

Percy, C. (2024). Technical note: Looking deeper at destination. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

In January 2023, The Careers & Enterprise Company published a technical note finding that schools who achieved higher Gatsby Benchmark scores in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 typically reported that more students had positive sustained destinations post-16.¹ It was found that on average, each additional benchmark fully achieved was associated with a 1.1% decline in the proportion not in confirmed education, employment and training (EET)², controlling for a range of school-level characteristics.

This new report builds on that research, examining whether the positive link between higher benchmark scores and student outcomes holds true when tested against additional data. The findings show that this link is not only present but even stronger in two new datasets relating to student-level post-16 EET rates and provider-level post-18 EET rates. Our holistic interpretation of our destinations-related analyses suggests a potential 0.5%pt to 3.5%pts improvement in EET rates for schools implementing the full suite of Gatsby factors.

In January 2023, The Careers & Enterprise Company published a technical note⁴ finding that schools who reported higher Gatsby Benchmark scores in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 typically reported that more students had positive sustained destinations post-16. Please refer to the 2023 note for more details on the policy context for the research.

Following that research, we identified three aims for future research on destinations:

- to test whether the statistical relationship between non-EET outcomes and Gatsby Benchmarks identified for the 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 cohorts could be observed in relation to post-18 destinations and the

The [Department for Education \(DfE\)](#) annually shares [data](#) on what students are doing six months after they finish Year 13. Many schools and colleges also assess their careers provision using the [Compass tool](#), which measures performance against the _____

The Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) follows young people mostly born between 2000 and 2002, with key data when they were between 14 and 17 years old. With support from UCL and the UK Data Service, we analysed Gatsby Benchmark achievement from 2017/18 and 2018/19 against the schools young people attended at age 14. In our 2023 note using school-level data, we found a 0.6%pt improvement in EET rate for institutions with a 100% benchmark score.¹² However, when we looked at individual student data in the MCS, we found a much larger 3.7%pts improvement if their Key Stage 4 schools had fully implemented Gatsby Benchmark provision. On average, students in schools with full Gatsby-style careers guidance had a 97.6% EET rate compared to 93.9% for similar students in schools with no careers provision.¹³ It is essential to note that the small number of students not in EET means that these findings are indicative only. For the same reason, we were not able to analyse specific groups such as economically disadvantaged students.¹⁴

Although the MCS survey did not cover all aspects of Gatsby Benchmark provision, it did ask students around age 17 if they had previously had advice from careers advisers about their post-16 options. Our analysis shows that the future plans of such students were often more strongly motivated by careers thinking. For instance, students' current education activities at age 17 were more likely to have been informed by future job preferences¹⁵ and their intentions regarding university were more likely to be strongly informed by careers thinking.¹⁶

The provider level post-18 destination analysis follows the same broad structure as the school-level post-16 destination analysis that has been analysed in two CEC publications (Percy & Tanner, 2021; Percy, 2023).

The unit of analysis is individual institutions in England – schools, colleges, etc. – which have both:

- (i) destination data available in DfE's published sustained EET data (i.e., the destination in the first year after completing the equivalent of Year 13, if sustained).¹⁷
- (ii) Compass data available on the quality of their careers provision in terms of self-reported Gatsby Benchmark achievement (average benchmark score as the primary variable of interest).

This first analysis on post-18 data is based on the cohort who were in Year 13 in the 2018/19 academic year, being the most recent year for which we have Gatsby Benchmark data, destination data, and Key Stage 5 examination results data when this research was initiated in summer 2023. The publication of provider-level academic results was paused during the Covid-19 pandemic, limiting the availability of control variables for later years. In future analysis, we hope to extend this approach to other academic years, subject to suitable control variable approaches.

The analytical regression technique is a generalised linear model, using robust standard errors and finite population correction¹⁸, with a logit link function and a binomially distributed dependent variable to model the outcomes of interest as a percentage, e.g. percentage of the institution's cohort in sustained EET the year after completing Year 13.

The two survey waves from the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) of greatest relevance to this research are the Wave 6 and Wave 7 surveys, taking place when the respondents were approximately aged 14 and 17 respectively.

Our intention is to understand the school-level careers provision that respondents would have experienced during Key Stage 4. As such, we matched Gatsby Benchmark data on the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years to the school attended during the Wave 6 survey (via the URN identifier, accessed as secure data via

special permission from the data owners). All analyses use probability weighted data with weights developed by the MCS team, with cluster-robust standard errors clustered by the school the student was in at Wave 6.

The destination analysis is implemented via a logistic regression, with the binary outcome variable identifying respondents in Education, Employment, or Training (EET) as of their Wave 7 survey. A positive EET status is

Both studies are observational in nature and the sample sizes are smaller than would be desirable for such

Control variables for the age 16-18 phase of education are chosen to reflect the same control variables as used in the published post-16 analysis, with a build-up in three stages:

- Core control variables:

- Cohort size (+ squared term)

- CEC provider type

- Region of England

- Rurality level (entered as dummy variables)

- Ofsted grade (entered as dummy variables, incl. missing as a category)

- Whether has KS4 provision (defined as having a statutory lower bound on allowed age range as 14 or below)

- Whether boys-only

- Whether girls-only

- Whether selective intake

- Whether is in an Opportunity Area

- Percentage of students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) as of their Year 11 status*

- Unemployment rate in LA district (2018/19)*

- Jobs density in LA district (2018/19)*

- Academic control variables*:

- Percentile ranking by weighted average academic grades and value-added scores, weighted by pathways available for 2018/19

- Approximate proportion of cohort taking at least one exam in each of five different pathways in 2018/19: Level 2 vocational qualifications, academic qualifications, applied general qualifications, T Levels, and tech certificates.¹⁹



The following table provides descriptive statistics for the headline analytical sample for the destinations results as compared to the full eligible sample prior to requiring successful Gatsby Benchmark data matching.

Variable	Full eligible sample			Headline analytical sample		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
"I am good at maths" view	4,802	3.04	0.79	3,245	3.04	0.79
Capped GCSE & eq. score	4,861	41.36	14.19	3,245	42.54	13.75
Local IMD score	4,855	5.36	2.97	3,245	5.63	2.95
"School is waste of time" view	4,800	3.28	0.76	3,245	3.27	0.76

The non-EET rate, i.e. the proportion not confirmed as EET, in the sample with control variables data is 3.3% (weighted sample size of 2064; unweighted of 3245, including 108 non-EET respondents). For the full eligible sample without requiring control variables data or matched benchmarking data, the non-EET rate is 3.7% (weighted sample of 3024; unweighted of 4861, including 176 non-EET respondents). The logistic regression results are shown in the following table.

Model	Unweighted				

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- 1 Percy, C. (2023). Technical note: Further analysis on post-16 destinations for the 2016/17 to 2018/19



