Estyn

Rhagoriaeth i bawb ~ Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Attendance in secondary schools

September 2014

The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ⚲ 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; and
- ⚲ 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; and
- ⚲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

Contents	Page

Introduction

This is the first of two reports in response to a request for advice on attendance from the Welsh Government in the annual remit letter to Estyn for 2013-2014 from the Minister for Education and Skills. This report focuses on strategies and actions in secondary schools and local authorities to improve attendance. The second report will focus on strategies and actions in primary schools to improve attendance. The report includes case studies of best practice. It is intended for the Welsh Government, headteachers and staff in schools, local authorities and regional consortia. See appendix 1 for the evidence base for the report.

Background

Improving the attendance of pupils has been the subject of a range of national reviews, policies and initiatives over recent years, including:

- National review of behaviour and attendance (NBAR) (2008) and resulting NBAR action plan (2009)
- Minister for Education's "Teaching Makes a Difference Address" (February 2011)
- Revised behaviour and attendance action plan (2011)
- Welsh Government – All Wales Attendance Analysis Framework (2012)
- Secondary school banding (2011)
- Welsh Government – Consortia Attendance Grant (2013)
- National Assembly for Wales' Children and Young People Committee's Inquiry into Behaviour and Attendance in Schools (2013) and Welsh Government's response
- Welsh Government's Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school (2013)

For more detail on these initiatives, see Appendix 2.

Improving attendance has been a recommendation[1] in nearly a third of secondary school inspection reports since the start of the current inspection cycle in 2010. Three-quarters of secondary schools with recommendations about attendance in 2012-2013 have a proportion of free school meals above the national average and a third are in the highest free school meal band.

In 2009, the Welsh Government introduced the All-Wales Core Data Sets. The core data sets contain a range of different graphs, charts and tables including attendance data. All schools are required to use one code, from a list of 25, to explain pupils' attendance or absence. This includes, for example, L, the code to indicate that a pupil is late, and M to indicate pupils' attendance at a medical/dental appointment.

---

[1] For the first three years of the current inspection cycle 2010-2014

Main findings

1   In the past five years, attendance in secondary schools has gradually improved. Authorised and unauthorised absences have both reduced. The proportion of pupils with no absences has also increased. Nearly three-fifths of the remaining absence is due to illness. Despite the improvement, absenteeism is a concern in nearly a third of secondary schools inspected in the first three years of the current inspection cycle and disproportionately disadvantages vulnerable groups of pupils.

2   There has been a year-on-year reduction in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Even so, persistent absentees now account for just over a quarter of all absences in secondary schools.

3   Absence from school has a clear impact on educational performance. About two-fifths of pupils who are absent for between 10-20% of sessions gain the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics, compared with about three-fifths for pupils who are absent for between 4-6% of sessions. Despite the impact that an absence rate of 10-20% has, the threshold for referral to Education Welfare Services is generally an absence rate of over 20%.

4   Pupils who are eligible for free school meals are more likely to be absent, to be persistent absentees, and to underperform. The overall absence rate of pupils eligible for free school meals is nearly twice the rate for pupils not eligible. Pupils eligible for free school meals have an unauthorised absence rate that is four times higher than for pupils not eligible. Just under a fifth of pupils eligible for free school meals are persistently absent. This is much higher than the 5% of pupils not eligible who are persistently absent.

5   The absence rate for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is higher than for pupils with no SEN. Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) have a higher absence rate than any other groups of pupils with SEN. This group of pupils had the highest rate of unauthorised absence too. It is three-and-a-half times higher than for pupils without SEN.

6   Schools have strengthened the messages they give regarding the link between high attendance and good academic achievement. Most pupils are aware of this link. With few exceptions, pupils know their current level of attendance and their target level. Despite the fact that pupils have a good understanding of reasons for non-attendance, only a few schools involve pupils in developing strategies to improve attendance, for example through school councils.

