Ipsos MORI

Youth Aspirations in London

Research study conducted for London Councils by Ipsos MORI

17 March 2010

Contents

Summary

Summary

In 2009 London Councils commissioned Ipsos MORI to undertake a piece of qualitative and quantitative research with Key Stage 4 pupils (aged 14-16) to investigate aspirations in young people. The project involved an in-schools survey with 1,393 self-completion interviews; and ten discussion groups, each with pupils currently in Key Stage 4, with fieldwork taking place from November 2009 to January 2010.

Expectations and aspirations

What is success?

Pupils identify a number of different aspects to success in life, such as: "making money"; "being a celebrity"; "having a family"; and "having a job you want to do". Underpinning this understanding of *success* is both a personal sense of achievement and also that others recognise and respect you for it. However, notions of success at school are much more limited and tend to be focused around high achievement in exams. This is perhaps because the school curriculum is currently so led by exams, with emphasis on the importance on achieving high grades.

Why do people succeed?

The vast majority (93%) of pupils agree that working hard at school/aiming to do the best you can will help their future success in life. A similar proportion think that being confident (92%); being able to read and write well (92%); and having good qualifications/exam results (91%) will help their future success. Thinking about more personal factors, around one in ten (11%) pupils think that their family's background or that their gender will make it more difficult for them to succeed in life, while sixteen percent say their ethnic background will make it more difficult. Over a third (35%) of pupils with a self defined disability[1] and the majority (56%) of pupils with a self defined learning difficulty think that this will make it more difficult for them to succeed in life.

---

[1] The base size for pupils with a disability is small (75) therefore these findings should be treated as indicative only.

Future plans

In general, pupils have not necessarily decided exactly what they would like to do in the future, however some pupils, who tend to be more confident in their ability to achieve at school have a number of ideas about what they might like to do. Notably, pupils who are more concerned that they may not achieve very highly in their GCSEs are more cautious when it comes to thinking about their future and making long term plans.

Plans and positivity about after Year 11

The vast majority (75%) of pupils say they have thought a lot or a fair amount about what they will do after Year 11. Three-quarters (75%) would be interested in doing A or AS levels and half (53%) say they would be interested in getting a part-time job. Around two fifths (39%) say they would be interested in a vocational course such as a Diploma or NVQ and less than a quarter (23%) would be interested in doing an apprenticeship. Thinking further into the future, around seven in ten (71%) pupils are very or fairly likely to go to university in the future.

Looking at positivity about the future, more than four in five (82%) pupils say that they feel positive about their future after Year 11. The one in ten (11%) who say they feel not very, or not at all positive about their future, however highlight the need for greater support.

> **Key issues**
>
> ▪ To try to widen young people's understandings of success at school, greater inclusion of social and emotional development, in addition to exam success, could be introduced to target setting.
>
> ▪ While exams are recognised as being important, where young people become unengaged with school-based learning or do not feel that they are personally 'academic' and able to achieve in exams there is currently a sense that they have 'failed' at the optimum route. Methods of recognising and developing other skills and personality traits that lend themselves well to future careers should be developed.

- It is important to identify and support pupils who are most at risk from falling out of the system at an early stage. Pupils with low aspirations would benefit from individual action plans that are appropriate and realistic (although not limiting) for their ability, and from which they can gain a sense of achievement. This may help alleviate some anxiety and stress that is associated with school and 'academia' which can deter them from wanting to continue in education/training.

- Young people at schools in more deprived areas are interested in the more vocational qualifications, however, they perhaps require greater encouragement and information about them from an earlier stage to help motivate and inspire them to succeed at school. It is important to offer alternative, credible education paths, for example into work-based learning, at an earlier stage rather than being presented as a remedial option i.e. create a positive message of success in vocational learning rather than failure in the academic system.

- Measures to achieve such support might be taken through: PHSE lessons; teachers being trained to offer praise and recognition for attributes that are not necessarily structured around exam-achievement – further, creating structures that facilitate 'reward' for such skills; offering greater information on alternative training paths at an earlier age; offering formal mentor support to those most in need at an earlier stage; creating less formal peer mentor support networks and 'role model' schemes.

Awareness and knowledge of options after Year 11

Knowledge of post 16 options

Familiarity with the options available to pupils after Year 11 is perhaps not as high as it should be. Two-thirds (66%) of pupils say they know a lot/a fair amount about the different things they could do after Year 11, but a third (31%) say they know a little or nothing at all.

Pupils feel they know the most about doing A or AS levels. Two-thirds (66%) of pupils say they know a lot or a fair amount about doing A or AS levels, however, over half (56%) of pupils say they know a little or nothing at all about vocational courses such as diplomas and over three in five (62%) know a little/nothing at all about apprenticeships.

Attitudes towards the options

Just as pupils know most about A levels, participants in the discussion group also tend to think that this more traditional route is the best to take as it is more widely recognised. Pupils in the discussion groups have barely heard of the new diploma, however, they think that an apprenticeship is a good route for people who know exactly what they want to do, and perhaps prefer being more 'hands on' when they learn. There is some concern, however, that apprenticeships can be restrictive if people decide they want to change their job because their training will have been so specific.

Awareness of options linked to future aspirations

Looking at the segmentation, the 'Unprepared' who are characterised by being least likely to feel well prepared for after Year 11, are also the group least likely to think that they are expected or supported to stay in education or training after Year 11. However, on the other hand, the 'Aspirant Academics' are most likely to feel well prepared for the future and are least likely to want to get a full-time job rather than stay in education/training. This illustrates how important feeling informed and prepared can be on young people's expectations and aspirations for the future.

Key issues

- Many pupils in Year 10 seem to lack information and feel unprepared for after Year 11. While this is not necessarily an issue for those who will follow a path into A levels, for those who have less confidence in their GCSE prospects it can lead to a lack of consideration of alternative options. Action therefore needs to be taken at this point to encourage young people to think about their future and inform them of the variety of options available, to help reduce anxiety about the future and to give them something to aspire to and work towards. Rather than waiting until Year 11 to offer advice and information to young people about their options after Year 11, this information could be delivered to young people, either by a careers advisor or through PHSE lessons, earlier in their academic career; perhaps in Year 9 or 10.

- In order to encourage young people to do apprenticeships or vocational qualifications, work needs to be done to ensure they are well respected and are well received by potential employers, education institutions and pupils alike, rather than being thought of as the 'easy' option. In schools, young people should be fully informed about what these qualifications entail, what their benefits and limitations are, and the opportunities they may lead to in later life. This should also be the case for education institutions and potential employers, as disregard for these qualification may stem from a lack of complete understanding about the nature of these qualifications.

Access to information

Useful sources of information

From their experience of speaking to different people and accessing different sources of information, pupils think the most useful source they have accessed is speaking to adult relatives or carers (83% think they are very or fairly useful). This is followed by teachers (73%), websites and the internet (68%) and school careers advisor or careers lessons (60%). The least useful service, according to pupils is Connexions (48% think they are very/fairly useful). However, it should be noted that these figures are based on all pupils, including those who have not used the service. Levels of use of the services decline in the same fashion: three percent of all pupils say they have not spoken to adult relatives or carers whereas a quarter (25%) of all pupils have not spoken to a Connexions advisor. However, pupils in PRUs who participated in the discussion groups have had a lot of contact with Connexions advisors and have found them to be a great source of information and support. This is supported by the finding that Connexions is found to be very/fairly useful for a greater proportion of students who attend PRUs than those who attend mainstream schools (60% compared to 47%), although this finding should be used cautiously, as it is based on all pupils including those who have not used the service.

Information young people want

Participants of the discussion groups would like to receive information from people who have recently experienced further education. They do not always trust teachers or careers to offer them impartial advice. Furthermore, they feel that times have changed since their parents experienced further education, if they did at all. They want to know what life is like in further education and what it is like to study particular courses. They would also like to be able to speak to people working in vocations they are interested in, and to be able to experience different types of work to help them to decide what to study.

Key issues

- Although pupils think they are the most useful source of information, parents may not always best placed to advise young people on their future after Year 11, particularly when they may not have experienced further education themselves.

- Instead, mentors or older peers who can offer impartial advice about what it is like to remain in education or training after Year 11, including apprenticeships and vocational qualifications, would be well received by pupils. Pupils would be more likely to trust these people who have recent experience of further education than more formal sources such as careers advisors. Similarly, this could also be applied to pupils who have left school and are in employment. Their advice about what it is like to work straight after Year 11 may also be useful for those who are considering that option, to ensure they make a well informed decision. In this way schools should be seen to support a range of options rather than the current perceptions that they are generally seen to encourage academic success.

Support and influences

The role of parents

Nine in ten (90%) pupils say they think their parents/step-parents/carers are very or fairly interested in what they do after Year 11. Following this, almost two-thirds (65%) of pupils think their teachers are very or fairly interested in what they do after Year 11, and over half (55%) say they think their school careers advisor is interested.

Looking at the role of parents, the vast majority (87%) of pupils think their parents/step-parents/carers expect them to stay in education/training after Year 11. However, one in five (21%) think their parents expect them to get a full-time job after Year 11. Pupils who took part in the discussion groups are aware that parents do have a role in motivating their children. They feel that because some pupils see their parents not working and not staying in education, they are also happy to do this.

Support from teachers

Around seven in ten (71%) pupils agree, and over a third (36%) strongly agree, that their teachers are supporting them to stay on in education or training after Year 11. Furthermore, over two-thirds (69%) of pupils agree that the government wants young people to stay in education/training after Year 11. For those who do not feel supported by their teachers, it was suggested in the discussion group that this may be because at times, it can seem as though teachers are more concerned about pupils currently, and perhaps do not care so much about what pupils do once they leave their school or class.

Key issues

- Pupils largely feel that they are expected, by their parents and the government, to stay to stay in education or training after Year 11. However, this does not always lead to a desire to do so, as illustrated by the 'Aspirant Workers' who are most likely to want to get a job rather than stay in education, but are very aware of this expectation. This can lead to conflict and difficulties within the family, when aspirations of parents and children are different.

- The heavy focus on exams within schools can lead pupils to believe that teachers are not interested in what they do once these exams are completed. Young people themselves would appreciate greater personal interest from teachers, and are not necessarily empathetic to the pressures on teacher's time. The introduction of effective mentoring schemes to create such support structures would help to bridge this gap

Reengaging the disengaged

Barriers to success at school

Looking at attitudes towards school, one in seven (15%) pupils disagree that they enjoy school and eight percent do not think that learning is interesting. Pupils were asked why they are not *very confident* in getting the exam results they want at the end of Year 11. The most commonly cited reasons pupils give are: *I don't think I work as hard as I could* (57%); *I get distracted by my friends* (44%); *I get distracted at home* (35%); *my lessons are boring* (35%); and *I don't feel supported by my teachers* (19%). The top reason is a motivational issue, which could be due to finding lessons boring due to not being engaged with the teaching methods, or not thinking about the long term effects of their actions as they do not have a future goal to aspire to.

'Bunking off'

Playing truant from school, or 'bunking off,' is one way in which pupil achievement can be adversely affected. Under a third (30%) of pupils say they have 'bunked off' school. The most common reasons why are that pupils *don't like their teachers* (40%), they do *not enjoy school* (37%), thinking that *bunking off is more fun than school* (30%), *to avoid getting into trouble* (21%) and *because their friends bunk off* (18%). The qualitative groups supported these findings, however found that underlying a lot of these reasons is an avoidance of potentially stressful or difficult situations, such as a test they think they may fail, or a confrontation with a teacher due to not having done their homework or arriving late.

Barriers to staying in education or training

One in seven (14%) pupils agree that people like them do not stay in education/training after Year 11. Furthermore, over one in ten (13%) agree than getting a job would be better for their future than staying on in education/training and approaching a quarter (24%) agree that they would need a full-time job after Year 11 to be able to buy the things they want. From the discussion groups, pupils largely thought that they could make enough money for themselves, and to contribute to their household, by having a part-time job alongside further education or training.

Key issues

- Young people who have had negative experiences of school may not want to continue in education or training after Year 11 because they assume it will be the same as school. Therefore the implications from this are to try to improve their overall experience of school (including relationships with teachers or finding lessons "boring"), and to inform young people of how there are differences between school and further education. In particular, being informed about the variety of courses to suit a range of abilities, with different modes of delivery may encourage more young people to stay in education. It is also important to note that different colleges can have quite difference cultures and that previous research has shown that where young people rebel against being "treated like a child" at school, they can struggle with suddenly being given too much freedom when they start at college. Ensuring that adequate information and support is provided during such transitions is vital.

- Anxiety about exam results can deter young people from wanting to make plans for their future and at this stage in their lives future success is often heavily tied to GCSE results. The availability of alternative education routes as a desirable outcome rather than a fall-back option would assist young people in creating firmer aspirations to work towards.

- Tackling truancy is one way in which young people's overall experience of school could help to be improved. Either finding ways to help young people cope with the potentially difficult situations that they avoid by 'bunking off,' or finding more constructive ways to avoid pupils getting into stressful situations, could help to prevent young people from playing truant.

Background and Objectives

Background and Objectives

The 14-19 political landscape

The past twelve years have seen a greater appreciation of the need for young people to be consulted and to have an opportunity to truly be heard in the development of policy that concerns them. Importantly, recent years have also seen a shift towards ensuring that the voices of traditionally excluded young people are heard, such as those living in social exclusion, or with special educational needs.

Youth aspiration is high on the policy agenda and is being approached from a number of angles. On the one hand, policy makers are identifying the importance of early facilitation; for example the National Youth Agency/DCSF national Aim Higher non-statutory guidance[2] highlights the importance of providing positive activities for young people, with age *eight* as the start point rather than simply focusing on young people in their teens. At the same time there are numerous policy areas that focus on offering opportunities to 14-19 years olds, such as the 14-19 reforms[3], with the Diploma qualification being rolled out over the next five years; supporting learning participation to 17 (2013) and 18 (2015) through a range of settings to avoid the most disadvantaged, disaffected and vulnerable young people missing out[4]; The Panel of Fair Access to the Professions (Milburn Report),[5] which made recommendations to improve social mobility through schools, universities, internship practices and recruitment processes; or the Communities and Local Government, DCSF and Cabinet Office Inspiring Communities programme, which aims to mobilise community-wide actions to raise the aspirations and educational attainment of young people in deprived communities.

---

[2] http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/_download/?id=6183

[3] http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/CM%206476.pdf ;
http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/Cm%206677.pdf.pdf ;
http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/CM-7354.pdf

[4] http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/raising_expectations_supporting_all.pdf

[5] http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/227102/fair-access.pdf

London Councils is at the heart of a number of initiatives designed to support young people's aspirations and achievement. These include:

- *London 14-19 Regional Planning Group (RPG)*, which works in partnership with boroughs, employers and education providers to ease the transfer of 16-19 education commissioning to local authorities;

- *GLA coordination on the Mayor's Time for Action initiative; Keeping young people in education (Project Brodie),* which highlights the pattern of the vast majority of young offenders having played truant from school and works with school (via local councils) to keep children in school by early intervention;

- *Pan-London Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) improvement work,* which is a two-phase partnership approach identifying and disseminating best practice to improve provision in PRUs;

- *Supporting initiatives to reduce the numbers of 16-19yrs who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs),* working closely with the National Apprenticeship Service to deliver apprenticeship entitlement for all 16-19yrs in 2013;

- *Improving outcomes for Children and Care in London,* which guarantees equal access for Children in Care to the same range of services wherever they live or attend school or training opportunities across London.

This research offered London Councils a valuable opportunity to speak to a representative spread of young people across London about their experiences of education and training provision, their future career aspirations and related issues. This research will be used to assist London Councils in its important role of developing and implementing policies that support young Londoners as they develop into adults.

Objectives

The overall objective of this research was to explore young people's aspirations, primarily in relation to the options that are available to them once they complete compulsory education. More specifically, the objectives of this research were to:

- Explore young people's expectations, aspirations and intentions regarding progression routes into education, employment and training;

- Explore young people's views and experiences of the provision of information, advice and guidance on careers and options on completion of compulsory education;

- Find out levels of truancy, why young people truant and how it should be dealt with;

- Understand young people's views on the barriers to successful learning and progression including concerns about the costs of staying in education or training post 16;

- Find out the extent to which young people feel significant adults take an interest in their post 16 choices, including teachers and parents;

- Explore optimism about the future and the ability to pursue the careers of their choice (in the context of the economic downturn); and to

- Explore young people's views about how society treats young people more generally.

Methodology

Methodology

In-schools survey methodology

Sampling

The sample of schools selected to take part in the Youth Aspirations survey was drawn from *edubase*, the DCSF database of schools across Great Britain. In total, 300 secondary schools and 53 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) across London were included in the sample. The sampling universe included LEA, voluntary aided/controlled, foundation schools and special schools with Key Stage 4 and excluded sixth form colleges. This sampling frame was stratified first by Government Office Regions (GORs); by Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD); and then by whether the school includes a sixth form. Within each stratum, schools were selected proportional to the size of the school register, thus producing a representative sample of secondary schools across London.

The year groups included in the survey were those in Key Stage 4: Year 10 and Year 11. In most schools, one class of Year 10 and one class of Year 11 pupils completed the survey. Ipsos MORI interviewers randomly selected the class with each year group to take part using a Kish grid.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork took place between 10 November 2009 and 22 January 2010. Of the 300 secondary schools and 53 PRUs approached to take part in the research, 33 schools and 8 PRUs participated. The total number of completed questionnaires is 1,393 (1288 from secondary schools and 105 from PRUs).

Interviewing was carried out through self-completion questionnaires with the whole class in one classroom period. An Ipsos MORI interviewer was present to explain the survey to pupils; to reassure them about the confidentiality of the survey; to assist them in completing the questionnaire; and to collect completed questionnaires. In classes where four or more children were absent during the self-completion session, up to two follow-up visits were arranged to interview absent pupils.

Weighting

Data are weighted by school type (maintained secondary school/PRU), gender, year group and ethnicity. The weights were derived from data supplied by the Department for Children Schools and Families. The effect of weighting is shown in the sample profile in the Appendices and in the computer tables.

Interpretation of the survey data

When interpreting the findings it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of the maintained school population, and not the entire population. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances, and not all differences between sub-groups are therefore statistically significant. A guide to statistical significance is appended in the guide to statistical reliability.

Qualitative discussion groups methodology

In addition to the in-school quantitative survey, ten qualitative discussion groups were carried out from 3 December 2009 – 7 January 2010. The groups were conducted in five schools and one PRU, with a Year 10 and Year 11 group in each aside from the PRU, where two groups were conducted with Year 10 students (due to the structure of the PRU). As illustrated below, one of the schools was in an area of low IMD (relatively affluent) and the other three were in areas of high IMD (relatively deprived).

	Year 10	Year 11
PRU	Group 1 Group 2	
Affluent area school	Group 3	Group 4
Deprived area school 1	Group 5	Group 6
Deprived area school 2	Group 7	Group 8
Deprived area school 3	Group 9	Group 10

Schools were recruited to take part in the research by one of Ipsos MORI's specialist schools recruiters. Once the school had agreed to take part, the contact at the school selected a friendship group to participate from within each year group. These friendship groups included a mix of gender, ethnicity and social grade. Friendship groups were selected to ensure pupils felt comfortable and able to speak honestly during the discussion.

Interpretation of the qualitative data

While qualitative research was an integral part of this study, it is important to bear in mind that qualitative research is based on very small samples, and is designed to be illustrative rather than to produce statistics. This should be taken into account when interpreting the research findings. It is important to bear in mind that the research deals with perceptions rather than facts (though perceptions *are* facts to those that hold them).

Throughout this report, we have made use of verbatim comments to expand upon and shed further insight into the quantitative findings. However, it is important to be aware that these views do not necessarily represent the views of all participants.

Acknowledgements

©Ipsos MORI/36969

Checked & Approved: *Sally Panayiotou*

    ....

    Ruth Gosling

    Nick Allen

    Lucy Clements

Demographic profiling

Demographic profiling

Before commencing with the main body of the report, it is important to point out some relationships between the demographic variables that will be used. These are important to keep in mind when reading the report because differences may not just be linked to one but to a number of variables[6].

School type: Nine in ten pupils attended mainstream schools (90%), whereas the remainder attended PRUs[7] (10%).

School type and school level of deprivation: A significantly greater proportion of PRUs are in areas of medium or high deprivation than mainstream schools (39% of PRUs are in areas of high deprivation compared to 17% of mainstream schools). Conversely, more mainstream schools than PRUs are in areas of low deprivation (51% compared to 7%).

School type and ethnicity: More pupils from an Asian or Asian British background than other ethnic groups attend mainstream schools (94% compared to 90% overall). However, a greater proportion of Black males attend a PRU than average (18% of black males are in PRUs compared to 10% of all pupils).

School type and family type: A greater proportion of pupils who attend mainstream schools are from a two parent family (60% of pupils from mainstream schools compared to 39% from PRUs are from two parent families), whereas the proportion of those in PRUs who come from a single parent family is higher than for mainstream schools (50% of those in PRUs are from single parent families compared with 30% of those in mainstream schools).

School type and Year group: More pupils who attend PRUs are in Year 11 than Year 10 (12% compared to 7%), whereas a greater proportion of pupils in mainstream education are in Year 10 than Year 11 (93% compared to 88%).

School level of deprivation and ethnicity: Schools in areas of high deprivation have a greater proportion of pupils from a Black or Black British background (36% compared to 20% overall). On the other hand, a large proportion of pupils from a White background attend schools in areas of low deprivation (60% compared to 47% overall).

