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Academic year 2022/23

Key stage 4 destination measures

This is the latest data

Published 27 February 2025

Next update October 2025

Last updated 14 May 2025
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Releases in this series

The latest data in this release covers students who left key stage 4 study in 2021/22 and follows their destinations in 2022/23.

Destination measures provide information on the success of schools and colleges in helping young people continue in education, apprenticeships or employment.

These official statistics show the percentage of pupils continuing to a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination in England in the year after completing key stage 4 study (after year 11) from state-funded mainstream schools.

The release also provides information on destination outcomes for different groups of pupils and education providers.

This data has been revised since the original publication in October 2024 to include the latest available education data.

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Methodologies

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Headline facts and figures - 2022/23

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What are destination measures?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic disruption

Destination outcomes in 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years were affected by the disruption to the economy and educational settings caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. 2020, 2021 and 2022 leavers (with destination outcomes 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23) were also impacted by changes to grading approaches during these years as well as the ongoing uneven impacts of the pandemic on different schools, colleges and pupils,

What are destination measures?

Destination measures provide information on the success of schools and colleges in helping young people continue in education, apprenticeships or employment.

Key stage 4 destination measures follow pupils who were at the end of key stage 4 study (GCSE and equivalent qualifications) in 2021/22, and reports their destinations in the following academic year (2022/23).

They show the percentage of pupils going to an education, apprenticeship or employment destination. To be counted in a destination, young people must have sustained participation for a 6 month period in the destination year. Full details are provided in the [methodology document](#) that accompanies this release.

The headline statistics refer to pupils leaving state-funded mainstream schools in England.

Some pupils do not sustain their destination for at least two terms, these students are recorded as “Not recorded as a sustained destination”. Overall, there is activity information on 99% of the cohort.

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Pupil characteristics

Disadvantage status and pupil premium

Pupils were considered disadvantaged in year 11 and were eligible for pupil premium funding if they had been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years, had been looked after by the local authority, or had been adopted from care. Pupils eligible for free school meals are a subset of the wider disadvantaged group. See [methodology](#) for details.

Disadvantage status

Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to have a sustained destination

Disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for [pupil premium \(opens in a new tab\)](#) funding) were less likely to have a sustained destination (86.2%) than all other pupils (95.6%). This is a gap of 9.4 percentage points

The most common education destination for disadvantaged pupils was further

education (43.6% of total destinations), compared to a school sixth form destination (41.0% of total destinations) for non-disadvantaged pupils.

Disadvantaged pupils were more likely to enter an employment destination and less likely to go into a sustained apprenticeship than all other pupils. Disadvantaged pupils were also more likely not to sustain a destination (12.1%) compared to all other pupils (3.6%).

Disadvantage status

The gap between sustained destinations for disadvantage and non-disadvantage students has increased in recent years

As commented above, the gap between disadvantage and non-disadvantage gap is 9.4 percentage points for the latest cohort of KS4 leavers. This has increased from 8.2 percentage points last year and continues the increase that started in 2020/21 when the gap was 7.4 percentage points.

Sex

Female pupils were more likely to have a sustained destination than male pupils

With female pupils 3.9 percentage points more likely to have a sustained education destination. Conversely, male pupils were more likely to have a sustained apprenticeship or employment destination. The overall gap in sustained destinations remain broadly similar to last year.

Disadvantage status and sex

Disadvantaged male pupils were least likely to have a sustained destination

Non-disadvantaged female pupils were most likely to have a sustained destination compared to the other groups. There was a 8.8 percentage points gap between non-disadvantaged female students and disadvantaged female students and 10.1 percentage points gap between non-disadvantaged male students and disadvantaged male students.

Non-disadvantaged female pupils were also most likely to have a sustained education destination. This was 4.2, 11.0 and 14.2 percentage points higher than non-disadvantaged males, disadvantaged females and disadvantaged males, respectively.

Non-disadvantaged male pupils were most likely to have a sustained apprenticeship destination. This was 2.4, 2.1 and 2.7 percentage points higher than non-disadvantaged females, disadvantaged males and disadvantaged females, respectively.

Disadvantaged male pupils were most likely to have a sustained employment destination. This was 2.1, 0.5 and 3.0 percentage points higher than non-disadvantaged males, disadvantaged females and non-disadvantaged females, respectively.

