / disengagement over time. The diagonal of figures running from top left to bottom right indicates the proportion of young people who remained the same engaged / disengaged type in Year 10 as they were in Year 9. Over 80 per cent of young people of each type in Year 9 remained the same in Year 10. What is also evident is that ‘disengaged’ young people were the most stable of the four: Around 98 percent of young people who were

'disengaged' in Year 9 remained so when they progressed to Year 10. Also, when examining the typical direction of transitions over the period, we can see that young people were far more likely to disengage between Years 9 and 10 than they were to re-engage.

Around 14 per cent of young people who were 'engaged' in Year 9 became disengaged with school in Year 10. Another 4 per cent remained 'engaged with school but not higher education'. However, virtually no-one who was 'engaged' in Year 9 became completely 'disengaged' by Year 10. This is an important point because it suggests that while some of these young people were at risk of disengaging, they still remained committed to education in the longer term. Of more concern is the 12 per cent of young people 'disengaged with school not education' in Year 9 who became 'disengaged' in Year 10. As shown in Chapter 3, while those 'disengaged from school not education' had a worse relationship with school and were more likely to skip classes, their outcomes in terms of their attainment and future destinations were comparable to 'engaged' young people. This further disengagement meant that these young people were at a much greater risk of low achievement and more difficult pathways into adulthood.

In addition, around 15 per cent of young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' also became 'disengaged' when they progress to Year 10. Some also became more 'engaged' in Year 10, although relatively few, around 3 per cent, and about 1 per cent became 'disengaged from school not education'.

**4.2 Transitions between year 10 and year 11**

**Table 4-2 Transitions in engaged / disengaged type over time: Year 9-10**

*Base: All young people in LSYPE wave 3*

Year 10	Year 11			
	Engaged	Disengaged from School not Education	Engaged with School not Higher Education	Disengaged
Engaged	98.0	0.0	1.9	0.1
Disengaged from School not Education	2.0	92.3	0.0	5.7
Engaged with School not Higher Education	3.7	0.0	96.0	0.3
Disengaged	0.0	1.6	0.0	98.4

In comparison with the transitions seen between Years 9 and 10, the level of stability between Years 10 and 11 is much higher. Over 95 per cent of young people within each type in Year 10 remained the same in Year 11. The only real departure from this trend was among young people who were 'disengaged from school not education' in Year 10. About 6 per cent of these young people became 'disengaged' in Year 11. Nevertheless this is still half the proportion of those who became 'disengaged' in Year 10. All other transitions between years 10 and 11 are fairly negligible.

### 4.3 Summary

Overall there are three key messages to be drawn from the analysis outlined above. First, the different types of engaged / disengaged young people are relatively stable over time. For the majority of young people, they were already either engaged or disengaged by the time they were in Year 9: 40 per cent were 'engaged', 25 per cent 'disengaged with school not education' 23 per cent 'engaged with school not higher education' and 12 per cent were 'disengaged' (table 2-2). Second, where change does occur it is generally in the direction of disengagement. There is far less evidence of young people re-engaging over the period.

Finally where young people did disengage during this period, it was most likely to occur between Year 9 and Year 10. This is the point at which young people are finishing Key Stage 3 and starting their Key Stage 4 qualifications. A time when established friendship groups may split up as young people start new subjects, and also a time associated with an increase in workload and the additional stress that future achievement will now count toward their final GCSE qualifications. NatCen's qualitative study of disengagement (Callanan *et. al.*, 2009) identified falling behind with coursework as a potential factor in a downward spiral of increasing disengagement among some young people. For some young people this will clearly be a critical point at which they are at greater risk of becoming disengaged. Therefore any procedures that schools have in place to monitor young people's progress may well benefit from paying particular attention during this period.

## 5 Predicting Disengagement in Years 9 - 11

This chapter explores factors that may contribute to a young person's level of engagement. Specifically, the influence of the young person's background, their parents and family life, their personal experiences both at home and school as well as the characteristics of the school they attend. The influence of these factors are examined over the last three years of compulsory schooling enabling the identification of what matters, but also when it matters most.

Interpreting the results of this analysis is a little more complex than in previous chapters. Information on how to interpret the figures presented in the tables is given below. However, if the reader prefers then they can skip this and simply read the written interpretation of the results (Section 5.4)

### 5.1 Interpreting the tables

The figures presented in table 5-1 to table 5-4 are termed relative risk ratios (RRR's) and represent the results from a multi-nominal regression in which engagement / disengagement type is the outcome being predicted. They indicate the likelihood of a young person being a particular engaged or disengaged type associated with each factor. Only figures predicting a young person's likelihood of being either 'disengaged with school not education', 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged' are reported. This is because all of the figures are interpreted relative to being 'engaged'. For example, the likelihood that a young person is 'disengaged' as opposed to being 'engaged', or the likelihood that a young person is 'disengaged from school not education' as opposed to 'engaged'. The influence of a factor is also reported for each school year, enabling us to identify any change in its influence over time.

A value above 1 means that the factor, or an increase in the factor (if the factor is a continuous measure), is associated with an increased likelihood of being that particular type. A value below 1 means the factor is associated with a decreased likelihood of being that particular type.

### 5.2 The importance of the measurement level of the factors

**Categorical factors:** Some of the factors examined are categorical measures. For these factors the figures represent the likelihood of being a particular type that is associated with the category named in the table, compared with the likelihood associated with the 'reference category' for that measure. For example, the likelihood of being 'disengaged' if a young person is female compared with the likelihood of being 'disengaged' if a young person is male, or the likelihood of being 'disengaged' if a young person is living in a single parent family, compared with the likelihood of being 'disengaged' if a young person is living with both natural parents.

**Continuous factors:** Other factors are measured on a continuous scale. For these factors, the figures simply represent the change in likelihood that is associated with an increase in the factor. In addition, as these measures are generally recorded on different scales they have been standardized to allow for a comparison of their influence with other continuous factors. For example, how involved parents feel in their child's education is measured on a four point scale<sup>6</sup> covering 'very involved', 'fairly involved', 'not very involved' or 'not at all involved', whereas the measure of the total number of pupils in a school is on a scale of approximately 2000. Standardization of these measures allows a comparison of the strength of the effect that is associated with them.

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<sup>6</sup> Strictly speaking this is not a continuous scale but an ordinal measure. However, for the purpose of these types of analysis such scales are often treated as if they were continuous.

**Comparing continuous and categorical factors:** Unfortunately the strength of the effect of a continuous factor cannot be easily compared with the strength of the effect associated with a categorical factor. As stated above, the figures presented for categorical factors simply tell us the influence of a particular category, if present, relative to the 'reference category' for that measure. The factor is either present or not present, so this is the maximum associated effect for that category of the measure. For continuous measures the figure represents the change in likelihood associated with a 1 'standard deviation' increase in that factor. Standard deviations are simply the name given to the standardized scale. Approximately 6 standardized deviations will account for the entire scale. Therefore the figures represent the change in likelihood that is associated with an increase of one sixth of the total scale. One final point to note is that this relationship between the factor and the engaged / disengaged type is on a logarithmic not a linear scale. Therefore in order to calculate the change in likelihood associated with two standard deviations you cannot simply double the figure presented in the table.

### **5.3 A simple example**

The figures for gender for the disengaged type represent the likelihood of girls being 'disengaged' as opposed to being 'engaged', compared with the likelihood of boys being 'disengaged' as opposed to being 'engaged'. A figure of 0.5 would mean that the likelihood of girls being 'disengaged' as opposed to being 'engaged' is half of what it is for boys. However, the simplest way to interpret these figures is to keep the reference class in mind and simply consider the result to mean that girls are half as likely to be disengaged as boys.

### **5.4 Results**

In order to simplify the results the analysis is presented in four sections. First the influence of the young person's characteristics and background are examined. Second, the influences of their parents are explored. Next the young person's experiences, and then finally, the characteristics of the school they are attending. All the results presented show the individual effect that is associated with each factor after 'controlling' for the effects of all the other measures.

### **5.5 Background factors**

Table 5-1 presents the influence of the young person's gender, their ethnicity, their father's socioeconomic class (or mother's if no father figure was present), their mother's level of education, the type of family they were living in and whether they were in receipt of free school meals. These background factors give a better understanding of the kinds of young people who are at most risk of disengaging.

**Table 5-1 Predicting engaged / disengaged type (background factors) (2004-2006)***Base: All young people in LSYPE Wave 3*

Factor	Engagement / Disengagement Type								
	Disengaged from School not Education			Engaged with School not Higher Education			Disengaged		
	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
<b>Gender</b> (Base: Boys)	0.92	0.94	0.94	0.77	0.74	0.72	0.70	0.72	0.78
<b>Ethnicity</b> (Base: White)									
Mixed	1.29	1.34	1.39	0.53	0.48	0.48	0.53	0.52	0.50
Indian	0.52	0.60	0.59	0.16	0.16	0.14	0.07	0.08	0.09
Pakistan	0.64	0.78	0.68	0.27	0.27	0.20	0.09	0.13	0.09
Bangladesh	0.84	0.98	0.84	0.26	0.24	0.18	0.18	0.20	0.15
Black Caribbean	1.31	1.37	1.31	0.45	0.42	0.39	0.29	0.25	0.30
Black African	0.56	0.69	0.63	0.11	0.11	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.03
Other	0.89	1.03	0.98	0.22	0.20	0.19	0.10	0.14	0.15
<b>NS-SEC</b> (Base: Prof & Man)									
Intermediate	1.24	1.13	1.15	1.48	1.45	1.41	1.65	1.52	1.38
Routine & Manual	1.17	1.14	1.08	1.85	1.92	1.95	1.88	1.96	2.03
Never Worked / Long-term Unemp.	1.22	1.24	1.29	1.55	1.61	1.86	2.09	1.78	2.03
<b>Mother's Education</b> †	0.98	0.99	1.00	0.69	0.67	0.65	0.64	0.65	0.65
<b>Family Type</b> (Base: Birth Parents)									
Step Family	1.22	1.25	1.25	1.30	1.44	1.49	1.38	1.43	1.59
Single Parent Family	1.33	1.38	1.33	1.38	1.41	1.42	1.62	1.70	1.72
<b>Free School Meals</b>	0.98	0.92	0.88	1.18	1.17	1.03	1.12	1.17	1.06

NB: All effects reported above represent the independent effect of each factor after controlling for the influence of all the other factors presented in this chapter

NB: Emboldened figures indicate an effect is statistically significant (at the 5 per cent value)

NB: All the figures are relative to young people being 'engaged'

† Continuous measure

Girls were just as likely to be 'disengaged from school not education' as boys (all of the figures for this type are non-significant). However they were less likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged' than boys, with the likelihood associated with being either of these two types at approximately two thirds of what it is for boys. In other words, girls were more likely to be engaged. This supports evidence found elsewhere which shows that boys are more at risk of disengaging from education than girls. The effect of gender remains fairly consistent over Years 9 to 11.

Ethnicity has a much larger influence than gender on whether a young person is engaged or disengaged. Compared with White young people, young people from an ethnic minority background were less likely, and in most cases far less likely to be any type other than 'engaged' (the majority of the figures, which represent the likelihood of being a particular type compared with white young people, are below 1). There are some exceptions to this rule: young people with a mixed race or Black Caribbean background were both around 1.3 times more likely to be 'disengaged from school not education' than White young people. Also, Bangladeshi and young people categorised as 'other' were just as likely to be 'disengaged from school not education' as White young people (the results are non-significant). However, Indian, Pakistan and Black African young people were around two thirds as likely to be 'disengaged from school not education' as young White people.



Young people with an ethnic minority background were much less likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged' than White young people. This is especially the case for young people with an Asian heritage, young people classified as 'Other' and Black Africans. The likelihood of these young people being either 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged' was between one-twentieth and one-fifth of what it was for White young people. Black Caribbean young people and those with a Mixed background were also less likely to be in either of these two groups than White young people, although the difference was less marked. Similarly to gender, the influence of a young person's ethnicity remains fairly consistent over the last three years of schooling.

In general, young people whose father<sup>7</sup> was employed in either an intermediate occupation, a routine or manual occupation, or who had never worked or was long-term unemployed, were less likely to be 'engaged' than young people with a father in a professional or managerial occupation (i.e. all of the figures presented in Table 5-1 are greater than 1). Again, there are exceptions to this rule: for young people who had a father in an intermediate occupation or a routine or manual occupation, the likelihood of being 'disengaged with school not education' was very similar to those with fathers in professional or managerial occupations (i.e. the figures are very small and in some cases non-significant). However, young people with a father who had never worked or was long-term unemployed were about 1.2 to 1.3 times more likely to be 'disengaged from school not education'.

The social class differences between 'engaged' young people and those who were either 'engaged with school not higher education', or 'disengaged' were much greater. Young people with a father in an intermediate occupation were about one and a half times more likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged' than those whose fathers were in professional occupations. For young people whose fathers were in routine or manual occupations, the likelihood for being either of these two types was greater still (about two times as likely). Young people whose father had never worked or were long-term unemployed were about one and a half times more likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' and twice as likely to be 'disengaged'.

The influence of socioeconomic class also changed a little over time. The likelihood of being 'disengaged' if their father was in an intermediate occupation decreased as the young person got closer to completing compulsory education. It is difficult to interpret the meaning of this result from this finding alone, but perhaps fathers in these kinds of occupations were more likely to take an interest in, and engage more in, their child's education and future plans as they got closer to finishing school. Similarly, young people whose father had never worked or was long-term unemployed were more likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' over time. Again this is difficult to interpret, but perhaps these young people were less likely to feel that university was something for them the closer they got to completing school, given that there may have been fewer positive role models in the home.