---

[6] Note that these profiles are based on the *weighted* data to assist in understanding the patterns in this report.
[7] Pupil Referral Units, now referred to as Short Stay Schools

PRUs and self defined learning difficulties: A greater proportion of pupils who attend PRUs have a self-defined learning difficulty (15% have a learning difficulty compared to 10% of those in mainstream schools).

Overall, seventy one of pupils who took part in the survey attend schools with a sixth form, and twenty percent attend schools without. The remaining pupils attend PRUs which have not been classified into having or not having a sixth form, as they do not exist in London with sixth forms attached.

Segmentation analysis

Segmentation analysis

Segmentation methodology

Segmentation analysis was carried out to find groups or segments across the sample that have similar attitudes and aspirations. These attitudes and aspirations are similar within each cluster and are dissimilar between clusters. The segments outlined here are unique to this piece of research. They were created using the specific questions and responses given in this particular survey.

The segmentation analysis was carried out in two stages: factor analysis, followed by cluster analysis. Factor analysis is a data reduction tool that aims to reduce the large number of raw variables into a smaller collection of factors (or 'latent variables') that are representative of more broad concepts. In this case, factor analysis was carried out which simplified the questions on the survey into eight manageable themes by grouping together questions that were answered in similar ways by pupils. The specific questions which went into creating each theme are listed in the appendices. Below are the eight main themes which were identified from this research:.

- **Preference for a job over education after Year 11.** This relates to attitudes towards the benefits of getting a job over staying in education, and expectation from parents to get a job.

- **Importance of personal skills in future success.** This relates to how important young people think skills such as ICT, numeracy, and interpersonal skills are in future success.

- **External reasons for lack of confidence in exam results.** This refers to external factors why young people think they may not achieve the exam results they want at the end of Year 11, such as not feeling supported by teachers, lack of access to resources, and not wanting to be taking the particular courses they are doing.

- **Importance of personal traits in future success.** This describes the importance of personal traits in future success such as being intelligent and being confident.

- **Personal focus as a reason for lack of confidence in exam results.** This is associated with not working as hard as you could and being distracted at home and in lessons.

- **Socio-demographic factors affecting success.** This relates to whether young people think their gender, ethnicity and family's background will make it easier or more difficult for them to succeed in life.

- **Expectation to stay in education/training.** This relates to agreement around expectation from parents or the government, and support from teachers to stay in education or training after Year 11

- **Preparation for the future.** This is associated with how much young people know about the different things they could do after Year 11 and how much they have thought about it.

Following the factor analysis, segmentation was carried out using pupils' responses to these questions. By doing this, we were able to group similar respondents according to their scores across the above themes to derive four segments: 'Aspirant Academics', 'Aspirant Workers', 'Self Detractors' and the 'Unprepared'. All of the pupils who took part in the survey can be categorised in to one of these groups, although the strength of pupils' identification with their segment will vary within the groups.

The segments

The cluster analysis revealed four distinct and separate groupings among young people. These segments are illustrated in the chart overleaf.

Segmentation analysis

Females
Mainstream pupils
Low deprivation
Two parent families
Year 11

-Most likely to attribute their lack of success at school to a lack of personal focus, such as not working as hard as they could or getting distracted at school.

-Least likely to blame their lack of success at school on external factors such as teachers.

-Least likely to agree that personal skills such as numeracy and literacy, and personal traits such as being intelligent or confident are important for future success.

-Least likely to want to get a job rather than stay in education after Year 11

-Higher than average tendency to agree that they are expected to stay in education.

-Most likely to feel that they are well prepared for the future.

Self detractors

White Males
Self defined
learning difficulties

19%

41%

Aspirant academics

20%

19%

Unprepared

-Lowest feeling of being prepared for the future after Year 11

-Least likely to feel that they are expected to stay in education or training.

- Most likely to think that personal skills such as numeracy and interpersonal skills are important for success in life.

White Males
Year 10

Aspirant workers

-Most likely to want to get a job rather than stay in education after Year 11.

- Most likely to think that their lack of success at school is due to external factors such as not feeling supported by teachers or finding lessons boring.

- Very aware of the general expectation for young people to continue in education.

-Tend to think that personal skills are important for future success.

-Feel fairly well prepared for once they complete Year 11.

Pie chart represents the groups as a percentage of the total sample

Black Males
PRU pupils
High deprivation
Single parent families
Self defined learning difficulties
Self defined disability
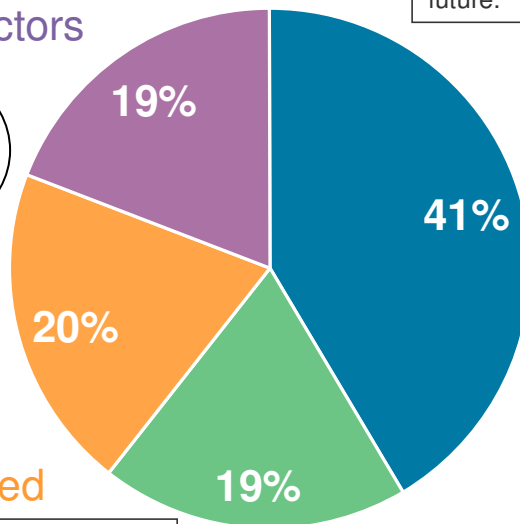
Aspirant Academics

'Aspirant Academics' are the largest group (41%) who are least likely to want to get a job once they have finished compulsory education. They have a higher than average tendency to feel that they are expected to stay in education/training after Year 11 and are the group that feel the most well prepared for their future after Year 11.

Young people attending mainstream schools are much more likely to be 'Aspirant Academics' (43% of those in mainstream schools fall within this segment, compared with 25% of those in PRUs). Connected to this, those attending schools in areas of low rather than high deprivation are more likely to fall in this segment (45% compared to 34%). These pupils are also much more likely to be female rather than male (48% compared to 35%).

The 'Aspirant Academics' are particularly likely to come from a two-parent household (44% compared to 41% overall). Furthermore, a significantly greater proportion of Year 11 pupils than Year 10 pupils are 'Aspirant Academics' (51% compared to 32%), which could be because Year 11 seems to be the time when young people start to think more realistically about what to do once they complete compulsory education.

The 'Aspirant Academics' are more likely than the other groups to be confident in their ability to do well in their exams (83% compared to 72% overall). They are also keen to go on to study the more traditional route of A levels after Year 11 (89% compared to 75% overall). Thinking about the qualitative research, pupils who were well informed about the options for after Year 11 and who were less anxious about their exam results tended to be happier thinking about and planning for the future. This is confirmed by the quantitative finding that aspirant academics are by far the most positive group about their future after Year 11 (91% are very or fairly positive compared to 82% overall).

Self Detractors

'Self Detractors' are characterised by a tendency to blame their lack of success at school on their personal lack of focus, such as not working as hard as they could, or getting distracted by friends. They are also the group who are least likely to blame their lack of confidence in achieving the exam results they want on external factors such as their teachers. 'Self Detractors' are least likely to think that personal traits such as confidence and intelligence and skills such as literacy and numeracy skills are important in future success in life.

White males are particularly likely to be 'Self Detractors' (23% compared to 20% overall). In addition, pupils with a self defined disability are also more likely than those without to be 'Self Detractors' (29% compared to 19%).

'Self Detractors' are the group that are least confident in their academic ability (29% compared to 19% overall are not very/not at all confident about getting the exam results they want). This could be why they are the least likely group to think that personal skills and traits are important for future success. Furthermore, rather than thinking about doing A levels, these pupils are more likely than 'Aspirant Academics' to be interested in: a vocational course (40% compared to 33%); an apprenticeship (26% compared to 15%); and a full-time job (23% compared to 7%). These pupils are also the most likely to play truant from school (39% compared to 30% overall), in particular because they think 'bunking off' is more fun than school (40% compared to 30% overall) and because their friends play truant (26% compared to 18% overall).

'Self detractors' seem to be anxious about their future: positivity about the future amongst these pupils is rather low (18% not very/not at all positive compared to 11% overall).

Unprepared

'Unprepared' students are the most likely to feel that they are not well prepared for their future after Year 11. They also feel the lowest expectation to stay in education or training after Year 11 from their parents/step-parents/carers and the government and a lack of support from their teachers. However, these pupils are the most likely to think that personal skills such as numeracy and literacy skills are important for success in life.

The 'Unprepared' segment are much more likely to be Year 10 than Year 11 students (28% compared to 13%), which would be expected considering pupils seem to receive most of their information about post-16 options in Year 11. Taking into account the fact that a greater proportion of Year 11 pupils than Year 10 pupils are 'Aspiring Academics' (51% compared to 32%), this could indicate that as pupils move from Year 10 to Year 11 and become better prepared for the future after Year 11, they begin to think more about staying in education rather than getting a job after Year 11.

White males are also more likely than other groups to be within the 'Unprepared' segment (24% compared to 20% of all young people).

'Unprepared' pupils tend to lack confidence in their academic abilities (26% not very/not at all confident compared to 19% overall) and feel least positive about their future compared to other pupils (20% not very/not at all positive compared to 11% overall). Following the same pattern as the 'Self detractors,' after Year 11, they are more likely than 'Aspirant achievers' to be interested in: a vocational course (41% compared to 33%); an apprenticeship (24% compared to 15%); and getting a full-time job (18% compared to 7%).

Aspirant Workers

'Aspirant Workers' are characterised by the strongest preference for getting a job rather than staying in education or training after Year 11. However, these pupils are very aware of the expectation of others (parents and the government) for young people to stay in education or training after compulsory education. They also and feel fairly well informed about their future options after Year 11.

 'Aspirant Workers' tend to think that personal skills such as numeracy and literacy are important for future success, although they are most likely to blame their lack of confidence in getting the exam results they want on external factors. These include not feeling supported by teachers, not having access to the resources they need and not wanting to do the courses they are taking.

Black males are significantly more likely than any other group to be members of the 'Aspirant Workers' segment (31% compared to 19% overall). Furthermore, the 'Aspirant Workers' are more likely to attend a PRU (33% compared to 17%). However, as already mentioned, these two factors are related: Black males are much more likely to attend a PRU than a mainstream school (13% compared to 6%). Also related to this, 'Aspirant Workers' are more likely to attend a school in an area of high rather than low deprivation (28% compared to 15%).

'Aspirant Workers' are more likely to live in a single than a two parent household (22% compared to 16%), but again, pupils in single parent household are more likely to attend a PRU than those living with two parents (15% compared to 7%).

Pupils with self defined difficulties with learning or with a self defined disability[8] are particularly likely to be in the 'Aspirant Workers' segment (35% and 39% respectively compared to 19% overall). Although these pupils are aware of the expectation on them to continue in education or training, they are more interested in getting a job after Year 11.

Pupils in this segment are characterised by thinking their lack of confidence in achieving academically is due to external factors, however this is not to say that they are not at all confident in their ability. 'Aspirant Workers' are more likely than 'Unprepared' students to be confident in their ability to get the exam results they want at the end of Year 11 (69% compared to 60%), but are not as confident as the 'Aspirant Academics' (23% not very/not at all confident compared to 10%). Although these pupils are much more likely than any other segment to want to get a full-time job after Year 11 (46% compared to 20% overall), they are also more likely to be interested in an apprenticeship (38% compared to 23% overall) or a vocational course such as a diploma or BTEC (48% compared to 39% overall).

Overall, 'Aspirant Workers' seem to be quite confident in what they want to do, and perhaps due to this, they tend to be more positive about their future after Year 11 than 'Unprepared' pupils (82% compared to 72%).

---

[8] It should be noted that the base size for pupils with a disability is low (75), hence findings based on this group should be treated as indicative only.

Expectations and aspirations

Expectations and aspirations

This chapter explores perceptions of what constitutes *success* and young people's aspirations. The key findings are summarised below:

- Success tends to immediately be seen in terms of wealth and by inferation, **social status**. There is a perceived need for external validation, with the optimum achievement being celebrated as **being the best** in a particular area. However young people do then develop this understanding into **achieving personal goals**; having **strong social networks**; and by consequence simply **being happy**.

- Amongst young people living in more deprived areas in particular, factors within their control such as working hard, tend to be weaved in with the less tangible notion of simply '**being lucky.**'

- **Future aspirations amongst 14-16-year-olds are felt to hinge on one's GCSE results**. Less academically-confident students tend to shy away from defining future aspirations as they're perceived to be so reliant on the uncertainty of their academic attainment – there is a strong sense of not wanting to set themselves up to fail.

- Pupils who think their family's background will make it more difficult for them to succeed are more likely to be from a Black or ethnic minority background (Black/Asian/mixed) than a White background (15% compared to 7%).

- Female pupils are more likely than male pupils to think **their gender will make it more difficult for them to succeed** (18% compared to 5%) in life.

Attitudes towards success

Among the pupils that took part in the discussion groups, spontaneous associations with the notion of *success* tend to focus on fairly materialistic traits. Almost all the pupils mention making a lot of money, and having the types of status symbols that would demonstrate this, such as a big car or a big house.

> **I'd like to do a job that's the best job in the world that you get lots of money.**
> Male, PRU, group 1

They look respectable, they wear a suit, have an Aston Martin, a lot of money, big house, and a family. I think of old people or grey [haired] people.
Female, school in affluent area, Year 10

The idea of a respectable, older person dressed in a suit suggests that a successful person is someone who has worked hard throughout their life and has earned such luxury items. Others immediately think of younger business people or celebrities and there is immediacy in their desire to gain such status symbols.

Money is Number one, but I think to be successful you need to have stuff, things to prove that you're successful, awards and stuff like that because people can't go around saying they're successful when they've got nothing to prove it.
Male, school in deprived area, Year 11

I think being successful is when someone mentions like a certain field, say cooking and you think Gordon Ramsay a successful person.
Male, school in deprived area, Year 11

This illustrates that pupils understand success as something that has to be affirmed by others, rather than a purely individual or private notion. It also demonstrates that celebrity is associated with success. This was particularly the case among the PRU pupils. This association with success is partly because being a celebrity results in having money and luxury; but also because being well known suggests that the person is the very best at what they do, at the top of their field. In this way they have achieved both wealth and external validation. In this sense, success is also thought of as being looked up to, where others strive to be like you, which satisfies esteem needs of being respected and admired.

This overt, public image of success is aspirational, but recognised by many as being somewhat detached from their own lives. Many also frame success in terms of achieving personal goals.

You achieve a goal. Not maybe one goal but achieve a number of goals as well and continue to achieve that goal….It could be to make a charity; it could be to make a business, even to be a great dad and things like that.
Male, school in deprived area, Year 11

Someone who's achieved what they wanted.
Female, PRU, group 2

This illustrates how, when thinking about success, pupils can think in a target- or goal-driven way, believing that success is achieving your personal goals. Therefore, understandings of success appear to be based both in a personal or private achievement but also gaining the respect and recognition of others around you.

Beyond the initial associations of money and celebrity, when they think of being successful, pupils also think of having a having a 'happy' life. For some, this would be having a job they enjoy and are motivated by.

Yeah just something that you look forward to doing like you get up in the morning and you don't dread going to work.
Male, group 1

As well as having a job they enjoy and want to do, many participants also think that there is a more social aspect to success in life. This includes having friends around you and having a long-term relationship or a family.

Having a family and just being happy with what they've got.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 10

Therefore, when thinking about success in life, although pupils do initially think about money and celebrity, they do have a wider understanding of success, based on being happy and content with their life, which they are aware that money may not always bring. Overall, pupils think that although there are certain symbols of success, such as having a big car or a happy family, different people will have different understandings of what success is, and what matters to them personally.

Some people are successful if they're like being a good housewife, so it's different people for different reasons.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 11

I think success is what you think of success, isn't it? So if you think that success is going to university, other people's success is different, isn't it? Because I know a lot of entrepreneurs that didn't go to university as well, so it's your success, isn't it?
Male, school in deprived area, Year 11

Although understanding of success in life tends to be quite wide, on the whole, success at school is thought of much more simplistically; as getting good exam results. Pupils acknowledge that 'good' exam results are dependent on individuals and their capabilities. As such, 'good' grades are reaching or exceeding their target grades.

If you do well at school, you get the grades that you want to achieve...and it depends on what you want to get. Some people want Cs, because like some people can't really aim as high as A.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 11

Thinking of success in terms of exams is perhaps because exams tend to be on the minds of Key Stage 4 students, or because being able to progress beyond compulsory education depends on them achieving certain grades. It is interesting to note how pupils extend this target- or goal-driven approach into their wider understanding of success, however do not appear to apply their wider, more social understandings of success in life to the school environment.

Future aspirations

The discussion groups highlight a clear difference in aspirations among participants. Young people's awareness of post-16 options will be discussed in the chapter, *Awareness and knowledge of options after Year 11,* but it is important to highlight that participants *see their GCSE results as having a significant impact on what they will be able to do in the future.* Amongst the less confident uncertainty over their future academic achievement leads many to defer thoughts about what they might do in the future and many claim this is something they haven't really thought about. In this way there is a strong element of not wanting to set ambitions that they may be incapable of achieving i.e. they don't want to set themselves up for a fall. Awareness that there are qualifications and other paths that can lead to success, which pupils can undertake even if they do not gain five C grades at GCSE, the standard entry requirement for many sixth form colleges, is quite low among discussion group participants.

It like depends on the GCSEs we get and then going to college and choose the right course and then, yeah.
Female, Year 11, school in deprived area

I've sort of thought about it. Maybe I'll do economics, but it depends on what I get in my Maths GCSE.
Male, school in affluent area, Year 10

The more confident pupils tend to have a clearer idea of where they are heading and what they would like to do in the future

I like working with people, something like a social worker or psychologist.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 11

I want to study medicine, I'd like to be a doctor. Like after college I want to go university.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 11]

There is, however an acute awareness of the recession among pupils at the more affluent school visited. In this way, in contrast to their less confident peers who fear their academic achievement will impact on their future success (which is, in part at least, something they can confront), these students feel more vulnerable to external conditions completely beyond their control. The fear is that the recession is making it more difficult for people to get the type of job they desire.

It doesn't mean like, it doesn't matter how many qualifications and stuff you've got, if the job isn't there then you can't get it.
Male, school in affluent area, Year 11

There are two different ways in which pupils react to concern over the recession. Some think that it is better to stay in education, as there is little chance of getting a good job at the age of 16, especially with the current jobs market. Others, however, see the number of university graduates who are unemployed, so question the point of staying in education. However, although there are these different thought processes, they seem at this point to be just thoughts which are not actually influencing the actions of these young people. All the affluent pupils who participated in the group discussions still intend to go to college after Year 11, and many are planning on going to university.

Factors that affect future success in life

The quantitative survey included a number of questions to establish how important Key Stage 4 pupils think various factors are in their future success in life. Over nine in ten (93%) pupils agree that working hard at school/aiming to do the best you can will help their future success in life. A similar proportion think that being confident (93%); being able to read and write well (92%); and having good qualifications/exam results (91%) will help their future success in life. Interestingly, only around two in five (41%) say they think that being lucky will affect their future success, which indicates it is perceived to be comparatively less important when set against the other attributes. However, as discussed below, the qualitative discussions reveal that luck and chance are certainly factors that are perceived to play a role in young people's futures.

Factors affecting future success in life

Q How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following things will help your future success in life?

- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Tend to agree
- ■ Neither agree nor disagree
- ■ Tend to disagree
- ■ Strongly disagree
- ■ Don't know/not stated

Factor	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not stated
Working hard at school/aiming to do the best you can	70%	23%	3%	1%		3%
Being able to read and write well	68%	23%	4%	1%		3%
Being confident	61%	32%	3%	1%		4%
Having good qualifications/exam results	66%	25%	3%	1%		4%
Being intelligent/clever	51%	35%	7%	2%		4%
Getting on well with other people	45%	41%	9%	2%		3%
Having good numeracy skills	46%	38%	8%	2%	2%	4%
Having good ICT skills	35%	40%	14%	4%	2%	5%
Being lucky	17%	24%	31%	13%	8%	7%

Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010

Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

There are particular sub groups of pupils who are more likely to agree that certain factors will help their future success in life. For example, pupils in mainstream education are more likely than those in PRUs to think the following will help their future success: working hard/aiming to do the best you can (94% compared to 88%); getting on well with other people (87% compared to 75%); and being able to read and write well (92% compared to 85%).

Furthermore, pupils who attend schools in more affluent areas (low IMD) are more likely than pupils at schools in more deprived areas (high IMD) to think certain factors will help their future success in life: getting on well with other people (89% compared to 82%); having good numeracy skills (85% compared to 79%); and being intelligent/clever (89% compared to 83%). Conversely, pupils from schools in more deprived areas are more likely than pupils attending schools in affluent areas to say being lucky will help their future success (49% compared to 41%). This pattern is discussed in more detail below, feeding in findings from the discussion groups.

There are also interesting gender differences when exploring perceptions of the factors that will influence a young person's future success in life. Females are more likely than males to say their future success will be helped by getting on well with other people (89% compared to 85%); being able to read and write well (95% compared to 91%); and having good exam results/qualifications (94% compared to 90%). However, males are more likely than females to agree that future success is helped by being lucky (48% compared to 34%) and being intelligent/clever (90% compared to 84%). Interestingly, pupils with a self defined learning difficulty or disability[9] are also more likely to say that being lucky will help their future success than pupils overall (52% and 61% respectively compared to 41% overall).

