

The Year 11 destinations of pupils in a Year 7 cohort

A report to the Campaign for State Education (CASE)
by FFT Education Datalab

Katie Beynon
Dave Thomson

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1 Introduction

In our previous research into pupil mobility in secondary schools in England¹ we investigated the number of pupils who left and/or joined schools from one year (2021/22) to the next (2022/23). In this paper, we expand on this by looking at the number of pupils in a specific Year 7 cohort who moved schools at any point during secondary school. For those who did move schools, we summarise their Year 11 destinations.

The aim is similar to that of the previous piece, namely to explore how pupil mobility varies by school governance. We will compare mobility rates and Year 11 destinations of pupils who began Year 7 in academies with those who began Year 7 in local authority (LA) schools. In addition, we will explore how mobility and destinations varied among the subset of academies which were members of large multi-academy trusts (MATs).

We again note that pupils move schools for a variety of reasons. Some pupils and their families may choose to change schools due to relocation or to seek a better quality of education, while for others the move may be encouraged by their schools (so-called “off-rolling”). The motivation behind such moves cannot be inferred from data alone.

We also note that not all pupils have a Year 11 destination recorded. This could be for a variety of reasons. For example, pupils may have emigrated to a different country (including Scotland or Wales), their families may have opted to educate them at home², or they may have moved to a school where Key Stage 4 results are not published. We are unable to differentiate between these scenarios.

2 Data and methodology

2.1 Defining the initial cohort

We begin by producing a table of pupils who were recorded as being in Year 7 in a state-funded school at the time of the Spring school census in 2018/19. We apply the following restrictions:

- Pupils must have an enrolment status of “Current” or “Main”.
- Pupils must have been on-roll at the time of the census.
- For the small number of pupils with more than one census record meeting both of the above restrictions, we choose the record with the earliest date of entry.

In total, the initial Year 7 cohort contains 614,597 pupils.

¹ <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/10/measuring-pupil-mobility-in-secondary-schools-in-england/>

² Some pupils’ Year 11 destinations in this situation may be recorded as the school they last attended, depending on when the move to elective home education occurred.

2.2 Defining school moves

We then compare the schools at which pupils were enrolled in Year 7 with those they were enrolled at in Year 11 (if any). We attempt to match pupils' Year 7 census records with records from the following sources, in this order:

1. School census in Spring of Year 11
2. Alternative provision (AP) census³ in Spring of Year 11
3. End of Key Stage 4 data

Pupils with no record in any of these sources are classified as having no Year 11 destination.

Of the 614,597 pupils in the cohort, 97% (595,436) had a known Year 11 destination. Of these, 98.5% (586,627) had their destination determined by a Year 11 census record, with the remaining 1.5% (8,809) having their destination determined by a Key Stage 4 record.

Some schools will have changed identifiers over time, for example due to academisation. We link all identifiers associated with the same school together so that they can be correctly identified as the same school across datasets.

2.2.1 Standard vs non-standard moves

There are two types of school moves that pupils may experience between Year 7 and Year 11. Those which are due to standard transitions, such as from a middle school into a high school, and those which are not.

We present figures for both types of moves, but the more detailed breakdowns focus solely on the latter type, which we refer to as "non-standard" moves.

We define a standard move as one which occurs from a Year 7 school which:

- was listed as having a statutory upper age limit of less than 16 in 2018/19, and
- which had no pupils recorded as being in Year 11 in 2022/23

Thus, where we present numbers of non-standard moves, we exclude any moves made by pupils who began Year 7 in schools meeting the above criteria. We do not remove such pupils from the initial cohort number.

Overall, 95,707 pupils were identified as having moved schools between Year 7 and Year 11. Of these, 13% (12,710) are classed as standard moves.

2.2.2 Relocation

We can also categorise school moves according to whether they appear to be related to pupils relocating.

We define relocation as a pupil's home postcode having changed to one at least 20km away (as the crow flies) between any two consecutive academic years, or between 2018/19

³ The AP census covers young people who are educated outside of the state-funded school sector but where fees are paid by local authorities. It includes pupils with EHC plans placed in independent schools or in non-maintained special schools. It also covers pupils receiving tuition at home or part-time provision at FE Colleges.

and 2022/23. In our previous work, we found that around 75% of pupils who moved at least 20km also moved schools.