Having a mother with a good education is important for a young person's long term engagement with *education*, but it does not appear to make a difference to whether they are engaged with *school* or not. The more highly educated the young person's mother, the less likely he or she was either 'engaged with school not higher education', or 'disengaged' (the figures are statistically significant and below 1). However, a mother's education did not make any difference to whether the young person was either 'engaged' or 'disengaged with school not education' (the figures for the latter are non-significant), or whether they were either 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged' (the figures for these two types are almost identical). Previous research has identified mother's education as a significant predictor of educational achievement, even after controlling for many other factors such as socioeconomic class and levels of income.

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<sup>7</sup> Or mother if a father figure was not present

The type of family a young person lives also appears to have a small yet significant influence on their level of engagement. Young people who lived in a step family were about 1.2 times more likely to be 'disengaged from school not education' than those who lived with both natural parents, and about 1.5 times more likely to be either 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged'. Young people living in single parent families were slightly more likely to be either 'disengaged from school not education' or 'disengaged'. There was also evidence that those living in single parent or step families were more likely to become 'disengaged' over time. This change could indicate the effects associated with family break-up, or difficulties in the relationships that some young people might have with a step parent.

Finally, whether the young person was in receipt of free school meals or not, which was used as an indicator of financial hardship, had no influence on the young person's engagement with school or education.

## 5.6 Parental factors

Table 5-2 shows the influence of factors relating to the young person's parents, including the aspirations they had for their child, whether they attended parent-teacher evenings, how involved they felt with their child's education, and how often they quarrelled with the young person.

**Table 5-2 Predicting engaged / disengaged type (parental factors) (2004-2006)**

*Base: All young people in LSYPE Wave 3*

Factor	Engagement / Disengagement Type								
	Disengaged from School not Education			Engaged with School not Higher Education			Disengaged		
	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Parental Aspirations (Ref: FTE)									
Learn A Trade / Apprenticeship	2.00	2.53	2.65	7.69	10.48	16.31	12.09	19.61	29.78
Fulltime Employment	1.12	1.65	1.87	4.50	5.29	12.42	9.15	16.53	37.34
Something Else	1.77	1.62	1.27	3.32	4.86	5.10	6.58	9.88	7.93
Attends Parent Evenings	0.63	0.75	0.57	0.61	0.68	0.56	0.43	0.40	0.30
Feels involved in School Life†	0.82	0.78	0.79	0.93	0.85	0.84	0.83	0.78	0.74
How often Quarrels with YP†	1.39	1.43	1.41	1.19	1.25	1.22	1.55	1.73	1.52

NB: All effects reported above represent the independent effect of each factor after controlling for the influence of all the other factors presented in this chapter

NB: Emboldened figures indicate an effect is statistically significant (at the 5 per cent value)

NB: All the figures are relative to young people being 'engaged'

† Continuous measure

The aspirations that the parents of these young people held for their future has a very strong association with their level of engagement. Young people whose parents preferred they learnt a trade or undertook an apprenticeship were twice as likely to be 'disengaged from school not education' than parents who preferred that the young person continued with full time education (FTE). However, young people whose parents preferred they learnt a trade or undertook an apprenticeship, took full time employment without training or engaged in some other activity were far more likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' and more likely still to be 'disengaged' than those whose parents wished them to carry on with their education.

The likelihood that a young person was 'engaged with school not higher education' was between 7 and 16 times greater if their parents preferred they learnt a trade or undertook an apprenticeship than it was if they preferred they continued in full time education. These young people were also between 12 and 30 times more likely to be 'disengaged'. For young people whose parents preferred they took full time employment, they were between 4 and 12 times more likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' and between 9 and 37 times more likely to be 'disengaged'. The figures for these effects are massive compared with all of the other factors looked at even after the consideration that some factors are on a continuous scale and should be given additional weight<sup>8</sup>.

Before we prioritise policies for increasing the aspirations of parents, we have to be cautious in attributing too much causality to this finding. Of course aspiring young people to learn a trade or undertake an apprenticeship is a very positive aspiration, however when we consider the effects associated with aspirations to take employment without training, or do something else, are parents really encouraging their children to have these much lower aspirations, or do they respond to and accept / adapt to their child's own wishes? Evidence suggests that it is a reciprocal relationship. If a parent aspires for their child to do well then it is likely this will influence the young person's aspirations, helping them aim higher. However, a young person may be adamant that he or she wants to leave school to get a job without training regardless of what their parent wishes them to do. So long as there is some mutual respect between parent and child, the parent is likely to respect their child's wishes and adjust their own aspirations accordingly. That said, although we need to remain cautious in interpreting the overall size of this effect, there is evidence to suggest that parental aspirations can be very important in helping some young people overcome a disadvantaged start in life (Schoon & Parsons, 2003).

The effects associated with parental aspirations increase substantially over time. As young people get closer to completing their compulsory education they will be having more discussions with their parents about their plans for Year 12, which will result in a closer alignment of aspirations. In addition, following an understanding of the transitions that occur between the different types over time (see Chapter 4), it is likely that the increase in effect between Years 9 and 10 is more reciprocal, but that an increase between Years 10 and 11 is more likely the result of parents realigning their aspirations for their children. This is because there is little transition between types from Years 10 to 11, therefore the direction of causality can really only go one way.

The majority of parents (between 80 and 90 per cent over the three years) attend parent-teacher meetings. However, not attending does appear to matter. Young people whose parents did attend teacher-parent meetings were around two thirds as likely to be 'disengaged from school not education', or 'engaged with school not higher education' and about one third as likely to be 'disengaged' than young people whose parents did not attend these meetings.

The main parent was also asked directly how involved they felt with their child's education, answering 'very involved', 'fairly', 'not very', or 'not at all involved'. The more involved a parent felt, the more likely their child was 'engaged' (all the figures are significant and below 1). There is also evidence that feeling involved is more important for a young person's engagement with school, as the figures associated with being 'disengaged with school not education' or 'disengaged' are further away from 1<sup>9</sup>. This suggests that having parents who feel more involved, which could include good communication between the young person and parent about what is happening at school, might have a positive influence on the young person's own level of engagement with school.

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<sup>8</sup> See section 'the importance of the measurement level of the factors' above

<sup>9</sup> Although the differences between the figures for the different types are fairly small, because the factor is continuous they should be given more weight

On average, parents felt more involved with their child’s education over time (results not shown). This finding, coupled with evidence that the influence of ‘feeling involved’ also becomes a more important predictor of a young person’s engagement over time (i.e. the figures get even further away from 1), suggests that it was the parents of ‘engaged’ young people who were measured as feeling more involved over time.

During their teenage years parents will often quarrel with their children. However, how often they quarrel appears to matter for the young person’s engagement. The more frequent the quarrelling, the less likely the young person was ‘engaged’. The results also suggest that quarrelling is more associated with disengagement from school than higher education, as the figures for ‘disengaged from school not education’ and ‘disengaged’ are greater than for being ‘engaged with school not higher education’. As with some of the other factors examined we cannot infer that the relationship is causal. Nevertheless, we might suppose that difficult relationships in the home may spill over into difficulties the young person experiences in the classroom. Conversely, difficulties that a young person may be experiencing at school may lead to arguments at home, whether because of the young person’s frustration or anger, or because their parents are aware they are skipping classes or underachieving.

There was also a significant increase in the effect of quarrelling for ‘disengaged’ young people in Year 10. This could indicate extra difficulties that some young people experience when starting Key Stage 4, and which might consequently spill over into arguments at home. In Chapter 4 the difficulties that some young people experience is considered as a reason why they might become disengaged in Year 10. In Chapter 7 there is also evidence that quarrelling between a parent and a child is associated with young people becoming disengaged in Year 10.

**5.7 The young person’s experiences**

Five areas of the young person’s personal experiences were examined: the impact of being a young carer, whether the young person had experienced bullying in the last 12 months, peer influences, whether the young person had spoken to a Connexions advisor and whether their behaviour had led to contact with Educational or Social Services, or a visit from the police.

**Table 5-3 Predicting engaged / disengaged type (young person’s experiences) (2004- 2006)**

*Base: All young people in LSYPE Wave 3*

Factor	Engagement / Disengagement Type								
	Disengaged from School not Education			Engaged with School not Higher Education			Disengaged		
	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
YP is a Young Carer	1.22	1.07	1.13	1.05	0.81	1.27	0.90	0.84	1.08
YP was bullied in last 12 months	1.58	1.71	1.71	1.05	1.10	1.17	1.35	1.62	1.78
Peers plan to say in FTE	0.65	0.64	0.60	0.40	0.43	0.39	0.22	0.21	0.19
Talked to Connexions Advisor	0.91	1.00	1.07	0.98	1.01	1.23	0.86	1.04	1.14
Visit from Educ / Soc Services	2.21	2.22	2.05	1.67	2.06	1.88	3.27	4.50	3.93
Visit from the Police	1.90	2.15	2.26	1.73	1.80	1.93	3.48	4.52	4.64

NB: All effects reported above represent the independent effect of each factor after controlling for the influence of all the other factors presented in this chapter

NB: Emboldened figures indicate an effect is statistically significant (at the 5 per cent value)

NB: All the figures are relative to young people being ‘engaged’

Other studies have shown that being a young carer can have a significant impact on a young person's ability to remain engaged with education. Young people can find themselves falling behind with school work because they miss school to care for a parent or another family member. About 5 per cent of young people reported looking after someone in the previous 12 months. However, in the current study, it appears to have little influence on the young person's engagement. In Year 11, carers were a little more likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' than 'engaged', but otherwise the relationship was inconsistent and non-significant. However, this may be because this definition of carers includes all carers regardless of the number of actual caring hours they provide each week.

If a young person is bullied this can have a significant impact on their engagement with school. Young people who were bullied in the last 12 months were about 1.7 times more likely to be 'disengaged from school not education', and between 1.3 and 1.8 times more likely to be 'disengaged'. The average number of young people who experienced bullying tended to fall off as they moved through Years 9 to 11 (results not shown), yet at the same time the risk associated with being bullied and disengaging increased. This suggests that it is young people who are persistently bullied who are at most risk of disengaging<sup>10</sup>.

Peer influence is also very significant for a young person's engagement. This study examines the influence of having friends with aspirations to continue with full time education in Year 12. Young people who reported that the majority of their friends were planning to remain in full time education were more likely to be 'engaged' than any other type. They were about two thirds as likely to be 'disengaged from school not education', two fifths as likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' and as little as a fifth as likely to be 'disengaged' as those whose friends planned to do something else.

Whether a parent had had contact with educational welfare, social services or similar services because of the young person's behaviour in the last 12 months, or whether their behaviour had led to a visit from the police was examined as an indicator as particularly problematic behaviour. This had been the experience of about 7 per cent of young people. Young people whose behaviour had led to a visit by services were about twice as likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education', just over twice as likely to be 'disengaged from school not education' and about 3 or 4 times more likely to be 'disengaged'. A similar pattern was evident for young people whose behaviour had led to a visit by the police.

For 'disengaged' young people there is also evidence of a peak in this association in Year 10. Again this may highlight this point at which young people start their Key Stage 4 qualifications as a critical period when some young people might just go 'off the rails' a little.

Whether a young person had spoken to someone from Connexions in the last 12 months had little and no consistent influence on their level of engagement.

## **5.8 School level factors**

Three characteristics of the school for determining a young person's engagement were explored. The teacher to pupil ratio, the total number of pupils within the school, and the proportion of half days lost to unauthorised absences. The assumption is that teachers are better able to control disruption and engage their pupils in smaller classes; that some, especially vulnerable young people may feel alienated in larger schools; and also that a general culture of truancy could encourage greater truancy or disengagement at the individual level.

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<sup>10</sup> Although the impact of the persistency of being bullied is not something that is formally tested in this study

**Table 5-4 Predicting engaged / disengaged type (school characteristics) (2004-2006)***Base: All young people in LSYPE Wave 3*

Factor	Engagement / Disengagement Type								
	Disengaged from School not Education			Engaged with School not Higher Education			Disengaged		
	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Pupil to Teacher Ratio†	1.11	1.10	1.09	1.14	1.13	1.12	1.09	1.09	1.12
School Size (Number of Pupils) †	1.03	1.03	1.03	0.90	0.88	0.86	0.98	0.98	0.93
School Level of Truancy†	1.04	1.05	1.06	1.12	1.16	1.17	1.18	1.19	1.22

NB: All effects reported above represent the independent effect of each factor after controlling for the influence of all the other factors presented in this chapter

NB: Emboldened figures indicate an effect is statistically significant (at the 5 per cent value)

NB: All the figures are relative to young people being 'engaged'

† Continuous measure

The larger the class size, the more likely it was that the young person was either 'disengaged from school not education' or 'engaged with school not higher education'. However, surprisingly, larger classes increased the likelihood of a young person being 'disengaged' in Year 11 only. For the former two types of young people it also appeared to matter less as the young person came closer to completing their compulsory education.

A slightly surprising relationship was also found with the total number of pupils within the school. The larger the school that a young person attended, the less likely that he or she was 'engaged with school not higher education' and conversely the more likely he or she was 'engaged'. This relationship also increased the closer the young person came to completing compulsory education. School size had no influence on whether a young person was likely to be disengaged from school. This may be an indication of the success of the larger educational academies, although this is not something that was formally tested.

School level truancy did appear to matter, and in the direction hypothesized. The greater the number of school days lost to unauthorised absences, the more likely that a young person was 'engaged with school not higher education', and even more likely they were 'disengaged'. However there was little association between school-level truancy and the likelihood that a young person was 'disengaged from school not education', with a relationship only identified in Year 11. School-level truancy appears to be more important, therefore, to a young person's aspirations for higher education. This might suggest that schools which experience high levels of truancy may also have lower ambitions for their pupils.