7   Most of the schools visited for this survey have identified strategic approaches to improving attendance and a few have a written attendance strategy. The strategies vary in content and quality. Most consist of procedures for dealing with absence and identify the general activities undertaken by the school to support attendance. These strategies are not usually based on a detailed analysis of the available data and neither do they set clear targets for improvement. Less than half of schools have carried out a good enough analysis of why pupils do not attend school and they do not set appropriate targets for improving the attendance of specific groups of pupils. Around half of schools do not use data to evaluate the impact of initiatives to improve attendance.

8   With few exceptions, pupils know who to go to in school if they have a worry. Pupils appreciate the support they receive, for example from peer mentoring. Restorative practice, pupil support centres and nurture groups are used to good effect and have enabled more pupils to attend school more often. However, a few schools are not aware enough of the needs of a few pupils, such as those with caring responsibilities. In addition, staff lack up-to-date knowledge of some bullying-related issues or how to deal with them. This is also a finding of Estyn's 'Action on Bullying' report[2].

9   The schools that are the most successful at improving attendance recognise that good teaching leads to greater pupil engagement. They identify and address shortcomings in teaching and offer a wide range of curriculum choices. They provide good support, guidance and mentoring for pupils. These schools have effective partnership arrangements with external agencies and services. However, around half of schools are not aware of relevant support services and initiatives, such as Families First, or how to access them. In a few schools, procedures for accessing services are too complicated, interventions take too long to get started, and schools are uncertain as to their impact.

10   Many schools have procedures for assigning the correct attendance codes. However, there remains variability in the use of the attendance codes. For example, 12% of unauthorised absences are categorised as "other unauthorised absence", where no attendance code or description can be used. In particular, in a few schools, there is uncertainty in applying the correct code for pupils that are educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS). As a result, it is possible for pupils to be recorded as present, even when they have actually failed to attend the EOTAS provision. This is a serious safeguarding concern, as these schools are unable to account for the whereabouts of their pupils.

11   There is also considerable variation in how the attendance of pupils educated off site and not dually registered (B code) and pupils that are dually registered and present at another school or pupil referral unit (D code) are recorded across Wales. In one consortium, the recorded use of the B code is 10 times higher than that of the local authority with the lowest recorded use. In another consortium, the use of the D code is 22 times higher than that of the lowest recording local authority. This highlights the fact that there are significant variations, across Wales and within consortia, regarding approaches taken and provision made for pupils that are educated away from school.

12   The extent to which senior managers and elected members from local authorities in Wales understand and discuss attendance at a corporate level varies between authorities. There are good examples where attendance is included in strategic plans that identify targets for attendance.

13   There are also good examples where local authorities and schools work well with other agencies. However, the extent and impact of multi-agency working in schools across Wales are too variable. The degree to which multi-agency approaches are effective is determined by the knowledge that schools have of these services, the willingness of schools to engage with them and the ability of school leaders to ensure that their schools are included in initiatives.

---

[2] http://www.estyn.gov.uk/download/publication/315915.6/action-on-bullying-june-2014/

14   A minority of schools do not understand what attendance data means to them. They need support to analyse data, identify main messages and determine appropriate actions. Not all schools know about the arrangements within their local authorities to access comparative data. In a few authorities, the data analysis provided for schools is of variable quality. Many schools are unaware of their local authority's approach to improving attendance and nearly all are unaware of the consortia attendance grant[3].

15   Secondary schools that employ staff to improve the attendance of specific groups of pupils generally deploy them effectively. They build relationships with families and local communities and work with primary feeder schools to improve the attendance of pupils. However, there are too few training opportunities for staff who work with families and pupils with complex needs, and for those who work with families from different cultural backgrounds.

16   The role of education welfare services is not always clear in relation to regional consortia arrangements and there is sometimes a lack of co-ordination between school improvement services in consortia and the residual attendance and inclusion services in local authorities. School improvement services do not make full use of the knowledge of schools and families held by education welfare officers.

17   The development of the all Wales Attendance Analysis Framework and the inclusion of attendance data in school banding have both played an important role in raising attendance rates.