We present the number of moves where a relocation was and was not known to have occurred between Year 7 and Year 11. But we present Year 11 destinations only for pupils who did not relocate, or where we do not know whether a relocation occurred⁴.

2.2.3 Limitations

We identify the following limitations of our approach:

- Pupils who left and re-joined their school between Year 7 and 11 will not be counted as having moved schools.
- Some pupil moves which we count as standard moves should, in fact, be counted as non-standard moves. For example, pupils who left their middle schools earlier than expected.
- The small number of pupils in a year group other than Year 11 in 2022/23 are described as having no destination. (We estimate this to impact around 3% of those with no destination.)
- National curriculum year groups are sometimes recorded incorrectly.
- We underestimate the number of pupils whose Year 11 destination was a school outside of the state-funded secondary sector or local authority alternative provision. The destinations of such pupils are derived from Key Stage 4 data alone, and not all will have taken Key Stage 4 exams.

2.3 School characteristics

We provide breakdowns of mobility by a range of characteristics of schools attended by pupils in Year 7. School type is also the way we categorise pupils' Year 11 destinations.

While all schools at which pupils were enrolled in Year 7 were state-funded schools, some of their Year 11 destinations were independent schools, further education (FE) centres, or local authority funded alternative provision (LA AP).

A full list of the types of schools included is provided in Tables A.0-1 and A.0-2 of the appendix, along with all relevant categorisations.

2.3.1 Academies vs LA schools, and mainstream schools vs other

Academy and LA schools are defined as follows:

- Academy schools: sponsored and converter academies of all types, free schools of all types, university technical colleges (UTCs), studio schools, and city technology colleges.
- LA schools: community schools of all types, voluntary-aided (VA) and voluntary-controlled (VC) schools, foundation schools of all types, pupil referral units (PRUs).

We also categorise schools by whether or not they are considered "mainstream". We use this label to mean any state-funded school which is neither a special nor an AP school (including PRUs).

⁴ This could be either because pupils lacked a valid postcode or because they ceased to be observed in school census records.

We present figures separately for all academy schools, and the subset of academies which belong to large multi-academy trusts (MATs). We define a “big MAT” as one with at least ten mainstream schools.

2.3.2 Year 7 school information

Not all schools had the same characteristics in 2018/19, when the pupils in our cohort were in Year 7, as in 2022/23, when they were in Year 11. For example, a number of schools academized in the intervening time.

We present high-level figures using schools’ information as it was in 2018/19 and in 2022/23. For more detailed breakdowns, we use the 2018/19 information only.

2.3.3 Numbers of schools in groupings

Where we produce output by MAT and by LA, we only publish figures for groupings with at least a certain number of schools. These thresholds are:

- MATs: at least ten mainstream schools.
- Local authorities split by academies vs LA schools: at least five mainstream academies and at least five mainstream LA schools.