## 5.9 A summary of the factors predicting each Engaged / Disengaged type

Below is a summary the factors that are most associated with being each of the different engaged / disengaged types. 'Engaged' is always the comparison group

### 'Disengaged from school not education' (DSNE)

- **Ethnicity:** Indian, Pakistani, and black African young people were less likely to be DSNE. Black Caribbean's and young people with a mixed race background were more likely to be DSNE

- **NS-SEC:** Young people with a father who had never worked or was long term unemployed were a little more likely to be DSNE
- **Family:** Young people living in a step or single parent family were more likely to be DSNE
- **Parent aspirations:** Young people whose parents preferred they took a job with training or an apprenticeship were more likely to be DSNE
- **Parents evenings:** Young people whose parents attended parent-teacher evenings were less likely to be DSNE
- **Parents involvement:** The more involved the parent felt in the young person's school life, the less likely he or she was DSNE
- **Quarrelling with parents:** The more the young person quarrelled with their parents the more likely they were DSNE
- **Bullying:** Young people who were bullied were more likely to be DSNE
- **Peers:** If most of their friends wanted to continue in fulltime education, they were less likely to be DSNE
- **Education / Social Services:** Young people whose behaviour had led to contact with educational or social services were more likely to be DSNE
- **Police:** Young people whose behaviour had led to a visit by the police were more likely to be DSNE
- **Class size:** Young people in bigger class sizes were more likely to be DSNE

#### **'Engaged with school not higher education (ESNHE)'**

- **Gender:** Girls were less likely to be ESNHE
- **Ethnicity:** Black Caribbean's and young people with a mixed race background were less likely to be ESNHE. Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African and 'other' young people were far less likely to be ESNHE
- **NS-SEC:** Young people with a father in an intermediate, routine or manual occupation, or who had never worked or was long term unemployed were more likely to be ESNHE
- **Mother's education:** The more educated the young person's mother, the less likely they were ESNHE
- **Family:** Young people living in a step or single parent family were more likely to be ESNHE
- **Parent aspirations:** Young people whose parents preferred they took a job with training or an apprenticeship, employment without training, or something else were far more likely to be ESNHE
- **Parents evenings:** Young people whose parents attended parent-teacher evenings were less likely to be ESNHE

- **Parents involvement:** The more involved the parent felt in the young person's school life, the less likely he or she was ESNHE
- **Quarrelling with parents:** The more the young person quarrelled with their parents the more likely they were ESNHE
- **Peers:** If most of their friends wanted to continue in fulltime education, they were far less likely to be ESNHE
- **Education / Social Services:** Young people whose behaviour had led to contact with educational or social services were more likely to be ESNHE
- **Police:** Young people whose behaviour had led to a visit by the police were more likely to be ESNHE
- **Class size:** Young people in bigger class sizes were more likely to be ESNHE
- **School size:** Young people in larger schools were less likely to be ESNHE
- **School level Truancy:** Young people in schools with higher levels of truancy were more likely to be ESNHE

#### **'Disengaged'**

- **Gender:** Girls were less likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Ethnicity:** Young people with a mixed race background were less likely to be 'disengaged'. Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African, Black Caribbean and 'other' young people were far less likely to be 'disengaged'
- **NS-SEC:** Young people with a father in an intermediate, routine or manual occupation, or who had never worked or was long term unemployed were more likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Mother's education:** The more educated the young person's mother, the less likely they were 'disengaged'
- **Family:** Young people living in a step or single parent family were more likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Parent aspirations:** Young people whose parents preferred they took a job with training or an apprenticeship, employment without training or something else were far more likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Parents evenings:** Young people whose parents attended parent-teacher evenings were far less likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Parents involvement:** The more involved the parent felt in the young person's school life, the less likely he or she was 'disengaged'
- **Quarrelling with parents:** The more the young person quarrelled with their parents the more likely they were 'disengaged'
- **Bullying:** Young people who were bullied were more likely to be disengaged



- **Peers:** If most of their friends wanted to continue in fulltime education, they were very unlikely to be 'disengaged'
- **Education / Social Services:** Young people whose behaviour had led to contact with educational or social services were far more likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Police:** Young people whose behaviour had led to a visit by the police were far more likely to be 'disengaged'
- **School level Truancy:** Young people in schools with higher levels of truancy were more likely to be 'disengaged'

## 6 Predicting Disengagement in Year 10

Previous chapters explored the influence of a number of factors for predicting a young person's level of engagement during their last three years of compulsory education. This chapter examines the influence of additional factors that were only measured in Years 9 or 10 to predict the young people's disengagement in Year 10. These additional factors give us a much richer understanding of how experiences within the home and school impact on the young person's level of engagement.

The chapter is divided into two sections. First the influence of further factors relating to the young person's parents, measured in Year 9 are examined. Then the influence of a number of additional factors relating to the young person's experiences, especially within school, measured in Year 10. All of the effects reported represent the independent effect associated with each factor, controlling for the effect of all other factors presented in both this chapter and the previous one. For a detailed description on how to interpret the figures presented in the tables please refer to section 5.1 in Chapter 5.

### 6.1 Further factors relating to the home

The influence of two additional factors relating to the young person's parents: the parent's subjective evaluation of their relationship with the school, and the importance they attributed to continuing with full time education. The influence of family cohesion was also examined using a measure of the time young people spent with their family.

**Table 6-1 Predicting engaged / disengaged type (additional parental factors) (2005)**

*Base: All young people in LSYPE Wave 3*

Factor	Engagement / Disengagement Type								
	Disengaged from School not Education			Engaged with School not Higher Education			Disengaged		
	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Relationship with School†		0.85			0.91			0.86	
Importance of continuing FTE†		0.95			0.76			0.75	
Family cohesion									
Spends Regular Time In Together		0.89			0.96			0.79	
How Often Go Out Together		0.91			0.94			0.91	

NB: All effects reported above represent the independent effect of each factor controlling for the influence of all the other factors presented both in this chapter and those presented in chapter 5

NB: Emboldened figures indicate an effect is statistically significant (at the 5 per cent value)

NB: All the figures are relative to young people being 'engaged'

† Continuous measure

A factor was constructed which measured the efficacy of the relationship that parents had with their child's school, especially in supporting their involvement in their child's education<sup>11</sup>. Parent's who had a very positive relationship with the school were less likely to have a child

<sup>11</sup> The measure was constructed from the main parent's level of agreement to four statements which described their relationship with school. Further detail is reported in Appendix B

who was 'engaged with school not higher education' and far less likely to have a child who was either 'disengaged with school not education' or 'disengaged'. Although we cannot be certain of the direction of causality from this finding it does suggest that when schools are able to foster a very positive relationship with parents, which includes providing parents with the information they need to support their child's education, it can have a very positive influence on that child's own engagement with that school. In a qualitative study on disengagement, Callanan *et. al.* (2009) reported that a good relationship between parents and the school was important for opening up a channel of communication so that any difficulties the young person may be experiencing at school or at home could be more easily identified and resolved. Findings such as these underline the current Government's strategy aimed at getting more schools working with parents.

Parents were also asked how much importance they attributed to continuing with full time education by stating whether they agreed or not that 'leaving school at 16 limits young people's career opportunities later in life'. Unsurprisingly, the more parents agreed with this statement the less likely it was that their child would be either 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged', that is the two types noted for having lower ambitions for continuing with full time education. It was also a little less likely that these young people would be 'disengaged from school not higher education'. Similar findings were also found in relation to the aspirations of parents in Chapter 5. Given these findings part of the aim of schools working with parents needs to focus on convincing parents of the importance of long term education for young people's future careers.

How often a family spends time together also replicated a pattern seen in Chapter 5 relating to how often the young person quarrelled with their parents. 'Engaged' young people were more likely to spend time going out with their family than other young people. There is also evidence that spending time going out together is especially related to disengagement from school (the effect for young people 'engaged with school not higher education' was not statistically significant). Again it is not possible to decipher the direction of causality from this association alone, for example, it may be disengagement from school that leads some young people to also disengage from their family. 'Disengaged' young people were also less likely to spend *regular time in* with their families.

## **6.2 Further factors relating to the school**

A number of additional factors relating to the young person's personal experience were explored, particularly within the school. This includes whether the young person had a disability, opportunities available at the school (including vocational qualifications, subject choice, time spent at a college or on a work placement, extra curricula activity), homework (including supervision by parents and teachers, and whether they received any support), the quality of their relationship with teachers, whether they had changed school during term time, and any guidance they had received regarding future plans to study.

Young people who had a disability which affected their schooling were almost twice as likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education', and one had a half times more likely to be 'disengaged' than other young people, suggesting that perhaps more could be done to support these young people in their education, particularly in fostering their longer term ambitions.

**Table 6-2 Predicting engaged / disengaged type (further young person and school factors) (2005)**

*Base: All young people in LSYPE Wave 3*

Factor	Engagement / Disengagement Type								
	Disengaged from School not Education			Engaged with School not Higher Education			Disengaged		
	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
<b>Has a Disability</b>									
School Effectd		1.22		1.88			1.55		
School Not Effectd		0.89		0.96			0.78		
<b>Doing a Vocational Qualification</b>									
		1.24		1.50			1.50		
<b>Subject not Available</b>									
		1.09		0.80			0.75		
<b>Regular Timetable Spent</b>									
At A College		1.20		1.62			1.75		
On A Work Placement		0.97		1.10			1.41		
Somewhere Else		1.10		1.62			1.36		
<b>Homework</b>									
How often parents ensure done†		0.97		1.11			0.92		
How many teachers ensure done†		0.81		0.83			0.68		
Gets helps at home		0.92		1.17			1.02		
<b>Teachers</b>									
Teachers In Control†		0.71		0.93			0.69		
Treats Young Person Unfairly†		1.52		1.31			1.84		
Take interest in YP's work†		0.88		0.86			0.79		
How likely praise YP†		0.92		0.97			0.92		
How likely blame YP†		1.22		1.14			1.42		
<b>Moved School During Term</b>									
		1.12		1.12			1.40		
<b>Talked About Future Study</b>									
Teachers As Part Of A Lesson†		0.92		0.95			0.86		
Teachers Outside Of Lessons†		0.93		0.93			0.90		
Family†		0.87		0.93			0.90		
Friends†		1.02		0.98			0.98		
Careers Advisor†		1.00		1.04			0.98		
<b>Extra Curricula Activity</b>									
Use sports facilities 1+ pwk		0.96		0.86			0.72		
Not available		1.07		1.31			1.44		
Attends clubs / societies 1+ pwk		0.74		0.67			0.45		
Not available		0.97		1.16			0.98		
<b>Study Support</b>									
Attends extra classes 1+ pwk		0.97		0.87			0.77		
Not available		1.21		1.24			1.30		
Attends free study classes 1+ pwk		0.94		0.94			0.74		
Not available		1.03		0.98			0.91		
Attends school during holidays		0.91		0.75			0.57		
Not available		0.84		0.86			0.89		

NB: All effects reported above represent the independent effect of each factor controlling for the influence of all the other factors presented both in this chapter and those presented in chapter 5

NB: Emboldened figures indicate an effect is statistically significant (at the 5 per cent value)

NB: All the figures are relative to young people being 'engaged'

† Continuous measure

To measure influences relating to the curriculum, the study examined whether the young person was studying any vocational subjects, whether they had wanted to study a subject that was unavailable, and whether they had spent any part of their regular timetable at a local college, on a work placement, or somewhere else (unspecified). Opportunities to study vocational subjects or to spend time outside of the school environment have been identified as a positive way to engage some young people. For example, Steedman and Stoney (2004) recommended opportunities for studying vocational subjects for a group of disengaged young people they termed the '1-4 A-C grade' group. In addition as illustrated in Chapter 3 there was also evidence that disengaged young people enjoyed and were more confident studying Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) which is a more hands on, practical type of subject.

In this study, young people who studied vocational qualifications were actually 1.2 times more likely to 'disengage from school not education' and one and a half times more likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged'. In addition, young people who spend a regular part of their timetable in structured activities outside of the school environment were more likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged'. This finding is perhaps not all too surprising seeing as these are considered strategies for engaging these kinds of young people. The question is whether the young people were more likely to disengage if these options were not available.

In order to answer this question we examined changes in the effects associated with identified risk factors for disengaging, including socioeconomic position, mother's education and the kind of family young people were living in, when including these activities in the analysis. There was a slight increase in the influence of these known risk factors (results not shown), which suggests that offering these types of activities may reduce the risk of disengagement for those young people known to be more at risk<sup>12</sup>.

The lack of a broad curriculum offering young people more opportunities for studying the subjects that they find interesting and relevant might be a trigger for disengagement for some. Chapter 3 already identified that some subjects were more interesting and inspired more confidence than others. However, young people who were not able to study a subject of choice were actually less likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged' than young people who had not reported this as an issue. What it suggests is that it is engaged rather than disengaged young people who are most likely to consider the curriculum too narrow.

Homework has been identified as another potential trigger of disengagement. On beginning their GCSE qualifications in Year 10, some young people would find themselves falling behind with their coursework and quickly feel overwhelmed (Callanan *et. al.*, 2009). This study examined whether parental and teacher supervision in ensuring homework was completed would help young people remain engaged with their education, as well as the influence of receiving help with homework at home.

The parents of young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' were actually more likely to ensure their child had completed their homework than parents of 'engaged' young people. This could of course indicate a higher degree of self-motivation among 'engaged' young people, with young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' requiring a little more encouragement<sup>13</sup>. This also differentiated them from their 'disengaged' peers who were less likely to be supervised by parents, who may as a result be at a greater risk of falling behind with work and consequently disengaging.