Turning to the discussion groups, 'hopeful' is perhaps the most appropriate way of describing students' thoughts about their likelihood to succeed in life. Participants tend to feel they will be able to achieve their goals if they are determined and work hard, which supports the quantitative finding that over nine in ten (93%) agree that working hard at school/aiming to do the best you can will help their future success. However, as illustrated by the quote below, participants from schools in more deprived areas think that there are various things that could happen or circumstances that could change which may prevent them from being successful. In this sense, think there is an element of *chance* or *luck* that will affect their likelihood of being successful. This supports the earlier finding that pupils in schools in deprived areas are more likely than those who attend schools in affluent areas to say that being lucky will help their future (49% compared to 41%). This highlights the perceived delicate balance between factors that are within a young person's control and those that are beyond it.

---

[9] It should be noted that the base size for pupils with a disability is low (75), hence findings based on this group should be treated as indicative only.

If you work hard and you are lucky you can achieve what you want to do.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 10

The role of gender, ethnicity and family background in future success

Pupils were asked specific questions about whether they think their gender, ethnicity and family background will make it easier or more difficult for them to succeed in life. This data is shown in the chart below.

At an overall level approaching half (46%) of pupils think that their family's background will make it *easier* for them to succeed in life, while just over one in ten (11%) feel it will make it more difficult for them. When responding to this question, pupils were told to think of family background as, *"What members of your family do for a living, how much money your family has, which part of the country your family lives in and so on."* A third (32%) of pupils feel that their family's background will make no difference to their success.

The majority of pupils think that their gender and their ethnic background will make no difference to their future success in life (60% and 54% respectively).

The influence of gender, ethnicity and family background on success in life

Q Do you think the following things will make it easier or more difficult for you to succeed in life?

- ■ A lot easier
- ■ A little easier
- ■ Makes no difference
- ■ A little more difficult
- ■ A lot more difficult
- ■ Don't know/not stated

	A lot easier	A little easier	Makes no difference	A little more difficult	A lot more difficult	Don't know/not stated
Your family's background	18%	27%	32%	8%	3%	12%
Your ethnic background	6%	12%	54%	11%	5%	12%
Being male or female	7%	11%	60%	9%	2%	11%

Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010

Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

44
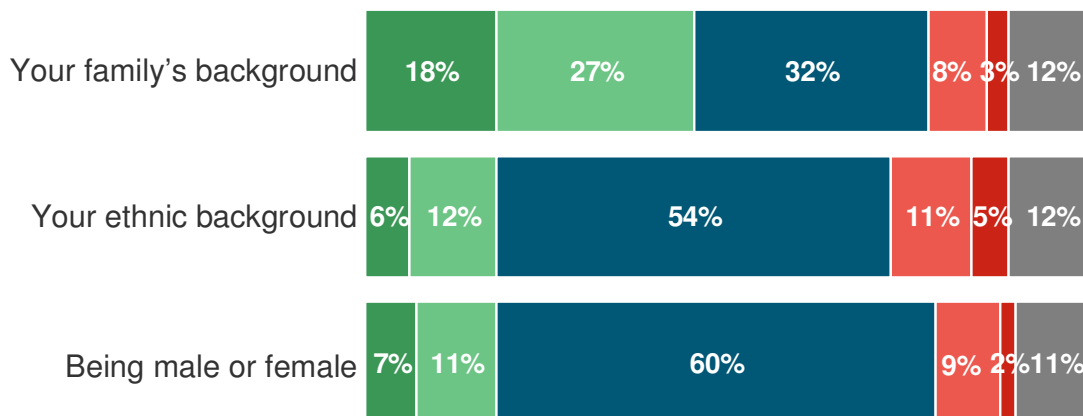
As one might expect pupils who think their family's background will make it easier for them to succeed in life are more likely to attend a school in a more affluent area than more deprived area (48% compared to 39%). It is interesting to recall the greater likelihood of young people living in deprived areas to agree that being lucky will help their future success in life. Those who feel their family's background will make it easier for them to succeed are also more likely to be male than female (52% compared to 41%) and be part of a two parent, rather than a single parent, family (50% compared to 42%). It is important to note that there is not a significant relationship between parental status and level of deprivation of the school. On the other hand, pupils who think their family's background will make it more difficult for them to succeed are more likely to be from a mixed[10], Asian/Asian British, or Black/Black British than a White background (17%, 13% and 16% respectively compared to 7%).

Looking at ethnicity, pupils from a Black/Black British background are particularly likely to say their ethnicity will make it more difficult for them to succeed (38% compared to 16% of pupils overall). In general, pupils from a Black/Black British, Asian/Asian British or mixed[11] background are more likely than those from a White background to say that their ethnic background makes it more difficult for them to succeed in life (38%, 15% and 21% compared to 5% respectively).

Looking at gender, female pupils are significantly more likely than males to think that their gender will make it more difficult for them to succeed in life (18% compared to 5%). Conversely, males are much more likely to think their gender will make it easier for them to succeed (25% compared to 11%).

Pupils who have a self defined learning difficulty more likely that those who do not to think that their gender (25% compared to 17%) and ethnic background (31% compared to 16%) will make it easier for them to succeed in life. Similarly, those with a self-defined disability[12] are also more likely than those without to think that gender (27% compared to 17%) and ethnic background (33% compared to 17%) will make it easier for them to succeed in life.

---

[10] It should be noted that the base size for pupils from a mixed ethnic background is low (80), hence findings based on this group should be treated as indicative only.
[11] It should be noted that the base size for pupils from a mixed ethnic background is low (80), hence findings based on this group should be treated as indicative only.
[12] The base size for pupils with a self defined disability is low (75). Therefore this finding is indicative only and should be used with caution.

Disability, learning difficulties and success

Pupils were asked whether they would say that they have a learning difficulty or a disability. Six percent of pupils say they have a disability, and just over one in ten (11%) say they have difficulties with learning. *It is important to note that these are self defined notions, rather than an official diagnosis or statement.[13]*

As shown in the chart below, a third (35%) of pupils with a disability feel this will make it more difficult for them to succeed in life, while over a quarter (28%) think it will make it easier for them.[14]

The majority (56%) of pupils with a self defined learning difficulty think that this will make it more difficult for them to succeed in life. However, one in seven (14%) think it will make it easier for them.

Disability, learning difficulties and success

Q Do you think the following things will make it easier or more difficult for you to succeed in life?

- A lot easier
- A little easier
- Makes no difference
- A little more difficult
- A lot more difficult
- Don't know/not stated

	A lot easier	A little easier	Makes no difference	A little more difficult	A lot more difficult	Don't know/not stated	Base
Have a disability	19%	9%	18%	13%	22%	19%	(75)
Have difficulties with learning	6%	8%	12%	27%	28%	18%	(141)
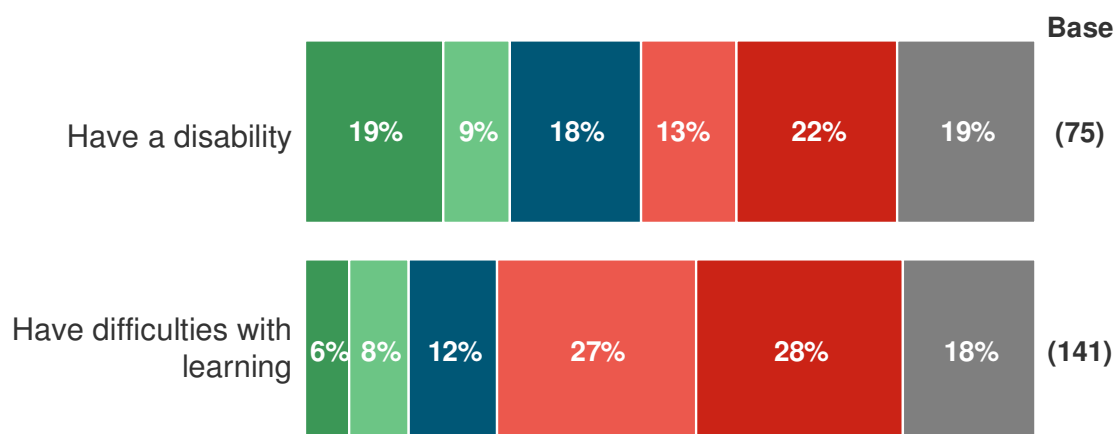
Base: Pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London who say they have a disability/difficulties with learning, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010

Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

---

[13] The questions asked were: "Would you say that you have a disability?" and "Would you say you have difficulties with learning?"
[14] The base size for pupils with a disability is small (75) therefore these findings should be treated as indicative only.

Thinking about the future: plans after Year 11

As the chart below shows, the vast majority (75%) of pupils say they have thought a lot or a fair amount about what they will do after Year 11.

Thoughts about after Year 11

Q How much have you thought about what you will do after Year 11?
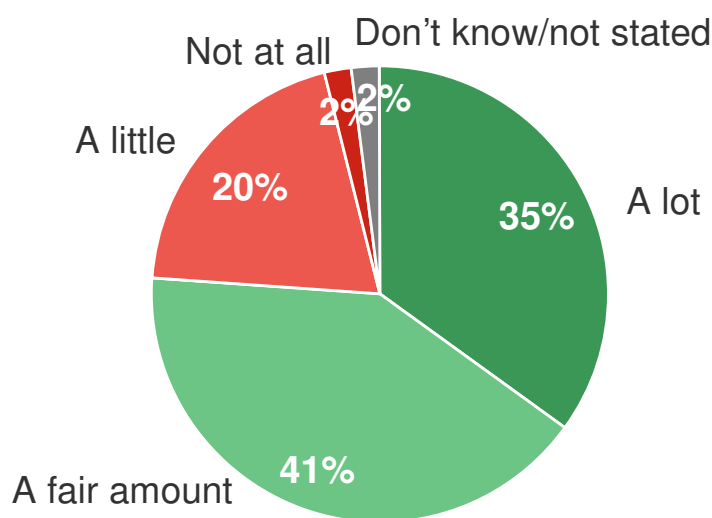
Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010
Ipsos MORI

Source: Ipsos MORI

As might be expected, pupils in Year 11 more likely that those in Year 10 to say they have thought a lot or a fair amount about what they will do after Year 11 (83% compared to 67%). Female pupils are also more likely than male pupils to say that they have thought about it a lot (40% compared to 29%), and so too are pupils from a Black/ Black British background compared to White or Asian/Asian British pupils (43% compared to 31% and 33% respectively). This is interesting if one recalls that pupils from a Black / Black British and those from an Asian / Asian British background are more likely than those from a White background to feel their ethnicity makes it more difficult for them to succeed in life.

In addition, pupils who self define as having difficulties learning or as having a disability[15] are particularly likely to have only thought a little or not at all about what they will do after Year 11 (33% and 35% compared to 22% overall).
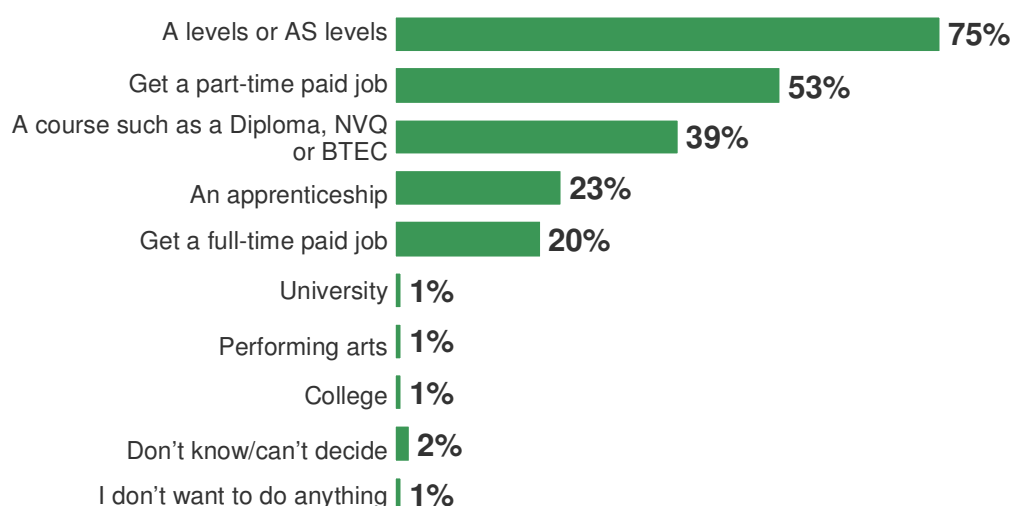
---

[15] The base size for pupils with a self defined disability is low (75). Therefore this finding is indicative only and should be used with caution.

© 2010 Ipsos MORI.

Pupils who say they are not very or not at all positive about their future are significantly more likely than those who are very or fairly positive to say they have thought a little or not at all about what they will do after Year 11 (42% compared to 19%). This reinforces the pattern seen throughout the qualitative and quantitative research that less confident students tend to defer decisions about their future as they are seen to rest very much in the uncertainty of their GCSE results.

The chart below shows the things pupils would be interested in doing after Year 11, three quarters (75%) say that they would be interested in doing A or AS levels while half (53%) say they would be interested in getting a part-time job. It is important to note that pupils were permitted to select as many options as they wanted to.

Plans for after Year 11

Q Which of the following things, if any, would you be interested in doing after Year 11?

Option	%
A levels or AS levels	75%
Get a part-time paid job	53%
A course such as a Diploma, NVQ or BTEC	39%
An apprenticeship	23%
Get a full-time paid job	20%
University	1%
Performing arts	1%
College	1%
Don't know/can't decide	2%
I don't want to do anything	1%

Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

Pupils from PRUs are more likely than those in mainstream education to say they would be interested in a vocational course, such as a diploma or NVQ (54% compared to 37%); an apprenticeship (35% compared to 22%) and in getting a full-time paid job (41% compared to 17%) after Year 11. Conversely, a greater proportion of mainstream pupils say they would be interested in doing A or AS levels than PRU pupils (77% compared to 50%).

Pupils who attend schools in areas of high deprivation are particularly likely to say they are interested in doing an apprenticeship (30% compared to 23% overall). On the other hand,

pupils who attend schools in areas of low deprivation are more likely than those who attend schools in areas of high deprivation to say they are interested in doing A or AS levels (78% compared to 65%). Further, female pupils are more likely than males to say they are interested in doing A/AS levels (82% compared to 69%) whereas male pupils are more likely than females to say they are interested in getting a full-time job (23% compared to 16%) and doing an apprenticeship (29% compared to 17%). White males are particularly likely to be interested in getting a full-time job (28% compared to 20% overall) or start an apprenticeship (28% compared to 23% overall).

Pupils who attend schools without a sixth form are also more likely to be interested in starting an apprenticeship than those who attend schools with an attached sixth from (32% compared to 20%). This could be because they also feel more informed about starting an apprenticeship (40% compared to 33% feel they know a lot/fair amount).

Looking at disability and learning difficulties, pupils with a self defined disability are more likely than those without to be interested in a vocational course (55% compared to 38%), and apprenticeship (33% compared to 22%) and a full-time job (41% compared to 18%)[16]. However, pupils with self defined difficulties learning seem less interested in the education or training routes and more interested in going into employment: pupils with a self-defined learning difficulty are much more likely than those without to say they are interested in getting a full-time job after Year 11 (37% compared to 17%).

From the qualitative discussion groups, most pupils have thought, however briefly, about what they might do after Year 11. However, pupils who appear to be more academic, have thought about possible future careers, and hence know exactly what they need to do after Year 11. These pupils intend to go on to study for A levels, because these are seen as the 'best' route to take, which may help them get into the top universities and pursue their chosen careers.

I would want to go to like a sixth form college and study science ... and then if I get good grades there, then I'll carry on to university and then hopefully I'd get a good job, like a doctor or a teacher or a pharmacist.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 11

For most of the pupils in mainstream education included in the qualitative research, there is a general assumption among peers that they will go to college after Year 11 albeit without

---

[16] The base size for pupils with a self defined disability is low (75). Therefore this finding is indicative only and should be used with caution.

necessarily being sure of what they will study at college. Going to college is seen as an opportunity to increase their knowledge, and gain important qualifications which will help improve their career prospects and give them something to fall back on if they want to change their vocation.

> **When I leave school next year I don't care where I work, I'll work in Asda, Tesco's, Sainsbury's, whatever because I'll be 17 by next fall so I've not really got much choice but I don't want to be 35 and working in Tesco's because I dropped out of school when I was 16 and thought 'this is it, I don't want to do education any more'.**
> Female, school in deprived area, Year 11

> **It's best to have like a backup plan so if you do well, just keep them with you, like the whole qualifications. …and you get a bigger range of opportunities.**
> Female, school in deprived area, Year 11

For some pupils, going to college is also seen as a helpful stage in their transition to adulthood - some feel that they are not yet ready to leave education and face the world of work. They think that college would provide them with a safe environment where they can continue to grow and develop without the responsibility of having a full time job.

> **If you leave at 16 and you're going straight into a job…then you are automatically kind of forced to grow up because you are out there and you're earning money.**
> Female, school in deprived area, Year 10

Some of the Year 10 students included in the qualitative research, who do not appear to be quite so driven or motivated, are less sure about what they will do after Year 11, and indeed whether they intend to stay in education or training. Rather than *knowing* that they will not go to college, these pupils just seem not to have really given it much thought. This, however, is partly because they have only recently started in Year 10 and they are not thinking that far ahead. However, when probed, they think about not enjoying school, and are concerned about whether the grades they will achieve in their GCSEs will enable them to go to college. This will be discussed further in the final chapter, *Reengaging the disengaged*.

Despite not necessarily being sure about what they want to do after Year 11, many pupils anticipate that whatever they do with regards to education or training they intend to get a part-time job. This is either to give them the money to afford to live a more independent life, or to contribute to their family household.

You can still do it [get a job] like on a Saturday or Sunday kind of thing, so it doesn't have to affect your education, so you can get money but still working towards a better future as well.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 10

The pupils included in the qualitative research largely felt they can earn sufficient money with an evening or weekend job, and this need not prevent them from staying in education or training after Year 11.

Positivity towards the future after Year 11

Four in five (82%) pupils say that they feel positive about their future after Year 11, while just one in ten (11%) say they feel not very, or not at all positive about their future.

Positivity about the future after Year 11

Q Overall, how positive do you feel about your future after Year 11?
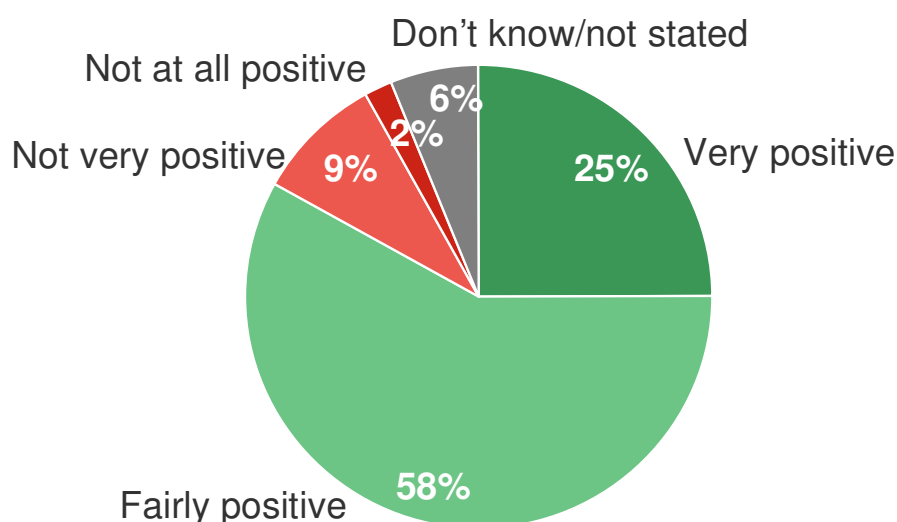
Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

Pupils who are interested in doing A/AS levels and those who plan to attend university are particularly likely to say they feel positive about their future after Year 11 (87% and 88% respectively compared to 82% overall). Furthermore, male pupils and those from two-parent families are also more likely to say they feel positive about their future (85% for both compared to 82% overall). However, those with a self defined disability[17] or learning difficulty

---

[17] The base size for pupils with a self defined disability is low (75). Therefore this finding is indicative only and should be used with caution.

are much less optimistic about their future than those without (19% and 21% respectively are not very/not at all positive compared to 11% overall). As already mentioned, these pupils are particularly interested in getting a full-time job after Year 11 (41% and 37% compared to 20% overall), but this lack of optimism could reflect that they do not feel that positive about getting a job.

Just as pupils are hopeful about being successful in life, the discussion groups also revealed that pupils are cautious about being positive about their futures, for much the same reasons - that is that pupils are nervous about the uncertainty of exams. Pupils feel that their aspirations and whether they are able to meet these are highly dependent on their exam results. Therefore, although pupils may be largely positive, they are very aware of the barriers they will have to overcome, such as exams, which leads them to think slightly more cautiously about their futures.

University plans

As shown in the chart below seven in ten (71%) pupils say that they are very or fairly likely to go to university in the future. Around one in seven (15%) say they are not very or not at all likely to go to university.