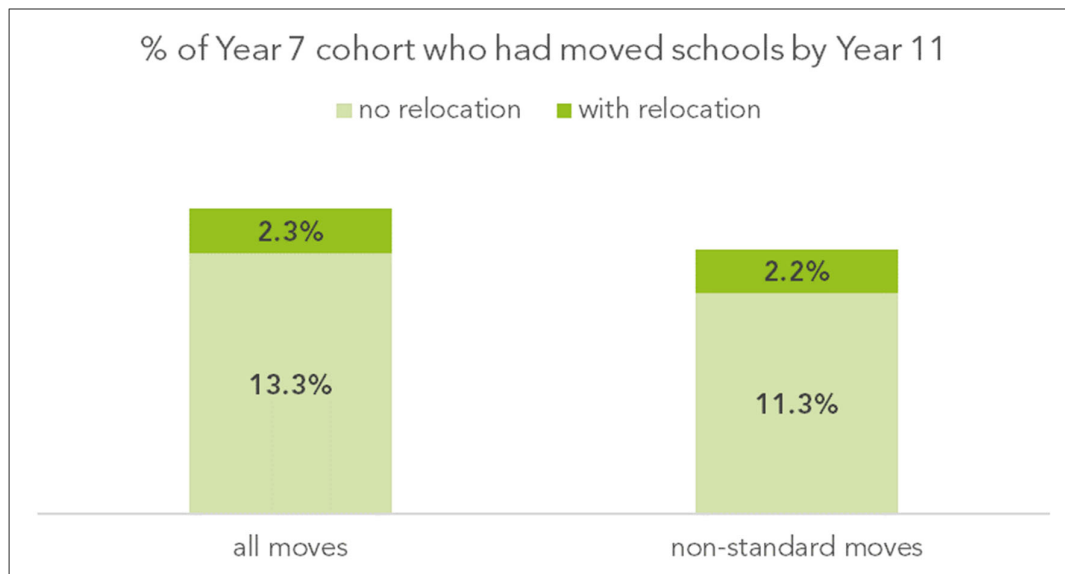
3 Results

3.1 Mobility rates

3.1.1 Overall

We begin by looking at the overall proportion of the cohort enrolled in different schools in Year 7 and Year 11, and the extent to which any differences may be related to a relocation.

Figure 3-1: Rates of pupil mobility by relocation and move type



Overall, 15.6% of Year 7 pupils had moved to a different school by Year 11. This reduces to 13.5% when we only consider non-standard moves (i.e. excluding those which are associated with expected transitions).

Around 20% of non-standard pupil moves were associated with a relocation. The remaining 80%, 11.3% of the initial cohort, form the population of interest in subsequent sections.

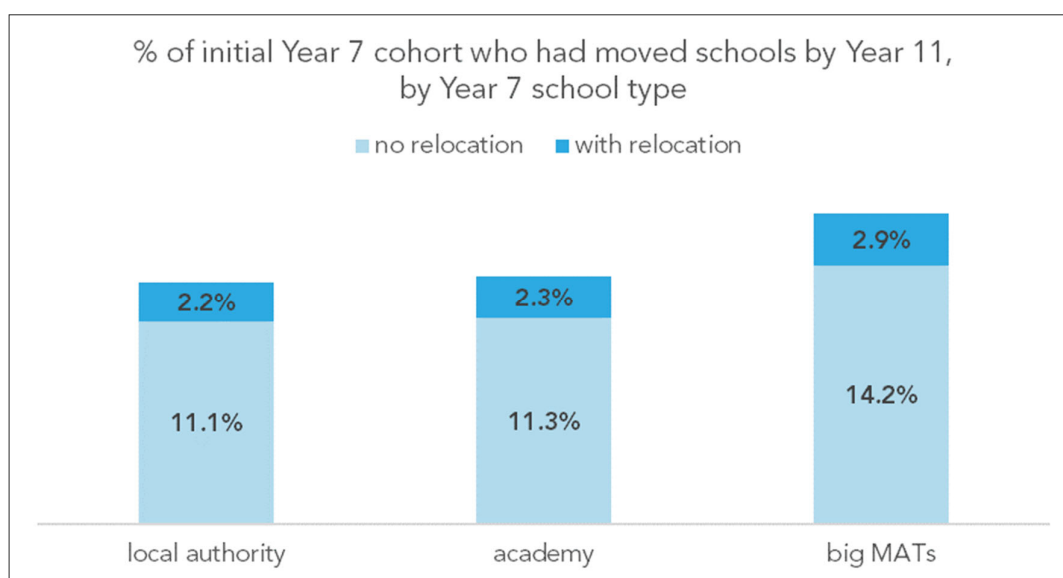
3.1.2 By school governance

We now compare rates of mobility by the type of school at which pupils were enrolled in Year 7. We compare LA schools with all academies, and with the subset of academies which were members of big MATs. We take schools' governance information as at 2018/19, when the pupils in our cohort were in Year 7. We count only non-standard pupil moves. The results are shown in Figure 3-2, overleaf.

Overall, the proportion of pupils who moved school between Year 7 and Year 11 was similar for those who were enrolled in LA schools in Year 7 and those who were enrolled in academies. This was true both for moves which were associated with a relocation and those which were not.

However, pupil moves were more common in the subset of academies which were part of big MATs. Moves associated with a relocation were around 30% higher in schools which were part of big MATs compared with LA schools, and around 25% higher compared with all academies. Moves not associated with a relocation were around 25% higher in big MATs than LA schools, and in big MATs than all academies.