Ethnicity

Pupils from Chinese and Indian backgrounds were most likely to have a sustained destination

This was driven by these students being most likely to have a sustained education destination. Pupils from Gypsy Roma backgrounds were least likely to have a sustained education destination.

Pupils from Gypsy Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage backgrounds were most likely to have a sustained employment destination. These two groups are relatively small and their outcomes are volatile between years. Pupils from Black African, Bangladeshi, Indian, Any Other Asian and Chinese backgrounds were least likely to have a sustained employment destination.

SEN support and Education, health and care plans

SEN support is given in school. It can include, for example, a special learning programme, extra help from a teacher or assistant, to work in a small group, observation in class or at break, help taking part in class activities etc.

Education, health and care plans (EHC) are for young people, aged up to 25, who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. EHC plans identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.

Special Educational Needs

Pupils with no identified special educational need (SEN) were most likely to have

sustained any destination; those pupils with SEN support were least likely to have sustained an education, apprenticeship or employment destination.

87.1% of pupils with no identified SEN sustained an education destination, compared to 78.8% for those with identified SEN.

For students with an identified special educational needs, SEN support and students with an education and health care plan had similar overall sustained destination rates. Those students with an EHCP were more likely to continue in education whereas SEN support students were more likely to continue in an apprenticeship or employment after KS4.

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Geographical location

Pupils from London were most likely to have an overall sustained destination, with pupils from North East being least likely.

The gap in overall sustained destinations between London and the North East is 3.1 percentage points, continuing the widening of the gap between the two regions in recent years.

92.0% of pupils from Outer London sustained an education destination, closely followed by Inner London with 91.9% of pupils . These values are 6.0 and 5.9 percentage points greater than the national average.

Pupils from the South West were most likely to have a sustained apprenticeship destination, whereas Inner London had the lowest proportion of pupils sustaining an apprenticeship destination.

The highest employment destination rate is for the North East where 5.2% of pupils sustained an employment destination, with pupils from Inner London were least likely to sustain an employment destination.

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Change over time

Following the 2.8 percentage decrease in education destinations last year, we see a smaller decrease of 0.5

percentage points this year. The proportion of pupils having sustained employment destinations has increased again this year (0.1 percentage points) following an increase last year.

In the 2022/23 academic year, 93.2% of pupils had a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination in the year after completing key stage 4. This is down slightly compared to previous years.

The proportion of pupils who sustained an education or apprenticeship destination fell by 0.5 and 0.2 percentage points respectively from 2021/22 to 2022/23.

The proportion of pupils who sustained an employment destination increased in 2022/23 by 0.1 percentage points, compared to 2021/22. Like last year, employment destinations are higher than pre-COVID levels whilst education and apprenticeship destinations are lower. There has been a larger decrease in education destinations which has resulted in the overall sustained destination rate falling.

Many of the pupils who did not have a sustained destination (5.8% in 2022/23) will have had some participation in the year after finishing key stage 4 but did not sustain the destination throughout the required 6 month period.

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Prior attainment

Attainment and destinations are closely linked

Pupils' attainment at the end of primary school (key stage 2) and at the end of key stage 4, have a strong relationship with the likelihood of staying in education, apprenticeships or employment, and with the specific destinations to which they progress.

Attainment at different points in time

The measures indicating whether students have met key thresholds are published by the Department for Education as outcomes from, and accountability measures for, these key stages. Although some students make faster or slower progress during secondary school, attainment at the two key stages is closely correlated.

The prior attainment thresholds referenced reflect the policies in place at the time the cohort completed those key stages and may differ from current benchmarks.

Further information on the prior attainment levels at key stage 2 and key stage 4 can be found in the [methodology section](#) of this release.

Prior attainment

Attainment for this cohort of students is available for two sets of assessments - the end of key stage 2 (KS2), when children take national tests in English reading, maths, and grammar, punctuation and spelling (age 11); and at the end of key stage 4 (KS4), when most pupils take GCSEs or other equivalent qualifications (age 16).

Key stage 4 attainment shows whether pupils achieved a grade of either 4 or above in English and maths GCSEs.

Prior Attainment at key stage 2 (age 11)

Pupils who had high prior attainment 4 at key stage 2 (KS2) were more likely to have a sustained destination than pupils who had middle or low attainment.