---

[3] An £800,000 Welsh Government grant available over two years to regional consortia to work directly and jointly on attendance (see Appendix 2)

Recommendations

Schools should:

R1   make better use of attendance data to inform their approach to improving the attendance of pupils, particularly those from vulnerable groups, such as persistent absentees, pupils eligible for free school meals, and those with SEN;

R2   improve teaching and the curriculum offer to maximise pupil engagement and explore approaches such as restorative practice, pupil support centres, peer mentoring and nurture groups;

R3   strengthen links with external agencies or services that assist in engaging and supporting families;

R4   engage more with pupils in developing the attendance policy or strategy, for example through school councils;

R5   ensure that staff receive up-to-date training on issues such as bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups;

R6   comply with the pupil registration regulations in accurately recording the attendance of pupils educated otherwise than at school and when removing pupils from the roll of the school; and

R7 ensure that initiatives to improve attendance are thoroughly evaluated.

Local authorities should:

R8   provide schools with training on understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes;

R9   analyse attendance patterns to inform a corporate strategy to improve the attendance of pupils, particularly those from vulnerable groups;

R10   investigate and challenge the variation in the use of attendance codes;

R11   improve the knowledge that schools have of relevant national priorities, initiatives and grants;

R12   identify and share exemplar practice within and beyond consortia boundaries; and

R13   ensure that school improvement services are aware of and use knowledge held by education welfare services.

The Welsh Government should:

R14 provide clarity about the responsibility for attendance within local authorities and regional consortia; and

R15 as part of the attendance analysis framework, continue to provide and publish comprehensive analyses of attendance data for local authorities and regional consortia.

How good is secondary school attendance?

Overall attendance

18　In recent years, there has been a gradual improvement in pupil attendance in secondary schools. The rate of both authorised and unauthorised absence has been decreasing. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: Attendance and absence by pupils of compulsory school age in secondary schools in Wales (a)

Year	Attendance	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
2007/08	91.0%	9.0%	7.3%	1.8%
2008/09	91.0%	9.0%	7.3%	1.7%
2009/10	91.1%	8.9%	7.3%	1.6%
2010/11	91.4%	8.6%	7.1%	1.5%
2011/12	92.2%	7.8%	6.5%	1.4%
2012/13	92.6%	7.4%	6.1%	1.3%

Source: Welsh Government

(a) Data includes special and independent schools where provided.

19　The percentage of pupils with no absence from school has improved also (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Distribution of pupils in maintained secondary schools by length of overall absence

Source: Welsh Government

6
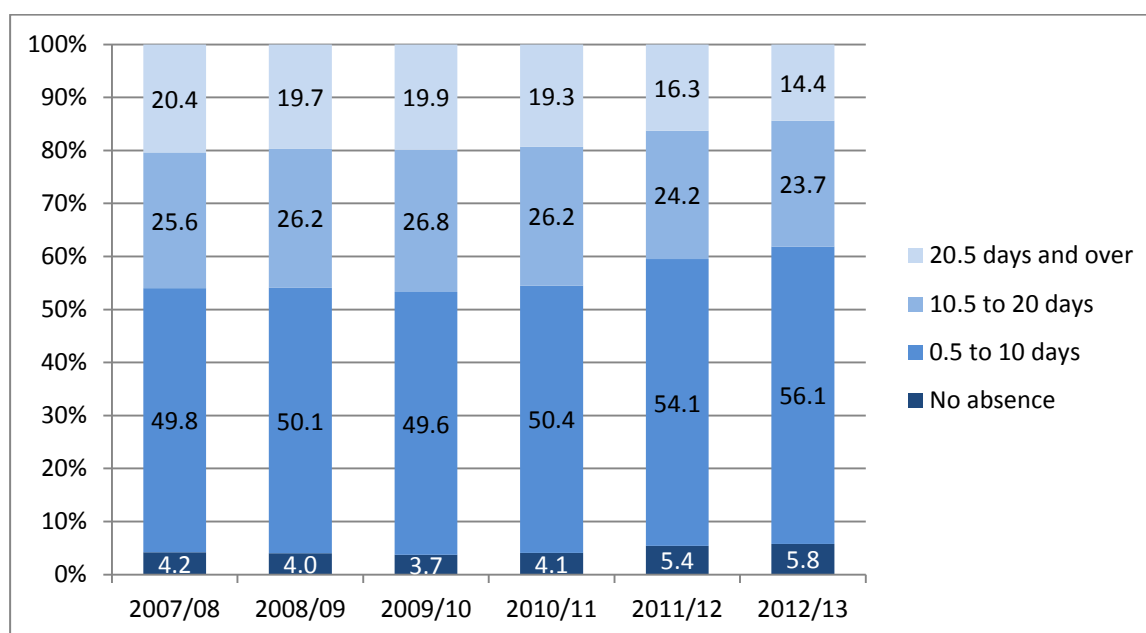
20   There remains a large proportion of pupils in the longest category of absence, with 14.4% of pupils absent for 20.5 days or more, despite a six percentage point reduction in this figure between 2008-2013. Also, there has only been a slow rate of improvement in absences of between 10-20 days, with just under a quarter of pupils in this category. The percentage of pupils absent from school for between 0.5 to 10 days has been steadily increasing for the past few years (see Figure 2).