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<sup>12</sup> It must be noted that this is not a formal test, and the changes in the effects identified were also very small.

<sup>13</sup> In Chapter 3 'engaged' young people were noted as being far more likely to recognise the importance of working hard at school and consider success at school as something very important to them

Within the school, the greater the number of teachers who ensured that homework was completed the more likely the young person was 'engaged' and the less likely they were any other type, especially 'disengaged'. This clearly highlights the importance of supervision in keeping young people engaged with their education. However, as the previous paragraph suggests, some young people might also benefit from some additional support at home, and for these young people it might make a difference between being 'engaged with school not higher education' and being 'disengaged'. Young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' were also more likely to receive help with their homework.

Another factor that has been identified as critical to a young person's engagement is the quality of the relationships they have with their teachers (Callanan *et. al.*, 2009). This study examines whether the young person felt their teachers were effective in instilling discipline and order in class, and on a personal level, whether they felt unfairly treated by their teachers and whether their teachers took an interest in their work. Whether young people felt they were more likely to receive praise, or conversely, more likely to receive blame if there was any trouble compared with other young people was also examined.

The general pattern that emerged was that all young people other than 'engaged' young people were more likely to express problems in their relationships with teachers. However, it was young people who were disengaged from school that were most likely to report difficulties (i.e. those young people who were either 'disengaged from school not education' or 'disengaged'). All were less likely to perceive their teachers as being in control than 'engaged' young people, especially those disengaged from school. They were also more likely to feel unfairly treated and blamed for any trouble in class, and less likely to feel their teachers took an interest in their work. Young people who were 'disengaged from school not education' also felt they were less likely to be praised compared with other young people. Overall, the evidence suggests that if teachers are able to foster positive relationships where pupils feel they are fairly treated and are given appropriate praise, then this may well contribute to their engagement with school.

Disengagement was also associated with moving school during term time. Young people who had moved school were almost one and a half times more likely to be 'disengaged' than those who remained at the same school. This could indicate difficulties that some young people have with fitting in and making new friends when they start a new school, or difficulties in getting up to speed with the curriculum. However it is also possible that some of these young people were already disengaged before they moved school and this may have even contributed to their move. Nevertheless, this finding does suggest that extra care may be needed to help young people integrate in their new school environment.

The influence of receiving information and guidance on a young person's level of engagement was explored by examining how often the young person spoke to a number of different individuals about their future plans for study. The results indicate that young people who often discussed their plans with teachers as part of a lesson or with family members were less likely to be 'disengaged with school not education' or 'disengaged', i.e. disengaged from school. The more active pursuit of discussing future plans outside of a lesson was particularly associated with being 'engaged' (all of the figures are below 1). There were no differences in how often young people were having discussion with their friends or a career advisor.

Previous research has identified significant benefits from the provision and use of study support and other extra curricula activities on young people's attainment, attitudes to school and attendance (Macbeth *et. al.*, 2001). This study explores the impact of making use of school sports facilities outside of lessons or participating in school clubs or societies on young people's level of engagement. The importance of attending additional classes (with a teacher) to prepare for exams, the use of additional 'drop in' classes (without a teacher) and

attending additional classes (with or without a teacher) during school holidays were also examined.

Where sports facilities were available for use outside of school lessons, those who used them at least once a week were a little less likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' and less likely to be 'disengaged'. Young people who reported that these facilities were not available to them were also more likely to be one of these two types. Participation in school clubs or societies had a stronger association with young people's engagement. Where clubs and societies were available, those who participated at least once a week were approximately two thirds as likely to be 'disengaged from school not education' or 'engaged with school not higher education' and half as likely to be 'disengaged'.

Also congruence with the study by Macbeth *et. al.* (2001), young people who regularly participated in any form of study support was less likely to be 'disengaged'. Young people who participated in additional classes during term time (with or without a teacher) were about two thirds as likely to be 'disengaged'. In addition, young people who attended classes during school holidays were three quarters as likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' and half as likely to be 'disengaged'. Clearly there is a strong association between disengagement and the participation in additional study support, although it is not possible to discern the direction of causality from these findings. 'Engaged' young people were also more likely to report that additional study classes for exams were actually available to them.

### 6.3 A summary of the factors predicting each Engaged / Disengaged type

Below is a summary of the factors that are most associated with being each of the different engaged / disengaged types. 'Engaged' is always the comparison group

#### 'Disengaged from school not education' (DSNE)

- **Parents relationship with the school:** Young people whose parents had a very positive relationship with school were far less likely to be DSNE
- **Importance of continuing FTE:** Young people whose parents recognised the importance of further education were a little less likely to be DSNE
- **Family cohesion:** The more a young person spent time going out with their family, the less likely they were DSNE
- **Vocational subjects:** Young people studying vocational subjects were a little more likely to be DSNE
- **Homework:** The more teachers supervised the young persons homework, the less likely they were DSNE
- **Teachers:** If the young person felt their teachers were in control, took an interest in their work, or were more likely to praise them than their peers, then they were less likely to be DSNE. If they felt unfairly treated or more likely to be blamed for trouble, they were more likely to be DSNE
- **Guidance:** The more the young person spoke to teachers or family about future plans for study the less likely they were DSNE
- **Extra Curricula Activity:** Young people who attended a club or society at school were a little less likely to be DSNE
- **Study Support:** Young people who were DSNE were a little more likely to report that additional 'exam' study classes were not available to them

### **'Engaged with school not higher education' (ESNHE)**

- **Parents relationship with the school:** Young people whose parents had a positive relationship with school were less likely to be ESNHE
- **Importance of continuing FTE:** Young people whose parents recognised the importance of further education were far less likely to be ESNHE
- **Disability:** Young people who had a disability effecting school were more likely to be ESNHE
- **Vocational subjects:** Young people studying vocational subjects were a more likely to be ESNHE
- **Curriculum:** Young people who were unable to study a choice subject were less likely to be ESNHE
- **Placements:** Young people who spent a regular part of their timetable at a college or somewhere else were more likely to be ESNHE
- **Homework:** The more teachers supervised the young person's homework, the less likely they were ESNHE. The more often parents supervised their homework, and also if they helped them with their homework, the more likely they were ESNHE
- **Teachers:** If the young person felt their teachers were in control, took an interest in their work, they were a little less likely to be ESNHE. If they felt unfairly treated or more likely to be blamed for trouble, they were a little more likely to be ESNHE
- **Guidance:** The more the young person spoke to teachers outside of a lesson about future plans for study the less likely they were ESNHE
- **Extra Curricula Activity:** Young people who used school sports facilities outside of lessons at least once a week were a little less likely to be ESNHE. Young people who participated in school clubs or societies at least once a week were less likely to be ESNHE. ESNHE were also more likely to report that sports facilities were not available for use outside of lessons
- **Study Support:** Young people who attended extra classes during the school holidays were less likely to be ESNHE. However, Young people who were ESNHE were a little more likely to report that additional 'exam' study classes were not available to them

### **'Disengaged'**

- **Parents relationship with the school:** Young people whose parents had a positive relationship with school were far less likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Importance of continuing FTE:** Young people whose parents recognised the importance of further education were far less likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Family cohesion:** The more a young person spent time going out with their family, or regular time in with their family the less likely they were 'disengaged'
- **Disability:** Young people who had a disability effecting school were more likely to be 'disengaged'



- **Vocational subjects:** Young people studying vocational subjects were a more likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Curriculum:** Young people who were unable to study a choice subject were less likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Placements:** Young people who spent a regular part of their timetable at a college or on a work placement were more likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Homework:** The more teachers supervised the young persons homework, the far less likely they were 'disengaged'. The more often parents supervised their homework the less likely they were 'disengaged'
- **Teachers:** If the young person felt their teachers were in control, took an interest in their work, they were a far less likely to be 'disengaged'. If they felt unfairly treated or more likely to be blamed for trouble, they were far more likely to be 'disengaged'
- **Guidance:** The more the young person spoke to teachers or family about future plans for study the less likely they were 'disengaged'
- **Extra Curricula Activity:** Young people who used school sports facilities outside of lessons at least once a week were less likely to be 'disengaged'. Young people who participated in school clubs or societies at least once a week were much less likely to be 'disengaged'. 'Disengaged' young people were also more likely to report that sports facilities were not available for use outside of lessons
- **Study Support:** Young people who attended extra classes during term time were less likely to be 'disengaged', and young people who attended extra classes during school holidays were much less likely to be 'disengaged'. However, 'disengaged' young people were also a little more likely to report that additional 'exam' study classes were not available to them

## 7 Predicting disengagement over time

Chapters 5 and 6 examined factors that contributed to disengagement over the last three years of compulsory schooling. This chapter focuses on young people who disengage (to some degree) between Years 9 and 10, the point at which they start their Key Stage 4 qualifications. Chapter 4 outlined three common pathways of disengagement between Years 9 and 10. Fourteen per cent of 'engaged' young people became 'disengaged from school not education', Twelve per cent of young people 'disengaged from school not education' became 'disengaged', and fifteen per cent of young people 'engaged with school not higher education' become 'disengaged'. Factors for predicting these transitions are examined below.

### 7.1 Interpreting the tables

The figures presented in table 7-1 and table 7-2 are odds ratios (ORs). These describe the odds of a young person disengaging which is associated with each factor. For categorical measures these represent a ratio of the odds of disengaging for the named category in the table to the odds of disengaging for the 'reference category' of that same measure. For example, for gender, this would represent a ratio of the odds of girls becoming 'disengaged' to the odds of boys becoming 'disengaged'. An odds ratio of 2 would signify that the odds of becoming 'disengaged' are twice as great for girls as they are for boys.

For continuous factors these represent a ratio of the odds of disengaging associated with an increase in that factor. As with the analysis carried out for Chapters 5 and 6, continuous factors have been standardized to allow comparisons of their influence with other continuous factors.

A figure above 1 means that the factor, or an increase in the factor (if the factor is continuous), is associated with increased odds of disengaging. A value below 1 means the factor is associated with decreased odds of disengaging.

### 7.2 A simple example

The figure 0.47 in table 7-1 for Black Caribbean young people who were 'disengaged from school not education' becoming 'disengaged' represents a ratio of the odds of Black Caribbean young people becoming 'disengaged' to the odds of White young people (i.e. the 'reference category') becoming 'disengaged'. The figure of 0.47 indicates that the odds that Black Caribbean young people disengaged was about half of the odds that White young people disengaged.

### 7.3 Results

In order to simplify the results the analysis has been divided into three sections. First the influence of factors that are associated with young people who were 'engaged' in Year 9, becoming 'disengaged from school not education' in Year 10 are examined. This is followed by an examination of factors associated with young people who were 'disengaged from school not education' in Year 9 becoming 'disengaged' in year 10, and then young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' becoming 'disengaged'.

**Table 7-1 Predicting transitions between Year 9 and Year 10 (2005)***Base: All young people in LSYPE Wave 3*

Factor	Transition between Years 9 and 10		
	'Engaged' to 'Disengaged from School not Education'	'Disengaged from School not Education' to 'Disengaged'	'Engaged with School not Higher Education' to Disengaged'
<b>Gender</b> (Ref: Boys)	1.00	0.85	1.01
<b>Ethnicity</b> (Ref: White)			
Mixed	1.06	0.59	1.06
Indian	0.84	0.70	0.75
Pakistan	0.87	0.68	0.76
Bangladesh	0.89	0.64	0.87
Black Caribbean	0.93	0.47	0.68
Black African	0.83	0.58	0.89
Other	1.07	0.79	0.84
<b>NS-SEC</b> (Ref: Prof & Man)			
Intermediate	0.93	0.93	0.97
Routine & Manual	1.00	1.15	1.05
Never Worked/Long-term Unemp.	1.05	1.08	1.12
<b>Mother's Education</b> †	1.01	0.89	0.99
<b>Family Type</b> (Ref: Birth Parents)			
Step Family	1.09	1.17	1.01
Single Parent Family	1.13	1.04	1.10
<b>Free School Meals</b>	0.94	1.17	0.91
<b>Parental Aspirations</b> (Ref: FTE)			
Learn A Trade/Apprentice	1.39	2.44	1.43
Fulltime Employment	1.23	2.21	1.79
Something Else	1.09	2.13	1.38
<b>Attends Parent Evenings</b>	0.87	0.79	0.83
<b>Feels involved in School Life</b> †	0.95	1.04	1.00
<b>How often Quarrels with YP</b> †	1.08	1.03	1.09
<b>YP is a Young Carer</b>	1.03	0.91	1.17
<b>YP was bullied in last 12 months</b>	1.26	1.00	1.13
<b>Peers plan to say in FTE</b>	0.89	0.59	0.70
<b>Talked To Connexions Advisor</b>	0.99	0.97	1.05
<b>Visit From Educ/Soc Services</b>	1.15	1.26	1.17
<b>Visit From the Police</b>	1.28	1.50	1.42
<b>Pupil To Teacher Ratio</b> †	1.00	1.02	0.95
<b>School Size (Number of Pupils)</b>			
†	1.00	1.02	1.06
<b>School Level Of Truancy</b> †	1.04	1.01	0.97

NB: All effects reported above represent the independent effect of each factor after controlling for the influence of all the other factors presented both in this table and the table below

NB: Emboldened figures indicate an effect is statistically significant (at the 5 per cent value)

† Continuous measure

**Table 7-2 Predicting transitions between Year 9 and Year 10 (continued) (2005)***Base: All young people in LSYPE Wave 3*

