Effective practice in improving attendance in primary schools

June 2015

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- ⅄ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- ⅄ primary schools
- ⅄ secondary schools
- ⅄ special schools
- ⅄ pupil referral units
- ⅄ independent schools
- ⅄ further education
- ⅄ independent specialist colleges
- ⅄ adult community learning
- ⅄ local authority education services for children and young people
- ⅄ teacher education and training
- ⅄ Welsh for adults
- ⅄ work-based learning
- ⅄ learning in the justice sector

Estyn also:

- ⅄ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others
- ⅄ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence

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Introduction

This report is the second of two thematic reviews produced by Estyn in response to a request for advice about practice in improving attendance from the Minister for Education and Skills in his annual remit letter. The first report, published in September 2014, focused on strategies and actions in secondary schools and local authorities to improve attendance. This report focuses on practices in primary schools that have led to good or improving levels of attendance and includes case studies of best practice.

For this survey, Estyn inspectors visited primary schools across Wales where attendance was either good or had improved significantly in the last four to five years. The schools ranged in size from 60 to 520 pupils and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals in those schools ranged from 3% to 60%.

Background

In 2006, Estyn produced a survey report called 'Improving attendance'. Its focus was to provide advice on the interventions used by schools and local authorities to tackle attendance issues in primary and secondary schools. Its main findings were that:

- Very few schools used the benchmarking data provided by the Welsh Assembly Government to set appropriately challenging targets for attendance
- Almost all schools had an attendance policy, but a minority of schools did not review these policies regularly and consequently they were not fit for purpose
- Many schools had problems in preventing pupils taking holidays during term-time

Where practice was good:

- Schools placed great importance on creating an environment that welcomes pupils and encourages them to attend
- Headteachers in primary schools and a member of the senior management team in secondary schools took a leading role in tackling absence
- Good links were established and maintained with families
- Schools had a designated link governor with responsibility for attendance

Many of the findings of this report are similar to those of the 2006 report.

In 2011, the Welsh Assembly Government published 'Strategies for schools to improve attendance and manage lateness', as part of the 'All Wales Attendance Framework'. This sets out examples of effective strategies that schools can employ to help improve attendance. Only a very few schools visited as part of this survey were aware of the report.

Main findings

1   Schools that maintain good attendance or improve attendance often employ common strategies. In these schools, it is the consistent attention given to attendance and the variety of strategies employed that has led to good attendance and not the implementation of one particular strategy. Schools with consistently good or improved attendance:

- create an environment that welcomes pupils and plan learning opportunities that encourages them to attend

- have a clear attendance policy that pupils, parents and staff understand

- raise the profile of attendance with pupils and parents, so that they understand the impact of poor attendance on pupils' work and life chances

- provide a strong message to parents that the school has a high expectation of pupil attendance, and responds quickly and consistently to absence

- understand the reasons for individual pupil absence and provide targeted challenge and support for these pupils and their families

- involve parents in school life and in strategies to improve attendance

- have strong links with support services including community groups, social services and the education welfare service that can assist in engaging and supporting vulnerable families

- have staff with a clearly defined responsibility for monitoring and improving attendance

- have a robust first-day and on-going contact system in place

- use all the data available to identify and act on attendance issues quickly and consistently

- use appropriate rewards and incentives to encourage good attendance

- include attendance in school improvement planning and ensure that strategies are implemented in a timely manner

- have senior staff and a governing body that monitor and evaluate the impact of attendance strategies

Recommendations

Schools should:

R1 implement the strategies identified in this report to make sure that all pupils attend school regularly

Local authorities and consortia should:

R2 facilitate the sharing of best practice between schools, local authorities and regional consortia

R3 make sure that challenge advisers challenge and support school leaders in relation to action on pupil attendance
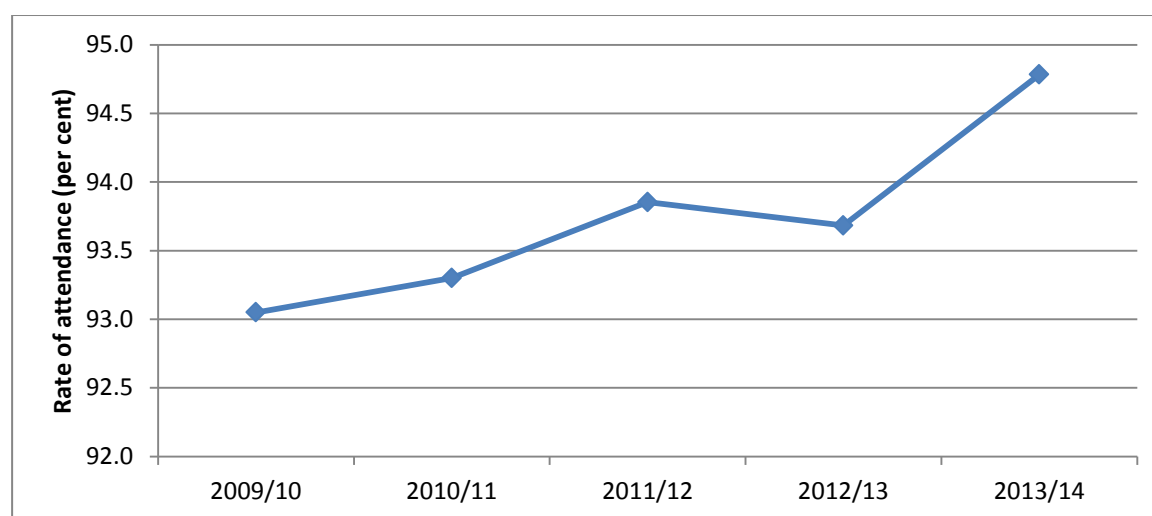
The Welsh Government should:

R4 publicise the 'Strategies for schools to improve attendance and manage lateness' portion of the 'All Wales Attendance Framework'

1 How good is primary school attendance?

Overall attendance

2   Attendance in maintained primary schools has improved over the last five years, with a sharp improvement last year (2013/2014). Average attendance in maintained primary schools now stands at 94.8%, (Welsh Government, 2014) (Figure 1). The improvement in attendance in 2013/2014 is the largest year-on-year increase seen over the past 10 years and results from an increased focus by schools on this issue.

Figure 1: Overall attendance by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary schools in Wales, 2009-2010 to 2013-2014

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record, Welsh Government, 2014.

3   An attendance rate of 94.8% means that on average pupils missed 5.2%[1] of half-day sessions from maintained primary, special and independent schools in 2013-2014. This means that on average every primary school pupil in Wales missed around eight days of school during the year.