Likelihood of going to university

Q How likely are you to go to university in the future?
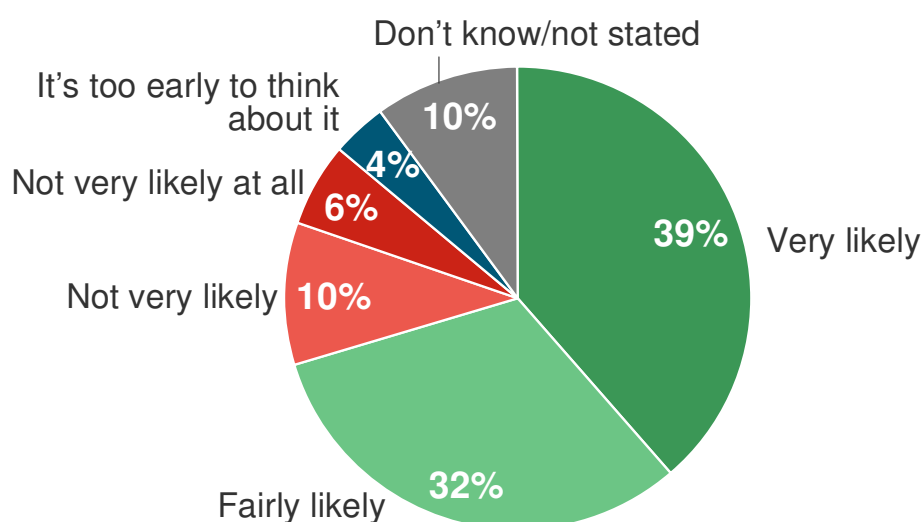
Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010

Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

© 2010 Ipsos MORI.

Pupils who attend a mainstream school are significantly more likely the PRU students to say they are very/fairly likely to go to university (73% compared to 46%). Furthermore, pupils who attend schools in low or medium areas of deprivation are more likely to say they are very/fairly likely to go to university than those who attend schools in areas of high deprivation (73% and 72% compared to 64% respectively).

A significantly greater proportion of pupils with a self defined disability[18] or learning difficulty than young people overall say they are *not likely at all* to go to university (17% and 15% compared to 6% overall). This is in line with the earlier finding that they are also particularly interested in getting a full-time job after Year 11 (41% and 37% compared to 20% overall).

Pupils from an Asian or Black background are also more likely than White pupils to say they are very/fairly likely to go to university (84% and 77% compared to 65% respectively), and so too are females compared to males (76% compared to 66%).

---

[18] The base size for pupils with a self defined disability is low (75). Therefore this finding is indicative only and should be used with caution.

Areas for future research

It is apparent from this research that the proportion of secondary school pupils who self define as having difficulties with learning (11%) or a disability (six percent) are much higher than the official DCSF statistics[19] which state that only 2.2% of secondary pupils in London have special educational needs. It is probably the case that the official figure is the more extreme end of the spectrum of special educational needs, whereas young people themselves have a broader understanding of what it is to have a disability or difficulties with learning. Nonetheless, the majority (56%) of those with a self defined think that this will make it more difficult fro them to succeed in life. It would therefore be useful to try to find more about this group who are not necessarily included in the official statistics to establish what can be done to further support pupils and encourage these pupils to feel more positive about their future success in life.

No quotas were placed on the number of pupils living in care, with the number in our sample allowed to fall-out naturally in line with their incidence. This has resulted in a low base of children in care for quantitative analysis (n=22). On an indicative level their views were seen to reflect those of the overall sample, however the low base size makes it difficult to identify real differences. It would therefore be necessary to conduct a greater volume of quantitative interviews amongst this group to be able to explore any differences with confidence. Alternatively, exploratory qualitative research might be conducted with young people living in care to explore in depth their expectations and aspirations, and to identify the particular needs of this cohort of young people.

---

[19] http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000852/SFR14_2009_LA.xls

Awareness and knowledge of options after Year 11

Awareness and knowledge of options after Year 11

This chapter explores young people's knowledge of and attitudes towards the options that are available to them once they complete compulsory education at the age of 16. The key findings are summarised below:

- **Around a third** (31%) **of pupils only know a little or nothing at all about the different things they could do after Year 11.** The majority (66%) of pupils say they know a lot or a fair amount.

- Of all the options, **pupils know the most about doing A/AS levels** (66% know a lot/fair amount) although **knowledge about the less 'traditional' routes is much lower**, such as apprenticeships (35%) or other vocational courses (42%).

- Pupils generally think that **A levels are the 'best' route to take after Year 11** because they are more widely recognised and respected, particularly among universities.

- **Apprenticeships are seen as a good option for pupils who know what they would like to do in the future**, and who do not flourish in a classroom environment. However, **there is some concern that apprenticeship training is so specific that it may make it difficult to change into a different area of work in later life.**

Familiarity with options for after Year 11

In order to establish the level of knowledge that Key Stage 4 pupils have about the options available to them once they complete compulsory education, pupils were asked how much they feel they know about the different things they could do after Year 11. As the chart below shows, two-thirds (66%) of pupils say they know a lot/a fair amount about the different things they could do after Year 11, although a third (31%) say they know a little or nothing at all.

Knowledge of post 16 options

Q How much do you feel you know about the different things you could do after Year 11?

Don't know/not stated

Nothing at all

A lot 15%

4%

3%

A little 28%

50%
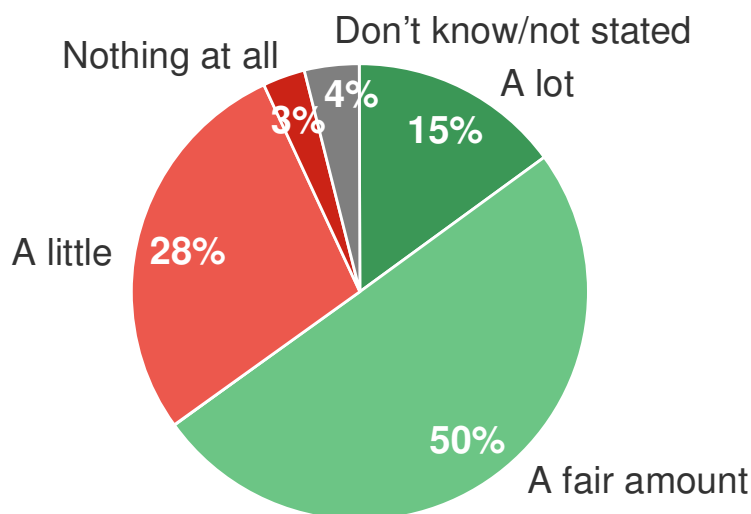
A fair amount

Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010

Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

As would be expected, pupils in Year 11 are more likely than those in Year 10 to say they know a lot/fair amount about the different things they could do after Year 11 (75% compared to 56%). Furthermore, pupils who say they are very/fairly positive about the future after Year 11 are more likely to say they are very/fairly well informed about the different options available after Year 11 than those who are not very/not at all positive about their future (72% compared to 35%). This is a particularly large difference which suggests that being informed about future options is connected to general positivity about their future.

Pupils were also asked how much they think they know about specific options that are available to them after Year 11, which is shown in the chart below.

Pupils feel they know the most about doing A or AS levels. Two thirds (66%) of pupils say they know a lot or a fair amount about doing A or AS levels, with a tenth (9%) knowing nothing at all.

Knowledge of specific post 16 options

Q How much do you feel you know about the following things you could do after Year 11?

Legend:
- I know a lot (dark green)
- I know a fair amount (light green)
- I know a little (light red/pink)
- I know nothing at all (dark red)
- Not stated (grey)

Option	I know a lot	I know a fair amount	I know a little	I know nothing at all	Not stated
Doing A levels or AS levels	32%	35%	22%	9%	3%
Getting a job	14%	46%	34%	5%	2%
Courses such as Diplomas, NVQs and BTECs	11%	31%	39%	17%	2%
Starting an apprenticeship	9%	26%	38%	24%	3%

Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

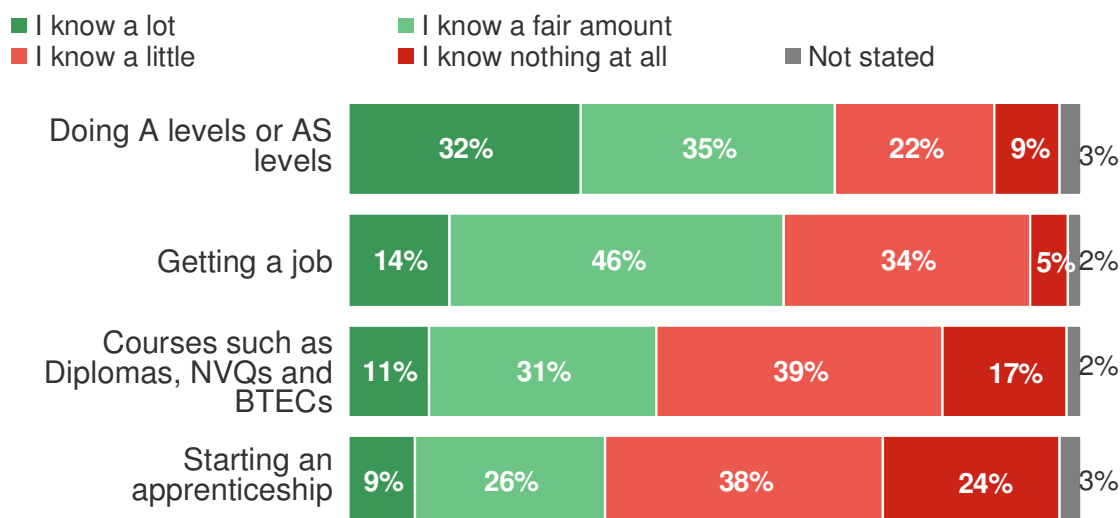Certain groups of pupils are more likely to say they know a lot/fair amount about specific post 16 options than others. For example, pupils from schools in areas of high deprivation are more likely than those who attend schools in areas of low deprivation to say they know a lot/fair amount about getting a job (66% compared to 56%). They are also more likely to say they know a lot/fair amount about vocational courses such as diplomas (51% compared to 39%) and starting an apprenticeship (43% compared to 35%).

On the other hand, pupils who attend schools in the most affluent areas are more likely than those who attend schools in the most deprived areas to say they know a lot/fair amount about doing A/AS levels (72% compared to 56%).

Similarly, pupils at mainstream schools are more likely than those who attend PRUs to say they know a lot/fair amount about doing A/AS levels (69% compared to 45%). However, students at PRUs are more likely that those in mainstream education to say they know a lot/fair amount about vocational courses (52% compared to 41%) and starting an apprenticeship (48% compared to 34%).

However, as already mentioned, there is a relationship between school type and level of deprivation, where PRUs are more likely to be in areas of medium or high deprivation than mainstream schools (39% compared to 17% in areas of high deprivation and 54% compared

to 32% in areas of medium deprivation). Furthermore, mainstream schools are more likely than PRUs to be in areas of low deprivation (51% compared to 7%). This relationship therefore explains to some extent why both school type and level of deprivation appear to play an important role in which post 16 options pupils feel they are well informed about.

A greater proportion of pupils who attend schools without a sixth form feel that they know a lot/fair amount about apprenticeships (40% compared to 33% of pupils at a school with a sixth form), however, those who attend schools with a sixth form are more likely to know a lot/fair amount about starting A/AS levels (75% compared to 46% of pupils at schools without a sixth form). This suggests that information provision for 'less traditional' routes may be better in schools where pupils have to leave after Year 11.

Just as the survey found that Year 11 pupils are more likely than Year 10 pupils to say they know a lot/fair amount about the different things available to them after Year 11, this was also the case in the discussion groups. Given that the discussion groups largely took place in the first school term of the academic year, Year 10 pupils had only just begun their GCSE or equivalent courses and were more concerned with working towards these exams than thinking about what they would do after Year 11, and the options that are available to them.

I don't know much about colleges, people ask me and I don't know what they do.
Female, school in affluent area, Year 10

Year 11 pupils who, at the time of the discussion groups were starting to apply to further education institutions, generally felt more knowledgeable about college and the types of courses on offer.

Attitudes towards the different options

Just as pupils feel they know the most about doing A or AS levels, in mainstream schools there is the attitude that A levels are the 'best' option, and that they are more widely recognised and respected by universities.

But the thing is it's like only A levels are recognised in like high class universities
Female, school in deprived area, Year 10

A few mainstream pupils acknowledge that although they themselves would not be interested in embarking on an apprenticeship, they think they are a good idea for people who are not so academic, who do not really like the classroom environment, and who know that they want to work in a particular discipline.

They're [apprenticeships] good for people who like manual work or for people who don't like staying in the classroom.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 11

I think apprenticeships are for people who have their mind set for what they want to do, say like football apprenticeships or my friend got offered a job for Ferrari, he loves cars so it's probably useful to start working for Ferrari
Male, school in deprived area, Year 11

While pupils did acknowledge the merits of an apprenticeship, their main concern about the qualification is that it can be quite restrictive or limiting.

But it's not really that great for the qualification side of things because say you wanted to change your field of work then qualification and you have to change your apprenticeship from a different job, its not really that useful but if you had qualifications at university and at college as well, even if its in different fields, you can say that you've been educated in different areas.
Male, school in deprived area, Year 11

Participants feel once someone has qualified in a particular discipline, it would be difficult for them to change to a different area of work because their education and training had been so specific. Pupils think of A levels as something more generic that a person can fall back onto in later life if they want to change their career, and they struggled to see how the skills developed through an apprenticeship could be transferred to a different vocation.

Areas for further research

It is clear from this research that levels of awareness and knowledge about more vocational routes such as apprenticeships and diplomas is rather low, and at times, misinformed. It would therefore be useful to further explore why some young people hold particular views about apprenticeships, such as their restrictive nature, and where these ideas originated from. Similarly, it would be useful to further investigate why young people feel so uninformed about the new diploma, and the action schools are taking to inform young people about what this qualification entails and its benefits.

Access to information

Access to information

This chapter explores which sources of information young people perceive to be useful for finding out about their options after Year 11. It also outlines the type of information that young people would like to receive. The key findings are summarised below:

- Overall, pupils think that **speaking to adult relatives or carers has been the most useful source of information** for finding out about their future (83% say this was very or fairly useful).

- **Pupils who attend schools in more deprived areas and PRUs have found the service provided by Connexions to be particularly helpful** both for information and support about what they could do after Year 11

- **Pupils would like to receive information from older peers**, who they trust to offer reliable information due to their recent experience of further education.

Which sources have young people accessed, and how useful were they?

When it comes to making decisions about what to do after Year 11, being able to access useful information is very important for young people. In order to establish how useful different information sources are to pupils, they were asked to respond to a number of sources and assess their usefulness. The data is shown in the chart overleaf.

According to pupils, the most useful source they have accessed is speaking to adult relatives or carers. Over four in five (83%) say this was very or fairly useful, followed by speaking to teachers; over seven in ten (72%) think that this has been useful in finding out about the things they could do after Year 11.

Connexions is described as a service that, "Offers advice on education, careers, housing, money, health and relationships for 13-19 year olds in the UK."[20] Under half (48%) of pupils say that Connexions has been very or fairly useful for advice about things they could do after Year 11. However, almost a quarter (24%) of pupils say is has not been very useful or not useful at all. Furthermore, a further quarter (25%) say that this does not apply to their situation, either because it is not available or because they have not used it.

---

[20] www.connexions-direct.com

The usefulness of information sources

Q You may have spoken to people, or used sources of information at school for advice about things you could do after Year 11. How useful did you find each of the following?

Legend:
- Very useful
- Fairly useful
- Not very useful
- Not useful at all
- Doesn't apply – I haven't used this/it isn't available
- Not stated

Source	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all	Doesn't apply	Not stated
Adult relatives/carers	36%	47%	10%	2%	3%	2%
Teachers	19%	53%	16%	6%	5%	1%
Websites/the internet	26%	42%	18%	5%	7%	2%
School careers advisor/careers lessons	18%	42%	17%	6%	14%	2%
Connexions	15%	33%	17%	8%	25%	2%
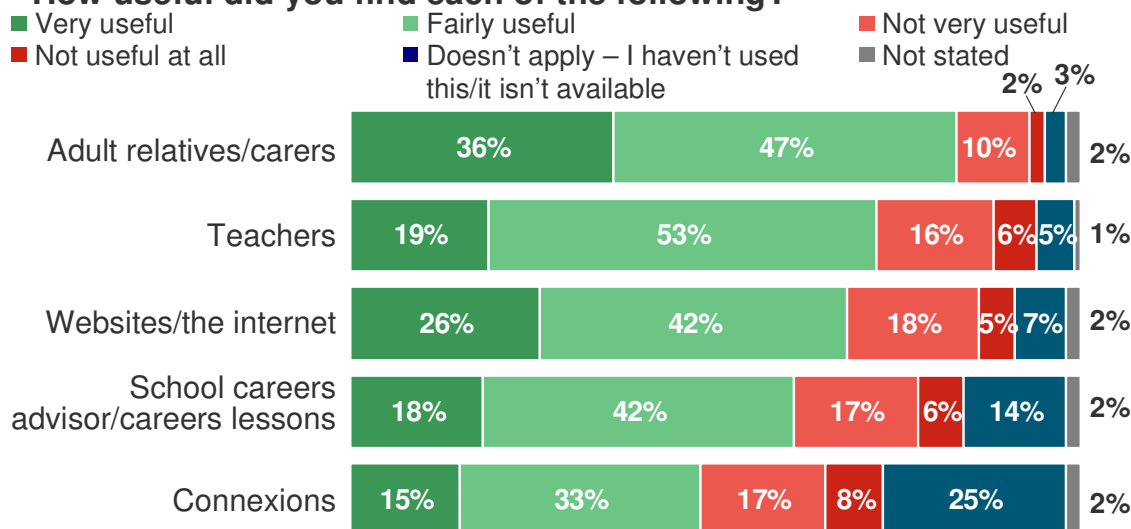
Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

As would be expected, a greater proportion of Year 11 pupils than Year 10 pupils think that teachers (22% compared to 15%) and their school careers advisor/careers lessons (23% compared to 12%) have been very useful for advice about the options available to them after Year 11.

Pupils with two parents living in their home are a little more likely that those of a single parent to think that speaking to adult relatives or carers has been very or fairly useful (85% compared to 80%).

The service offered by Connexions is found to be very/fairly useful for a greater proportion of students who attend PRUs than those who attend mainstream schools (60% compared to 47%). In the PRU where the discussion group took place, pupils had had a lot of contact with Connexions advisors. However in the mainstream schools, only a few had used any Connexions service. This may suggest that PRU pupils are more likely to think Connexions is a useful service because they have had a lot more exposure to it. Similarly, pupils from schools in areas of medium/high deprivation are more likely to say that Connexions were very/fairly useful for advice about things they could do after Year 11 than pupils from schools in areas of low deprivation (52% compared to 44%).

Many pupils who participated in the discussion group have spoken to their parents or other relatives about what they may do after Year 11. However, the information they get is often loaded with parental expectation. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

For pupils whose parents went into higher or further education, pupils often think that their parents' experiences of the education system were so long ago that they do not know about how the system works today. Pupils whose parents left school at the age of sixteen, and pupils without older siblings or older siblings who stayed in education or training feel even more as though their parents do not know about options available after Year 11, so it is up to the pupil to find out and inform their parents.

Because I'm the oldest I'm the first one to go through it so whatever I say she probably agrees with me what I want to do.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 10

A few pupils in Year 11 who participated in the discussion groups have looked online for information about their future, mostly in relation to the different jobs they might be interested in, and which qualifications they would need to get there. The specific internet sites that these pupils have used are prospects.co.uk and fasttomato.com. These are the more motivated pupils who are thinking about their future. However, most pupils do not seem to have actively sought out information about options available to them after Year 11, as they feel that they don't need to think about this until they have to start making applications to further education institutions.

Most of the pupils are aware that they have a school careers advisor. However, there is much discrepancy over whether pupils have had any contact with this member of staff, both between and within schools.

We had a careers meeting as well... well I haven't but some people have... I think they just talk to you about your options and stuff and then I think you tell her what you want to do roughly and she, and I think the woman just tells you how to go about doing that and shows you websites and stuff.
Male, school in affluent area, Year 11

In general, pupils had not received specific careers advice from a careers advisor, although many thought they would do in the future, either later in the academic year, or once they reached Year 11 in the case of current Year 10 pupils.

Students from one of the schools in a deprived area and also the PRU students had been given information and support by a Connexions advisor. This allowed them to have one-to-one contact, where they are informed about and encouraged to find courses that may interest them.

He [Connexions advisor] looks on a website, and you tell him what you want to do. He gives you hints.
Female, PRU, group 1

I had like an interview with like the Connexions career adviser and then they talked to me, asked questions, tells you what you can do and then gives you different options … then she sent me an action plan as well and then gave me information about like psychology and working with people and stuff, so she sent that to me and that gives me more information…that was very helpful.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 11

Both pupils in mainstream education and PRUs who had received information from a Connexions advisor thought this had been useful. They helped them to create action plans specific to their individual needs, which most had not received from their school staff.

What could be improved?

Looking at information provision, pupils are quite clear that they trust and value the information from certain sources rather than others. As already mentioned, pupils are wary about the information given by their parents, because their experience of further education, if at all, is from many years ago. Equally, they feel that teachers and careers advisors have not actually experienced further education as a pupil for a number of years.

It's just like, no that doesn't happen anymore kind of thing. I think you want to like experience and like want to know about what happens today and not 60 years ago or something.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 10

I think sisters, because I think because like they've been through it, so they kind of know what it's like and they can help you.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 10

Pupils want information from people who have recently embarked on the courses they are considering, or have recently started working in the professions they are interested in. It is really important to these young people to hear the information firsthand from someone with recent experience. For this reason, many pupils mention speaking to older siblings or cousins and older friends for information about their future, as they trust their advice to be more accurate. A good example of this is one pupil who is interested in studying law. She was thinking of taking law A level, but it was an older sister, who has recently been to university, who advised her against it.