Factor	Transition between Years 9 and 10		
	'Engaged' to 'Disengaged from School not Education'	'Disengaged from School not Education' to 'Disengaged'	'Engaged with School not Higher Education' to Disengaged'
<b>Efficacy of School Relationship†</b>	0.96	1.03	1.00
<b>Importance of Qualifications</b>	0.98	0.96	1.00
<b>Family</b>			
Spends Regular Time In Together	0.93	0.94	0.95
How Often Go Out Together	0.96	1.00	1.00
<b>Has a Disability</b>			
School Effected	0.84	0.91	0.83
School Not Effected	0.89	0.91	0.88
<b>Doing a Vocational Qualification</b>	1.09	0.99	1.03
<b>Subject not Available</b>	1.08	0.94	0.98
<b>Regular Timetable Spent</b>			
At A College	1.07	1.01	1.10
On A Work Placement	1.04	1.12	1.10
Somewhere Else	1.02	1.16	0.95
<b>Homework</b>			
How often parents ensure done†	0.99	1.01	0.94
How many teachers ensure done†	0.94	0.90	0.90
Gets helps at home	0.96	0.97	1.00
<b>Teachers</b>			
Teachers In Control†	0.84	0.94	0.86
Treats Young Person Unfairly†	1.22	1.09	1.14
Take interest in YP's work†	0.93	0.96	0.94
How likely praise YP†	0.94	0.98	0.96
How likely blame YP†	1.10	1.07	1.15
<b>Moved School During Term</b>	1.00	1.30	1.07
<b>Talked About Future Study</b>			
Teachers As Part Of A Lesson†	0.99	0.99	0.96
Teachers Outside Of Lessons†	0.97	1.00	1.02
Family†	0.92	0.99	1.00
Friends†	1.03	1.04	0.98
Careers Advisor†	1.02	0.96	0.96
<b>Extra Curricula Activity</b>			
Use sports facilities 1+ pwk	0.95	0.91	0.92
Not available	1.07	1.15	0.95
Attends clubs / societies 1+ pwk	0.83	0.81	0.81
Not available	0.94	0.93	0.92
<b>Study Support</b>			
Attends extra classes 1+ pwk	1.00	0.86	0.90
Not available	1.06	0.89	1.02
Attends free study classes 1+ pwk	0.96	0.83	0.87
Not available	1.01	1.01	0.93
Attends school during holidays	0.93	0.87	0.92
Not available	0.91	1.04	1.05

NB: All effects reported above represent the independent effect of each factor after controlling for the influence of all the other factors presented both in this table and the table above

NB: Emboldened figures indicate an effect is statistically significant (at the 5 per cent value)

† Continuous measure

## 7.4 'Engaged' to 'Disengaged from School not Education'

Fourteen per cent of 'engaged' young people in Year 9 became 'disengaged from school not education' during Year 10, i.e. they become disengaged from school, but remain committed to long-term education. A summary of the statistically significant factors predicting this disengagement follows.

### Significant background factors

Young people with an Indian, Pakistani or Black African heritage were slightly less at risk of disengaging from school between Years 9 and 10 than White young people (their odds of disengaging were about four fifths of the odds of White young people disengaging). Otherwise, ethnic differences were non-significant. The odds for young people disengaging were also slightly higher if they lived in a single parent family than if they lived with both natural parents (OR: 1.13).

### Significant parental factors

Young people whose parents wanted them to learn a trade or undertake an apprenticeship rather than continue with full time education (OR: 1.39) were more likely to disengage. However, their risk of disengaging was lower if their parents attended parent-teacher evenings (OR: 0.87), felt more involved with their child's education (OR: 0.95) and had a positive relationship with the school (OR: 0.96). Positive relationships in the family home were also significant, with increased risk of disengagement associated with quarrelling (OR: 1.08) and a decreased risk associated with regularly spending time out together as a family (OR: 0.96).

### Significant personal experiences

Two personal experiences of the young person were associated with disengaging from school: if they had been bullied in the last 12 months (OR: 1.26), and if their behaviour had been problematic enough to warrant a visit from a police officer (OR: 1.28). If the majority of a young person's friends aspired to continue with full time education in Year 12 then their risk of disengaging was lower (OR: 0.89).

### Significant school experiences

Young people were more likely to disengage if they were doing a vocational qualification (OR: 1.09). However, as noted in Chapter 6, this might have been suggested as part of a strategy to help re-engage young people who were already showing signs of disengaging. Having teachers who supervised the completion of homework was associated with a reduced risk of disengaging (OR: 0.94). In general, however, the relationship between the young person and their teachers appeared quite critical to young people remaining engaged with school. Perceiving teachers to be competent at ensuring order and discipline (OR: 0.84), to be interested in their work (OR: 0.93) and more likely to praise them than others (OR: 0.94) were all associated with a decreased risk of disengaging from school, whereas feeling that their teachers treated them unfairly (OR: 1.22) or were more likely to blame them for any trouble in class (OR: 1.10) was associated with an increased risk of disengaging. Attending a school club or society at least once a week was associated with a reduced risk of disengaging during this period (OR: 0.83). In addition, and replicating a finding associated with being 'disengaged with school not education' identified in Chapter 6, there was a *reduced* risk of disengaging in Year 10 if opportunities for attending additional classes during the school holidays were *not* available (OR: 0.91) which is difficult to interpret.

## **Information and Advice**

The more often a young person spoke about plans for future study with a teacher outside of a lesson (OR: 0.97) or members of their family (OR: 0.92) the lower their risk of disengagement from school in Year 10.

### **7.5 'Disengaged from School not Education' to 'Disengaged'**

About 12 per cent of young people who were 'disengaged from school not education' in Year 9 became 'disengaged' during Year 10, i.e. as well as being disengaged from school, they became disillusioned with education in the long term. This is perhaps a more disconcerting transition than the last because 'disengaged' young people are at much greater risk of low achievement and more convoluted pathways into adulthood. A summary of the significant factors predicting this disengagement follows.

#### **Significant background factors**

A young person's background was far more influential in predicting disengagement from longer term education between Years 9 and 10 than it was for predicting disengagement from school (i.e. the transition discussed above). Girls were less at risk of disengaging than boys (OR: 0.85). In addition, ethnic minority groups were also less at risk of disengaging than White young people except Indian young people and those categorized as 'Other'. Interestingly, young Black Caribbean pupils were the least likely to disengage between Years 9 and 10 (OR: 0.47). Previously, compared with most other ethnic minorities, these young people were more likely to be 'disengaged' (see table 5-1 in Chapter 5). What this finding tells us is that if these young people were already committed to continuing with their education, then they were more likely to remain so for the duration of Key Stage 4. If a young person's mother had completed higher education, then he or she was also at less risk of disengaging from education in the longer term (OR: 0.89).

#### **Significant parental factors**

The only parental factor associated with these young people disengaging with education, was their parents' aspirations. The odds of young people disengaging were more than twice as big (OR: 2.44) if their parents preferred they learn a trade or undertook an apprenticeship than if they had preferred they remain in education. The odds were also twice as big if they preferred they took employment without training (OR: 2.21) or did something else (OR: 2.13). Young people who were 'disengaged from school not education' were already more likely to argue with parents and spend less time with their family, see table 5-2 and table 6-1 in Chapters 5 and 6. However, there is no evidence of any further disharmony between the young person and their parents which might contribute to them also disengaging from education.

#### **Significant personal experiences**

If most of the young person's friends aspired to continue with full time education in Year 12, then their odds of disengaging from education were almost halved (OR: 0.59). At the same time, if the young person's behaviour was such that it led to a visit from an educational welfare officer or social services, then their odds of disengaging were increased (OR: 1.26). Similarly, visits by the police were associated with a 50 per cent increase in the odds of disengaging (OR: 1.50). What these findings might suggest is that some young people may be getting into the wrong kind of crowds, which may have then contributed to their disengagement. As we have already seen in Chapter 5, peer influences were strongly associated with a young person's level of engagement.

## **Significant school experiences**

Again, there was evidence that homework supervision was associated with further disengagement in Year 10. Having teachers who ensured that homework was completed was associated with a reduced risk of disengagement in year 10 (OR: 0.89). Conversely, not having this supervision was associated with an increased risk of disengagement. In addition, there was some evidence to suggest that further breakdown in the relationships with teachers is also associated with disengagement from education. Chapter 6 identified that young people who were 'disengaged from school not education' were far more likely to have difficult relationships with teachers than 'engaged' young people. The findings above suggest that further disengagement in Year 10 was associated with a further breakdown in these relations. Young people who felt their teachers treated them unfairly (OR: 1.09) or were more likely to blame them for any trouble (OR: 1.07) had an increased risk of disengagement. Young people who perceived their teachers as being in control, on the other hand, had a reduced risk (OR: 0.94). Young people who attended a school club or society at least once a week were less likely to disengage (OR: 0.81), as were those who attended additional 'free study' classes (OR: 0.83). There was also evidence moving schools during Year 10 was associated with an increased risk of disengagement (OR: 1.30).

## **7.6 'Engaged with School not Higher Education' to 'Disengaged'**

Finally, about fifteen per cent of young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' also became 'disengaged'. For these young people, the transition represented a breakdown in an otherwise relatively positive relationship with their school and a fall in their commitment to further education or training in year 12. As before, a summary of the significant factors predicting this disengagement follows.

### **Significant background factors**

Young people with a Black Caribbean (OR: 68) background were less at risk of disengaging from school between Years 9 and 10 than White young people. Otherwise, there were no significant background factors contributing to disengagement.

### **Significant parental factors**

Again, a young person's risk of disengaging from school was slightly increased if their parents preferred they learnt a trade or undertook an apprenticeship (OR: 1.43), or did 'something else' (OR: 1.38) in year 12 rather than continue with full time education, and was further increased if they simply preferred they took employment (OR: 1.79). On the other hand, risk of disengaging was decreased if the young person's parents attended parent-teacher evenings (OR: 0.83). There was also evidence that disengaging was associated with disharmony in the family home, with an increased risk associated with quarrelling (OR: 1.09).

### **Significant personal experiences**

Similar to 'engaged' young people who disengaged from school in Year 10, there was evidence that disengaging from school was associated with being bullied in the previous 12 months (OR: 1.13), and with poor behaviour which led to contact with educational or social services (OR: 1.17) or a visit from the police (OR: 1.42). Again, having friends who aspired to continue with full time education in Year 12 was associated with a reduction in this risk (OR: 0.70).

### **Significant school factors**

This was the only transition for which there was a significant effect associated with a characteristic of the school. The odds of a young person who was 'engaged with school not higher education' disengaging from school in Year 10 increased the bigger the school the young person was attended (OR: 1.06). Chapter 5 identified that young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' were more likely to be in smaller schools. Although we can only speculate from this finding, it is possible that some young people find life more difficult in larger schools.

### **Significant school experiences**

Also, similar to 'engaged' young people who disengaged from school over the same period, there is evidence that the relationship with teachers was quite critical in these young people's disengagement. Perceiving teachers to be competent at ensuring order and discipline (OR: 0.86) and to be interested in their work (OR: 0.94) was associated with a decreased risk of disengaging, whereas feeling that their teachers treated them unfairly (OR: 1.14) or were more likely to blame them for any trouble (OR: 1.15) was associated with an increased risk of disengaging.

Chapter 6 noted a distinction between young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' and 'disengaged' which was that the former were more likely to have parents who supervised their homework. It is perhaps not surprising then that having parents who supervised their homework was also associated with a reduced risk of disengaging for these young people in Year 10 (OR: 0.94). Having teachers who supervised their homework also reduced their risk of disengaging (OR: 0.90). Finally, as with other transitions described in this Chapter, there was a reduced risk of disengaging if young people attended a school club or society at least once a week (OR: 0.81).



## 8 Conclusions and Policy implications

This chapter summarises the main findings of the research and discusses the implications for policy.

### 8.1 Pen pictures of the four engaged / disengaged types

Four different types of engaged / disengaged young people were identified using data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England. These types are described in greater detail below:

#### **'Engaged'**

'Engaged' young people are very likely to aspire to continue with education in the long term. They also have very positive attitudes to school and show very few signs of truanting. The large majority (87 per cent) achieve level 2 qualifications at Key Stage 4 and almost all continue with full time education in Year 12. They have very positive relationships with their teachers and are far more accepting of school rules and discipline than the other types. They are also more likely to enjoy the curriculum and feel confident in their ability to achieve well. Doing well at school is important to these young people, and they are by far the most likely to recognise the importance of working hard to improve their future prospects. 'Engaged' young people also report little misbehaviour in class, and are far less likely to engage in risky behaviours.

This was the largest group of young people, representing 40 per cent of the population in Year 9, but this fell to 33 / 34 per cent in Year 10.

#### **'Disengaged from school not education'**

Young people who are 'disengaged from school not education' are also very likely to aspire to continue with education in the long term. However, they have more negative attitudes to school, and are more likely to play truant. The large majority still achieve Level 2 qualifications (71 per cent), and most (85 per cent) continue with full time education in Year 12. However, this is slightly fewer than the proportion who had intended to stay on (98 per cent) which suggests that disengaging from school may, for some, be associated with a failure to achieve the grades they required, or further disengagement in Year 12. These young people are more likely to have problems with school rules and discipline, and are more likely to report misbehaving in class. They are also less likely to report positive relationships with their teachers. In some respects they are similar to 'engaged' young people: they have similar reasons for Year 10 subject choices, and look for similar qualities in employment. However, they are less likely to believe that working hard at school will improve their prospects for getting these jobs in the future. They are also more likely to engage in risky behaviours including drinking, smoking, and trying cannabis.

Twenty-three per cent of the population were 'disengaged from school not education' in Year 9. This increased to 26 per cent in Year 10, and fell to 25 per cent in Year 11.