4   Although attendance rates in primary schools in Wales now stands at its highest ever level, it is still below that recorded in other parts of the United Kingdom. Based on the last full year for which verified data is available (2012-2013), the primary school attendance rate in Wales trails behind that in the other home nations:

- England   95.3%
- Northern Ireland   94.9%
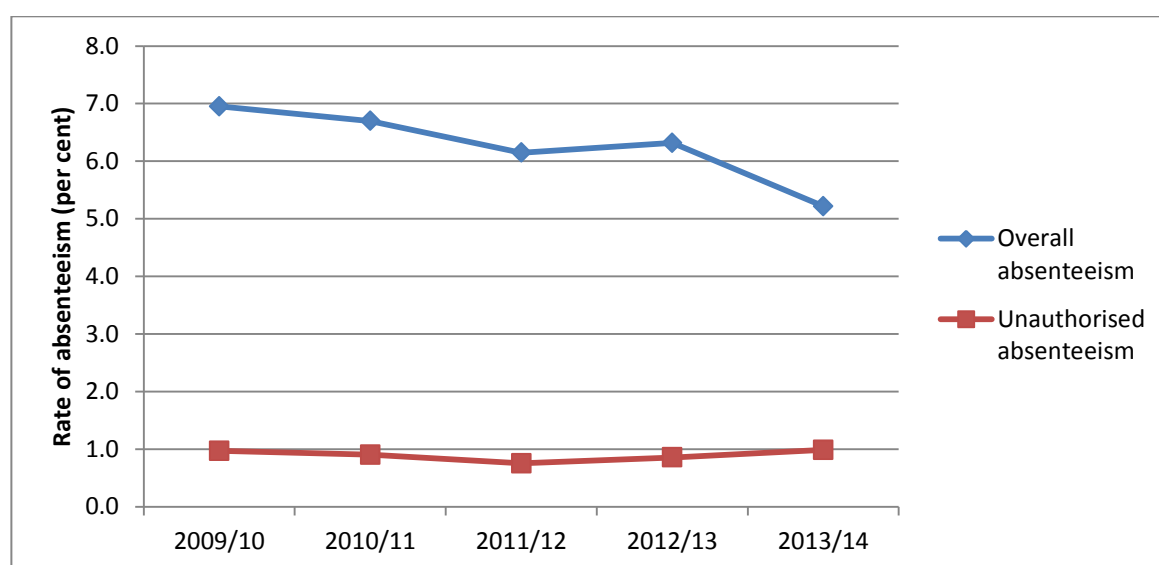- Scotland   94.9%
- Wales   93.7%

    Sources: Great Britain (DfE) 2014, Northern Ireland (DENI) 2014, Scottish Government 2013.

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[1] This figure includes both authorised and unauthorised absences. See Appendix 3.

Reasons for pupil absence

5   The percentage of sessions missed by pupils fell from 6.9% of half-day sessions in 2009-2010 to 5.2% in 2013-2014, (Welsh Government, 2014) (Figure 2). This means that on average pupils are now in school for an extra two and a half days every year throughout their primary school life.

6   In 2012-2013, the rate of overall absence from maintained primary, special and independent schools rose by 0.2 percentage points. This was mainly due to increased levels of illness. However, the latest figures show that overall absence has fallen in primary schools again, (Welsh Government, 2014).

Figure 2: Rates of absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary schools, 2009-2010 to 2013-2014

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record, Welsh Government, 2014

7   Illness is the most common reason for absence in maintained primary schools, accounting for almost 60% of absences (Figure 3). The proportion of absence accounted for by medical or dental appointments increased slightly in 2013-2014 and accounts for 6.3% of all absences, (Welsh Government, 2014).

8   In 2013-2014, pupils who were 'late (arriving after the register closed)' accounted for 1.1% of all absences, (Welsh Government, 2014). Inspection and survey evidence shows that the recording of this type of absence varies significantly across primary schools and that there is considerable variation in the time at which primary schools consider their register as 'closed'. Until recently, there has been a lack of clear guidance and consistency in how long registers should remain open at the start of each school session, causing considerable variation across Wales. However, the Welsh Government has responded to this by providing the Education Welfare Service with clear guidance that registers should remain open for only 30 minutes after the start of the session.

Figure 3: Percentage of sessions missed by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary schools, by reason for absence

Type of absence	Reason for absence	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Authorised	Illness	51.7	56.9	57.2
	Medical or dental appointments	10.2	6.2	6.3
	Religious observance	0.2	0.2	0.4
	Study leave	0.1	-	-
	Traveller absence	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Agreed family holiday	19.3	17.0	11.7
	Agreed extended family holiday	0.6	0.3	0.2
	Excluded, but no alternative provision made	0.3	0.3	0.3
	Other authorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	4.8	5.0	4.5
	Total authorised absence	**87.7**	**86.4**	**81.1**
Unauthorised	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	1.3	3.1	8.0
	Late (arrived after the register closed)	1.1	0.9	1.1
	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	7.7	7.7	9.1
	No reason for the absence provided yet	2.2	1.9	0.8
	Total unauthorised absence	**12.3**	**13.6**	**18.9**
Overall	**Total overall absence**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

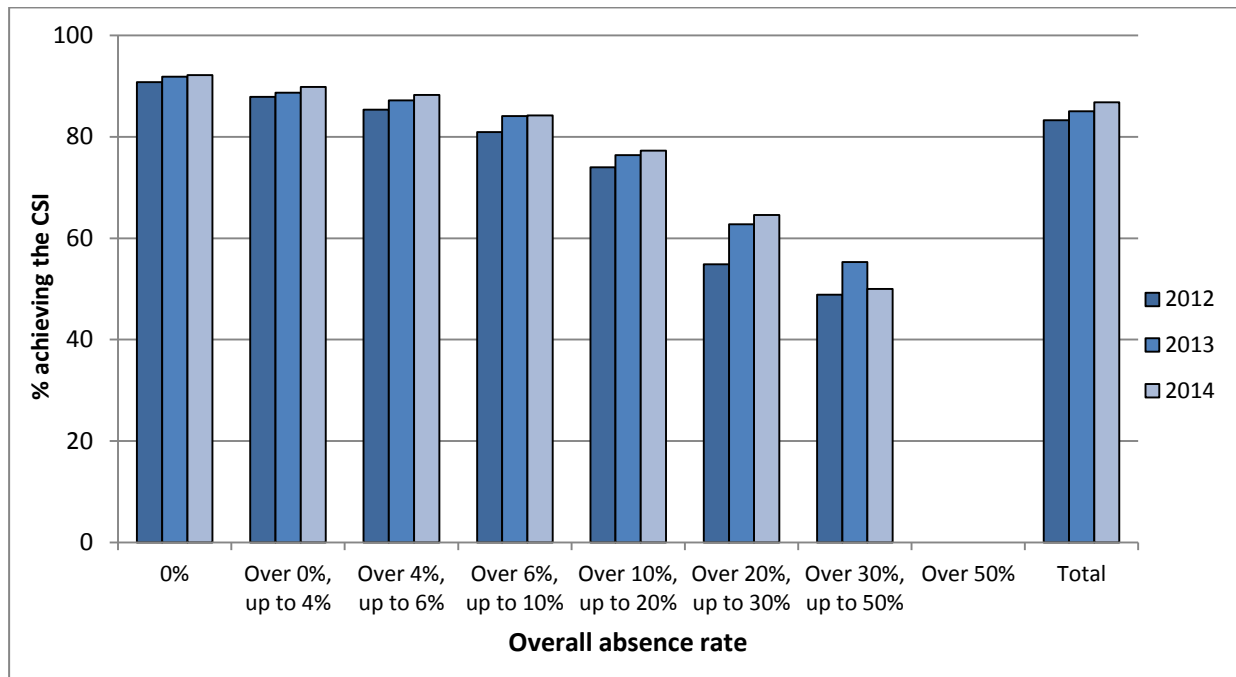Source: Pupils' Attendance Record, Welsh Government, 2014

9   While the rate of overall absence fell in maintained primary schools, the rate of unauthorised absence increased. This is as a result of schools categorising certain types of absence as unauthorised that they may have classed as authorised in the past.

10   Many schools (supported by local authorities and regional consortia) now implement a policy of not authorising family holidays during the academic year. In the last two years, the percentage of absence due to family holidays authorised by schools has fallen notably. Over the same period, unauthorised absences due to family holidays not agreed with the school have risen by a similar amount. The proportion of absence due to family holidays not agreed by the school increased from 1.3% in 2011-2012 to 8.0% in 2013-2014, (Welsh Government, 2014). Survey evidence shows that the growing practice of schools not authorising family holidays during term time is the most significant factor in this rise in unauthorised absences in primary schools.