21   Despite the overall improvement in attendance, in 2012-2013 there was a 2.6 percentage point difference between the authority with the lowest rate of absence, Ceredigion at 6.4% and Blaenau Gwent, with the highest at 9% (see reference c in Appendix 6).

22   Nearly three-fifths of all absences from secondary schools were due to illness in 2012-2013. Taking holidays during term time accounted for 6.8% of absence. The unauthorised taking of holidays nearly doubled to 1.4%, compared with the previous year. This, in part, is because local authorities and schools have been more systematic in refusing to authorise the taking of holidays during term time, although The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 (see reference v in Appendix 6) provides headteachers with the discretion to allow up to 10 days leave. There has been little change in the past two years (see Figure 10 in Appendix 5) in the overall proportion of pupils taking holidays in term time.

Persistent absenteeism

23   Pupils are considered persistent absentees if they are absent from school for at least 20% of the half-day sessions that schools are open, not including inset days.

24   In recent years, there has been a year-on-year reduction in the proportion of pupils that are persistently absent. In 2007-2008, 10% of secondary aged pupils were persistently absent. This has reduced to 6.2% by 2012-2013 (see Figure 3). However, the 6.2% of persistent absentees in 2012-2013 account for just over a quarter of absences in secondary schools (see reference c in Appendix 6).

Figure 3: Percentage of pupils (compulsory school age) who were persistent absentees from maintained secondary schools (a)
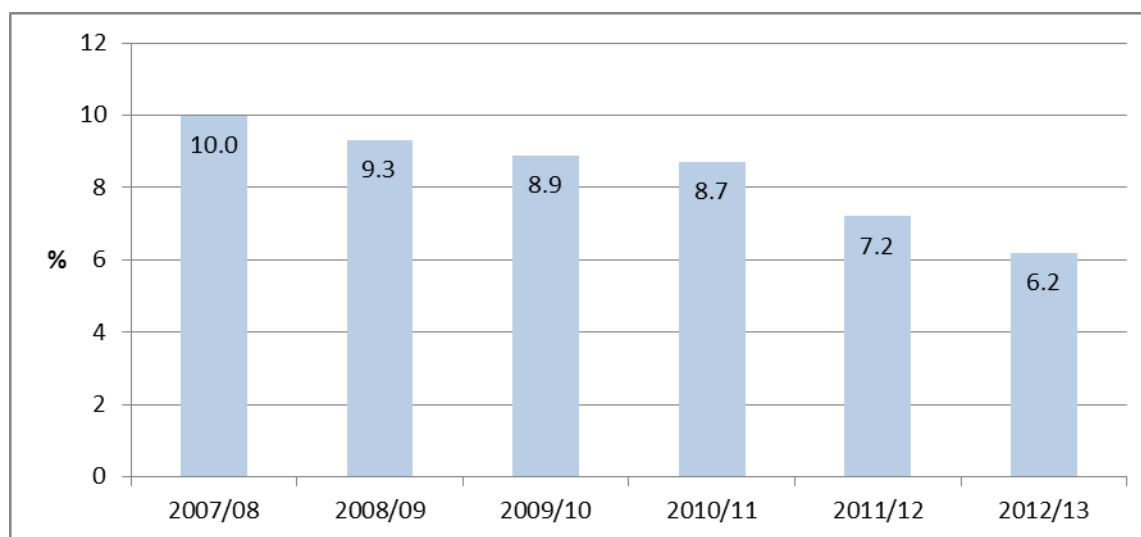
Source: Welsh Government