### **'Engaged with school not higher education'**

Young people who are 'engaged with school not higher education' are reasonably likely to aspire to continue with fulltime education in Year 12, but not higher education. They are also very unlikely to play truant and tend to have moderate to positive attitudes to school. Two fifths of these young people still achieve Level 2 at Key Stage 4, but most achieved Level 1. Three fifths also continue in full time education and one fifth are in work with training. However a fifth are either in work without training, or NEET in Year 12. They are generally accepting of school rules and discipline, and have very positive relationships with teachers. However, they are a little more likely to report misbehaving than their 'engaged' peers. They prefer Information Communication and Technology to academic subjects, and feel more confident in their ability for this subject. They are more likely to choose courses they are good at and those they need for a future job or career. These young people are more likely than others to recognise the importance of working hard at school, although not to the extent of 'engaged' young people. They are also less likely to engage in any kind of risky behaviour.

Twenty-five per cent of young people were 'engaged with school not higher education' in Year 9, and this fell to 22 per cent in Years 10 and 11.

### **'Disengaged'**

'Disengaged' young people are far less likely to aspire to continue with full time education. They are also much more likely to play truant and have very poor attitudes to school. Although most of these young people achieve Level 1 qualifications, over a third leave school with few or no qualifications. The destinations of these young people are also worse, with two fifths in a job with no training, and over a quarter Not in Employment, Education or Training in Year 12. 'Disengaged' young people are far more hostile to school than other young people. The majority believe there are far too many rules and over a third claim to like few, if any, of their teachers. In relation to the curriculum, they are far more likely to enjoy and feel confident studying Information, Communication and Technology than traditional academic subjects. They are more likely than other young people to choose subjects they think they will do well in, but also those in which they like the teacher, or which their friends are also studying. In terms of their future careers, they are keener than other young people to get a job that pays well, and also to be their own boss. They are actually a little more likely than others to think that any job is better than being unemployed. However, far fewer any of these young people recognise the importance of working hard at school in order to fulfil their ambitions. Over two fifths of these young people don't think about their future much, and around one fifth will just 'wait and see' where they end up. These young people are far more likely to engage in risky behaviour, with large numbers drinking regularly, and having tried both cigarettes and cannabis. One fifth has also engaged in crimes against property, and nearly two fifths in fights or public disturbances.

'Disengaged' represented 12 per cent of 13 / 14 year olds in Year 9, but this increased to 19 per cent of young people in Year 10, and 20 per cent in Year 11.

## 8.2 Who is most at risk of disengaging?

### ‘Disengaged from school not education’

Those most likely to disengage from school but remain committed to education were Black Caribbeans and young people with a Mixed background, whereas Indian, Pakistani, and Black African young people were the least likely to disengage from school. Young people whose father (or mother if no father figure was present) had never worked or were long term unemployed were at a slightly greater risk of disengaging from school, as were those living in a step or single parent family.

### ‘Engaged with school not higher education’

Young people who were at most likely to be engaged with school not higher education were White, males, with a father (or mother if no father figure was present) employed in a routine or manual occupation, and a mother with a low education. Young people whose father was in an intermediate, or who had never worked or was long term unemployed, were also more at risk, as were those who lived in a step or single parent family.

### ‘Disengaged’

Young people who were at most risk of disengaging from education and school were again, White males (they were especially unlikely to be Indian, Pakistani, or Black African). Young people whose father (or mother if no father figure was present) was in a routine or manual occupation or who had never worked or was long term unemployed, and whose mothers had a low education were most at risk of disengaging. Although less so, young people whose fathers were in intermediate occupations were also more at risk.

## Discussion

Boys are more likely to disengage than girls, especially in their commitment to education in the longer term. Is there something about the current education process or curriculum that appeals more to girls than it does to boys? Changes to the 14-19 curriculum such as plans to expand the diploma system could offer more opportunities to study a wider range of subjects with different learning styles, which may appeal more to boys and help to address this gender imbalance in engagement. There is certainly evidence within this study that subjects such as Information, Communication and Technology command a much broader appeal than traditional academic subjects, especially among disengaged young people.

Differences in the engagement of White young people and ethnic minorities also need to be addressed. In McIntosh and Houghton’s study (McIntosh and Houghton, 2005) they also found that White young people were more likely to disengage than ethnic minority pupils. Further investigation is needed to understand the processes behind these differences, and again, we need to ask whether there is something about the current education process or curriculum that appeals more to ethnic minority pupils. There is also evidence to show that ethnic minority parents have higher aspirations for their children (Strand, 2007) which can have a strong influence on young people’s own aspirations.

There is also evidence of a continued gap in engagement between advantaged and disadvantaged young people. Young people with more educated mothers or fathers in professional or managerial occupations are far more likely to be engaged, especially in their commitment to education in the longer term. More needs to be done to reduce this disparity and engage more disadvantaged young people. Some of the factors that appear to work, and might be of particular benefit in engaging these groups are outlined below.

## **8.3 What appear to help or hinder engagement?**

### **Schools working with parents**

One key finding is the importance of the relationship between schools and parents. This relationship included providing parents with clear information on how the young person is getting on, but also information on the ways that they, as parents, could help in their child's education. Where there was evidence of a more positive relationship with parents young people were more likely to be engaged with school, but also with education in the longer term.

The importance of schools working with parents may be especially beneficial to young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly those whose parents have lower aspirations for them and perhaps for whom the advantages of continuing in education are not so clearly visible. The more parents recognised that leaving education at age sixteen limits young people's career opportunities later in life the more likely their child would be engaged, even after controlling for a young person's background. Fostering positive relationships between schools and parents would give schools better opportunities for convincing more parents of the benefits of a gaining a good education.

### **Parental aspirations**

Parental aspirations were also strongly associated with young people's engagement, particularly with their desire to remain in education and aspire to go to university. We must be cautious in imputing too much causality to this relationship, as parents may simply be responding to and adapting their aspirations in accordance to their child's own preferences and achievements. Nevertheless, other studies have shown the importance of aspirations for helping some young people overcome disadvantage (Schoon & Parsons, 2002). As noted above, schools also have a part to play by informing more parents of the choices that are available to their children and helping to increase the aspirations of some parents.

### **Information and Guidance**

Another important factor identified within this study but also found in NatCen's qualitative study on disengagement (Callanan *et. al.*, 2009), is the importance of providing young people with good information about the pathways that are available to them in Year 12, and especially the kind of qualifications they will need to achieve them. In the qualitative study young people expressed regret at not having understood sooner that a minimum number of GCSEs were required for most college courses, work-based learning settings, and 'decent' jobs. Within the current study 'disengaged' young people were especially likely to want a job that paid well, yet they were not especially likely to recognise the importance of working hard at school to achieve this goal.

There is now an abundance of social science evidence illustrating the difference between gaining some GCSE qualifications and having no qualifications at all for young people's future opportunities for training and employment (see for example McIntosh 2006). This information needs to be conveyed clearly to these young people in Year 9, before they start their GCSE qualifications. It also needs to be done in a way that is relevant to them, even if this means focusing on the financial rewards that are associated with gaining just a few GCSEs compared with gaining no qualifications at all. Of course we have to recognise that some young people are less willing to listen to good advice, a point that was also picked up on the qualitative study. However by appealing directly to aspects of their future that matter to them, i.e. their earning capacity, we might just convince some young people to be a little more engaged.

## **Peer pressure**

The aspirations of young people's friends had a very strong association with their educational engagement. It may be that young people tend to befriend like-minded people. Efforts to improve engagement may benefit from focusing on clusters of disengaged young people.

## **Difficulties at home**

For some young people, difficulties within the home will inevitably make engagement a more difficult prospect. Within this study, how much time a family spends together and how often they quarrel with one another were both important in predicting a young person's engagement with school. Whilst we are unable to discern the exact direction of causality in this relationship, it is likely to be reciprocal. Difficulties at school are likely to spill over into arguments at home, and vice versa.

## **Relationships with teachers**

Relationships that young people have with their teachers are especially critical to a young person's engagement, particularly with school. Of course, some young people may be particularly difficult to manage, but if teachers are able to foster positive relationships where pupils feel they are fairly treated and are given appropriate praise, this may contribute to their engagement with school. Conversely a breakdown in relationships, as was demonstrated in NatCen's qualitative study (Callanan *et. al.*, 2009), can contribute to a spiral of disengagement for some young people. In addition, schools where teachers are able to convey a sense of being in control were more likely to foster engagement.

## **Curriculum**

It is difficult to draw conclusions about the relationship between engagement and offering vocational subjects, and also the provision of opportunities for studying outside of the school environment. This is because it was the less engaged young people who were most likely to participate in these activities, perhaps as part of a strategy to improve their engagement. However a good indication of the possibilities associated with providing a more varied programme of vocational options is evident from the enjoyment and confidence inspired by studying Information, Communication and Technology especially among disengaged young people.

## **Supervision of Homework**

Low supervision of homework by teachers was identified as important for all types of disengagement, but was especially important for 'disengaged' young people. In NatCen's qualitative study (Callanan *et. al.*, 2009) they found that some young people fell behind with their coursework and quickly felt overwhelmed with the amount of work required to catch up. By helping young people keep on top of their work through close supervision it might be possible to reduce the risk of this occurring.

In addition, parents who supervise their child's homework and offer support where needed might make a difference between a young person being 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged'. Parents of young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' were more likely to provide this support whereas the parents of 'disengaged' young people were not. It may be that some young people, in particular those from more disadvantaged backgrounds may benefit from a little extra support and supervision at home to help keep them engaged with their studies. As shown below in a discussion of findings examining young people's disengagement over time, a lack of supervision for young people who were 'engaged with school not higher education' was also associated with becoming 'disengaged' in Year 10.

## **Extra Curricula Activity**

Making sports facilities available for young people to use outside of lessons, and providing school clubs and societies may reduce the risk of disengagement. Young people who used school sports facilities at least once a week were a little less likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' and less likely to be 'disengaged'. They were also more likely to be one of these two groups if these facilities were not available. The association between participating in school clubs or societies and disengagement was even stronger. Those who participated at least once a week were approximately two thirds as likely to be 'disengaged from school not education' or 'engaged with school not higher education' and half as likely to be 'disengaged'. This supports findings by Macbeth *et al.* (2001).

## **Study Support**

Participation in study support may also help with a young person's engagement. Attending additional teacher led classes in preparation for exams, simple 'drop in' classes where young people could study on their own or with friends, or attending classes in the school holidays were all associated with a reduced risk of disengagement. Of course, it is not possible to discern the direction of causality from these findings, however a study by Macbeth *et al.* (2001) does suggest that study support improved attainment, attitudes and attendance.

## **Bullying**

Bullying was clearly a problem that can contribute to a young person becoming disengaged from school. Schools need to ensure they have good policies for identifying and treating instances of bullying, as it can have such detrimental effects to a child's wellbeing, their engagement, and ultimately, as we have seen from the differences in the outcomes for these young people, their qualifications and future prospects.

## **Moving School**

Moving school during term time was also associated with disengagement however we must again be cautious about the causal link. Nevertheless, this suggests it is important to ensure these pupils integrate well in their new school environment.

## **School factors**

Finally, the amount of truancy that occurs within a school can have an impact on that school's culture of engagement. Young people are more likely to be 'engaged with school not higher education' or 'disengaged' in schools with greater levels of truancy. Thus not only does truancy impact on those who play truant, it might also impact on the educational engagement of other young people within the same school. Schools therefore need to ensure they have high quality strategies for dealing with truancy.

## **8.4 Disengagement over time**

A key finding was that most young people were already either engaged or disengaged by the time they were in Year 9, and remained so throughout the rest of their compulsory education. However, there is still the risk that some young people will disengage, or further disengage, especially when starting Key Stage 4. In Year 10 a total of 14 per cent of young people disengaged or further disengaged from education. This is of course a point at which established friendship groups may be split up as young people begin new subjects, and is also period associated with an increase in both volume and significance of the work these young people are doing. Both of these factors may contribute to some young people disengaging, although further investigation is also needed to understand why this appears to be a particularly critical time.

There was also little evidence of young people re-engaging with education during Years 9 through to 11. However, young people who were 'engaged' in Year 9 who disengaged in Year 10 still remained committed to education in the longer term. There were three common pathways of disengagement in Year 10. A summary of those factors associated with each are given below.

#### **Fourteen per cent of 'Engaged' young people became 'disengaged from school not education' in Year 10**

Young people in single parent families and those whose parents preferred they learnt a trade or took an apprenticeship were a little more likely to disengage during this period. They were also more likely to quarrel with their parents, spend less time going out with their family, have friends who wanted to leave school at 16, have been bullied in the last 12 months, or have had a visit from the police relating to their behaviour.

Indian, Pakistani and Black African young people were less likely to disengage in Year 10. If their parents attended parents' evenings, felt more involved in the young person's school life, and felt positive about their relationship with the school, again they were less likely to disengage. Relationships with teachers were also important. If they perceived their teachers as in control, taking an interest in their work and being more likely to praise them they were less likely to disengage, whereas feeling unfairly treated or more likely to be blamed for any trouble was associated with an increased risk of disengagement. Discussing plans for future study with teachers outside of lessons, or family members was associated with a reduced risk of disengagement. Young people were also a little less likely to disengage if they attended a school club or society at least once a week.

#### **Twelve per cent of young people 'disengaged from education not school' became 'disengaged' in Year 10**

These young people were more likely to disengage if their parents had lower aspirations, most of their friends wanted to leave school at 16 and if they engaged in behaviour that prompted contact with educational or social services, or a visit from the police. Young people who felt their teachers treated them unfairly or blame them for any trouble were also more likely to disengage.

Conversely, girls, ethnic minority pupils and young people with more educated mothers were less likely to disengage from education in Year 10. Young people whose parents attended parent evenings, who perceived their teachers as in control and whose teachers supervised their homework were also less likely to disengage. Young people were also a little less likely to disengage if they attended a school club or society at least once a week or additional 'drop in' study classes.