Attendance and attainment

11   The statistical link between attendance and attainment is strong. In 2014, over 92% of pupils with no absence gained the core subject indicator (CSI)[2] at the end of key stage 2 (Figure 4). For pupils with attendance below 90%, but more than 80%, this figure drops notably to around 77% of pupils. For the lowest attending pupils, those with attendance lower than 70% but more than 50%, only 50% gained the CSI, (Welsh Government, 2015).

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[2] The core subject indicator (CSI) refers to pupils gaining the expected level 4 or above in English, mathematics and science at the end of key stage 2.

Figure 4: Percentage of pupils gaining the core subject indicator (CSI) at key stage 2 by overall absence rates, 2012-2014 (a)

(a) Chart data for pupils whose absence rates were over 50% are not shown due to there being fewer than 50 pupils in the years' cohorts.

Source: Welsh Government, 2015

12   Based on the statutory number of 190 school days per year, a pupil with 90% attendance will miss 19 days of schooling each year. Between entering primary school in the reception class to the end of primary education in Year 6, a pupil with an average attendance of 90% will miss 133 full days of school. This is over half a year of learning.

Attendance and disadvantage

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13   Attendance data indicates that there is a relationship between the overall rate of attendance and the proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. In general, schools with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals have lower attendance rates (Figure 5). However, the data also shows that schools with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals can have very different rates of overall attendance, (Welsh Government, 2015).

14   In 2014, in schools with the lowest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (below 8%), attendance varied from 88.9% to 98.8%. In schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (over 32%), attendance varied from 87.9% to 97.5%, (Welsh Government, 2015). Based on the statutory number of 190 school days per year, in schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils miss around five more school days each year, on average, than pupils in the lowest free-school-meal group.

Figure 5: Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary schools, by proportion eligible for free school meals, 2013-2014 (a)

Percentage entitled to free school meals	Percentage of half-day sessions missed		Number of schools
	Overall absence	Unauthorised absence	
8% or less	5.0	0.4	313
16% or less, but over 8%	5.7	0.5	345
24% or less, but over 16%	6.4	0.8	241
32% or less, but over 24%	7.0	1.0	205
Over 32%	7.7	1.7	275
All maintained schools	6.3	0.9	1,379

(a) Free school meal data are based on a three year average.

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record and Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC), Welsh Government, 2014.

Regional consortia and local authorities

15 The rates of attendance vary too much between local authorities and between schools within the same local authority (Appendix 5).

16 All regional consortia and local authorities have taken action to reduce rates of overall absence in primary schools in 2013-2014. In just under half of local authorities, unauthorised absences have increased. This increase coincides with the increase in the number of schools taking a firmer stance on not authorising family holidays during term time.

17 There is a now consistent message coming from most local authorities, most of whom have policies that discourage schools from authorising family holidays during term time, although the responsibility for authorising these holidays ultimately rests with headteachers. For the most part, this change accounts for this increase in unauthorised absences.

2 Planning to improve attendance

Data analysis

18 Schools that have been successful in maintaining or improving attendance undertake detailed analysis of the data available to schools on pupil absence. Through this analysis, they identify specific patterns and attendance issues relating to attendance at the school and go on to identify individual pupil reasons for absence.

19 At best, those responsible for analysing attendance data, do so regularly. In many cases, they scrutinise data on a weekly basis as well as over longer periods. They analyse attendance for groups of learners as well as individuals. As a result, they are able to detect differences in attendance for different groups of learners, falls in individual pupils' attendance or unexplained absences quickly. Following this, they undertake agreed actions, such as contacting parents or support services, without delay.

20   Effective schools ensure that all staff and the school's governing body have a good understanding of the school's attendance data. Those responsible for attendance data inform all teachers about the attendance rates of their pupils, including any reduction in attendance of individual pupils. As a result, all staff are aware of their role in improving attendance. They challenge unexplained absences sensitively but robustly and are consistent in the messages that they give on the importance of attendance.

21   These schools use attendance data to inform strategic planning. They set ambitious but realistic targets for attendance and build strategies into the school's improvement plan to maintain and improve attendance. This ensures that the governing body can hold school leaders to account on this important matter.

Detailed data analysis at Acton Park Primary School, Wrexham

There are 480 pupils at the school. About 11% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is lower than local and national averages. English is the home language for most pupils and around 6% of pupils receive support for English as an additional language. The school identifies about 12% of pupils as having additional needs.

At Acton Park, school leaders analyse attendance data to inform improvement plans and interventions. The school administrative officer, the specialist teaching assistant and school leaders analyse attendance data carefully to identify attendance and absence. The analysis includes careful scrutiny of the attendance of individual pupils and of various groups, including:

- pupils with English as an additional language
- pupils eligible for free school meals
- pupils with additional learning needs
- minority ethnic groups
- boys and girls
- individual classes and year groups

The school also analyses data over time to identify annual and three-year trends in relation to pupil absence for holidays.

School leaders also use a 'matrix of vulnerability'. This matrix is a collection of a range of data from a number of sources that leaders use to assess the likelihood of support that pupils and parents might need.

Following the rigorous data analysis, the school implements activities that meet the specific needs and challenges of particular pupils and parents.

These include:

- a nurture breakfast club, which targets specific pupils who may arrive late to school without having breakfast, and which provides a valuable opportunity for checking a pupils' wellbeing, (how are they feeling? and Is there anything the school can do to help?)
- a therapeutic story-writing project for small groups of children who are at risk of

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non-attendance and who have emotional and behavioural difficulties

- parent workshops to help them understand their children's behaviour and attitude and the impact these can have at home and on school attendance
- a student-assist programme to help pupils to develop positive self-esteem and resilience, especially on transition to secondary school for Year 6 pupils
- social and communications skills sessions for pupils who would benefit from developing these skills
- sessions on developing phonic skills for pupils with low literacy skills
- support for pupils eligible for free school meals who require further challenge in their learning
- an anxiety workshop to support pupils to cope with emotional problems

The school has maintained good pupil attendance for the last four years with an overall attendance rate of around 95%. This places the school mostly among the top 25% when compared with similar schools. Data analysis helps the school to identify those at risk of poor attendance at an early stage early and has helped the school to put in place effective intervention strategies for pupils and parents. This has had a positive impact on improving attendance. The percentage of pupils absent due to holidays within term time has decreased to its lowest ever level.

22 In nearly all schools visited, challenge advisers discuss attendance data with school leaders. This contributes to maintaining attendance as an important strategic priority. In a minority of cases, challenge advisers do not challenge school leaders about the issues underlying poor attendance, for example the reasons for persistent absences or poor attendance of groups of pupils. In addition, challenge advisers do not make enough use of the knowledge about families that education welfare officers hold to inform their discussions.

23 Most of the schools visited, whose attendance had improved, analyse attendance data on a regular basis and share the results of actions they take with their governing body. However, even in these schools, only a few evaluate the impact of the individual actions they take on pupils' attendance.

Policies and strategies

24 Successful schools have a clearly understood attendance policy. In the best cases, these set out the school's aims and objectives, along with systems and procedures for ensuring regular school attendance and for investigating poor attendance.

25 School leaders ensure that they develop policies that take into account the views of pupils, parents and the governing body. They consult with their local authority and education welfare service to ensure the school's strategies reflect local authority policy.

Parkland Primary School in Swansea has a parents' forum that promotes good and ongoing communication with parents. The forum meets regularly and has an open agenda that allows school leaders and parents to discuss school matters. This group is a valuable source of information for the school about issues such as attendance. The forum took part in scrutinising and agreeing the new attendance policy. This helped ensure parental co-operation. This group is also able to speak with other parents, ensuring that the school communicates its message consistently and widely.

