

TRANSITIONS AT 14

Analysing the intake of 14–19 education institutions

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60 SECOND SUMMARY

In England, more young people are now able to change education institution at age 14. This follows a growth in recent years in the number of institutions that cater for 14–19-year-olds, such as university technical colleges (UTCs), studio schools and 14–19 free schools. These institutions typically have a focus on vocational or technical education, but promise to deliver a broad education to a wide mixture of pupils.

UTCs, studio schools and 14–19 free schools were all introduced following the passing of the Academies Act 2010. Each of them implement different models of the provision of 14–19 education, and of the extent to which vocational and technical education is blended with a mainstream academic curriculum. All, however, are designed to build relationships with a range of business partners.

Despite this growth in their number, relatively little is known about how 14–19 institutions impact upon their local education markets. This has led to many claims and counter-claims being made about UTCs and studio schools, ranging from arguments that they provide high-quality technical routes for young people, through to fears that they will ‘track’ low-attaining pupils and impede their chances of success.

IPPR’s ‘Transitions at age 14’ study seeks to understand these claims in more detail. It will examine how 14–19 education institutions are becoming a more significant part of local schools provision, and what this means for both nearby mainstream secondary schools and the wider education system.

This briefing is the first, interim publication of our ‘Transitions at 14’ study, and presents new findings, based on analysis of the Department for Education’s National Pupil Database, to help inform the debate.

KEY FINDINGS

What are the characteristics of pupils enrolling in 14–19 institutions¹ at age 14?

- They are disproportionately male (68 per cent).
- They are more likely to have lower attainment at key stage 2 (KS2), and to have ‘underprogressed’ between the ages of 7 and 11.
- Based on their attainment at KS2, they are predicted to achieve GCSE grades below the national average. This is particularly true of pupils in studio schools, compared to those in UTCs (who are more likely to recruit ‘middle attainers’).
- They are likely to travel around three times further to get to school than the national average.
- While the average proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is 15 per cent among all school types, within UTCs it is slightly below average (13 per cent), and among studio schools it is above average (20 per cent).
- UTCs recruit equally from the most and least deprived neighbourhoods, while studio schools recruit disproportionately from the most deprived neighbourhoods.

¹ We analysed data for UTCs, studio schools and 14–19 free schools which opened in 2013 or 2014. While some further education colleges are also able to recruit pupils at age 14, data for these institutions is not included in the National Pupil Database so they were not included in this analysis.

What are the characteristics of the schools from which 14–19 institutions recruit pupils at age 14?

- They are more likely to be schools rated as ‘inadequate’ or ‘requires improvement’ by Ofsted as opposed to those rated as ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’.
- Pupils that join a 14–19 institution from schools within the same multi-academy trust (MAT) are more likely to have lower prior attainment when compared to those that join from schools which are not within the same MAT.²

At age 13, what factors predict whether a pupil will enrol in a 14–19 institution?

- They are disproportionately likely to have already moved from one primary school to another.
- Those recruited from ‘good’ and ‘outstanding’ schools are more likely to be lower-attaining and more disadvantaged than their peers within the same school.
- Coming from a more deprived household was found to increase the likelihood that a pupil will enrol in a 14–19 institution.
- Pupils that come from schools with lower GCSE pass rates are more likely to travel further to attend a 14–19 institution.

- Pupils most likely to attend UTCs are boys with high attainment in maths and low attainment in English, who come from more affluent neighbourhoods and who join from a school with an adverse Ofsted rating (‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’).

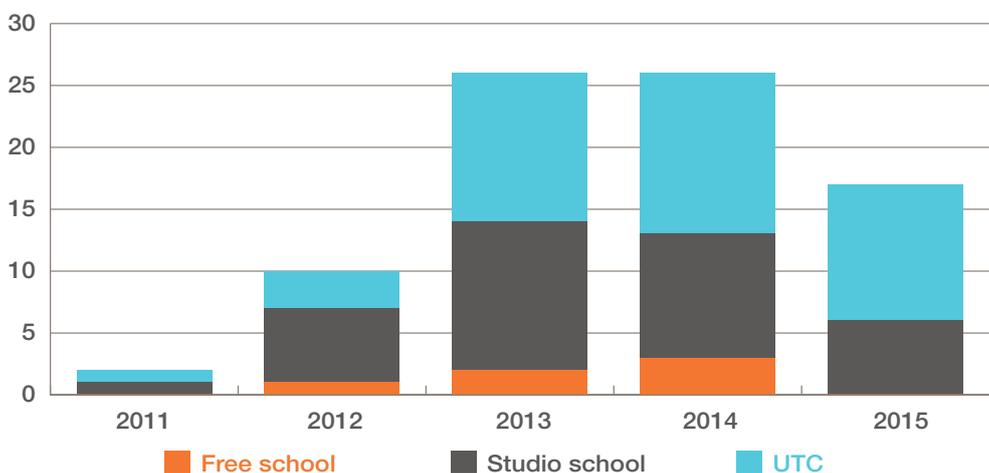
Where are 14–19 institutions being set up?

- There is no discernible pattern determining their geographical spread: their location is not based on the quality of local schools, or local labour market or demographic factors.
- Many of these institutions are failing to recruit sufficient numbers of pupils, and are operating significantly under capacity.

It is important to remember that these are average statistics and mask considerable variation between different 14–19 institutions. It is also important to remember that 14–19 institutions are a recent phenomenon, and the characteristics of pupils attending them might change as the programme ‘beds down’ over time. For example, they may attract a more diverse intake once parents are familiar with them and they become an established part of the education market.

FIGURE 1.1

Since 2010, a growing number of 14–19 institutions have opened in England
Timeline of 14–19 institution openings, 2011–2015



Source: IPPR analysis of data from an extract of the Department for Education’s EduBase dataset (DfE 2015a) <http://www.education.gov.uk/edubase/home.xhtml>

² A multi-academy trust is an organisation established as a legal entity to govern a group of schools, through a single set of members and directors.

For the full report, including all references, data sources and notes on methodology, see: www.ippr.org/publications/transitions-at-14

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