25   There is a link between pupil age and persistent absence. The percentage of pupils who are persistently absent increased from 3.8% in Year 7 to 11% in Year 11 and over, in 2011-2012 (see reference a in Appendix 6).

26   Pupils from white ethnic backgrounds have a higher percentage of persistent absentees and overall absence rate than any other broad ethnic group (see reference a in Appendix 6).

27   Of all pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, 18% were persistent absentees. The corresponding figure for pupils not eligible for free school meals was 4.9% (see reference a in Appendix 6).

28   Thirteen per cent of pupils with SEN are persistently absent from school; this is more than double the rate for pupils with no SEN (see reference a in Appendix 6).

29   There is considerable variation across Wales in the percentage of secondary school aged children that are persistent absentees. This ranged from 3.2% in Ceredigion to 10% in Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2011-2012 (see reference a in Appendix 6). In 2011-2012, in the local authority with the highest rate of persistent absenteeism, 35% of all absence was due to the pupils that were absent for 20% or more. This compares with 14% of all absences in the local authority with the lowest rate of persistent absenteeism (see reference d in Appendix 6).

Figure 4: Twenty per cent absence over five school years

80% attendance equates to	1 day absent per week
=	6 days absence per ½ term
=	12 days absence every term
=	36 days absence every year
=	180 days absence in 5 years
=	Nearly one year of secondary schooling lost through absence

Attendance and attainment

30   Absence from school has a clear impact on educational performance. Attainment decreases as absence increases. At key stage 3, in 2013, 86% of pupils that had missed up to 4% of sessions achieved the core subject indicator (CSI)[4]. Only a half of pupils that are absent for between 20-30% of sessions achieve the CSI. Those pupils that miss over half of all sessions have the lowest attainment levels – just under a fifth achieves the CSI.

31   The negative impact of absence on attainment continues for pupils in key stage 4. In 2013, 68% of pupils with absences up to 4% achieved the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics. This compares with only 37% for pupils that were absent for between 10-20% of sessions and 4% for pupils who miss over half of all sessions (see Figure 5).

---

[4] The core subject indicator represents the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level, or above, in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination

Chart 5: Percentage of pupils achieving selected indicators in key stages 3 and 4, by overall absence rate, 2013
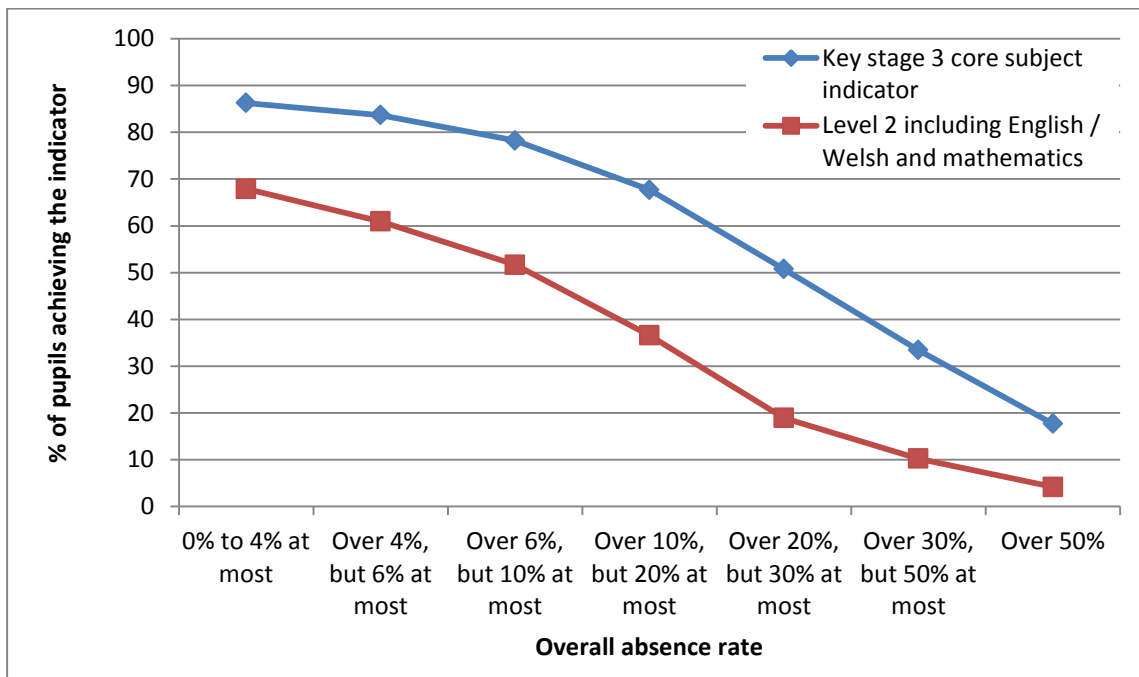
Source: Welsh Government

Pupils eligible for free school meals

32   There is a strong link between poverty and low educational attainment. In general, pupils from poorer families do not achieve as well as their peers. Estyn's reports on tackling poverty have also shown that pupils who are eligible for free school meals perform significantly less well than those not eligible.

33   In 2013, 16.2% of all secondary school pupils were eligible for free school meals. This represents a slight increase on the previous year. Overall, the rate has increased by 1.4 percentage points since 2009 (see reference f, Appendix 6).

34   In 2013, 26% of pupils eligible for free school meals achieved the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics. The corresponding figure for pupils not eligible for free school meals was 59%, a gap of 33 percentage points. This gap has remained at a similar level since 2010 (see Figure 12, Appendix 5).

35   There is also a strong relationship between the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and absenteeism. Pupils eligible for free school meals have a higher rate of authorised absence and unauthorised absence (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by free school meal eligibility and type of absence
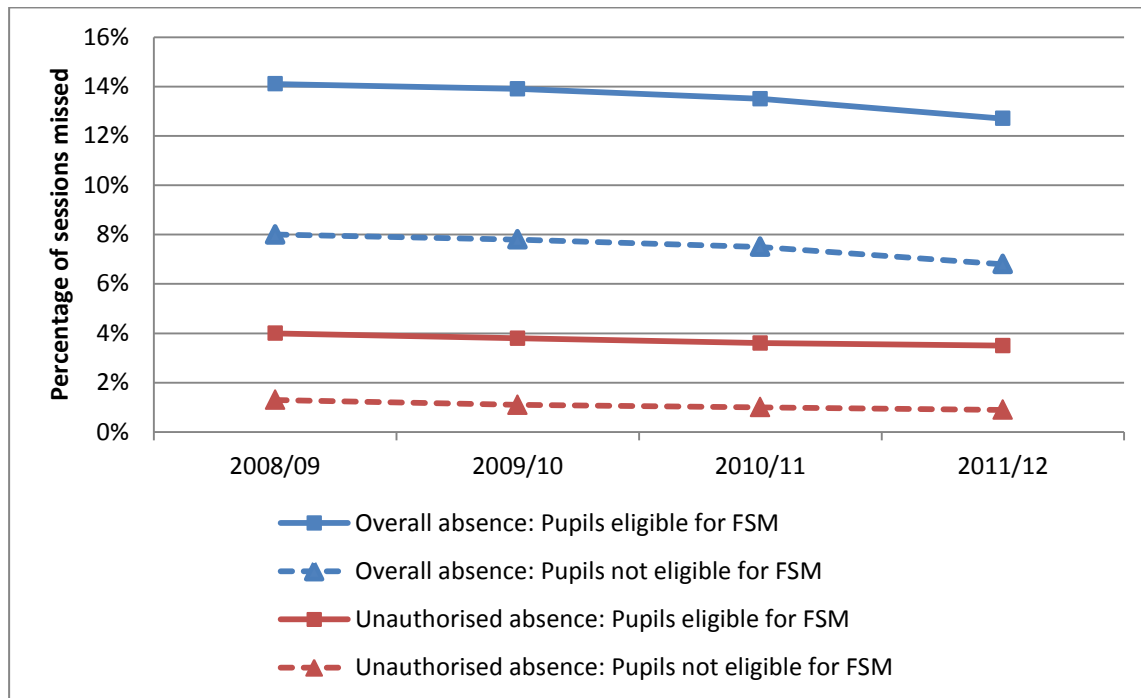
Pupils with special educational needs