26 A minority of schools develop their attendance policy in conjunction with other cluster primary schools and the local secondary schools. This ensures a common vision and sends a strong message to pupils and parents.

27 Where schools have a policy that is effective in improving attendance, leaders continue to monitor, evaluate and adapt their policy to ensure that the policy is up-to-date and reflects changes in local and national policy, and that the school continues to employ the most relevant strategies.

Sharing best practice and evaluating impact

28 Local authorities and regional consortia are generally aware of primary schools that have effective strategies to improve and maintain good attendance. However, only in a few cases are primary schools with very good attendance levels being used as models of best practice or to support other schools.

29 In the best cases, schools receive comparative data from the local authority and are aware of how other schools perform. As a result, they are able to set appropriate targets and contact other schools to share good practice.

30 Local authorities and regional consortia do not always share best practice in improving attendance. For example, headteachers are not always aware of effective strategies to improve attendance in other local authorities, even when these authorities are in the same consortium.

3 Provision and support for improving attendance

School-based approaches

31 Parents or carers are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly. Schools have an important role in establishing policies and procedures that support high levels of attendance. Effective school leaders understand the importance of attendance to pupils' life chances and place a high priority on implementing a broad range of strategies to maintain and improve pupil attendance.

32 These leaders develop clear policies and practices to support good attendance that they share with pupils, parents and staff. They provide pupils and parents with a range of information on the impact of poor attendance on attainment and the possible

consequences of low attendance by pupils. They reaffirm these messages regularly and raise the profile of attendance with pupils and parents through a variety of means such as newsletters, social media, the school's website and at school events. This ensures that pupils and parents understand the impact that poor attendance can have on pupils' outcomes.

Clear policy, information and guidance for pupils and parents in Parkland Primary School, Swansea

Parkland Primary School has 513 pupils on roll. This includes a specialist teaching facility for nine pupils with moderate to severe learning difficulties. Around 10% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Around two-thirds of pupils are white British and come from homes where English is the first language. About a third of pupils speak a range of 27 different languages. The school identifies around 15% of its pupils as having additional learning needs. All pupils in the specialist teaching facility, and a very few in the main school, have statements of special educational needs.

The school provides parents with regular and clear information on the preferred time for pupils to attend routine appointments and what to do in the case of illness. School leaders send regular newsletters that aim to discourage appointments in school time and reinforce the importance of attendance at school for pupils' ongoing progress.

The school sends each pupil's attendance record to their parents in a letter at the end of term. This letter explains the cumulative effect of absences over a pupil's school life and the effect absence can have on attainment. It also provides useful phone numbers, such as that of the education welfare service. The school has a system of rating attendance so parents receive a percentage attendance rate for their child, and are told whether that percentage is acceptable. For example, over 95% attendance is 'good' and 97% attendance is 'excellent'. This matches well with the school's target of an overall attendance rate of between 95% and 96%.

In parents' surveys since 2011, parents have shown an increasing satisfaction with the school. Most parents agree that the school informs them about their child's progress well and that the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility.

During the last three years, the school has also seen an improvement in pupil outcomes. In key stage 2, results in all subjects at all levels are higher than in 2011. At the higher than expected level 5, results place the school in the top 25% for all subjects when compared with similar schools.

Attendance figures show a continuing trend of improvement over the last four years. From 2011 to 2014, the school's overall attendance rates improved its position relative to similar schools from the bottom 50% to the higher 50%.

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33   Schools that improve attendance or maintain high levels of pupil attendance usually set suitably ambitious targets. Staff understand the targets and the schools communicate them to pupils and parents.

34   Schools that maintain or improve attendance have a robust first-day and on-going contact system in place. This ensures that the schools understand which pupils are absent on any given day and the reasons for absences. They contact parents quickly when a pupil is absent and maintain communication with the home throughout the absence. They question the reasons for unexplained absences sensitively but robustly. This communicates a strong message to parents that the school takes absence seriously and will always respond to it quickly and consistently.

35   Nearly all schools visited have a dedicated member of staff who is responsible for improving and maintaining high levels of attendance. These individuals have clearly defined roles and responsibilities that support the school's continuing aim of improving attendance. They monitor all pupils' attendance carefully and have a broad understanding of all pupils' individual needs. As a result, they are able to intervene quickly when pupil's attendance begins to fall, including making timely referrals to support agencies.

Wellbeing officer at Christchurch Primary School, Rhyl

There are currently 427 pupils on roll. About 60% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is significantly above the national average. The school identifies around 25% of pupils having additional learning needs, which is slightly higher than the national average.

The school employs a well-qualified teaching assistant in the role of 'wellbeing and learning mentor'.

The wellbeing mentor and the school administrator collect and analyse attendance and other related data regularly. They pay close attention to the analysis of attendance data and its link with individual pupil performance. When patterns of underperformance linked to weak attendance are identified, they organise opportunities for individual pupils to have mentoring and support.

The wellbeing mentor collates all the information that the school has on attendance and wellbeing and contacts parents quickly when an individual pupil's attendance begins to fall. She liaises with class teachers and key staff across the school to share relevant information effectively.

She is proactive in contacting and liaising with other support agencies when needed. As part of this role, the wellbeing mentor makes phone calls to parents when pupils are absent and offers support when required.

The development of this role has resulted in better engagement between the school and parents. It has also resulted in better liaison with local support agencies, such as the local authority's 'Family Link' and Action for Children's 'Bridge Project', and an increased willingness from parents to work with these agencies. Parents respond that having someone available in school with whom they can discuss attendance issues and from whom they can get advice is very helpful.

The school uses this role well in co-ordinating support from outside agencies in relation to attendance, including the education social worker and specific projects to improve attendance and wellbeing. For example, 'Roots of Empathy' is an emotional literacy programme, based on experiential learning. It improves pupils' wellbeing by helping them to understanding their own feelings and the feelings of others.

The wellbeing and learning mentor is an approachable member of staff who meets with parents to discuss attendance and other wellbeing issues. Through this channel, the school provides information about other support available elsewhere to further assist pupils and parents.

In 2010, the school's overall attendance rate was around 91%, which placed the school in the lower 50% when compared with similar schools. Since 2011, attendance has improved and the school has remained consistently in the top 25% or higher 50% when compared with similar schools.

36   Many schools have improved attendance by developing strong relationships with parents. They take suitable steps to ensure that all parents can be part of an effective partnership, including those for whom English is an additional language. They involve parents in strategies to improve attendance and more widely in the life of the school. For example, they use parents' forums to discuss and formulate policy.

Building relationships with families at St Monica's Church-in-Wales Primary School, Cardiff

There are 116 pupils on roll aged 4 to 11 years. Around 20% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Over 60% of pupils speak English as an additional language, mainly from the Czech, Slovak and Romanian Roma communities. The school identifies 20% of its pupils as having additional learning needs.

School leaders realised that their usual methods of communication with parents were not effective given the high number of pupils and families with English as an additional language.

They decided to employ a teaching assistant as a multilingual interpreter. This role focuses on supporting families of pupils with English as an additional language including improving attendance. The interpreter is effective in building positive working relationships with these families.

While establishing these links, they are able to explain expectations for pupils' attendance at school. This helps the school to challenge poor attendance and lateness in a positive manner.

The interpreter undertakes a wide range of responsibilities, such as facilitating meetings between parents and school staff. This also includes making home visits with the school's attendance officer, to support and to challenge parents when attendance is poor. The interpreter helps arrange medical appointments, translate letters and assist parents in completing forms. Within the school day, they provide

effective support for groups of pupils with English as an additional language and one-to-one pastoral support. They are also able to support new parents and pupils who have English as an additional language, explaining the school's policies, practices and expectations. This role contributes well to improving attendance among this group of vulnerable learners.