Pupils who had high prior attainment at KS2 were more likely to have an overall sustained destination than those pupils who had middle or low prior attainment. Pupils who had high prior attainment at KS2 were more likely to have a sustained education destination, but least likely to sustain an apprenticeship or employment destination.

Pupils who had low prior attainment at KS2 were most likely to have a sustained apprenticeship or employment destination out of all prior attainment at KS2 groups, however they were least likely to have a sustained education destination.

Prior Attainment at key stage 4 (age 16)

Pupils who achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths at key stage 4 (KS4) were more likely to have an overall sustained destination (education, apprenticeship or employment) than those who didn't.

There was a considerable gap (21.3 percentage points) in the proportion of pupils who had a sustained education destination between those who achieved at least grade 4 English and maths and those who did not achieve these grades.

The students who did not achieve at least grade 4 in English and maths at KS4 were more likely to have a sustained apprenticeship or employment destinations than students who did achieve at least grade 4.

Key stage 4 Prior Attainment (KS4) and Disadvantage Status

Pupils who were not disadvantaged and achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths at key stage 4 (KS4) were most likely to have a sustained education destination of all the prior-attainment/disadvantage status groups

Pupils who were disadvantaged and achieved at least grade 4 in English and maths at KS4 were 3.5 percentage points less likely to have a sustained education destination than their non-disadvantaged peers. There was a 7.6 percentage point difference in the proportion of disadvantaged and not disadvantaged pupils sustaining an education destination when they had not achieved at least grade 4 in English and maths at KS4.

Pupils who were not disadvantaged and did not achieve at least grade 4 in English and maths at KS4 were 3.1 percentage points more likely to sustain an apprenticeship destination than their disadvantaged peers.

Pupils who were disadvantaged were more likely to sustain employment destinations than their non-disadvantaged peers with the same achievement in English and maths at KS4.

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Mainstream institution type

Pupils from converter academies were more likely to have a sustained destination than pupils from any other institution types

Pupils from converter academies were most likely to have a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination, whereas pupils from FE colleges with 14 to 16 provision were least likely to have sustained any destination. This was driven by education destinations: 87.6% of all pupils from converter academies and 61.8% from FE colleges with 14 to 16 provision sustained an education destination.

Pupils from University Technical Colleges were most likely to have a sustained apprenticeship destination, this was closely followed by studio schools. Free schools had the lowest proportion of pupils sustaining an apprenticeship destination.

FE colleges with 14 to 16 provision had the highest proportion of pupils sustaining an employment destination, 5.3 percentage points higher than the national average. Pupils from free schools had the lowest proportion of pupils sustaining an employment destination.

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Other institution types

The commentary in this release focusses on pupil destinations after leaving state funded mainstream schools, in this section we discuss pupil destinations from other types of institution.

Special schools

A number of pupils go to schools specifically for pupils with special educational needs – ‘special schools’. These pupils may either go to state-funded special schools, or non-maintained special schools where state-funding follows the learner. The different types of special school are not shown separately.

Of pupils in special schools, 89.6% had an overall sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination compared to 93.2% for pupils in state-funded mainstream schools.

Over half of pupils from special schools (53.5%) stayed in the special school sector, 27.7% sustained a further education destination, whilst only 1.8% sustained an employment destination and 0.3% sustained an apprenticeship destination.

Alternative provision (AP)

State place funded AP includes pupil referral units, academy and free school alternative provision and hospital schools.

Other alternative provision includes education funded by the local authority outside of state place funded schools, including independent schools, non-maintained special schools, and providers who do not meet the criteria for registration as a school.

Less than 2% of pupils who completed key stage 4 were mainly attending state place funded AP or other types of alternative provision. 66.5% of pupils from AP went to a sustained destination, compared with 93.2% from state-funded mainstream schools.

In 2022/23, 54.2% of pupils from AP sustained an education destination, this was 0.4 percentage points higher than 2021/22. The majority of these pupils sustained further education destinations (27.8% for 2022/23).

Over a quarter (28.5%) of pupils in any AP provision didn't sustain a destination for the required 6-month period, this compares to 5.8% of students from state funded mainstream schools. A larger proportion of AP pupils had no activity captured compared to mainstream pupils (4.9% compared to 1.0%).

AP pupils were more likely to go on to employment (10.6% compared to 4.0% in mainstream schools).

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[Key stage 4 destination measures](#)

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