Figure 3-2: Rates of pupil mobility by Year 7 school governance and move type



An alternative set of figures, with schools' governance information as at 2022/23, when the pupils in our cohort were in Year 11, is provided in Table A.2-2 of the appendix. We also provide a breakdown by individual MAT (Table A.3), by LA (Table A.4), and by the combination of LA and governance (Table A.5).

3.1.3 By pupil characteristics

We provide a breakdown of mobility rates by a range of pupil characteristics in Tables A.6 and A.7 of the appendix. We find (figures quoted are for non-standard moves not associated with a relocation):

- Pupils were more likely to move school between Year 7 and Year 11 if they had an identified special educational need (SEN) than if they did not (10% of those with no identified SEN moved schools, compared to 16% of those with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and 17% of those receiving SEN support).
- Rates of mobility were highest by far among White Irish Traveller and Gypsy/Roma pupils (around 40%). Pupils from Asian backgrounds tended to have the lowest rates (6% of Bangladeshi pupils, 7% of Indian pupils, 8% of Chinese pupils).
- Pupils who had been eligible for free school meals (FSM) in Year 7 or earlier were almost twice as likely to move schools than those who were never eligible (16.4% vs 8.8%).

3.2 Destinations

We now examine the Year 11 destinations of pupil who moved schools between Year 7 and Year 11. Throughout this section we only consider moves which were non-standard, and not associated with a relocation.

We summarise these destinations as a percentage of pupils who experienced such moves, rather than as a percentage of the initial cohort. Destinations for the cohort overall are shown in Figure 3-3, overleaf.

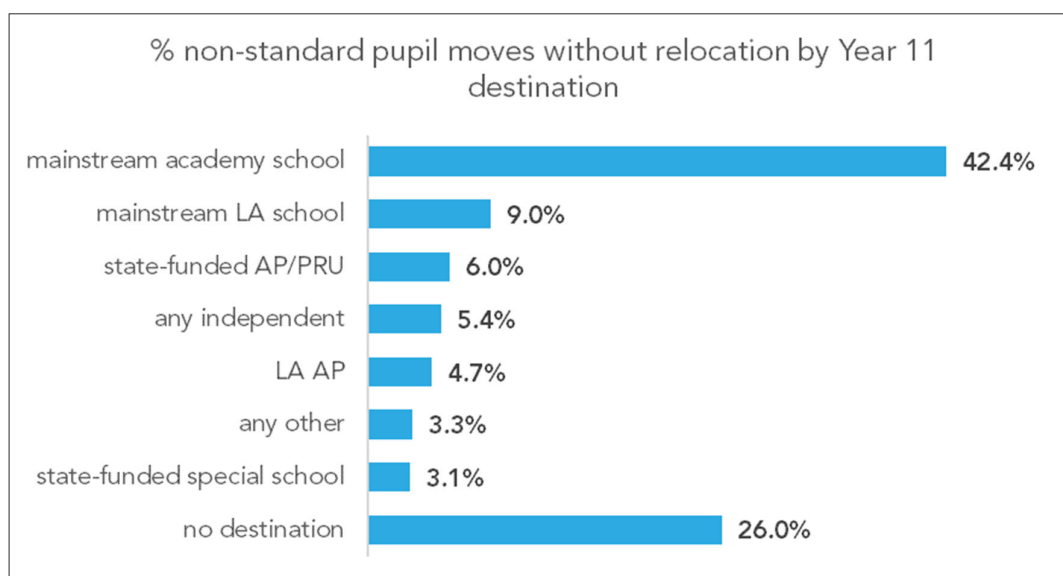
Alternative versions which additionally include standard moves can be found in the appendix (provided for national totals only, in Table A.1).

3.2.1 Overall

The most common destinations were mainstream academy schools (42% of movers), followed by no observed destination (26%) and LA mainstream schools (9%).

In total, 14% of movers were enrolled in a non-mainstream state-funded school in Year 11 (a special or AP school, or in LA AP), while 5% were enrolled in the independent sector. (Note: many LA AP placements will also have been in independent schools, particularly independent special schools.)

Figure 3-3: Percentage of pupil moves by Year 11 destination



3.2.2 By school governance

The proportion of movers with no known destination was broadly similar for LA schools, academies, and the subset of academies which were members of big MATs. The proportion of movers in mainstream schools in Year 11 was also similar across the different school types. These results are summarised in Table 3-1, overleaf.