At meetings for new parents, the school's explains its attendance policy and practices, including the possibility of fines and prosecution.

The school has built trusting and strong relationships with nearly all parents. This has been used to great effect when improving attendance. Surveys of families show that nearly all understand the school's procedures and see them as fair. In 2011, the school's overall attendance rate placed the school in the bottom 25% when compared with similar schools. Since introducing the strategies above, the school has seen year-on-year improvement and now has an overall attendance rate of over 95%, which places it in the top 25% of similar schools.

37   Schools that encourage parents to consider carefully the timing of non-urgent appointments and actively discourage routine appointments during school hours have reduced absences. Schools that provide guidance on when and for how long pupils need to remain away from school due to illness or other conditions have also reduced absences in this area.

Engaging pupils, parents and the local community at St Helen's Primary School, Swansea

There are 207 pupils on the roll. Around 23% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is similar to the national average. About 44% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is around twice the national average. Around 90% of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, mainly Asian. A similar figure has English as an additional language, with around 10% new to English.

Background

In 2010, the overall attendance rate was below 90% and placed the school in the bottom 25% when compared with similar schools. On arriving at the school, the headteacher identified that the underlying reasons for the trend of low attendance were a relaxed attitude to attendance by a minority of parents and pupils.

In addition, a high percentage of absences were for illness or medical appointments.

Strategy

School leaders developed strategies to address the attendance issues by:

- addressing the relaxed attitude to attendance from a minority of parents
- communicating the school's expectations of attendance to all pupils and parents
- engaging with pupils, parents and the local community, and communicating messages more effectively, such as the importance of school attendance

Action

The school held open meetings for parents to discuss absence issues and to emphasise the importance of school attendance. These meetings and further investigation, involving the education welfare service, staff and parents, found that many of these absences were due to short appointments, such as medical or dental appointments, where pupils missed a whole day from school. In addition, a minority were due to parents allowing pupils to remain at home, without challenge, when pupils asked not to attend school.

As a result, the headteacher:

- provided clear and consistent guidance to parents that appointments should be taken outside school time whenever possible
- made clear that, if time away from school is needed, then the appointment should take place later in the school day and/or that pupils return to school following appointments, where possible
- expected parents to provide appointment slips (but not medical notes) from general practitioners and health services if they recommended time off school for appointments
- engaged the local community in supporting school attendance, for example by contacting local dentists and opticians to request that pupils receive routine appointments outside of the school day
- continued with open meetings for parents each term, where the termly report to the governing body is presented to parents, and placed a particular focus in these meetings on the importance of attendance and highlighted the school's progress towards meeting its attendance targets

Impact

Attendance figures have improved notably since the school's focus on attendance, and absenteeism has more than halved. The school has moved from the bottom 25% when compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, to the top 25% in 2013 and 2014.

38 Many schools that have improved pupils' attendance use support groups, such as nurture groups and breakfast clubs, to encourage pupils to attend school more often. These groups provide targeted, individual care and support for these vulnerable pupils.

At St Monica's Primary School in Cardiff, the headteacher organises after-school clubs each term, targeting families new to the school, pupils with English as an additional language, and vulnerable pupils. The headteacher structures activities to develop pupils' confidence, wellbeing and friendships. These include circle time to share experiences, group challenges, team games and team building activities, such as singing and dancing. This has been effective in developing pupil friendships and confidence, building relationships with both pupils and parents. This action has contributed notably to the school's success in improving attendance rates.

Pupil engagement

39 Schools have improved pupil attendance when staff have explained to pupils the importance of attending school and explained when it is suitable for them to take time off due to illness.

> In Parkland Primary School in Swansea, the school undertakes a wide range of strategies to ensure it provides pupils with clear information about the importance of attendance. These include:
>
> - class sessions that link attendance with life goals and with learning about global citizenship and education around the world
> - class values that link to children's rights and their right to an education
> - whole-school assemblies and class sessions that highlight the importance of regular attendance and the need to be self-motivating and self-regulating
> - visitors to the school to talk about the importance of attendance, for example an American teacher, who had grown up in Haiti with no chances of an education, speaking to pupils about the importance of attending school
>
> As a result, pupils in the school understand the value of their education and want to attend school. Most pupils have a good understanding of the impact of attendance at school on their future life chances. Older pupils are able to explain clearly the difference between illnesses that need time off school and those that do not. For example, the pupils on the healthy school committee assert that time off is not appropriate for a minor cold or cough.
>
> In the school's annual questionnaire to pupils, the school has added a question that asks whether pupils understand that it is important not to miss school. In the most recent survey, 100% of pupils confirmed their understanding.

40 In many schools where attendance has improved, schools share whole-school, class and individual attendance figures with pupils regularly. Schools also inform pupils about the school's targets figure for attendance. In this way, pupils are aware of their and others' attendance and how it compares to the school's target.

41 Many schools work with pupils regularly in class sessions and whole-school assemblies on values that link to children's right to an education. The focus of these sessions is often the need for pupils to be self-motivating and self-regulating.

42 In a minority of schools, the school council or other groups of pupils contribute ideas to the school's attendance policy and practices. This ensures that the school takes account of pupils' views suitably and further increases the profile of attendance with all pupils.

43 In most schools, leaders recognise that incentives for good attendance are an effective way to motivate pupils and ensure that good attendance remains a high-profile issue. Schools that use incentives well tend to mix more formal, structured rewards systems, such as certificates for good attendance each term or year, with more apparently spontaneous systems, such as small rewards for all pupils who attend on a particular day.

St Monica's Primary School in Cardiff uses a number of innovative and effective reward programmes to highlight attendance and to engage pupils.

- The '5 full weeks' initiative rewards pupils who attend school for five weeks with no absence during one term. This is effective as even if a pupil misses one day, then they are still able to get a reward as they start their five weeks again.
- The school holds raffles on random days where each child in attendance on that day receives a raffle ticket, which gives them a chance to win stationery.
- The award of a 'green certificate' (in line with the traffic-light system) for pupils with over 95% attendance encourages those with only a few days of absence.

Results from the '5 whole weeks' campaign demonstrate an increasing number of pupils with full attendance for the five weeks:

- 38% of pupils with full attendance in the five weeks in the autumn term
- 62% of pupils with full attendance in the five weeks in the spring term
- 75% of pupils with full attendance in the five weeks in the summer

44 Many schools recognise that it is important to encourage good attendance for all pupils, particularly those who may not be able to gain a certificate for a high percentage of attendance over a long period. In the best cases, these schools develop incentive systems that reward improved or full attendance over a rolling period, such as five weeks at a time. This allows all pupils to continue to aim for high attendance, because after any period of absence their target can be set again.

Working with other schools and external agencies

45 Most of the school visited as part of this survey have developed links with other agencies, such as the local authority, social services and a range of community support agencies. They access these services promptly to support pupils and their parents.

46 Many schools work well with their local secondary school and cluster of primary schools to improve attendance, supported by their local authority and local regional consortium. Through close liaison, they agree consistent policies and set procedures to support attendance. These often include standardising their approach to requests for time off for holidays. This unified practice helps sends a consistent message to parents about the importance of attendance in all schools.

47 Effective schools link well with initiatives, such as the 'Team around the Family' or the 'Daily Absence Response Team' in the Rhondda Cynon Taff local authority. These are examples of agencies that support families by providing a range of support services. As a result, families in need of support for a range of issues that may affect school attendance negatively are able to receive help.