#### **Fifteen per cent of young people 'engaged with school not higher education' became 'disengaged' in Year 10**

These young people were more likely to disengage if their parents preferred they left fulltime education when were aged 16. They were also more likely to argue with their parents, have friends who wanted to leave school at 16, have been bullied in the last 12 months, or had contact with educational or social services, or a visit from the police because of their behaviour. They were also more likely to disengage if they attended larger schools.

Indian or Black Caribbean young people were less likely to disengage during this period. Young people were also less likely to disengage if their parents attended parent evenings at the school. Again, relationships with teachers were particularly important. Those who perceived their teachers to be in control, interested in their work were less likely disengage,

whereas those who felt unfairly treated or often blamed for trouble were more likely to disengage. For these young people having parents who supervised their homework also appeared to help them remain engaged. Again, young people were also a little less likely to disengage if they attended a school club or society at least once a week.

## **Discussion**

Overall, background factors were more strongly associated with disengaging from education (i.e. the transition from 'disengaged from school not education' to 'disengaged') illustrating the importance of heritage, gender and mother's education as protective against a fall in aspirations. Parental aspirations were also important for remaining committed to education in the longer term. However, the relationship that the parents of these young people had with the school and the relationships that young people had both with their parents and teachers were more important for disengaging from school.

Again, the findings are also suggestive of the difficulties that some young people might be experiencing when beginning Key Stage 4. The aspirations of the young person's friends and contact with educational, social services, or the police are all associated with a young person disengaging during this period. Although only speculative, this could be indicative of some young people falling into the wrong kind of crowds, or going 'off the rails' a little as they struggle to meet the demands of their studies.



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## Appendix A - Methodology

### Identifying the optimal latent class solution

In order to identify a typology of engaged / disengaged young people a statistical technique called latent class analysis (LCA) was employed. Latent class analysis is useful technique for identifying types or groups of individuals not directly observable from the data, and is especially useful for measuring multi-dimensional concepts such as disengagement. For a good introduction to latent class analysis read 'Latent Class Analysis' by Allen McCutcheon (McCutcheon, 1987)

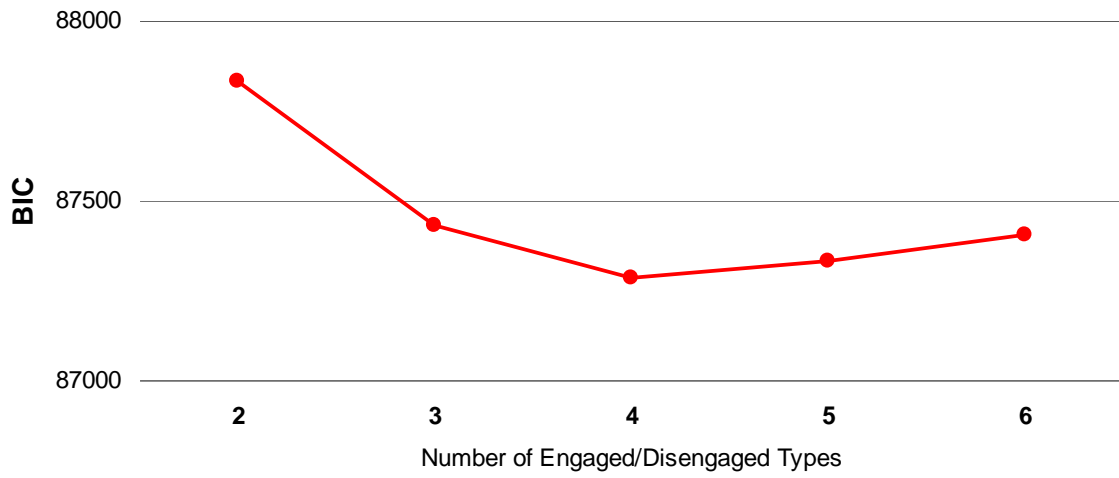
The technique works by exploring the structure within a set of observed variables in order to establish whether associations between these observed measures (i.e. the structure of the data) can be explained by a set of underlying types or classes. The 'latent' in 'latent class analysis' refers to the assumption that there is an unobserved i.e. latent quality, which can explain people's pattern of responses to the set of observed measures in question. In the case of the current study, this quality is the young person's engagement or disengagement. The assumption is that the young person's engagement or disengagement is the factor that explains their pattern of motivations, behaviour and attitudes.

The process of identifying the typology of engaged / disengaged young people involves estimating multiple latent class solutions, beginning at first with just one 'class' (or 'type'), and then each time adding an additional class until the optimal solution is found. The estimation procedure runs through a complex set of algorithms designed to identify the best parameters (or latent classes or types) to fit the data.

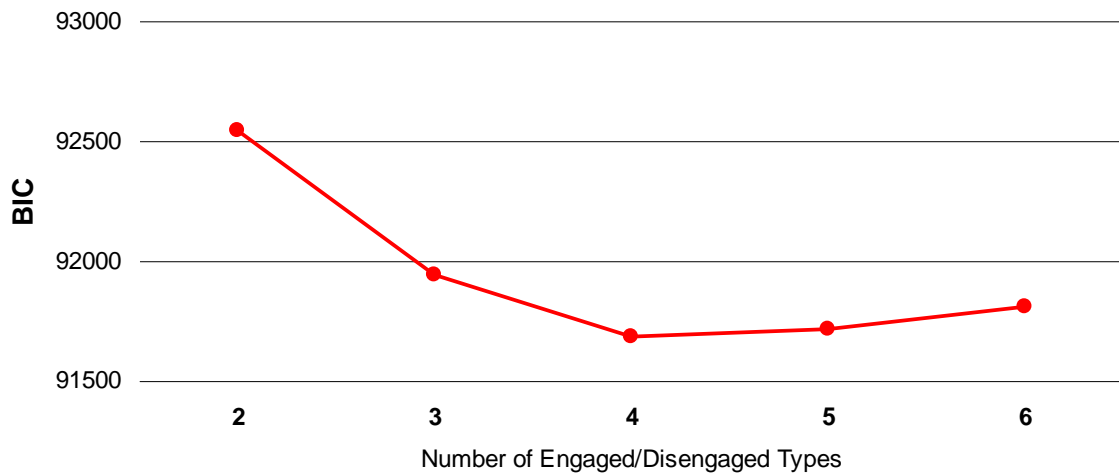
Establishing the optimal solution generally follows four common criteria: First a measure of statistical fit, the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) was employed; a commonly used fit index that balances statistical fit and model parsimony. The model with the lowest BIC is considered optimal (Muthén & Muthén, 2000). Second the solution was examined to ensure that it was both interpretable and useful for the aims of the study. At this step the types or classes are also examined to ensure they are distinguishable from one another (i.e. they represent qualitatively different types). Finally the validity of the types was tested by examining the relationship of the typology with other measures known to be associated with disengagement. As a further and final test of the reliability of the solutions the analysis was replicated using a 25 per cent random sample. All the analysis was carried out using Mplus version 5.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2007).

Figure 8-1 to figure 8-3 plot the 'BIC' for the latent class estimations carried out for each school year. As the figures show a four class solution had the lowest BIC in each case. Closer inspection of the solutions revealed typologies of young people that were very similar to those used in the final analysis, showing four distinctive types. At this step the relationship of the four types with gender, ethnicity and parent's socioeconomic class was also examined and found hypothesised relationships similar to those presented in Chapter 5.

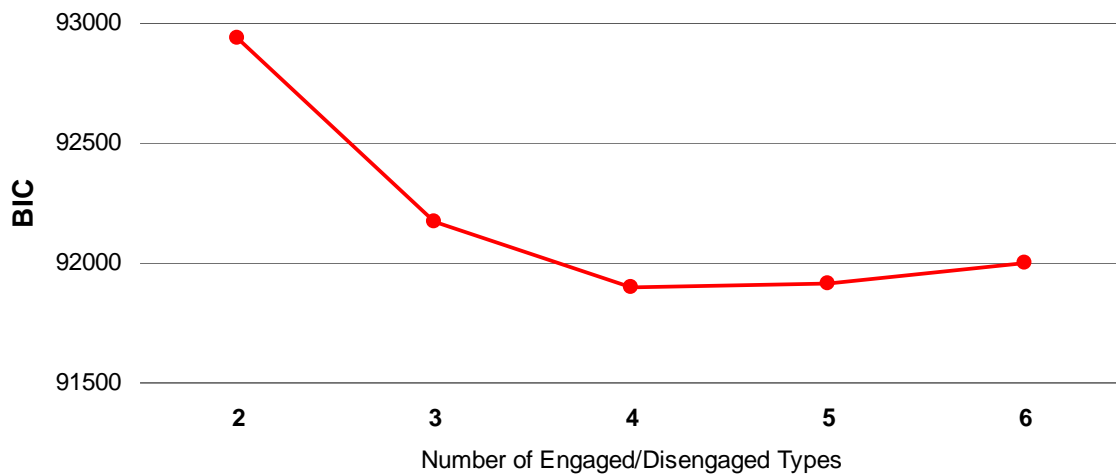
**Figure 8-1 Year 9 BIC by number of latent types (2004)**



**Figure 8-2 Year 10 BIC by number of latent types (2005)**



**Figure 8-3 Year 11 BIC by number of latent types (2006)**



### Estimating the Latent Transition Analysis

As the solutions were all very similar, in a next step the four-type latent class solutions for each year was estimated simultaneously using an extension of the standard latent class approach called latent transition analysis (LTA). This is a statistical technique that enables an examination of the level of stability or transitions across the four types identified over time. Similar to the analysis outlined above there are a number of steps in the estimation of this model. First the parameters of the three latent class solutions are constrained to be the same to test whether the solutions are statistically equivalent. A statistically equivalent model would suggest that the types of engaged / disengaged young people are exactly the same in each year enabling a better exploration of the transitions between the different types over time.

For this analysis the solutions were not statistically equivalent, however this did not come as a surprise. The test used to investigate the equivalence of the solutions is a chi-square test which is highly sensitive to sample size. With a sample size of this magnitude (12,000 cases) even very small differences will be identified as being statistically significant. Because of this issue, and because the types were *substantially* identical a practice used elsewhere (Nylund, 2007) was followed, which was constrain the classes to be equivalent nevertheless.

Table 8-1 to table 8-3 describe the individual solutions for the three waves of data. As these tables illustrate, the differences between the three solutions are very minimal and justify the decision to constrain them to be equal. Doing so may mean missing some of the nuanced differences seen in the types over time. However, the approach enables us to model and quantify transitions between the different types, and more importantly allows us to identify when young people are most likely to become disengaged. If a young person changes their level of engagement to school or education, then this change will be manifest in a transition between groups over time instead of the nuanced change in the characteristics of the types seen below.

**Table 8-1 Engaged / Disengaged Type (Year 9)**

Observed measures		Engaged	Disengaged from School not Education	Engaged with School not Higher Education	Disengaged
Aspirations for year 12	FT education	.996	.982	.755	.429
	Job with training	.002	.006	.134	.284
	Job no training	.001	.007	.086	.239
	Something else	.000	.004	.025	.049
Likelihood of applying to University	Very likely	.622	.376	.024	.028
	Fairly likely	.349	.515	.304	.153
	Not very likely	.030	.104	.409	.331
	Not at all likely	.000	.005	.263	.488
Level of Truancy	None	.971	.788	.926	.578
	Odd day / lesson	.022	.153	.043	.205
	Particular lessons	.006	.040	.016	.129
	Wks/several days	.001	.019	.015	.087
Attitudes to School (score)	26- 30 (very high)	.268	.008	.121	.004
	21- 25	.590	.267	.465	.073
	16- 20	.137	.539	.381	.401
	0-15 (very low)	.005	.186	.033	.522

**Table 8-2 Engaged / Disengaged Type (year 10)**

Observed measures		Engaged	Disengaged from School not Education	Engaged with School not Higher Education	Disengaged
Aspirations for year 12	FT education	.999	.980	.774	.428
	Job with training	.001	.012	.161	.330
	Job no training	.000	.006	.053	.217
	Something else	.000	.002	.012	.025
Likelihood of applying to University	Very likely	.648	.320	.010	.015
	Fairly likely	.335	.554	.221	.060
	Not very likely	.017	.117	.471	.360
	Not at all likely	.000	.009	.297	.565
Level of Truancy	None	.939	.633	.874	.441
	Odd day / lesson	.052	.265	.090	.283
	Particular lessons	.007	.077	.025	.144
	Wks/several days	.002	.025	.011	.131
Attitudes to School (score)	26- 30 (very high)	.210	.001	.060	.004
	21-25	.601	.132	.429	.025
	16-20	.186	.602	.474	.323
	0-15 (very low)	.002	.265	.036	.648

**Table 8-3 Engaged / Disengaged Type (year 11)**

Observed measures		Engaged	Disengaged from School not Education	Engaged with School not Higher Education	Disengaged
Aspirations for year 12	FT education	.997	.991	.779	.494
	Job with training	.001	.004	.161	.278
	Job no training	.001	.003	.048	.209
	Something else	.001	.003	.012	.019
Likelihood of applying to University	Very likely	.717	.394	.000	.009
	Fairly likely	.260	.464	.181	.053
	Not very likely	.023	.134	.429	.245
	Not at all likely	.000	.008	.389	.692
Level of Truancy	None	.929	.614	.852	.435
	Odd day / lesson	.062	.277	.121	.261
	Particular lessons	.007	.083	.016	.139
	Wks/several days	.002	.026	.011	.165
Attitudes to School (score)	26- 30 (very high)	.251	.002	.074	.004
	21- 25	.596	.188	.443	.029
	16- 20	.150	.557	.449	.286
	0-15 (very low)	.003	.253	.034	.681