I was like going to do law at A level because I want to do law at university ... but my sister told me that some universities don't like it when you've done law A level, and told me they like it if you've done something like history.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 10

Pupils are also keen to get experience of different jobs to try to find something that they would enjoy. One pupil has found it very helpful to get experience of a range of different health and social care settings in order to find out which she would like to pursue once she finishes Year 11.

I don't have to just go into a nursery every Friday, I've got to go and like work with disabled kids and all that to see which one is better for me.
Female, school in affluent area, Year 11

Overall, pupils would like to receive advice from people a few years older, who have recently been through the experience of college or who are working in areas they are interested in now. On the whole, pupils are less trusting of older people in figures of authority, who are seen to be unfamiliar with the system and courses available today. Therefore, a medium through which young people could speak to older students to find out about the different options available to them, and what these entail, would be a great help to young people. This could be face-to-face, or perhaps using some form of social networking facility.

Areas for further research

Connexions is a service that is highly valued by pupils who have encountered their support services, particularly those in PRUs. However, the way in which schools make use of the Connexions service is not something that was investigated in this research, but would be interesting to explore. For example, the referral mechanism used by schools: whether individuals are referred to Connexions, or whether the service is offered to all pupils, as this may influence how effective the service is seen to be by pupils and teachers alike within different schools.

Support and influences

Support and influences

This chapter explores the support and influence of parents, teachers and the government on young people and what they might do after Year 11. The key findings are summarised below:

- **Young people feel that their parents/step-parents/carers show the greatest level of interest in what they do after Year 11** (90% of pupils say they think they are very or fairly interested) compared to teachers and school career advisors.

- In general, pupils **think their parents are much more likely to expect them to stay in education or training after Year 11 than get a full-time job** (67% compared to 11% strongly agree).

- **The majority (71%) of pupils think that their teachers are supporting them to stay on in education or training after Year 11**. However, the qualitative discussion groups revealed that although pupils are generally told by their teachers that they should stay in education**, individual pupils can feel as thought their teachers 'don't care' what they do once they leave their class or school.**

- The vast majority (69%) of **pupils agree that the government wants young people to stay in education/training after Year 11.**

## Who is interested in young people's futures?

In addition to being asked which sources of information are useful, pupils were also asked how interested they think various people are in what they do after Year 11, which is shown in the chart below. Young people feel that their parents/step-parents/carers show the greatest level of interest in what they do after Year 11: nine in ten (90%) pupils say they think they are very or fairly interested.

Following this, almost two-thirds (65%) of pupils say that their teachers are very or fairly interested in what they do after Year 11, and over half (55%) say they think their school careers advisor is interested.

Who is interested in young people's futures?

Q How interested do you feel each of the following people are in what you do after Year 11?

■ Very interested   ■ Fairly interested   ■ Not very interested
■ Not interested at all   ■ Don't know/not stated

	Very interested	Fairly interested	Not very interested	Not interested at all	Don't know/not stated
Parent(s)/step-parent(s)/carer(s)	74%	17%	3%		5%
Teachers	16%	49%	23%	6%	7%
School careers advisor	14%	41%	24%	7%	14%
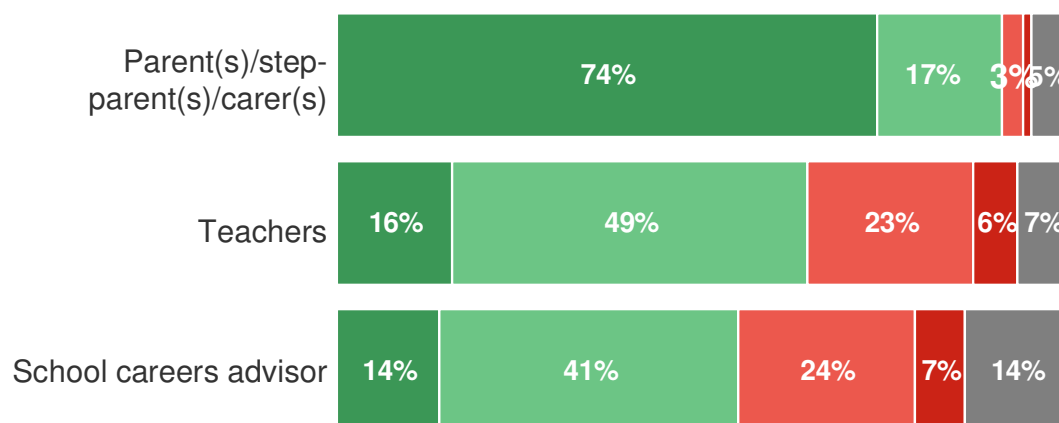
Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

Pupils who say their parents/step-parents/carers are very or fairly interested in what they do after Year 11 are more likely to be from schools in areas of low than high deprivation (93% compared to 84%); and be female rather than male (93% compared to 89%). Pupils from Year 11 are also more likely than those from Year 10 to think their parents are very/fairly interested in what they do after Year 11 (92% compared to 89%) and so too are their teachers (70% compared to 59%). This could be because it is something that is more talked about among young people when they reach Year 11.

Interestingly, pupils with a self-defined disability[21] or learning difficulty are more likely than young people overall to think that their parents/step-parents/carers are not very or not at all interested in what they do after Year 11 (nine percent and eight percent compared to four percent overall).

---

[21] The base size for pupils with a self defined disability is low (75). Therefore this finding is indicative only and should be used with caution.

Parental expectations

As outlined in the chart below, looking at the role of parents and their expectations, a much greater proportion of pupils think their parents expect them to stay in education or training rather than get a full-time job after Year 11. Over two–thirds (67%) of pupils strongly agree that their parents/step-parents/carers expect them to stay on in education or training, whereas only one in ten (11%) strongly agree that their parents are expecting them to get a full-time job after Year 11.

Parental expectations

Q How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Tend to agree
- ■ Neither agree nor disagree
- ■ Tend to disagree
- ■ Strongly disagree
- ■ Don't know/not stated

My parent(s)/step-parent(s)/carer(s) expect me to stay on in education/training after Year 11: **67%** | **19%** | **6%** | **5%**

My parent(s)/step-parent(s)/carer(s) are expecting me to get a full-time job after Year 11: **11%** | **10%** | **15%** | **16%** | **38%** | **11%**
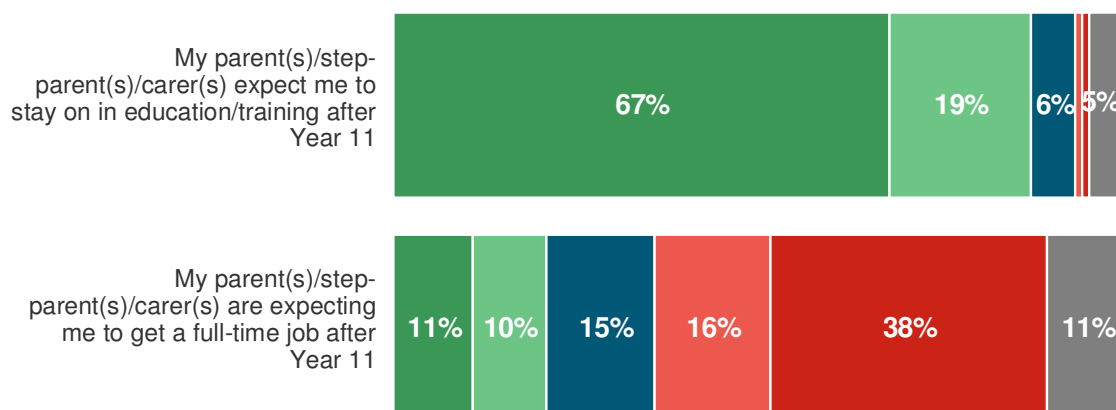
Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

Pupils who agree that their parents expect them to stay on in education or training after Year 11 are more likely to attend a mainstream school rather than a PRU (88% compared to 72%). However, on the other hand, pupils who agree that their parents expect them to get a full-time job after Year 11 are more likely to be male than female (25% compared to 16%) and attend a PRU rather than a mainstream school (32% compared to 20%). Connected to this, pupils who agree their parents expect them to get a full-time job are also more likely to attend a school in an area of high rather than low deprivation (29% compared to 18%). This difference between PRUs and mainstream education can also be seen in what young people would be interested in doing after Year 11: a greater proportion of mainstream pupils say they would be interested in doing A or AS levels than PRU pupils (77% compared to 50%).

However, pupils from PRUs are more likely than those in mainstream education to say they would be interested in getting a full-time paid job (41% compared to 17%).

Looking at ethnicity, pupils who agree their parents expect them to stay on in education or training after Year 11 are more likely to be from a Black or Asian background than a White background (both 93% compared to 83%). However, pupils from a White rather than Asian background are more likely to agree that their parents expect them to get a full-time job after Year 11 (23% compared to 16%). Looking at aspirations more generally, these pupils' aspirations are in line with their parents' expectations: pupils from a White background are more likely than Asian pupils to say they would be interested in getting a full-time job after Year 11 (23% compared to 11%).

In terms of gender, female pupils are more likely than males to agree their parents expect them to stay in education/training (89% compared to 85%), whereas pupils who agree that their parents expect them to get a full-time job after Year 11 are more likely to be male than female (25% compared to 16%). This pattern is also reflected in what young people plan to do after Year 11: female pupils are more likely than males to say they are interested in doing A/AS levels (82% compared to 69%) whereas male pupils are more likely than females to say they are interested in getting a full-time job (23% compared to 16%).

Pupils with a self-defined disability[22] or learning difficulty are more likely that those without to disagree that their parents/step-parents/carers expect them to stay on in education or training (nine percent and seven percent compared to three percent overall). This is interesting as these groups are also likely to think that their parents are not very or not at all interested in what they do after Year 11 (nine percent and eight percent compared to four percent overall).

During the qualitative discussion groups, most pupils made it clear that their parents expect them to continue in education or training. In some cases, parents also have expectations for their child's particular vocation.

I do think they will have a serious problem if I didn't go [to college] because the fact that they didn't have that opportunity and I did it, they'd kill me.
Male, school in affluent area, Year 11

---

[22] The base size for pupils with a self defined disability is low (75). Therefore this finding is indicative only and should be used with caution.

My family tells me to be a teacher because I've already got three teachers in my family.
Female, PRU, group 2

Pupils acknowledge that their parents want the very best for them, and this is why they have this expectation. In most cases, these expectations are not at odds with what the pupils anticipate they will do, especially with regard to whether they say in education or training. However, where it is a difference, pupils can feel very frustrated and that they are not listened to or supported by their parents.

Pupils in one group from a school in a deprived area did say that they are aware of a few cases where parents have low aspirations for themselves, which are not much higher for their children. In these cases, young people see their parents getting by without much education, and so think this will be fine for them too.

What our parents do is going to have an effect on us, motivating us, because if our parents don't get up in the morning then we're not going to get up. If our parents don't say to you have to do a course then we are not going to do it.
Male, school in deprived area, Year 11

In this sense, they feel that some young people do not appear to have any role models to look up to who would encourage and support them to stay in education or training after Year 11.

Support from teachers

In addition to being asked about parental expectations, pupils were also asked about whether their teachers are supporting them to stay on in education or training after Year 11. Around seven in ten (71%) pupils agree, and over a third (36%) strongly agree, that their teachers are supporting them to stay on in education or training after Year 11. Only six percent of pupils disagree with this. This is illustrated by the chart overleaf.

Support from teachers

Q How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...

My teachers are supporting me to stay on in education/training after Year 11
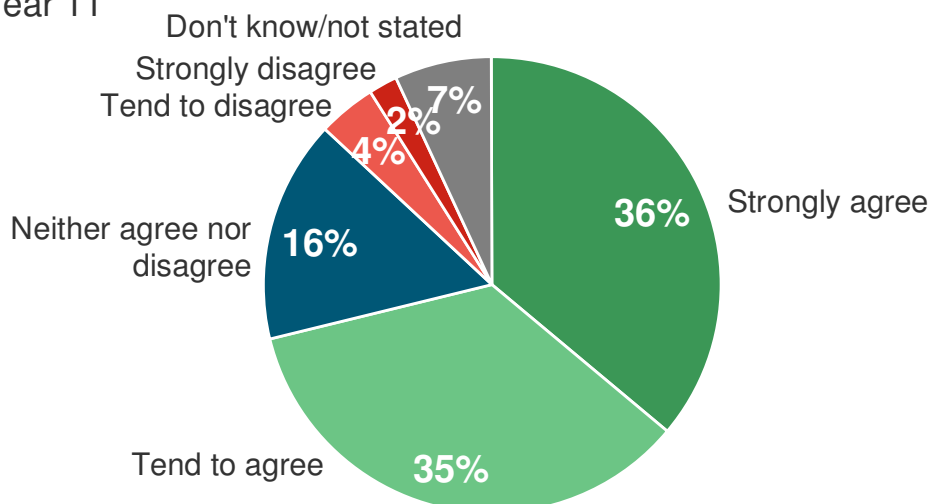
Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

Pupils who agree that their teachers are supporting them to stay on in education or training after Year 11 are more likely to be female than male (75% compared to 69%); and are more likely to attend a school in an area of low than high deprivation (74% compared to 67%). This illustrates that gender and affluence of the school appears to play a role in attitudes about support on offer. This is also supported by the finding that pupils who say their parents/step-parents/carers are very or fairly interested in what they do after Year 11 are more likely to be from schools in areas of low than high deprivation (93% compared to 84%); and be female rather than male (93% compared to 89%).

Students in Year 11 also feel they have a lot more support from their teachers to stay on in education/ training after Year 11 than those in Year 10 (79% compared to 64%), which is indicative of their different stages in the education system.

Pupils with self defined difficulties with learning are more likely than those without to disagree that their teachers are supporting them to stay in education or training (10% compared to four percent). However, there is no significant difference for pupils who have a disability.

According to the pupils who took part in the discussion groups, they do not really talk to their teachers very much about their futures. It seemed that it may come up in conversation with teachers they like and have a positive relationship with, but they would not go to a teacher

75

with the sole purpose of talking about their future or the options available to them after Year 11. Although the quantitative research found that the majority (65%) of pupils think their teachers are very or fairly interested in what they do after Year 11, a few pupils feel as though their teachers are not very interested in what they do once they have left that particular school.

There's like a few teachers who have actually said like "I don't care". It's not because of you whether you do well or not but it doesn't affect them personally, so they don't really care.
Male, school in affluent area, Year 11

This could be because although pupils may think their teachers are generally interested in what they do in later life, the day to day stresses of school can mean that teachers appear more concerned about pupils doing well in their exams at the end of Year 11, than exactly what they do and where they go once they have left their class and their school.
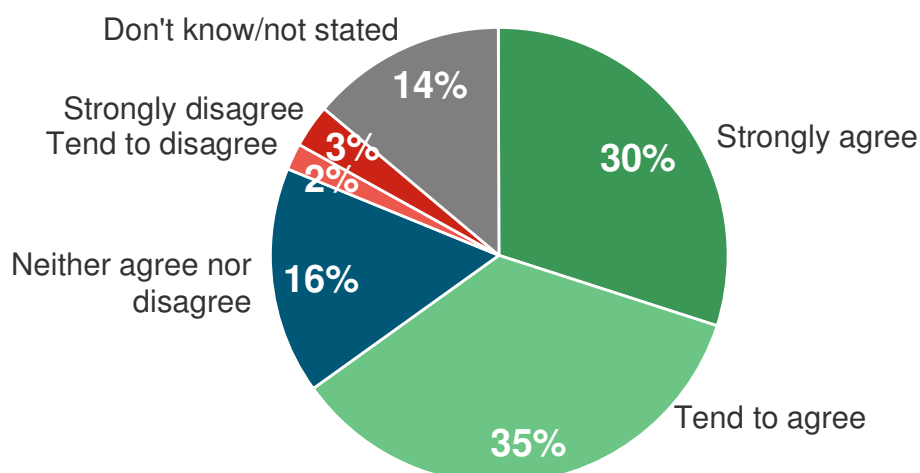
The Government

Thinking about the influence of wider society and the government on young people, two–thirds (66%) of pupils agree that the government wants young people to stay in education/training after Year 11. Only five percent say they disagree. However, young people appear to be quite undecided on this issue; one in six (16%) say they neither agree not disagree, and a similar figure (14%) say they don't know, or did not respond to this question.

What the government wants

Q How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...

The government wants young people to stay on in education/ training after Year 11

Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

Pupils in Year 11 are more likely to agree than those in Year 10 that the government wants young people to stay in education/training after Year 11 (69% compared to 63%), which is indicative of their closer proximity to these decisions. Females pupils are more likely than male pupils to agree (69% compared to 63%), just as they are also more likely to think that their teachers are supporting them to stay in education or training after Year 11 (75% of female pupils agree compared to 69% of male pupils).

Areas for further research

This report suggests that mentoring by older peers is one way in which information and advice about their options after Year 11 could be effectively communicated to young people. In addition to this, an evaluation of the support services currently in place (both inside and outside of the school environment) could be undertaken to gain a better understanding of exactly what effective support for young people is and why certain schemes or interventions are perhaps more effective than others. This would then illustrate how schools and other support services could best offer information, advice and support for young people to encourage them to stay in education or training after Year 11.

Reengaging the disengaged

Reengaging the disengaged

This chapter explores what prevents some young people form succeeding in education, why young people play truant from school, and how to make education more attractive to young people. The key findings are summarised below:
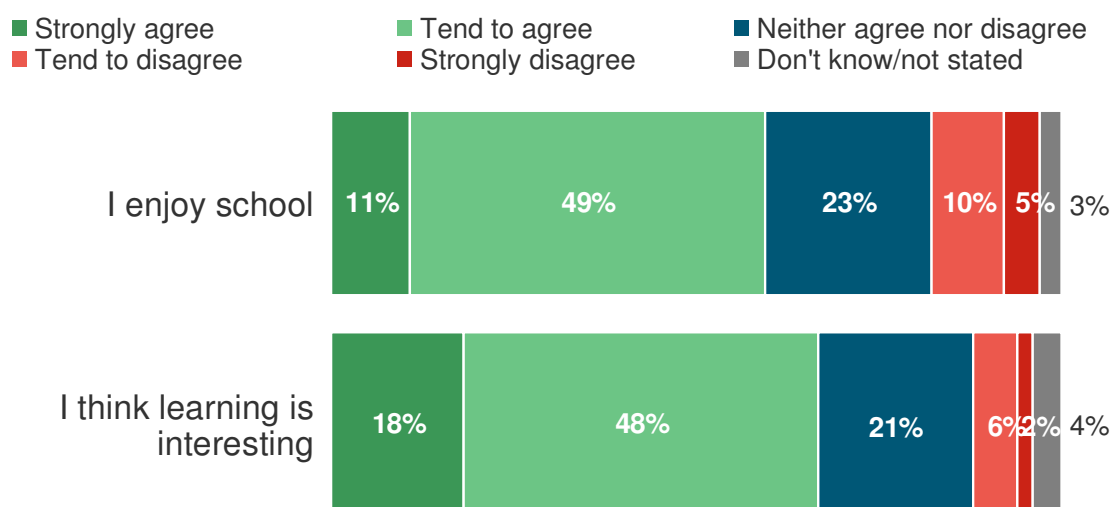
- The most common reason why **young people are not confident about getting the exam results they want at the end of Year 11 is due to a motivational issue; not working as hard as they could** (57%).

- **Around a third (30%) of pupils have ever played truant from school**. Pupils reveal that **they tend to 'bunk off' lessons to avoid potentially stressful or difficult situations** such as getting into trouble for not completing homework, or worry about a test they think they will fail.

- Pupils seem to be **hesitant about staying in education or training after Year 11 when they have had a negative experience of secondary school** and assume that further education would be much the same. Therefore to encourage young people to stay on in education, measures need to be introduced that will improve their overall perception and experience of education. Furthermore, young people need to be better informed about what it is like to continue in further education, including the variety of courses and modes of delivery to suit a range of academic abilities.

Barriers to success at school

In order to establish some possible reasons why some pupils do not do as well as they could at school, pupils were asked to respond to some attitudinal statements about school and learning. The data is shown in the chart below. Three in five (60%) pupils agree that they enjoy school, while two thirds (67%) agree that learning is interesting.

Attitudes towards school and learning

Q How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know/not stated

I enjoy school: 11% | 49% | 23% | 10% | 5% | 3%

I think learning is interesting: 18% | 48% | 21% | 6% | 2% | 4%

Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

There are particular groups of pupils who are more likely to enjoy school than others. For example, pupils in mainstream education are more likely than those who attend PRUs to agree that they enjoy school (62% compared to 34%). Similarly, they are also more likely than PRU pupils to agree that learning is interesting (68% compared to 57%).

However it should be noted that the students who took part in the qualitative research in the PRUs tended to be very happy in their PRU and compared it favourability to their former school. Naturally as only one PRU was included in the qualitative research this cannot be said to represent views in general, but it does suggest that students in PRUs included in the quantitative research may have been rating their *previous school* rather than their current PRU[23]. It is not possible to assess this conclusively, however.

Supporting the idea that mainstream pupils are more likely to enjoy school and find learning interesting, they are also less likely than PRU pupils to have played truant (60% compared to 24%), which is discussed later in this chapter.

Female pupils are more likely to say they enjoy school than males (63% compared to 57%), just as they are to feel that they are supported by their teachers to stay in education/training (75% compared to 59%). However, White male pupils are particularly likely to disagree that they enjoy school (19% compared to 15% overall).