Strategic partnerships in Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwyncelyn, Porth

The school's catchment area is large and covers the villages of Porth, Ynyshir, Aberllechau, Glynfach, Cymer, Trebannog and Trehafod. There are 310 pupils at the school. Around 11% of learners are eligible for free school meals. This is lower than local and national averages. The school has identified around 15% of pupils as having additional learning needs.

Strategy

The school has implemented a wide range of strategies to improve attendance, as recognised in this thematic review. However, of particular note is the development of effective links with strategic partners that provide effective support for individual pupils and families where needed

Action

The school has established a range of strategic partnerships to help improve attendance. These partnerships include other local primary schools, the feeder secondary school, local authority agencies, and external services such as a local business.

The school works well with its local cluster of primary schools, led and supported by the local secondary school. Through close liaison, they have agreed a consistent policy and set procedures to support attendance. These include a standardised approach to the recording of absences due to holidays.

In addition to the school's termly rewards for attendance, the school and its cluster of local primary schools hold an end-of-year ceremony in the local secondary school for older pupils in key stage 2. All older pupils with attendance of over 98% attend and a range of prizes helps to motivate to all pupils to attend well during the year. This strategic partnership also develops pupils' familiarity with the local secondary school and so supports transition between the primary and secondary school.

The school makes effective use of the local authority's 'super attender' initiative. Super attender is a fictitious superhero and is the local authority's attendance mascot. He attends assemblies in most terms, encourages pupils to attend school as regularly as possible and gives pupils rewards for good attendance. Linked with this, the local authority also acquires extra prizes from local businesses, which pupils receive for good attendance.

The school has developed close links with the local authority's Daily Absence Response Team (DART). Their role is to help ensure that pupils only take time off school when it is necessary.

With the agreement of the headteacher, the DART team visit pupils' homes if they have been marked as absent with no reason provided by the parent. They aim to meet the parent to find out the reason for absence and explain the importance of ensuring that their child attends school every day and on time.

The school has effective strategic partnerships with its education welfare service. The school liaises beneficially with its education welfare officer, who helps analyse attendance data, monitors registers for patterns of absence and supports and challenges families effectively when pupil attendance falls.

The school links well with the local 'Team around the Family' initiative. This supports families through co-ordinating a range of support services, which may normally work in isolation. This is also an effective way of directing families towards support that they may not know is available. As a result, families in need of support for a range of issues that may affect school attendance negatively are able to receive help efficiently.

School leaders link with other local authority services to help improve attendance beneficially. For example, the school works closely with the local authority's transport services to overcome barriers and to ensure pupils from families who live a significant distance from the school are able to attend regularly.

Impact

Overall attendance has improved consistently over the last five years, improving from the bottom 25% to the higher 50% when compared with similar schools. In addition, the rate of pupil absences due to term-time holidays has decreased. Over a period of four years, the gap between the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals compared to that of other pupils has reduced notably.

48   In Cardiff local authority, feeder primary schools can access help from support officers for attendance and wellbeing, who are based in secondary schools. The support officers help analyse data, contact parents when pupils are absent, and make house calls to hard-to-reach parents. This arrangement has had a positive impact on improving attendance in these schools.

The support officer for attendance and family engagement officer of Tredegarville Primary School, Cardiff

The school has 233 pupils. About 39% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is well above the national average. The school identifies 28% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is slightly higher than the national average. The school identifies 36% of pupils as having English as an additional language. This includes a majority of pupils in the nursery, who are at the early acquisition stage with regard to English. Most of these pupils speak Arabic as a first language.

The previous headteacher put in place practices to improve attendance. At that time, a few pupils' attitude to attendance was poor and a few families did not consider taking time off as an issue. For example, the children from a whole family might have been absent if one child was unwell. Holidays during school time were commonplace.

A new headteacher took up post in 2014 and continues with effective strategies to improve attendance.

The cluster of schools has its own support officer for attendance, based in the local secondary school, who attends the primary school around one half-day each week to help monitor attendance and to support the school.

Action

The support officer for attendance analyses attendance data each week and contacts parents quickly if there are anomalies or unexplained absences. If a pupil's attendance falls, careful analysis of their attendance is undertaken and the attendance officer may make a home visits or set up a meeting with parents at the school.

As a result, the school is able to offer families suitable support initiatives and help address issues causing poor attendance. Careful monitoring, prompt actions and a good range of support initiatives means that attendance in school is good and a very few cases are referred to the education welfare service.

Each class teacher meets with the headteacher and family engagement officer on a half-termly basis to discuss the progress of all pupils. This includes an analysis of each pupil's attendance. The school makes the support officer for attendance aware of concerns identified in meetings, which may result in support for the pupil.

School leaders have created an effective attendance provision map, similar to that used by many schools to monitor provision for pupils with additional learning needs. This categorises pupils with low attendance at one of three intervention levels: school monitoring, school attendance officer monitoring, or referral to education welfare services. The school tracks treatment and intervention strategies that support these pupils carefully.

In its drive to engage families more and to encourage attendance, the family engagement officer leads a range of initiatives, such as:

- 'Family learning signature'. This is an initiative where parents and pupils work together using a set of statements that they colour red, amber or green. This helps identify strengths and needs in the family. The school uses this as an initial session with families to indicate where further support may be needed.
- 'Strengthening families', for key stage 2 pupils at risk of becoming non-attenders and their families. This runs weekly. The children meet in a group with an adult while their parents meet in another group. The two groups then come together at the end of the session for a meal. Through discussions, games and activities, families solve problems together learn about rules and consequences, and support family communication

The school targets hard to reach parents including those whose children have low attendance. For example, the family engagement officer runs a twice-weekly reading and writing workshop. Parents work with their children on spelling, handwriting and reading. This strengthens the relationship between home and school and improves standards for pupils.

> **Impact**
>
> Attendance rates have improved consistently over the last four years, the school improving from the lower 50% to the top 25% when compared with similar schools.

49   In schools where attendance is good or improving, leaders involve the education welfare service in a timely manner and seek their advice as soon as they identify poor or falling attendance. In these schools, the education welfare service provides useful support to schools, pupils and parents to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absenteeism. They help schools and parents to work together to improve pupils' attendance. The education welfare service liaises with a range of agencies and provides an important link between home and school. Where these arrangements are most successful, education welfare officers visit schools regularly and meet with members of staff responsible for pupil attendance. Through these meetings and the analysis of the school's attendance data, they develop an in-depth knowledge of the school and its pupils. As a result, they are able to provide valuable information to school staff and support the school effectively.

4 Effective practice to improve attendance rates

50   In all of the schools visited for this thematic review, it is the consistent attention given to attendance and the variety of strategies employed that has led to good attendance rates and not the implementation of any one strategy. Herbert Thompson Primary School in Cardiff is an example of a school that has a range of effective strategies to improve attendance rates.

> **Pupil involvement at Herbert Thompson Primary School, Cardiff**
>
> There are 465 pupils on roll, including 80 pupils who attend the nursery part-time. Around 51% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is significantly above the national average of 21%. The school identifies around half of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which is also well above the national average of 22%. The school identifies around 17% of its pupils as having English as an additional language.
>
> **Background**
>
> Following the inspection of 2008, when attendance was below most schools, locally and nationally, school leaders identified a range of issues as contributing to poor attendance:
>
> - pupils' attitude to school was poor
> - absence through illness was high and many pupils did not attend school when suffering from minor ailments
> - too many parents had low aspirations for their children

School leaders identified that absences for holidays during term time were not significant, but absence due to illness was a major contributor to weak attendance rates overall.