Pupils who were enrolled at schools which were part of big MATs in Year 7 were more likely to have moved into state-funded AP schools by Year 11 than those who were enrolled in all academies (6.5% of movers in big MATs, 5.8% in all academies). They were also more likely to have moved into LA AP (5.1% vs 4.4%). Pupils in LA schools in Year 7 had a similar likelihood of moving into state-funded or LA AP as those in schools in big MATs (6.7% into state-funded AP schools, 5.3% into LA AP).

Pupils who moved schools were more likely to be enrolled at a state-funded special school in Year 11 if they were enrolled at a LA school in Year 7 than at an academy (4.0% of movers in LA schools, 2.8% in academies). There was no difference between big MATs and all academies.

The proportion of pupils who had moved into an independent school by Year 11 was similar among those enrolled in LA schools in Year 7 and those enrolled in academies. Among those enrolled in schools in big MATs, however, the proportion was lower (4.9% of movers in LA schools, 5.6% in academies, 2.9% in big MATs).

An alternative set of figures, with schools' governance information as at 2022/23, when the pupils in our cohort were in Year 11, is provided in Table A.2-2 of the appendix. We also provide a breakdown by individual MAT (Table A.3), by LA (Table A.4), and by the combination of LA and governance (Table A.5).

Table 3-1: Percentage of pupil moves by Year 11 destination and Year 7 school type

	% pupils by Y7 school type		
	local authority	academy	big MATs
total cohort	160,086	454,511	47,575
pupil moves without relocation	17,690	51,494	6,741
% of initial cohort	11.1%	11.3%	14.2%
% movers with no relocation by Year 11 destination type			
<i>mainstream academy school</i>	36.7%	44.4%	44.1%
<i>mainstream LA school</i>	14.4%	7.2%	8.1%
<i>state-funded AP/PRU</i>	6.7%	5.8%	6.5%
<i>any independent</i>	4.9%	5.6%	2.9%
<i>LA AP</i>	5.3%	4.4%	5.1%
<i>any other</i>	2.9%	3.4%	3.7%
<i>state-funded special school</i>	4.0%	2.8%	2.6%
<i>no destination</i>	25.1%	26.4%	27.0%

3.2.3 By pupil characteristics

We provide a full breakdown of destinations by pupil characteristics in Tables A.6 and Table A.7 of the appendix. We find:

- Boys who moved schools were around twice as likely as girls to be enrolled in a state-funded special (4.6% vs 1.7%), state-funded AP school (8.0% vs 4.0%), or in LA AP (6.5% vs 2.9%) in Year 11. Boys and girls were similarly likely to have no observed destination.
- Broadly, pupils from ethnic backgrounds with the highest rates of mobility tended to be the most likely to have no observed destination in Year 11 (73% of White Irish Traveller movers, 72% of Gypsy/Roma movers, 51% of White Other movers). Exceptions to this include Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils, who were among the most likely to move schools, but among the least likely to have no observed destination. They were among the most likely to have moved into the AP sector (around 18% of Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean movers were enrolled in the AP sector in Year 11 vs 11% of all pupils).
- The most likely destination for pupils with an EHCP who moved schools between Year 7 and 11 was LA AP (30% of movers), followed by state-funded special schools (27%). (Note: many LA AP placements are in independent special schools.) Only

16% of pupils with an EHCP who moved schools were enrolled in a mainstream school in Year 11.

- Movers who had been eligible for FSM by Year 7 were similarly likely to be enrolled at a mainstream school in Year 11 as those who had not been eligible for FSM. They were much more likely to be enrolled in a state-funded special school (4.2% of FSM-eligible movers vs 2.2% of others) state-funded AP school (9.4% vs 3.0%) or in LA AP (6.3% vs 3.3%), and much less likely to be enrolled in the independent sector (5.7% vs 11.3%).

4 Acknowledgements

This work contains statistical data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which is Crown Copyright (*Department of Education, released 6 February 2024, ONS Secure Research Service, dataset, Bespoke National Pupil Database extract*).

The use of the ONS statistical data in this work does not imply the endorsement of the ONS or other data owners in relation to the interpretation or analysis of the statistical data. This work uses research datasets which may not exactly reproduce National Statistics aggregates.

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