Pupils from Black or Asian backgrounds are more likely than those from White backgrounds to think that learning is interesting (70% and 74% respectively compared to 63%). Similarly, pupils from Asian backgrounds are more likely than all other groups to say they enjoy school (74% compared to 60% overall).

Looking at self defined disability and learning difficulties, pupils with a self defined disability are more likely than those without to not enjoy school (23% disagree compared to 14%).[24] Similarly, pupils with a self defined learning difficulty are also more likely to hold this view than those without (23% compared to 13%). This is interesting when it is considered that these groups of pupils are particularly interested in getting a full-time job after Year 11 (41% of pupil with a self defined disability[25] and 37% with a self-defined learning difficulty compared to 20% overall). In fact, overall, pupils who do not enjoy school are more likely to say they are interested in getting a full-time job rather than doing A/AS levels or a vocational course after Year 11 (18% compared to 12% and 14% respectively).

---

[23] Note that unfortunately due to the survey timings it was not possible to conduct the qualitative research before the quantitative research in order to feed into its design.
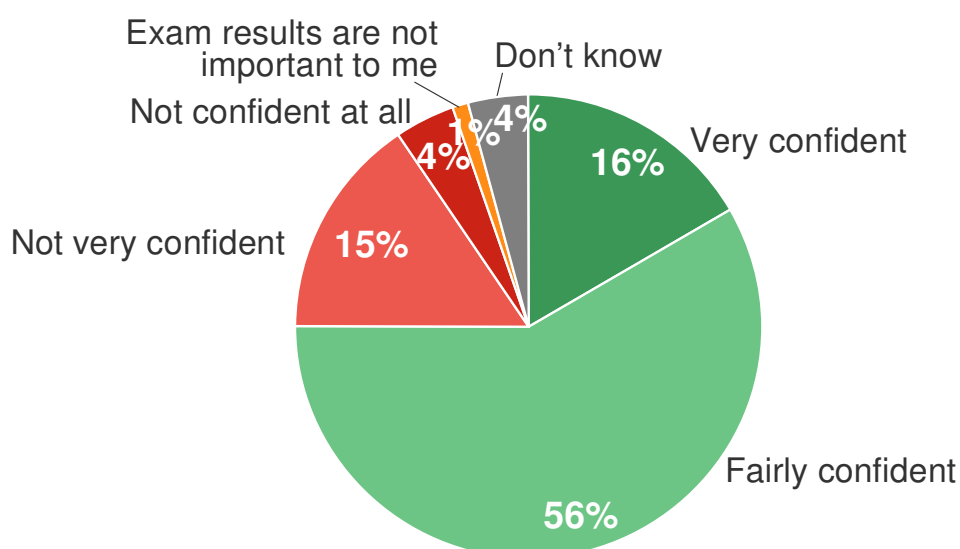[24] The base size for pupils with a self defined disability is low (75). Therefore this finding is indicative only and should be used with caution.
[25] Ibid.

To try to understand why pupils may not achieve as highly as they can at school, pupils were asked how confident they are about getting the exam results they want at the end of Year 11. Pupils who are fairly confident, not very or not at all confident were asked why this is the case. This is shown below. Over seven in ten (72%) pupils are very or fairly confident that they will get the exam results they want at the end of Year 11, and one in six (16%) pupils are very confident.

Confidence in exam results

Q How confident are you that you will get the exam results you want at the end of Year 11?

Exam results are not important to me
Don't know
Not confident at all
1%
4%
Very confident
16%
Not very confident
15%
Fairly confident
56%

Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

Pupils who attend schools in areas of low deprivation are more likely than those who attend schools in areas of medium or high deprivation to be very or fairly confident that they will get the exam results they want at the end of Year 11 (76% compared to 67% and 69% respectively). These pupils, however, are also more likely than those who attend schools in areas of high deprivation to generally feel positive about their future (64% compared to 49% are 'fairly positive' about their future after Year 11).
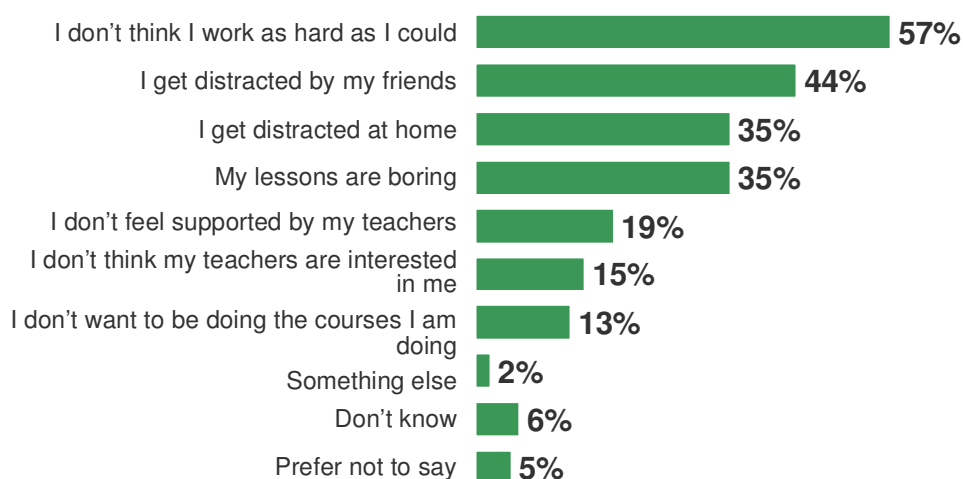
Just as pupils who attend schools in areas of low deprivation are more positive about their future and also more confident about getting the exam results they want, female pupils are also more likely than male pupils to say they feel 'not very positive' about their future after Year 11 (11% compared to 7%) and also that they are not very or not at all confident that they will get the exam results they want (26% compared to 13% of male pupils).

It is also the case that PRU pupils are more likely than mainstream pupils to be not very or not at all confident that they will get the exam results they want at the end of Year 11 (28% compared to 18%) and that pupils with self defined difficulties with learning are more likely than pupils without to be not very/not at all confident (31% compared to 17%).

Looking at the reasons why pupils are not *very confident* that they will get the exam results they want at the end of Year 11, the most commonly cited reason pupils give *is I don't think I work as hard as I could* (57%). Following this, pupils say *I get distracted by my friends* (44%), *I get distracted at home* (35%), *my lessons are boring* (35%) and *I don't feel supported by my teachers* (19%). The chart below shows all mentions above 10%.

Reasons why pupils are not confident about getting the exam results they want

Q Why aren't you confident that you will get the exam results you want?

I don't think I work as hard as I could	**57%**
I get distracted by my friends	**44%**
I get distracted at home	**35%**
My lessons are boring	**35%**
I don't feel supported by my teachers	**19%**
I don't think my teachers are interested in me	**15%**
I don't want to be doing the courses I am doing	**13%**
Something else	**2%**
Don't know	**6%**
Prefer not to say	**5%**

Base: 1,.037 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London who are fairly, not very or not at all confident that they will get the exam results they want, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010

Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

Looking at the differences between certain groups of pupils, those who attend PRUs are more likely that those who are in mainstream education to say *I haven't thought about/don't know what exam results I want* (19% compared to 8%). They are also more likely to give the reason that they *haven't had access to the things they need to help them* (17% compared to 8%). Pupils who attend schools in areas of high deprivation are also more likely to give this as a reason this than pupils who attend schools in areas of low deprivation (14% compared to 6%).

© 2010 Ipsos MORI.

With regards to ethnicity, a greater proportion of pupils from Asian or mixed[26] than from White backgrounds give the reason that they *don't think they work as hard as they could* (62% and 66% compared to 53% respectively).

Looking at gender, male pupils are more likely than female pupils to say I get distracted by my friends (49% compared to 41%). However, female pupils are more likely than male pupils to give the reasons that they *don't feel supported by their teachers* (22% compared to 16%) and that they *don't think their teachers are interested in them* (17% compared to 12%).This, however, differs from the finding from an earlier question, where pupils were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree that their teachers are supporting them to stay on in education/training. Here, females are more likely to agree than males (75% compared to 69%). Therefore, it appears that although female pupils are more likely than males to feel that their teachers are supporting them to stay on it education or training, they are more likely to also think that the reasons they are not confident in getting the exam results they want is because of a lack of support and interest from teachers.

As noted previously, pupils with a self-defined learning difficulty are much more likely than pupils without to be not very or not at all confident they will get the exam results they want at the end of Year 11 (31% compared to 17%). However, when looking at the reasons why, it appears that this group is particularly likely not to have thought about or know what exam results they want (15% compared to 9% overall).

During the discussion groups, pupils were asked to think why some pupils do not do as well as they could at school. Pupils suggest a number of reasons, some of which relate to the school, others are more personal, and some relate to the social influence of peers. Overall, pupils often appear to not fulfil their potential because they lose motivation. The qualitative research helps to understand where this happens.

The issues relating to school are that pupils claim to find lessons "boring". This is largely attributed to teaching styles. Pupils find that lessons where they just have to copy from the white board lend themselves to misbehaviour. There were also some comments highlighting that different people learn in different ways.

Sometimes the course system doesn't work for them…Well maybe they're more like into work or doing stuff or, yeah, they need to like move around and stuff and they can't really.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 11

---

[26] It should be noted that the base size for pupils from a Mixed ethnic background is low (80), hence findings based on this group should be treated as indicative only.

Similarly, pupils think that some of their teachers lack enthusiasm and so do not inspire pupils to learn. Particularly with pupils who may have "a bad reputation" amongst teachers, a few participants think that they do not get "pushed" enough academically by either their teachers, because they have "given up" on them.

Pupils also suggest that the timetabling of schools can prevent pupils from being able to take the subjects that they would like. All of these factors contribute to pupils losing motivation and not working as hard as they could at school.

Well if you're not motivated you're not going to get stuff done because they sit around, can't be bothered to do this, can't be bothered to do that.
Male, school in affluent area, Year 11

In terms of personal factors that may prevent pupils achieving, a participant from a PRU thinks that the school environment can be too stressful for certain people. Rather than dealing with the stressful situation, pupils instead drop out of school, meaning their education is severely disrupted.

Or it gets too stressful and they can't be bothered. So they just sit in their house they watch TV wasting their lives, got no money, have to go to the job centre.
Male, PRU, group 2

Many of the mainstream pupils also alluded to the stress of school preventing pupils succeeding, particularly stressful relationships between teachers and pupils. This can cause pupils to lose motivation for particular lessons, or in extreme cases, play truant to avoid certain teachers. This will be discussed further below. Another reason pupils suggest for losing motivation is feeling stupid in lessons.

Like there could be people in your class that are just, like that! Like he corrected me. People that correct you all the time just make you feel like you're nothing.
Female, school in affluent area, Year 11

Being made to feel stupid by peers can really affect pupils' sense of self worth. Although this may motivate confident pupils to disprove their classmates, it can really affect the motivation of those who are less confident.

Perhaps the most common reason in the discussion groups that participants give for not succeeding at school is due to the influence of friends. In order to impress their friends, certain pupils will be disruptive during lessons, which has a negative impact on both their education and those of others in their class.

They think they can just mess around and stuff, trying to impress people.
Female, school in affluent area, Year 10

Obviously I think social groups play a part because even a teacher said to me before there are turkeys and there are eagles. Some people are turkeys, just flap around and don't care and just cruise where eagles will soar above their peers and work hard and try to be leaders and those are the people that I'd rather associate myself with instead of just being a turkey that will bring me down.
Male, school in deprived area, Year 11

Trying to maintaining a particular reputation or fit in with friends and the disruption this can cause in lessons is perhaps why the second most commonly mentioned reason in the quantitative research for why pupils are not confident they will get the exam results they want is because they *get distracted by their friends* (44%).

Finally, another reason why pupils think that others may not do as well as they can at school is because they are not thinking about the future, and the importance that school and their exam results will play in later life.

Some people don't understand, like the importance of like, what we're going through now, like GCSEs and stuff, because that's like the basis of everything that's going to happen to us. Some people sort of don't get it and so they just mess around and things.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 10

By being focused in the present, rather than looking towards the future, pupils can make decisions in the present, be it to mess around in lessons, or bunk off school, without thinking about how this may impact on their success, both at school and in later life. It is perhaps the case that these pupils, who are less academic and lack motivation, do not wish to look to the future because they are concerned about what it may bring. It is these pupils who seem to be much more hesitant about actually planning what they will do after Year 11, as they lack confidence about being able to achieve the grades they would like.

Pupils were then challenged on whether students had any control over these reasons. Pupils came to the conclusion that even those that they may initially seem powerless to exert control over, they can in fact control their reaction and how they deal with this issue. For example, pupils cannot control the timetabling so may not always be able to the subjects they wish. However, they can control how they act in these lessons, and whether to work hard at them, or decide not to bother. This, however, does not negate the need for schools to continue to try to improve pupil motivation.

'Bunking off'

Playing truant from school, or 'bunking off,' is one way in which pupil achievement can be adversely affected. Around a third (30%) of pupils say they have 'bunked off' school, but the majority (57%) say they have not ever played truant. In line with ethics of conducting research, it was made clear to respondents that they did have to answer questions that they did not feel comfortable with, and nine percent of pupils opted to not answer this question.

The prevalence of 'bunking off'

Q Have you ever 'bunked off' school/skipped lessons?
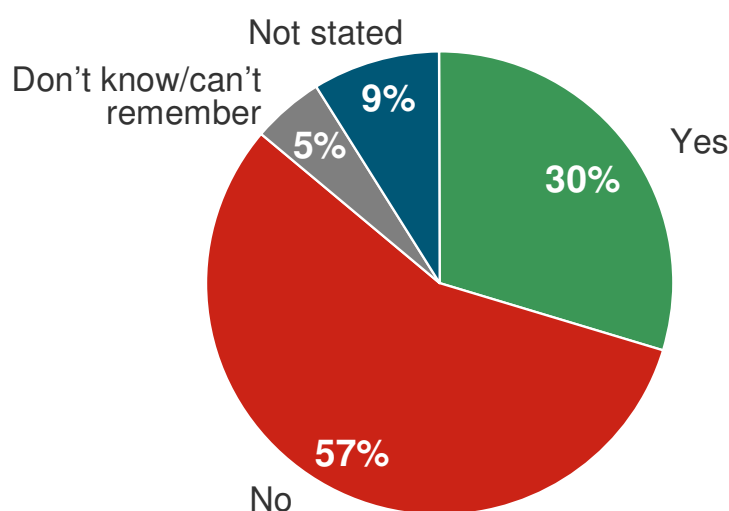
Not stated
9%

Don't know/can't
remember
5%

Yes
30%

No
57%

Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

A much greater proportion of pupils from PRUs than mainstream schools have 'bunked off' school (63% compared to 26%). It is also these pupils who are more likely to disagree that they enjoy school (22% compared to 14%) and that learning is interesting (14% compared to 8%)
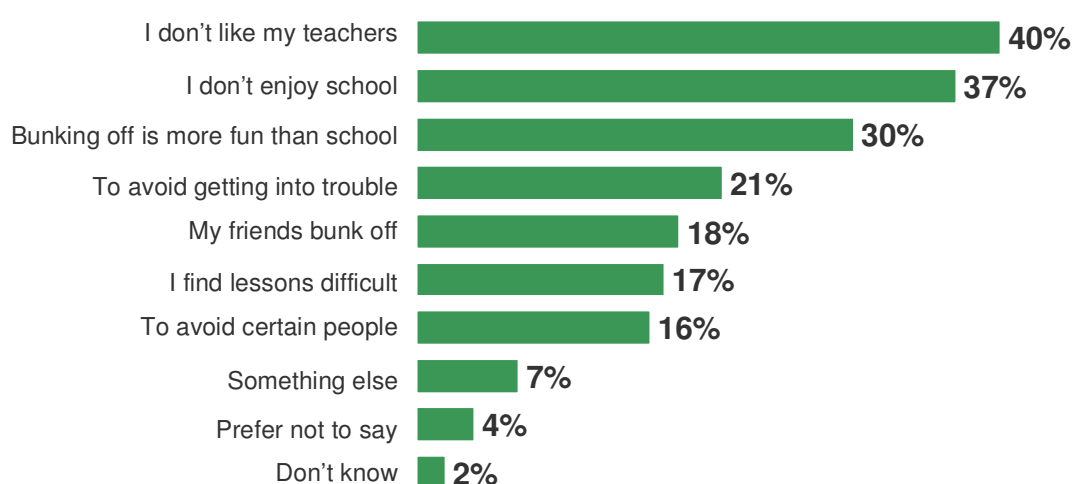
88

© 2010 Ipsos MORI.

Related to school type, pupils who attend schools in areas of high deprivation are much more likely to have played truant than those who attend schools in areas of low/medium deprivation (39% compared to 28%). Further, pupils with a self defined learning difficulty are more likely than those without to have played truant (46% compared to 27%), although there is a relationship between pupils at PRUs and with self defined learning difficulties: pupils in PRUs are more likely to have a self defined learning difficulty than not (14% compared to nine percent).

Furthermore, pupils living with one parent compared to pupils living with two are more likely to have played truant from school (34% compared to 27%). However, pupils from single-parent families are more likely to attend a PRU than a mainstream school (50% compared to 30%). Pupils at PRUs have already been found to be more likely to 'bunk off' (63% compared to 23% of mainstream pupils).

When asked why they have played truant from school (selecting answers from a list in the questionnaire), the reason given by the greatest number of pupils is that they *don't like their teachers* (40%). This is followed by: *not enjoying school* (37%); thinking that *bunking off is more fun than school* (30%); *to avoid getting into trouble* (21%) and *because their friends bunk off* (18%). The chart below details all mentions above 16%.

Reasons why pupils have 'bunked off' school

Q Which of the following, if any, were reasons for you 'bunking off' school/skipping lessons?

Reason	%
I don't like my teachers	40%
I don't enjoy school	37%
Bunking off is more fun than school	30%
To avoid getting into trouble	21%
My friends bunk off	18%
I find lessons difficult	17%
To avoid certain people	16%
Something else	7%
Prefer not to say	4%
Don't know	2%

Base: 399 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London who say they have 'bunked off' school/skipped lessons, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010

Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

© 2010 Ipsos MORI.

Pupils who attend PRUs are more likely than pupils in mainstream education to play truant from school, as already discussed. However, there are particular reasons why they 'bunk off' which are less common amongst mainstream pupils. These relate to not enjoying school and being influenced by their peers. PRU pupils are more likely that mainstream pupils to say they play truant because they do not enjoy school (58% compared to 31%) and because 'bunking off' is more fun than school (43% compared to 26%). Furthermore, they are also more likely to say they play truant because their friends 'bunk off' (31% compared to 15%).

Male pupils are more likely than female pupils to 'bunk off' because their friends do (23% compared to 14%), whereas females are more likely than males to play truant because they find lessons difficult (22% compared to 12%).

Pupils with a self defined learning difficulty are significantly more likely than pupils without to say they play truant from school because they find lessons difficult (25% compared to 12%). This illustrates that for these pupils, perhaps more needs to be done by schools to ensure that lessons are at the right level for these pupils and they are offered the support they need, so they are able to feel they can achieve in lessons.

There were two prevalent reasons why young people bunk off school highlighted in the qualitative research: the influence of, or to impress their peers; and to avoid difficult situations. Firstly, just as pupils may mess around and be disruptive in class to impress their friends, they may also 'bunk off' school to achieve the same end. On occasion, pupils may also play truant from school because they feel direct pressure from their friends, or more indirect pressure through concern over 'fitting in' or being accepted.

Secondly, pupils seem to play truant from school in order to avoid potentially difficult or stressful situations. This report has already illustrated how the stress of school can lead people to stay at home and avoid coming into school. However, pupils say that their peers tend to skip particular lessons rather than the whole day. The specific reasons vary but they are mostly to do with avoiding difficult situations or confrontation, for example, skipping a particular lesson when they do not like the teacher.

They don't like a certain teacher, teachers are not always who you going to like...I mean I know people that actually miss specific lessons because of that.
Male, school in affluent area, Year 11

Similarly, when pupils have not done their homework, or they know they will arrive late, they may choose to bunk the lesson in order to avoid getting into trouble or getting detention.

If you're late like with English you're late you get like an hour detention. I would rather not go to the lesson than get an hour.
Female, school in affluent area, Year 11

Furthermore, pupils may also bunk a particular lesson when if they know they are going to have a test and are worried that they will do badly. More generally, pupils may also play truant if they think they are not going to do very well throughout their lessons. This could impact negatively on their self-esteem, but could also result in getting into trouble with the teacher.

Some people they...well I wouldn't say they know but they think that they're not going to do well, they think, oh there's no point in coming into school if I'm not going to get my grades then I'll just stay at home.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 11

This avoidance is justified by pupils who can, at times, struggle to see the relevance or importance of going to school.

Well they just see school as like pointless and ...it's like a lot of the stuff you never actually going to need really.
Male, school in affluent area, Year 11

This is particularly the case for certain subjects, where pupils feel there is little practical use for what they are learning, either in general life or for what they want to do when they leave school. For example, some question the importance of learning trigonometry when they have no intention of using it beyond that lesson. That they will need to know it to do well in their exams is either ignored, or is not enough to motivate them to go to a potentially difficult or stressful lesson.

In addition to the main two reasons for truancy, bullying was also given as a reason for 'bunking off' by a few pupils who participated in the focus groups. It was not the case that these pupils admitted to playing truant because of being bullied, but that they though this could be one possible reason why others may play truant. However, avoidance and to impress friends were much more commonly cited reasons for truancy.