Strategy

The school developed a wide range of strategies to improve attendance that included:

- engaging parents more fully in the life of the school
- improving support mechanism for parents
- improving the way the school responds to the pupil voice and the role pupils play in improving attendance
- developing a clear whole-school structure for managing attendance
- improving information for parents on attendance, including a clear and easily understood policy

Attendance has been a priority in the school improvement plan for most of the last five years and remains in the plan even though attendance rates place the school in the top 25% or top 50% when compared with similar schools.

The school has developed a 'learning squad' comprised of Year 5 pupils who act as pupil representatives to support school leaders with school improvement. Two of the squad support the drive to improve attendance. Each term, these pupils work with around 20 pupils that the school identifies as needing to improve their attendance.

Action

Each morning, the learning squad visits the 20 pupils during registration and gives them a sticker if they are present. They aim to encourage these pupils to have full attendance for the week. If successful, they are able to attend a Friday lunchtime club, specifically set up for them.

The club is organised and run by senior staff and the learning squad. Twice each half-term, the learning squad and targeted pupils decide what activities they would like to undertake in their club, for example art and craft. Pupils may also choose to act as play leaders for pupils in the Reception class during club time.

Actions taken also include:

- having a weekly focus in morning briefings on attendance, which allows teachers to discuss individual pupils and to identify any support or challenge that they may require
- sending out attendance leaflets every half-term to all parents reminding them of the school's attendance targets and the importance of attendance
- making attendance information easy for parents to understand by giving parents their child's individual attendance rate but also using a traffic light system to show parents whether the level of attendance is good enough or not
- monitoring by the deputy headteacher, in the role of the school's inclusion leader, when pupils' attendance falls below 90%

- making sure that all teachers have a learning review with the inclusion leader each term which also focuses on individual pupils' attendance
- establishing an attendance tracker where actions for individual pupils are monitored carefully by the inclusion leader

The school has established a parents' council, made up of two parents from each year group. They form a support network for parents and are at the school on a daily basis. Individuals can approach them to ask for help or discuss issues. One of their goals is to improve attendance.

Impact

The school's detailed tracking of pupils shows that their strategies have helped to make a measurable and significant impact on improving the attendance of identified pupils. For example, in one term, the school targeted 32 pupils with attendance of below 80% (half with attendance of less than 75%). Of these, 29 improved their attendance notably. Twelve pupils (over a third) achieved attendance of over 90% and eight pupils (a quarter) had attendance of over 95%. Four pupils achieved 100% attendance for the term. The average improvement in attendance was 17 percentage points.

The impact of all the school's strategies on whole-school attendance has been to lift the school into the top 25% or higher 50% when compared with similar schools.

Appendix 1: Evidence base

The findings and recommendations in this report draw on visits to 20 primary schools. The sample takes account of socio-economic background, geographical location, size of school and linguistic contexts. In these visits, HMI:

- met with representative groups of pupils
- met with headteachers
- met with members of school staff responsible for attendance and well-being
- reviewed school, local authority and consortia documentation

The team considered additional evidence from:

- national attendance statistics
- the Welsh Government's analysis of attendance
- The All Wales Attendance Framework
- Estyn inspection reports from primary schools
- Estyn thematic reports

Schools visited

Estyn would like to thank all the schools that helped with the development of this thematic review. In particular, our thanks go to the schools who took part in our detailed survey work:

- Abernant County Primary School, Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Acton Park Primary School, Wrexham
- Bynea County Primary School, Carmarthenshire
- Christ Church Primary School, Denbighshire
- Forden Primary School, Powys
- Herbert Thompson Primary School, Cardiff
- Maes-Y-Coed Primary School, Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Myrddin County Primary School, Carmarthenshire
- Parkland Primary School, Swansea
- Severn Primary School, Cardiff
- St Helen's Primary School, Swansea
- St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School, Cardiff
- Tredegarville Primary School, Cardiff
- Ysgol Gymraeg Llwyncelyn, Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Caerau, Cardiff
- Ysgol Llannefydd, Conwy
- Ysgol Treganna, Cardiff
- Ysgol Y Bedol, Carmarthenshire
- Ysgol Y Graig, Merthyr Tydfil
- Ysgol Tan-y-Fron, Wrexham

Appendix 2: Attendance rates at the surveyed schools

All of the six primary schools quoted within this thematic survey as improving their attendance rates, moved from the bottom 25% or lower 50% in 2011 to the higher 50% or top 25% in 2014 when compared with similar schools.

	Attendance rates			
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**
Acton Park Primary School, Wrexham	95.4%	95.7%	95.5%	95.8%
Parkland Primary School, Swansea	93.7%	94.2%	94.3%	95.5%
Christchurch Primary School, Rhyl	92.8%	93.8%	93.6%	93.6%
St Monica's Church-in-Wales Primary School, Cardiff	91.2%	92.9%	94.4%	95.3%
St Helen's Primary School, Swansea	90.3%	91.9%	94.4%	95.5%
Herbert Thompson Primary School, Cardiff	91.4%	91.8%	93.4%	93.6%
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwyncelyn, Porth	93.2%	94.4%	95.0%	95.5%
Tredegarville Primary School, Cardiff	91.4%	92.4%	94.0%	95.2%

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record, Welsh Government

Appendix 3: Authorised and unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is absence without approval from an authorised representative of the school and includes all unexplained absences. Authorised absence means that the school either has given advanced approval for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

It is important that schools exercise caution in the authorisation of absence. If they are suspicious of the explanation given by parents, the school should further investigate the absence and it should remain unauthorised until the school has clarified the matter to its satisfaction. The decision taken by the school to authorise absence or not, is of critical importance in determining the level of involvement of the Education Welfare Service.

Pupils are not expected to attend school when they are not well enough to do so whether because of short term, long term or recurring illnesses. However, they should not be kept away from school when they are well enough to go to lessons or when they have minor ailments, which do not prevent them from attending. A useful guide is whether the ailment would keep parents and teachers away from work.

It is reasonable for the school to ask the nature of the illness, ask the parent the expected length of absence and make arrangements for the parent to call the school again if the situation changes.

Schools have the right to consider whether to accept the parent/carers position with regard to medical absence as there are occasions when parents report parentally condoned absence to the school as medical absence. If the school has concerns that the illness may not either be genuine or warrant the amount of absence accruing, the school may ask the parent to substantiate the illness by asking to see additional evidence such as an appointment card. However, care should be taken over asking for letters from general practitioners, due to the extra administrative burden this may place on them.

Appendix 4: The current legal position relating to attendance

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent or carer is responsible for ensuring that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to their child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. In law, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure their child's attendance at school and that absence is not authorised by the school.

Schools are required under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 to take an attendance register twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The accuracy of the register is important in order to support any statutory interventions that may be required.

Under section 437 of the Education Act 1996, local authorities also have a duty to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010. These Regulations replace, with amendments, the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995.

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday during term time. In relation to granting a leave of absence from school, these regulations make it clear that the responsibility lies with the headteacher. They state that:

- On application made by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides, the school may grant a leave of absence to enable the pupil to go away on holiday
- Save in exceptional circumstances, a pupil must not be granted more than ten school days leave of absence in any school year

The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations

These regulations came into force on 2 September 2013. They recognise that attendance at school is essential to improve children's educational prospects and that penalty notices are one option among a number of different interventions available to promote better school attendance.

As a result of these regulations, headteachers have the authority to issue penalty notices in respect of the irregular attendance of a child registered at their school. They may also authorise their deputy and assistant head to do the same. The local authority and the police also have the authority to issue penalty notices under this legislation.

The penalty is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt of the notice. 'Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school. Guidance document no: 116/2013' provides further guidance.