## Appendix B - Scale measures

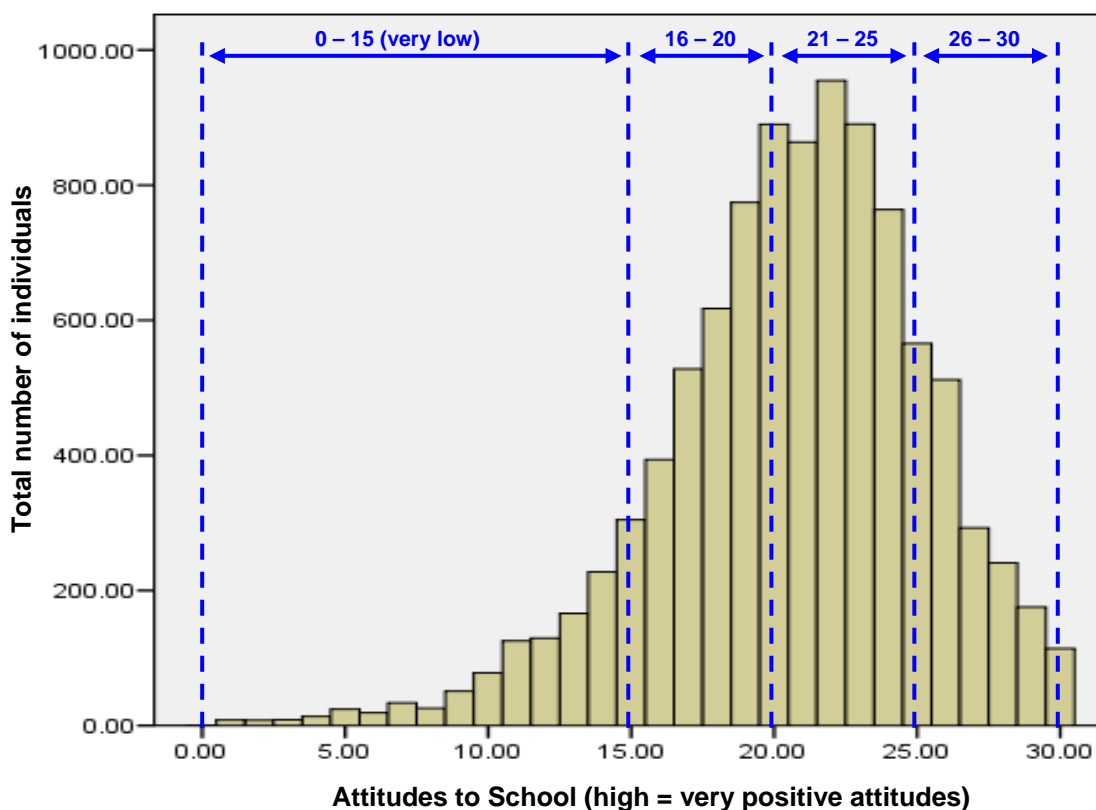
### Attitudes to school

A scale measuring the young person's attitudes to school was constructed by the summed responses to the following ten statements. For the purpose of estimating the latent class analysis, a four level categorical measure was derived, distinguishing between very negative (0-15), negative to moderate (16-20), moderate to positive (21-25), and very positive attitudes to school (26-30)

- I am happy when I am at school
- School is a waste of time for me
- School work is worth doing
- Most of the time I don't want to go to school
- On the whole I like being at school
- I work as hard as I can in school
- In a lesson, I often count the minutes till it ends
- I am bored in lessons
- The work I do in lessons is a waste of time
- The work I do in lessons is interesting to me

Young people answered whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with each statement.

**Figure 8-4 Attitudes to school scale and the four level categorical measure (2004)**





### **Efficacy of the relationship parents had with the school**

A scale measuring the efficacy of the relationship parents had with the school was constructed by the summed responses to the following four statements:

- I find it easy to deal with the people at son / daughter's school.
- Son / daughter's school gives me clear information on how he / she is getting on
- Son / daughter's school makes it easy for me to get involved in his / her education.
- I know all I need to know about how I can help with son / daughter's education.

The parent answered whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed with each statement

### **Teachers in control**

A scale measuring the young person's perceived ability of their teachers to maintain order and discipline was constructed by the summed responses to the following three statements

- The teachers at my school make it clear how we should behave
- The teachers in my school take action when they see anyone breaking school rules.
- My teachers can keep order in class

The young person was asked whether each statement was true of all of their teachers, most of their teachers, some of their teachers, hardly any of their teachers, or none of their teachers

### **Teachers treat them unfairly**

A scale measuring the young person's perception of whether their teachers treat them unfairly was constructed by the summed response to the following two statements

- My teachers don't really listen to what I say in class
- I get treated unfairly by my teachers

The young person was asked whether each statement was true of all of their teachers, most of their teachers, some of their teachers, hardly any of their teachers, or none of their teachers

## Appendix C - The LSYPE Data

### Background of the Dataset

The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) is a large, nationally representative survey designed to follow a single cohort of young people from the age of 14 to 25. The study began in 2004, when over 15,000 young people from all areas of England born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 1989 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 1990 were interviewed. These young people are tracked and re-interviewed every year, and the study is currently in its sixth wave of interviews, with the respondents now aged 19.

LSYPE is managed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and fieldwork is carried out by a consortium led by the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB). It is a highly detailed and in-depth survey, and the data are publicly available from the UK Data Archive (Waves 1-4 are currently available). Because LSYPE is a longitudinal study, it is possible to link data between waves and explore young people's transitions and changing attitudes as they grow older.

### Purpose of the LSYPE Study

The main objectives of the study are:

- To provide evidence on key factors affecting educational progress and attainment from the age of 14.
- To provide evidence about the transitions young people make from education or training to economic roles in early adulthood.
- To help monitor and evaluate the effects of existing policy and provide a strong evidence base for the development of future policy.
- To contextualise the implementation of new policies in terms of young people's current lives.

### Information Available from the Study

As well as interviews with the sampled young people, LSYPE also includes interviews with parents or guardians (both main and secondary if available) in its first three waves. Only the main parent was interviewed at Wave 4, while at Wave 5 no parents or guardians were interviewed, as the young people are likely to be more independent at this stage. There is also a self-completion section used to record more sensitive information from the young person. The main types of information available from the core LSYPE dataset are listed below, divided into the categories in which the questions are asked:

- *Family background* - including household situation, languages spoken in the home, family activities, household responsibilities and resources, parental qualifications and education, parental occupations and employment history, parental health, household benefits and tax credits and estimates of household income.
- *Parental attitudes* - including attitudes to the young person's school and involvement in education, parental expectations and aspirations for the young person, school history, vocational courses and choice of current school.

- *Young person characteristics* - including demographics, health, Year 10 subject choices and reasons for these, rules and discipline at school, homework, ICT, study support, future plans and advice, household responsibilities, use of leisure time, subjects being studied and expected qualifications and knowledge of and intentions towards apprenticeships and related schemes.
- *Young person self-completion* - including relationships with parents, risk factors such as drinking and smoking and attitudes to school.
- *Household grid* - includes information about every household member (sex, marital status, employment status and ethnic group) and their relationship to other household members including the young person.

## Data Linkage

The LSYPE data have been linked to administrative data held on the National Pupil Database (NPD), a pupil-level database which matches pupil and school characteristics to attainment. The data are also linked to school-level and Local Authority-level indicators such as school size, proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C and ethnic composition, and to geographical indicators such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and classifications of urban and rural areas.

This data linkage enables researchers to draw links between the data collected at all waves of LSYPE and subsequent educational attainment in the same pupils. It also means that characteristics of particular schools or Local Authorities (e.g. ethnic composition or percentage of pupils receiving free school meals) can be investigated in conjunction with individual pupil characteristics. Linkage to the NPD database has enabled a range of other measures to be recorded, and these are listed below:

- *Individual-level data* - including attainment at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, free school meal eligibility and special educational needs.
- *School-level data* - including OFSTED reports, numbers of pupils, percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, percentage of pupils with special educational needs, ethnic composition, percentage for whom English is not a first language and school-level attainment at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4.
- *Local Authority-level data* - including percentage of pupils with special educational needs, ethnic composition and LA-level attainment at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4.
- *Geographical data* - including indicator of urban or rural residence, number of schools attended since Year 7, Index of Multiple Deprivation and Government Office Region.

## Sampling and Response Rates

The original sample drawn for the first wave of the study was of over 33,000 young people in Year 9 attending maintained schools, independent schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) in England in February 2004 (Ward and D'Souza, 2008). The final issued sample was approximately 21,000 young people, all of whom were born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 1989 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 1990. The young people sampled for the study were aged 13-14 when the study began, and are now aged 17-18 as the study enters its fifth wave. Cleaned data are currently available for Waves 1-4.

The sample was taken from a school census database supplied by DCSF, and 892 schools were selected in total. Of these, 647 schools (73%) co-operated with the study. School-level non-response was a specific problem with LSYPE, especially in inner London, where only 56% of schools responded, and in the independent sector, where only 57% co-operated with the study. The final issued sample was therefore much smaller than the initial sample drawn from the census database. Further information on the sample design and weighting can be found in Appendix D.

## **Appendix D - Sample Design, Weighting and Imputation**

### **Sampling from Maintained Schools**

In the maintained sector, the sample was drawn using the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC), and there was a two-stage probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling design, with disproportionate stratification. The primary sampling unit (PSU) was the school, and maintained schools were stratified into deprived / non-deprived, with deprived schools (defined by schools in the top quintile according to the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals) being over-sampled by a factor of 1.5. Within each deprivation stratum, school selection probabilities were calculated based on the number of pupils in Year 9 from major minority ethnic groups (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African, Black Caribbean and Mixed). Within each stratum, maintained schools were ordered and thus implicitly stratified by region then by school admissions policy before selection. 838 schools were selected in the maintained sector.

The second stage sampled the pupils within schools. Pupils from the six major minority ethnic groups identified above were over-sampled at pupil level in order to achieve target sample numbers of 1000 in each group. The school sampling stage took into account the number of pupils from each of these minority groups. Taken together, the school selection probabilities and the pupil selection probabilities ensured that, within each stratum of deprivation, all pupils had an equal chance of selection. The average number of pupils sampled per school was 33.25, although this varied according to the ethnic group composition of the school.

### **Sampling from Independent Schools and PRUs**

A two-stage sampling design was also used for independent schools and PRUs, but these were sampled using the School Level Annual Schools Census (SLASC). Independent schools were stratified by percentage of pupils achieving five or more A\*-C GCSE grades in 2003 within boarding status (i.e. whether or not they had any boarding pupils), within gender of pupils (i.e. boys, girls and mixed). PRUs formed a stratum of their own. Both independent schools and PRUs were sampled with probability proportional to the number of pupils aged 13 at that institution. 52 independent schools and 2 PRUs were sampled in this way.

Pupils in independent schools and PRUs were sampled directly from school rolls by LSYPE interviewers using a sampling program. An average of 33.25 pupils was randomly selected at each school/PRU containing 34 or more Year 9 pupils. All Year 9 pupils were selected in schools/PRUs containing fewer than 34 but more than five Year 9 pupils.

### **Sample Exclusions**

Excluded from the original sample were young people educated solely at home (and therefore not present on a school roll), pupils in schools with fewer than ten (maintained sector) or six (independent sector) Year 9 pupils, boarders (including weekly boarders) and young people residing in the UK solely for educational purposes.

### **Longitudinal Sampling**

At each subsequent wave, the survey attempted to follow all the households who took part in the previous wave where the young person was still alive and living in the UK. Movers were traced using the stable contact address collected at Wave 1, and where this failed, DCSF sent a letter to the head teacher of the school from which the young person was sampled to locate up-to-date address details for them.

## **Response Rates**

Of the 21,000 young people sampled at Wave 1, the survey reached 15,770 households (74%) in England. This comprises 13,914 full interviews (66%) and 1,856 partial interviews (9%), most of which were cases where the second adult in the household was not interviewed. At Wave 2, the survey reached 86% of the total households, and at Wave 3 it reached 92% of the total households.

## **Weighting**

The LSYPE data were weighted to account for the survey design for each wave of the study, and pupils from maintained and non-maintained schools were weighted separately at Wave 1. For pupils from independent schools and PRUs, responses were found to vary according to the sex of the pupil and the size of the school, so these pupils were weighted accordingly and the weights combined with design weights which were taken from the reciprocal of the pupil's selection probability. Calibration weights were also applied, so that the achieved sample size matched the population breakdown by type of school and by region. Pupils from maintained schools were first weighted according to school non-response (found to be linked to the school's deprivation status and its region), and then according to pupil non-response (found to be linked to region, ethnicity and qualifications). These were again combined with the design weights, and the two sets of weights for maintained and non-maintained schools were then combined and weighted so that the maintained/non-maintained split matched the population proportions.

For subsequent waves of the study, statistical models were used to model the differences between those who responded at each wave and those who did not. These non-response weights were again calculated separately for pupils from maintained and non-maintained schools and then combined.

## **Imputation**

Whilst it is possible to take account of attrition using the standard weights supplied with the data, missing data due to component and item non-response was a more serious methodological problem. Complete cases analysis can lead to biased results. As a result a multiple imputation of missing values was performed. Using information from all of the variables used in the analysis 5 datasets were imputed using the ICE programme in STATA 10. The imputation method takes account of the level of missing data through the degree of variation in imputed values across the five datasets. The analysis of these complete data involves estimating coefficients for each imputed dataset separately and averaging the estimates over the five results to achieve a single estimate. Standard errors of the estimates are adjusted according to Rubin's rule (Rubin, 1987).

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