And also like bunking off, some people bunk off because it's for loads of different reasons... it could be for bullying, it could be because of fallings out with your friend and all that sort of stuff.
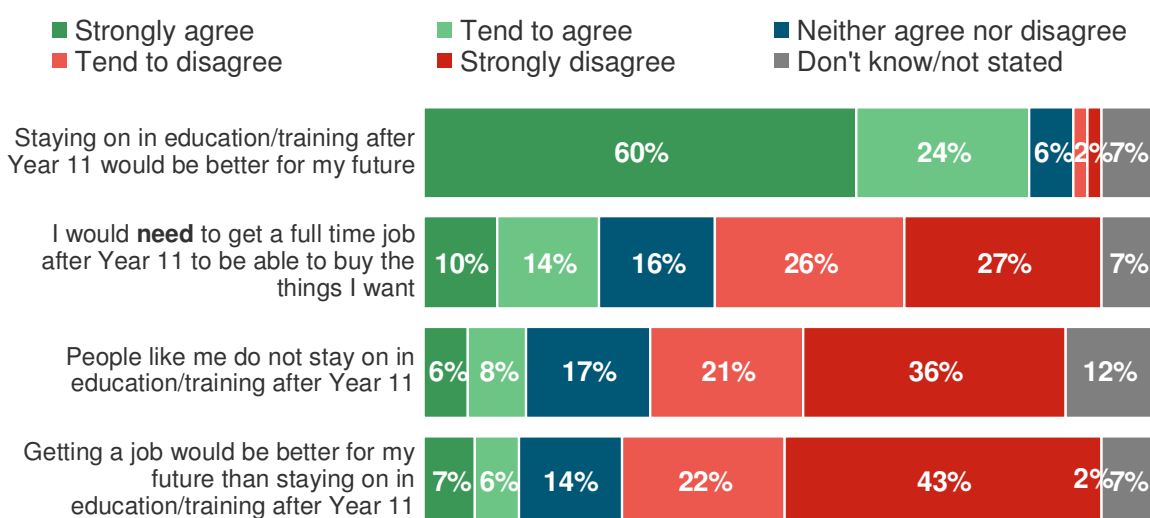Female, school in deprived area, Year 10

Reasons for leaving education or training

Pupils were asked to respond to a number of attitudinal statements about staying in education or training. Over four in five (84%) pupils agree that staying in education/training would be better for their future, although one in seven (14%) agree that people like them do not stay on in education/training after Year 11; and over one in ten (13%) agree than getting a job would be better for their future than staying on in education/training after Year 11. The full data is shown below

Reasons for staying or leaving education/training

Q How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know/not stated

Statement	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not stated
Staying on in education/training after Year 11 would be better for my future	60%	24%	6%	2%		7%
I would **need** to get a full time job after Year 11 to be able to buy the things I want	10%	14%	16%	26%	27%	7%
People like me do not stay on in education/training after Year 11	6%	8%	17%	21%	36%	12%
Getting a job would be better for my future than staying on in education/training after Year 11	7%	6%	14%	22%	43%	2% 7%

Base: 1,393 pupils in Key Stage 4 in maintained schools in London, 10 Nov 2009 – 22 Jan 2010   Source: Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI

There are very similar groups of pupils who think that people like them do not stay in on education/ training after Year 11 and that they would need to get a full-time job to buy the things they want. Pupils from schools in areas of high deprivation are more likely than those who attend schools in areas of low deprivation to think this (20% compared to 13% think people like them do not stay in education/training; 30% compared to 21% would need to get a job). In addition, pupils who attend PRUs are more likely than pupils in mainstream education to say they would need a full-time job after Year 11 to be able to buy the things them want (41% compared to 22%). However, PRUs are more likely to be in areas of high deprivation than mainstream schools, as already discussed.

Similarly, male pupils are more likely than female pupils to hold these views about not staying in education or training (17% compared to 10% think people like them do not stay in

education/training; 28% compared to 19% would need to get a job), and so too are Year 10 students compared to Year 11 (28% compared to 19%). Pupils with a self defined learning difficulty or disability[27] are also particularly likely to think that people like them do not stay in education/training (27% and 31% compared to 14% overall).

Looking at attitudes towards what would be better for pupils' futures, getting a job or staying in education/training after Year 11, PRU pupils are more likely than mainstream pupils to say that getting a job would be better (26% compared to 12%). However, pupils at mainstream schools are more likely to think that staying in education would be better (86% compared to 66% of PRU pupils). Similarly, pupils who attend schools in areas of high deprivation, where there tends to be more PRUs, are more likely than those who attend schools in areas of low deprivation to say that getting a job would be better for their future (20% compared to 13%). On the other hand, pupils at schools in areas of low deprivation, where there tends to be more mainstream schools, are more likely to think staying in education/training would be better (87% compared to 78% of pupils who attend schools in areas of high deprivation).

Pupils with a self defined disability[28] or learning difficulty are more likely than those without to think that getting a job would be better for their future than staying in education/training (both 26% compared to 13% overall). This could be one possible reason why these groups are particularly interested in getting a full-time job after Year 11 (41% with a self defined disability[29] and 37% with a self defined learning difficulty compared to 20% overall).

Finally, pupils from an Asian/Asian British background are more likely than pupils from a White background to think that staying in education/training is better for their future (94% compared to 82%), whereas White pupils are more likely than Asian/Asian British to think getting a full-time job after Year 11 would be better for their future (17% compared to 7%).

None of the pupils who participated in the qualitative research are certain that they will not stay in training or education after Year 11. However, they were able to identify a number of reasons which may deter them, or are deterring others they know. Many of these reasons are the same as the reasons why pupils do not succeed at school or why they play truant. For example, disliking the relationship they have with teachers, or not being motivated as they struggle to achieve academically.

---

[27] The base size for pupils with a self defined disability is low (75). Therefore this finding is indicative only and should be used with caution.
[28] The base size for pupils with a self defined disability is low (75). Therefore this finding is indicative only and should be used with caution.
[29] Ibid.

Although the majority (87%) of pupils say their parents expect them to stay on in education or training after Year 11, there are some that disagree (just three percent) or are unsure. As discussed in the *Parental expectation* section, some pupils think that parents do not appear to have high aspirations for themselves or their children. Without role models and guidance, this very small minority of pupils may fail to see the point in continuing in education or training, as they see their parents have managed without it.

Although a quarter (24%) of pupils agree that they would need to get a full-time job in order to buy the things they want after Year 11, participants in the discussion group felt their circumstances did not reflect this. In general, they think that getting a part-time job alongside training or education would provide young people with sufficient money to buy the things they want. For the young people in this qualitative sample even where they are expected to contribute to the household, they think that this is achievable with just an evening or weekend job.

How to make education and training more attractive to young people

Thinking about the reasons why young people may not want to continue into education or training, pupils think many of these stem from a difficult experience of school, and an assumption that sixth form college would be just the same.

I think it's just because they hate school so much they might think it's [further education] exactly the same as school.
Male, school in affluent area, Year 11

The most obvious way to make education and training more attractive to young people would be to address the issues of why young people do not do as well as they could at school, and hence become de-motivated and disillusioned with education. With this approach, modes of delivery of lessons; being distracted by their peers; getting distracted at home; negative relationships with teachers; and truancy, to name a few, would need to be addressed. If pupils had a more positive experience of education in their secondary years, they may be more likely to succeed at school and be less resistant to continuing in education or training.

For example, it is clear from this research that one of the main reasons why young people play truant from school is to avoid potentially difficult or stressful situations. 'Bunking off' school often results in pupils falling behind in lessons and therefore not doing as well as they can. This creates a vicious cycle, as the more pupils 'bunk off' the more they will fall behind, and the more they will dread going to the lesson. Perhaps if pupils were offered greater help and support to avoid getting into these situations in the first instance, or to deal with these difficult situations when they do arise, they would be less likely to play truant.

However, thinking specifically about making the progression to further education more attractive, it seems that if pupils were better informed about what life is like in college and the variety of different courses that are available, staying in education or training may seem more appealing.

Yeah because in school you don't really learn about stuff that interests you, whereas in college you can learn about what actually interests you, so that's why I want to go.
Male, school in affluent area, Year 11

Pupils who have struggled and perhaps not achieved the best they could at school need to be well informed of any differences between going to school and going to sixth form college, particularly when these differences relate to something that prevents pupils succeeding at school or deters then from wanting to continue in education/training.

For example, one of the reasons given in the qualitative research for why young people do not succeed in school, and hence can become de-motivated, is not being able to do the subjects they want, or disliking the mode of delivery of lessons.

I need to move, I can't sit still, I'm quite active and hands on but I don't like to sit down in classroom and be copying off boards. That's why I like drama because I can express myself.
Female, school in deprived area, Year 11

However, if pupils were made more aware of the huge range of options at college, some of which are more vocational, others that are based in the classroom, the idea of going to college may be more attractive and not seen to be 'boring' as some think school to be. However, pupils do not necessarily want to get this information from authority figures, which they do not trust to have reliable information. Rather, they want to hear from older students, who have recently experienced going to college, or recently completed a work-based apprenticeship, who they believe will give a more realistic representation of what being a pupil there is like.

On the subject of older students or role models who can offer advice and support, this may also be useful in altering the attitudes of some disengaged pupils. Looking at reasons why young people may not want to stay in education or training after Year 11, there is a small minority (14%) of pupils who think that people like them do not stay on in education/training after Year 11, or that getting a full-time job after Year 11 would be better for their future (13%). It therefore appears that action needs to be taken to try to alter these attitudes. One way to do this might be to expose these pupils to positive role models they can identify with, who have perhaps come from a similar background, who have carried on into education or training and have been successful in doing so. This might help to alter the perception that only a certain type of person continues in education or training.

Finally, the idea of disengaged pupils not looking or thinking ahead came up repeatedly in the discussion groups. Rather than thinking about how their actions in the present may impact on their future, these pupils tended to act in the moment, shying away from thinking about their future.

I think when we make decisions we don't really think them out fully in advance or think about the long term affects, you just think about now, like not doing course work and watching a football match in the evening, but that could have been revision for an exam or something.
Male, school in deprived area, Year 11

It is possible that these pupils act in this way for short term gratification, e.g. that 'bunking off' school is more fun than going to lessons. However, it also seems as though some young people are anxious about their future and so would rather not have to think about it. They may be aware that they are not likely to achieve very good exam results, so do not dare to think beyond the end of Year 11, as they may not achieve the grades they need to go to a traditional sixth form college and do A levels. Again, if pupils were made aware of the many different options which are not always dependent on getting five Cs at GCSE, and perhaps at an earlier stage, they may not be so dismissive of thinking about their future. If pupils knew that there is a course they could do after Year 11, in a subject they would enjoy that suited to the way they learn, this may help them feel more positive about their future, give them a direction or goal to work towards, and prevent them from acting in a certain way in the present that may have longer term consequences.

Overall, the ideal in approaching disengagement among pupils would be to directly tackle the reasons why they find school challenging and struggle to do the best they can. This would include tackling the issue of truancy, distraction in lessons and negative teacher-pupil relationships to name a few. A more positive experience of school may make young people more open to the idea of continuing beyond compulsory education. However, thinking more specifically about encouraging pupils to stay in education after Year 11, the key here appears to be the provision of information. Many pupils assume that school and education beyond the age of 16 are the same. However, by informing students of the different options available, this may help them understand the differences, such as the variety of subjects delivered in a variety of teaching modes. Pupils are knowledgeable about A levels, but are much less so about alternatives such as the new diploma or apprenticeships. By knowing about these options, pupils who struggle with school may be more optimistic when thinking about their future, and have something to work towards which they can achieve at. If pupils do not shy away from thinking about their future, but have something to work towards, this may help motivate them and think about the longer term consequences of their actions.

Areas for further research

This research has highlighted mixed messages from pupils about the support and information provided by their teachers. On the one hand, the vast majority (71%) of pupils agree that their teachers are supporting them to stay in education or training after Year 11, however, the qualitative research found that some young people feel their teachers are more concerned about their short term success in exams than their longer term future. Similarly, the relationship between pupils and their teachers could have an impact on their success at school, where some may fell inclined to play truant to avoid lessons where they have a negative relationship with their teacher. Further research could therefore be of benefit to explore why these negative relationships exist, and what could be done to help improve such relationships, which may help improve young people's success in the future.

Appendices

Appendices

Statistical reliability

The sampling tolerances that apply to the percentage results are given in the table below. This table shows the possible variation that might be anticipated because a sample, rather than the entire population, was interviewed. **As indicated below, sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample and the size of the percentage result.** For example, on a question where 50% of the people in a sample of c.1,000 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary by more than 3 percentage points, plus or minus, from a complete coverage of the entire population using the same procedures (i.e., between 47% and 53%).

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels					
	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
Size of sample on which survey result is based					
1,393	2	2	2	3	3

Source: Ipsos MORI

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results from different parts of the sample. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons.[30]

Approximate differences required for significant at or near these percentages					
	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
Male pupils vs. Female pupils (714 vs. 632)	3	4	5	5	5
White vs. Black/Black British (618 vs. 283)	4	6	7	7	7

Source: Ipsos MORI

---

[30] Strictly speaking these tolerances are based on perfect random samples, and design effects such as clustering and weighting are likely to increase them

Sample profile

The table below illustrates the effect of weighting of the profile of respondents:

	Number of interviews	Neighed %	Weighted %
Total	1393		
Gender	714	51	49
Male	632	46	48
Female			
School Type			
Mainstream	1288	92	90
PRU	105	8	10
Year Group			
10	715	5	48
11	671	48	51
Ethnic Origin			
White	618	44	48
Mixed	97	7	6
Asian	226	16	17
Black	283	20	18
Chinese	16	1	1
Other	77	6	4
Unclassified	11	1	2

Source: Ipsos MORI

Questions used in segmentation analysis

Preference for a job over education after Year 11

Q11.2 Agree: I would need to get a full time job after Year 11 to be able to buy the things I want
Q11.3 Agree: Getting a job will be better for my future than staying on in education/ training after Year 11
Q9.4 Agree: My parent(s)/ step-parent(s)/ carer(s) are expecting me to get a full-time job after Year 11
Q11.1 Agree: People like me do not stay on in education/ training after Year 11
Q20 How likely are you to go to University in the future?

Importance of personal skills in future success

Q13.4 Agree that this will help your future success in life: Having good ICT skills
Q13.5 Agree that this will help your future success in life: Having good numeracy skills
Q13.3 Agree that this will help your future success in life: Being able to read and write well
Q13.2 Agree that this will help your future success in life: Getting on well with other people
Q13.1 Agree that this will help your future success in life: Working hard at school/ aiming to do the best you can

External reasons for lack of confidence in exam results

Q17.2 Reason for lack of confidence in exam results: I don't feel supported by my teachers
Q17.4 Reason for lack of confidence in exam results: I don't think my teachers are interested in me
Q17.6 Reason for lack of confidence in exam results: My lessons are boring
Q17.8 Reason for lack of confidence in exam results: I haven't had access to text books, a computer etc.
Q17.3 Reason for lack of confidence in exam results: I don't want to be doing the courses I am doing

Importance of personal traits in future success

Q14.3 Agree that this will help your future success in life: Being intelligent/ clever
Q14.4 Agree that this will help your future success in life: Having good qualifications/ exam results
Q14.1 Agree that this will help your future success in life: Being confident
Q14.2 Agree that this will help your future success in life: Being lucky
Q17.9 Reason for lack of confidence in exam results: I haven't thought about/don't know what exam results I want

Personal focus as a reason for lack of confidence in exam results

Q17.5 Reason for lack of confidence in exam results: I don't think I work as hard as I could
Q17.1 Reason for lack of confidence in exam results: I get distracted by my friends
Q17.7 Reason for lack of confidence in exam results: I get distracted at home
Q.16 How confident are you that you will get the exam results you want at the end of Year 11?

Socio-demographic factors affecting success

Q.15.2 Which of these will make it easier or more difficult for you to succeed in life: Ethnic background
Q.15.1 Which of these will make it easier or more difficult for you to succeed in life: Family background
Q.15.3 Which of these will make it easier or more difficult for you to succeed in life: Gender

Expectation to stay in education/training

Q.9.2 Agree: My teachers are supporting me to stay on in education/ training after Year 11
Q.9.3 Agree: The government wants people to stay on in education/ training after Year 11
Q.9.1 Agree: My parent(s)/ step-parent(s)/ carer(s) expect me to stay on in education/ training after Year 11
Q.11.4 Agree: Staying on in education/ training after Year 11 would be better for my future

Preparation for the future

Q.5 How much do you feel you know about the different things you could do after Year 11?
Q.4 How much have you thought about what you will do after Year 11?

Questionnaire

Date
☐☐/☐☐/☐☐   ☐☐

Year Group
☐☐☐☐

School ID number

What are your thoughts and plans for the future?

Thank you very much for your help with this survey.
Please read each question carefully and fill in the answer which applies to you. We're carrying out this survey for London Councils, an organisation that works with councils across London. They're interested in what young people think about their future, in order to help improve opportunities for young people.
We'd like to ask you some questions about what you do and think, but this isn't a test, and there are no right or wrong answers.
The answers you give us to the questions are confidential. This means that we won't tell anyone what you've said. Your teacher won't see your answers and the Ipsos MORI interviewer who gave you the questionnaire will take it away with them when you've finished. Please don't write your name on the questionnaire.
You should answer every section, although sometimes you might be asked to miss out certain questions. For most questions, you just need to tick the box next to the answer or answers that describes you best. If you don't know, tick the 'Don't know' box.
If you're not sure whether to answer a certain question, or if you have any other problems with filling in the survey, please ask the Ipsos MORI interviewer for some help.
We hope you enjoy taking part in this important research project.
Many thanks
Ruth Gosling
Study Manager

<table>
<tr><td>Section A - About You</td></tr>
</table>

First of all, we'd like to ask some questions about you. Please remember that your answers are confidential.

Q1. **How old are you?** PLEASE WRITE IN

I am _____ years old
Write in

Q2. **Which year are you now in at school?** PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Year 9	☐
Year 10	☐
Year 11	☐
Year 12	☐
Other	☐

Q3 **How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ON EACH LINE

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I enjoy school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I think learning is interesting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

In England, you have to stay in education (either at school or somewhere else) until you're 16 years old and have finished Year 11. The end of Year 11 is when many young people take their GCSEs.

Q4 **How much have you thought about what you will do after Year 11?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

A lot	❑
A fair amount	❑
A little	❑
Not at all	❑
Don't know	❑

Q5 **How much do you feel you know about the different things you could do after Year 11?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

A lot	❑
A fair amount	❑
A little	❑
Nothing at all	❑
Don't know	❑

Q6 **How much do you feel you know about the following things you could do after Year 11?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ON EACH LINE

	I know a lot	I know a fair amount	I know a little	I know nothing at all
Getting a job	❑	❑	❑	❑
Courses such as Diplomas, NVQs and BTECs. These are courses which teach you the skills you need to do a certain job	❑	❑	❑	❑
Doing A levels or AS levels	❑	❑	❑	❑
Starting an apprenticeship (either at 6th form college or through an employer)	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q7 **You may have spoken to people, or used sources of information at school for advice about things you could do after Year 11.**

How useful did you find each of the following?
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ON EACH LINE

	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all	Doesn't apply – I haven't used this/ it isn't available
Teachers	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
School careers advisor/ careers lessons	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Adult relatives/carers	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Websites/the internet	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Connexions	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q8 **How interested do you feel each of the following people are in what you do after Year 11?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ON EACH LINE

	Very interested	Fairly interested	Not very interested	Not interested at all	Don't know
Teachers	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
School careers advisor	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Parent(s)/step-parent(s)/carer(s)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q9 **How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ON EACH LINE

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My parent(s)/step-parent(s)/carer(s) expect me to stay on in education/training after Year 11	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
My teachers are supporting me to stay on in education/training after Year 11	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
The government wants young people to stay on in education/training after Year 11	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
My parent(s)/step-parent(s)/carer(s) are expecting me to get a full-time job after Year 11	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Section C – This section is about what you would like to do in the future.

Q10 **Which of the following things, if any, would you be interested in doing after Year 11?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ALL BOXES THAT APPLY</u>

A levels or AS levels	❑
A course such as a Diploma, NVQ or BTEC. These are courses which teach you the skills you need to do a certain job	❑
An apprenticeship (through an employer or 6th form college)	❑
Get a full-time paid job	❑
Get a part-time paid job	❑
Something else (Please tick ✓ the box and write your answer below)	❑
Don't know/can't decide	❑
I don't want to do anything	❑

Q11 **How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ON EACH LINE

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
People like me do not stay on in education/training after Year 11	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
I would **need** to get a full time job after Year 11 to be able to buy the things I want	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Getting a job would be better for my future than staying on in education/ training after Year 11	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Staying on in education/training after Year 11 would be better for my future	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q12 **Overall, how positive do you feel about your future after Year 11?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Very positive	❑
Fairly positive	❑
Not very positive	❑
Not at all positive	❑
Don't know	❑

Q13 **How much do you agree or disagree that each of the following things will help your future success in life?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ON EACH LINE

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Working hard at school/ aiming to do the best you can	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Getting on well with other people	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Being able to read and write well	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Having good ICT skills	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Having good numeracy skills	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q14 **And looking at the following statements, how much do you agree or disagree that each of these things will help your future success in life?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ON EACH LINE

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Being confident	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Being lucky	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Being intelligent/clever	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Having good qualifications/exam results	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q15 **Do you think the following things will make it easier or more difficult for you to succeed in life?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ON EACH LINE

	A lot easier	A little easier	Makes no difference	A little more difficult	A lot more difficult	Don't know
Your family's background (for example, what members of your family do for a living, how much money your family has, which part of the country your family lives in and so on)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Your ethnic background	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Being male or female	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Q16 **How confident are you that you will get the exam results you want at the end of Year 11?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Very confident	❑	**GO TO Q18**
Fairly confident	❑	**GO TO Q17**
Not very confident	❑	**GO TO Q17**
Not confident at all	❑	**GO TO Q17**
Don't know	❑	**GO TO Q18**
Exam results are not important to me	❑	**GO TO Q18**

PLEASE ANSWER QUESTION 17 IF YOU ARE <u>FAIRLY CONFIDENT, NOT VERY CONFIDENT OR NOT CONFIDENT AT ALL THAT</u> YOU WILL GET THE EXAM RESULTS YOU WANT.