Guidance on this legislation notes that penalty notices are an additional option that can be used in a wide range of intervention and support strategies to support parents, carers and pupils. The penalty notice measures are designed to support schools and local authorities in ensuring parents and carers fulfil their responsibilities by ensuring their children attend school regularly.

Within this guidance, the Welsh Government also recognises that:

- When a child attends school on a regular basis, they take an important step towards reaching their full potential, and are given the greatest opportunity to learn new things and develop their skills
- Children who miss school can frequently fall behind with their work and do less well in exams
- The more time a child spends around other children, whether in the classroom or as part of a school team or club, the more chance they have of making friends and feeling included, boosting social skills, confidence and self-esteem
- Attendance in schools needs to remain a priority to ensure that children and young people are given the chance to achieve their potential
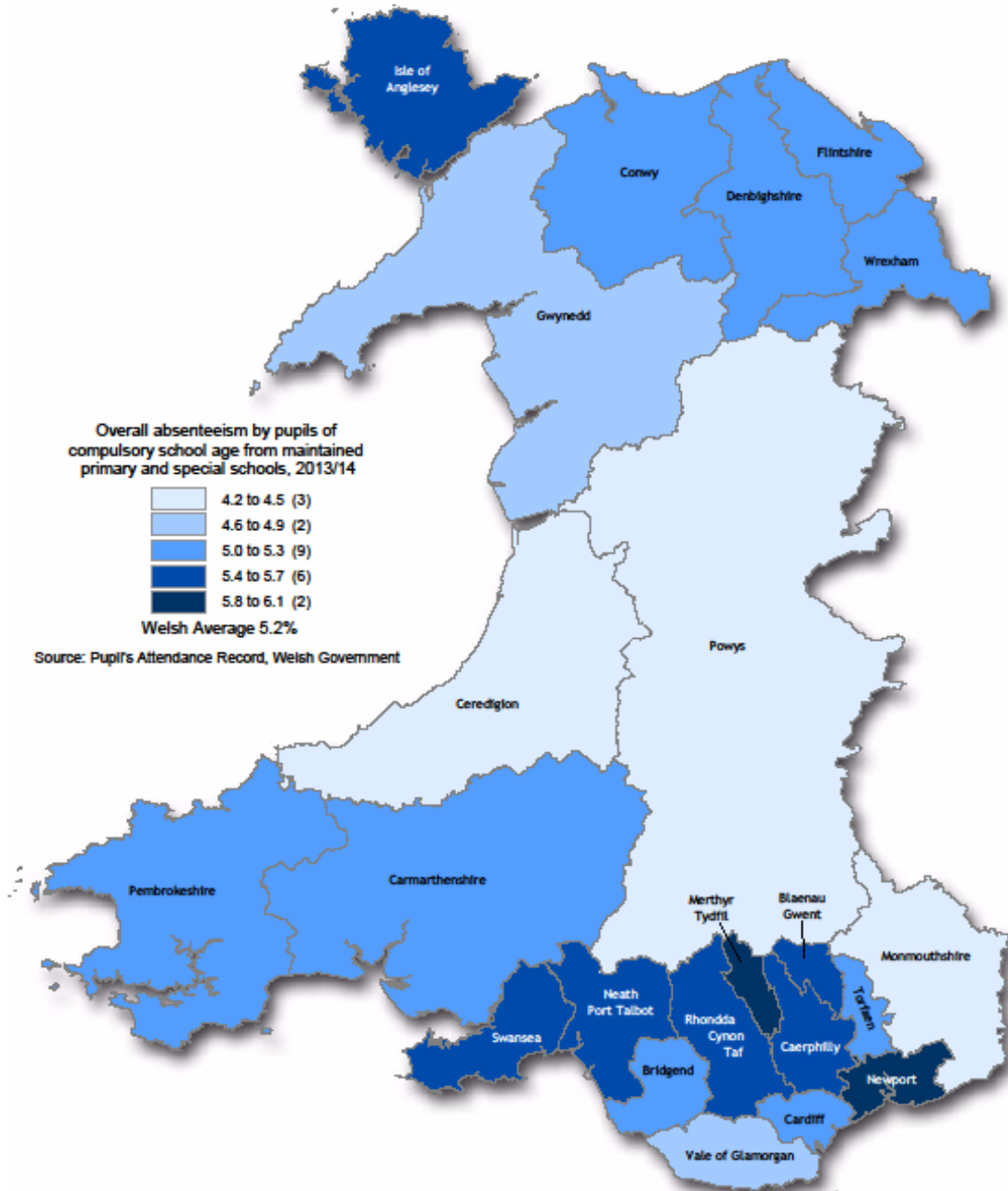
Appendix 5: Local authority and consortia attendance rates

Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in all maintained primary and special schools, by local authority and regional consortia

	Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to:							
	Overall absence				Unauthorised absence			
Local authority	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
North Wales	**5.9**	**5.5**	**5.8**	**5.2**	**0.7**	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.5**
Isle of Anglesey	6.5	5.7	5.6	5.4	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5
Gwynedd	5.9	5.4	5.7	4.9	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3
Conwy	5.8	5.5	5.9	5.3	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.6
Denbighshire	5.7	5.5	5.7	5.2	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5
Flintshire	6.1	5.5	5.9	5.2	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.4
Wrexham	5.7	5.4	5.9	5.2	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6
South West and Mid Wales	**6.9**	**6.3**	**6.6**	**5.1**	**0.5**	**0.4**	**0.4**	**1.1**
Powys	6.4	5.4	5.8	4.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.8
Ceredigion	5.7	5.1	5.7	4.4	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.9
Pembrokeshire	6.8	6.1	6.5	5.2	0.4	0.4	0.3	1.2
Carmarthenshire	6.9	6.3	6.5	5.0	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.8
Swansea	7.1	6.7	7.0	5.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	1.4
Neath Port Talbot	7.5	7.0	7.0	5.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	1.2
Central South Wales	**7.1**	**6.4**	**6.3**	**5.3**	**1.4**	**1.1**	**1.3**	**1.2**
Bridgend	6.8	6.3	6.5	5.2	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8
The Vale of Glamorgan	6.3	5.5	5.8	4.7	1.7	1.1	1.0	0.7
Rhondda Cynon Taf	7.7	6.9	6.6	5.5	1.4	1.0	0.9	0.9
Merthyr Tydfil	7.6	7.1	6.7	6.1	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.6
Cardiff	7.1	6.4	6.0	5.1	1.7	1.4	2.0	1.8
South East Wales	**6.9**	**6.4**	**6.7**	**5.4**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.1**	**1.1**
Caerphilly	7.2	6.9	6.8	5.6	1.3	1.1	1.0	0.8
Blaenau Gwent	7.5	6.9	6.9	5.6	0.5	0.4	0.5	1.3
Torfaen	6.8	6.0	6.4	5.3	0.7	0.9	1.3	1.1
Monmouthshire	5.6	5.3	5.6	4.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.6
Newport	7.0	6.6	7.0	5.8	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.7
Wales (a) (b)	**6.7**	**6.2**	**6.3**	**5.2**	**0.9**	**0.7**	**0.9**	**1.0**

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record, Welsh Government, 2014.

Overall Absenteeism - Wales

Overall absenteeism by pupils of
compulsory school age from maintained
primary and special schools, 2013/14

- 4.2 to 4.5 (3)
- 4.6 to 4.9 (2)
- 5.0 to 5.3 (9)
- 5.4 to 5.7 (6)
- 5.8 to 6.1 (2)

Welsh Average 5.2%

Source: Pupil's Attendance Record, Welsh Government

135.14-15 Cartographics, FCS
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Source: Welsh Government, 2014

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