PLEASE GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 18 IF YOU ARE <u>VERY CONFIDENT</u> THAT YOU WILL GET THE EXAM RESULTS YOU WANT, OR IF <u>EXAM RESULTS ARE NOT IMPORTANT TO YOU</u>, OR IF YOU <u>DON'T KNOW</u>.

Q17 **Why aren't you confident that you will get the exam results you want?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ALL BOXES THAT APPLY</u>

I get distracted by my friends	❑
I don't feel supported by my teachers	❑
I don't want to be doing the courses I am doing	❑
I don't think my teachers are interested in me	❑
I don't think I work as hard as I could	❑
My lessons are boring	❑
I get distracted at home	❑
I haven't had access to the things I need to help me (e.g. text books, a computer)	❑
I haven't thought about/don't know what exam results I want	❑
Don't know	❑
Prefer not to say	❑
Something else (Please tick ✓ the box and write your answer below)	❑

………………………………………………………………………………
……….

Section D – This section is about what you think about school.

Please remember that we're interested in your honest answers. Your answers are confidential and will not be seen by your teachers

Q18 **Have you ever 'bunked off' school/skipped lessons?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

Yes	❑	**GO TO Q19**
No	❑	**GO TO Q20**
Don't know/can't remember	❑	**GO TO Q20**

PLEASE ANSWER QUESTION 19 IF YOU <u>HAVE</u> 'BUNKED OFF' SCHOOL/ SKIPPED LESSONS.

PLEASE GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 20 IF YOU <u>HAVE NOT</u> 'BUNKED OFF' SCHOOL/SKIPPED LESSONS.

Q19 **Which of the following, if any, were reasons for you 'bunking off' school/skipping lessons?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ ALL BOXES THAT APPLY

I don't enjoy school	❑
I find lessons difficult	❑
I don't like my teachers	❑
My friends bunk off	❑
Bunking off is more fun than school	❑
To avoid certain people	❑
Family problems/problems at home	❑
To avoid getting into trouble	❑
Prefer not to say	❑

Something else (Please tick ✓ the box and write your answer below)

❑

…………………………………………………………………………………………
………

Don't know ❑

Q20 **How likely are you to go to University in the future?**
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Very likely	❑
Fairly likely	❑
Not very likely	❑
Not likely at all	❑
It's too early to think about it	❑
Don't know	❑

Q21 **Are you male or female?** PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

I am a boy/male	❑
I am a girl/female	❑

Q22   **Who lives in your home?** PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ALL BOXES THAT APPLY</u>

My mum	❏
My stepmum	❏
My foster mum	❏
My dad	❏
My stepdad	❏
My foster dad	❏
My brother(s)	❏
My sister(s)	❏
Other relative(s)	❏
Somebody else	❏
I live in a children's home	❏
Prefer not to say	❏

Q23   **Which of the following best describes you?** PLEASE TICK ✓ <u>ONE</u> BOX ONLY

A: White

White British ❑

White Irish ❑

Other White European background ❑

Any other White background ❑

B: Black or Black British

Black Caribbean ❑

Black African ❑

Any other Black background ❑

C: Asian or Asian British

Indian ❑

Pakistani ❑

Bangladeshi ❑

Chinese ❑

East African Asian ❑

Any other Asian background ❑

D: Mixed

White and Black Caribbean ❑

White and Black African ❑

White and Asian ❑

Any other Mixed background ❑

E: Prefer not to say

F: Other

Other (please tick ✓ the box and write your answer below)

.... ❑
....

Q24   **Would you say that you…**
       PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ON EACH LINE

	Yes	No	Not sure
…have a disability	❑	❑	❑
…have difficulties with learning	❑	❑	❑

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO HAVING A DISABILITY OR HAVING DIFFICULTIES WITH LEARNING PLEASE GO TO Q25. PLEASE ANSWER THE OPTION THAT APPLIES TO YOU

EVERYONE ELSE – YOU HAVE FINISHED THE SURVEY!

Q25   **Do you think the following things will make it easier or more difficult for you to succeed in life?**
       PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ON EACH LINE

	A lot easier	A little easier	Makes no difference	A little more difficult	A lot more difficult	Don't know
Having a disability	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Having difficulties with learning	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

THAT'S EVERYTHING!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

Mainstream schools discussion guide

Objectives

- To explore young people's expectations and aspirations relating to education, employment and training – each area specifically and overall plans
- To explore young people's level of knowledge and understanding about progressing into education, employment and training
- To explore the information sources young people use and how effective these are
- To explore key influences – friends, family, peers etc
- To explore barriers to succeeding in learning, including current and past experiences and how these could be overcome
- To explore reasons why young people disengage from education, training and employment and how they could be encouraged to reengage.

```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│   Where are you now?     │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Understandings of success│
│ in life and in education,│
│ and barriers to success  │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│   What are your plans    │
│   after year 11?         │
└─────────────────────────┘
     │      │      │
     ▼      ▼      ▼
┌─────────┐┌────────┐┌────────────┐
│Education ││Training││ Employment │
└─────────┘└────────┘└────────────┘
     │      │      │
     ▼      ▼      ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Reasons for choices and barriers to  │
│ other routes                         │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Information provision   │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Key influences       │
└─────────────────────────┘
```

Introduction

- Introduce researcher, Ipsos MORI
- Explain no right and wrong answers, opportunity to share views, respect each others' opinions etc
- Reassure over confidentiality, MRS code of conduct, ask permission to tape record
- Get pupils to introduce selves

SECTION ONE: Warm up – talking about now

- What are you doing now – what subjects are you studying?
- What do you like doing outside school/ what did you do last weekend?
- How do you feel about school – what do you like/dislike?

_____

© 2010 Ipsos MORI.

SECTION TWO: Attitudes to success

In an ideal world, what would you like to be doing in 10 years time?
- Why? What interests you about this?
- Do you know how/what you would need to do to get there?
- What/who initially made you think that you wanted to do this ....?
-

Do you think you _will_ be doing this in 10 years?
- Why/why not?
- Do you think other people (friends, family etc) think you will be doing this?

What does a successful person look like/how would you describe them?
- Is there anyone you can think of who you think is successful? How/what makes them successful?

Do you see yourself as being successful?
-Why/ why not?

Does being successful matter to you?
-Why/why not?

What do you think is succeeding/doing well in school? e.g. progressing from year to year, getting good exam results, good reports from teachers, having lots of friends

What do you think other people (teachers, friends, family, the Government) think of as success at school?
- Do you agree with them? Why/ why not?

POSSBLE ACTIVITY: get pupils to write the barriers to doing well at school onto cards, then group into ones they feel they can control and are out of their control. Then ask why they think these are out of their control – challenge their position.

What do you think stops young people doing as well as they can at school? REFER TO WHAT THEY THINK OF AS SUCCESS AT SCHOOL. SEPARATE PRACTICAL FROM MOTIVATIONAL. E.g. Bad teachers, couldn't do the courses they wanted, distractions, don't feel safe at school etc

Which of these do you think is the main reason why young people don't do as well as they can in school?
- Is there anything that could be done to make it easier?

_____

SECTION THREE: Plans after year 10/year 11

FOR YEAR 10: **What do you think you will be doing next year? How are you feeling about next year?**

What would you ideally like to be doing after year 11?
- Why is this appealing?

Have you thought much about what you will actually do after year 11?
- What have you thought about?
- Have you made a definite plan or yet to decide?
- Is this what you would ideally like to be doing? IF NOT, what is stopping you pursuing your ideal?

Has anyone else asked you about your plans after year 11?
- IF SO: Who?
- What did they ask you about?

POSSIBLE ACTIVITY: could get pupils to write on cards all the different options they can think of and then describe a typical person who follows each route.

What do you think are the options that are available to you after year 11? DO NOT PROMPT AT FIRST.
- Do you think your options have been affected by the current economic situation/jobs market?
- IF MENTION EDUCATION: do you aware of the different options available? e.g AS levels, GNVQs, diplomas, apprenticeships etc

Do you have plans to do any of these things after year 11?

ACCORDING TO PUPILS' RESPONSES, GO TO APPROPRIATE SECTION THEN INTRODUCE OTHER OPTIONS

FOR THOSE PLANNING TO STAY IN **EDUCATION**:

Why do you think you will stay in education? E.g. interested in subject, don't know what else to do etc

What do other people think about you staying in education – parents, friends?
- Is there an expectation to stay in education?

Have you thought about getting a job straight after year 11?
- Why/why not?

FOR THOSE PLANNING ON GOING INTO **TRAINING**:

Which training course are you planning on starting on?
- Why this one?

What/who gave you the initial idea to go on a training course?
- When?

What appealed to you about a training course (rather than a job or education route)? E.g didn't want to be at school but wanted to continue learning, why? Learn a trade, etc

FOR THOSE WHO MENTION GOING STRAIGHT INTO **EMPLOYMENT**:

What kind of job do you want to get after year 11?
- Why this job?
- A part time or full time job? IF PART TIME – what will you do with the rest of your time?
- Do you think you will be able to get this kind of job?
- Are there any requirements for this? Will you be able to meet these?

Why do you want to go into work after year 11?
AGAIN SEPARATING, IF POSSIBLE, MOTIVATIONAL FROM PRACTICAL REASONS
E.g Already work there and want start full time, don't like school, won't get the grades for higher education etc

_____

SECTION FOUR: barriers to education/training

POSSIBLE ACTIVITY: List all the reasons why people would and would not want to stay in education. Ask which they think apply most to them and why.

Why do you think some people your age don't want to stay in education/training? TRY TO SEPARATE OUT PRACTICAL FROM MOTIVATIONAL/ASPIRATIONAL E.g is there a course they want to do, want to earn a wage instead, family pressure, don't like school – why? etc.

What, if anything, do you think would encourage people to stay on in education/training after year 11? E.g more support with passing exams, better knowledge about the options, financial support, role models/mentors who have continued learning etc

Do you think there are any advantages or disadvantages of staying in education/training after year 11. What are they?
-   Do you feel you are *expected* to take this route? IF YES: what/who makes you think that?

Do any of your friends/people in your year ever 'bunk off' school?
IF YES:
-   why do you think they do that?
-   What do you think is the impact on these people? E.g. in terms of school work, friends, family etc

What happens if you get caught 'bunking'? Do people worry about getting caught?

What do you think could be done to prevent people from 'bunking' off school?

_____

SECTION FIVE: Information provision

Thinking generally, what sort of information do you think young people need/want to know about what they could do after year 11?

Where would you go to find out about your options for after you finish school?
e.g. internet sites such as *Prospects*, careers advisers, teachers, friends, family

Have you used any of these sources?
-   Which ones? When?
-   What information did you want to find out?
-   What information did they give you? Was this what you wanted to know?
-   Which one was the most helpful?
-   Whose opinion was most important to you?

Are there any other/more effective sources you would like to be able to access careers information from?
e.g. through text messages, DVDs, touch screen kiosks, social networking sites (could receive advice from older people who've made these decisions)
 - What information would you like these to include/contain?

Do you think you have been given enough support about your future?

Is there anything you couldn't find out, but want to know about your options?

_____

SECTION SIX: Influences

Do you think there are people who are interested in your future?
IF YES: Who – parents, teachers, friends, family etc?
IF NO: What makes you think there isn't?

What do these people think you should do in the future? ASK ABOUT ALL THE PEOPLE MENTIONNED PREVIOUSLY
- Are they supportive of what you *want* to do?
- What do they *expect* you to do?
- Do you agree with their ideas?
- Do you think their opinions will/have influenced your decisions?

Is there anyone/anything you think will influence the choices you make about your future? Anyone whose opinion you particularly respect?

Have you had any advice from teachers or career advisors?
- What advice did they offer?
- Did they tell you what you wanted to know?
- Were they helpful?
- Is there anything they didn't tell you that would have been helpful?

What do you think other people generally expect of you in the future (not parents or friend)? Do they have positive or negative expectations? i.e make a useful contribution/ cause trouble
- Why do you say that?

Overall, how do you feel about your future – are you excited/worried/don't think about it? Why?

_____

SECTION SEVEN: Conclusion

Give me one way in which staying in education could be made more appealing.

Anything else you want to talk about?
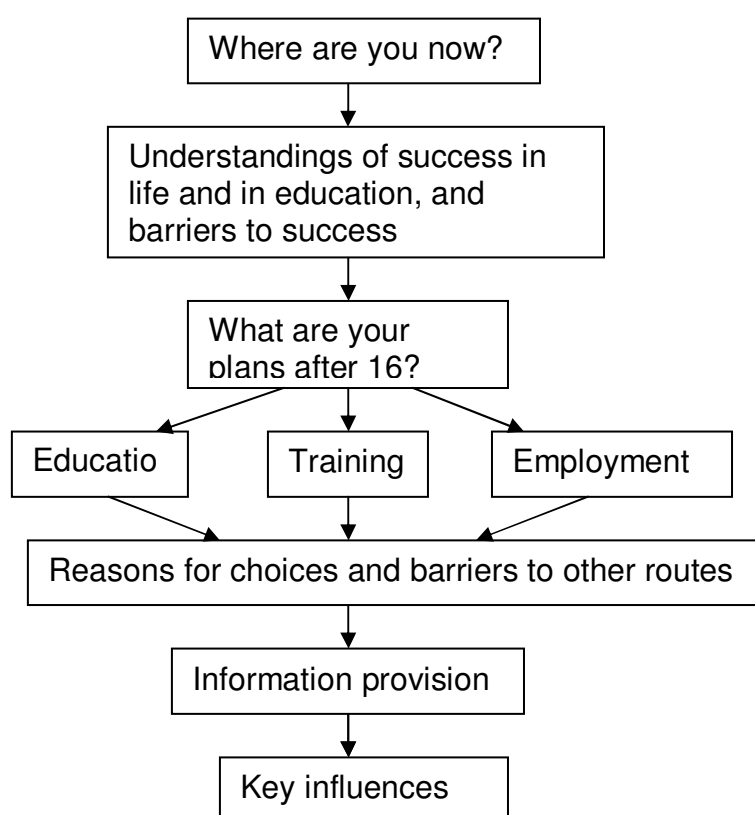
Thanks.

PRU discussion guide

Objectives

- To explore young people's expectations and aspirations relating to education, employment and training – each area specifically and overall plans
- To explore young people's level of knowledge and understanding about progressing into education, employment and training
- To explore the information sources young people use and how effective these are
- To explore key influences – friends, family, peers etc
- To explore barriers to succeeding in learning, including current and past experiences and how these could be overcome
- To explore reasons why young people disengage from education, training and employment and how they could be encouraged to reengage.

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │   Where are you now?     │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
         ┌───────────────────────────────────────┐
         │ Understandings of success in          │
         │ life and in education, and            │
         │ barriers to success                   │
         └───────────────────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │   What are your          │
              │   plans after 16?        │
              └──────────────────────────┘
               │            │            │
               ▼            ▼            ▼
        ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
        │ Educatio │  │ Training │  │ Employment   │
        └──────────┘  └──────────┘  └──────────────┘
               │            │            │
               ▼            ▼            ▼
      ┌────────────────────────────────────────────┐
      │ Reasons for choices and barriers to other  │
      │ routes                                     │
      └────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │  Information provision    │
              └──────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │   Key influences          │
              └──────────────────────────┘
```

Introduction

- Introduce researcher, Ipsos MORI
- Explain no right and wrong answers, opportunity to share views, respect each others' opinions etc
- Reassure over confidentiality, MRS code of conduct, ask permission to tape record
- Get pupils to introduce selves
- Introduce the research and London Councils – emphasise that this is an opportunity to have their voice and opinions heard, and to feed into important research about education in London.

SECTION ONE: Warm up – scrap book exercise

- ACTIVITY – looking through magazines to pull out images that you think describe yourself. These can be objects, other people they think are similar to them – anything they think reflects them now. Get them to explain how each image applies. Then look for images that they think will describe/reflect what they will be like in the future, use this as an opening to talk about where they see themselves in the future, and understandings of success.

_____

SECTION TWO: Attitudes to success

MODERATOR NOTE: RATHER THAN 'SCHOOL' USE THE LANGUAGE PUPILS USE WHEN TALKING ABOUT EDUATION/PRU

IF THESE QUESTIONS SEEM TOO PERSONAL, MOVE ONTO THE MORE GENERAL
In an ideal world, what would you like to be doing in 10 years time?
- Why? What interests you about this?
- Do you know how/what you would need to do to get there?
- What/who initially made you think that you wanted to do this …….?

Do you think you will be doing this in 10 years?
- Why/why not?
- Do you think other people (friends, family etc) think you will be doing this?

What does a successful person look like/how would you describe them?
- Is there anyone you can think of who you think is successful? How/what makes them successful?
- Do you think you will be successful?
- Do you think other people think you will be successful? Who?

What do you think is doing well in life? e.g. having lots of friends, good at sport, at school
- If mention school – what is doing well at school?

What do you think stops young people doing as well as they can at school? REFER TO WHAT THEY THINK OF AS SUCCESS AT SCHOOL. SEPARATE PRACTICAL FROM MOTIVATIONAL. E.g. Bad teachers, couldn't do the courses they wanted, distractions, don't feel safe at school etc

Which of these do you think is the main reason why young people don't do as well as they can in school?
- Is there anything that could be done to make it easier?

_____

SECTION THREE: Plans after compulsory education

What would you ideally like to be doing after you finish education at 16?
- Why is this appealing?

Has anyone else asked you about your plans after you finish education at 16?
- IF SO: Who?
- What did they ask you about?

What do you think are the options that are available to young people after they finish education at 16? DO NOT PROMPT AT FIRST.

POSSIBLE ACTIVITY: Brainstorm the different options and moderator to write on show cards. Get pupils to discuss which, if any they would like to pursue.
- IF MENTION EDUCATION: do you aware of the different options available? e.g AS levels, GNVQs, diplomas, apprenticeships etc
- IF MENTION GETTING A JOB: what sort of job?

Do any of you have any plans for once you finish education at 16?
- Have you thought much about it?
- What are you thinking of doing?
- How much control do you think you have over what you do?
- Why?
- Who suggested you do this?
- Why this over other routes (education/training/employment)?

What do other people (friends, family, teachers) think you should do?
- do you agree with them?

118

_____

SECTION FOUR: barriers to education/training

Why do you think some people your age don't want to stay in education/training? TRY TO SEPARATE OUT PRACTICAL FROM MOTIVATIONAL/ASPIRATIONAL E.g is there a course they want to do, want to earn a wage instead, family pressure, don't like school – why? etc.

What, if anything, do you think would encourage young people to stay on in education/training after school? E.g more support with passing exams, better knowledge about the options, financial support, role models/mentors who have continued learning etc

Do you think there are any advantages or disadvantages of staying in education/training after school. What are they?
- Do you feel you are *expected* to take this route? IF YES: what/who makes you think that?

Do you manage to come here (PRU) every day?
- why/why not?
- What prevents you from getting here?

What happens if people don't make it in every day?

_____

SECTION FIVE: Information provision

Thinking generally, what sort of information do you thik young people need/want to know about what they could do after year 11?

Where would you go to find out about your options for after you finish education at 16?
e.g. internet sites such as *Prospects*, careers advisers, teachers, friends, family

Have you used any of these sources?
- Which ones? When?
- What information did you want to find out?
- What information did they give you? Was this what you wanted to know?
- Which one was the most helpful?
- Whose opinion was most important to you?

Are there any other/more effective sources you would like to be able to access careers information from?
e.g. through text messages, DVDs, touch screen kiosks, social networking sites (could receive advice from older people who've made these decisions)
 - What information would you like these to include/contain?

Is there anything you couldn't find out, but want to know about your options?

_____

SECTION SIX: Influences

ACTIVITY: Get pupils to brainstorm all the people they think are interested in their future. Moderator to write these onto cards. Then use these as a prompt to discuss:
- what these different people think/expect them to do with their futures
- whether they agree with these people's opinions
- whether they have had any support from these people for what *they* want to do in the future.
- Get them to rank how important each influence is and why – which ones they listen to and which they ignore.

Have you had any advice from teachers or other adults?
- What advice did they offer?
- Did they tell you what you wanted to know?
- Were they helpful?
- Is there anything they didn't tell you that would have been helpful?

What do you think other people generally expect of you in the future (not parents or friend)? Do they have positive or negative expectations?
- Why do you say that?

Overall, how do you feel about your future – are you excited/worried/don't think about it? Why?
_____

SECTION SEVEN: Conclusion

Give me one way in which staying in education could be made more appealing.

Anything else you want to talk about?
Thanks.