36   In 2013, 22% of secondary school pupils had a special educational need (see Figure 16 in Appendix 5). The absence rate for pupils across all SEN statuses[5] is higher than for pupils with no SEN. However, overall and unauthorised absence has been decreasing for all SEN statuses since 2008-2009 (see Figure 7). Pupils at school action plus had a higher rate of overall absence than any other SEN status.

Figure 7: Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by special educational need status

% overall absence

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Statement of SEN	10.7%	10.6%	10.4%	9.3%
School Action Plus	12.7%	12.7%	12.6%	11.5%
School Action	11.2%	11.1%	10.7%	9.7%
No identified SEN	8.3%	8.1%	7.8%	7.1%

Source: Welsh Government

37   Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) have a higher absence rate than other groups of pupils with SEN. The unauthorised absence rate for these pupils is nearly four times higher than for pupils without an SEN (see Figures 14 and 15, Appendix 5).

---

[5] School Action, School Action Plus and Statemented

38   Those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, autistic spectrum disorders, hearing impairment and multi-sensory impairment had unauthorised absence rates below those of pupils with no special educational need (see Figure 15, Appendix 5).

Provision and support to improve attendance

School-based approaches

39   The reasons that pupils do not attend school are often not simple. Previous Estyn reports[6][7] have highlighted the fact that certain groups of pupils, for example those eligible for free school meals and those with SEN, are more likely to be absent from school than others. Schools that have a good understanding of the needs of all their pupils and their backgrounds are more effective in putting into place strategies to encourage their attendance.

40   The schools that are best at improving and maintaining high levels of attendance set ambitious targets for attendance. These are clearly understood and all staff are aware of their role in promoting attendance. Attendance is discussed regularly at staff meetings. Schools use their data well and ensure that sensitive and timely support is provided. They offer customised care, support and guidance to pupils.

41   These schools have strong leadership and a positive, inclusive ethos. Senior managers recognise the links between good quality teaching and pupil engagement. They have identified and addressed shortcomings in teaching. They also have a wide range of curriculum choices, and provide good guidance and mentoring to pupils. Pupils that are more vulnerable receive individual and group support in pupil support centres or nurture groups (see Glossary). Pupils have access to counselling and staff make referrals to health services where appropriate.

42   These schools are consistent in the messages they give to pupils, parents and staff about the importance of attendance. They explain the impact of non-attendance on pupil attainment and the consequences for parents of pupils' non-attendance. These messages are reinforced regularly for pupils and parents. A few schools identify members of senior management to mentor pupils whose absence has been a cause for concern. Pupils also value the support and counsel that other, generally older, pupils provide through peer-mentoring programmes.

43   Nearly all schools visited make good use of pastoral staff to ascertain and understand reasons for pupil absence. Concerns about bullying, parentally-condoned absences, and the distance of travel to school are common reasons given for absence. Around half of the schools visited have used their

---

[6] http://www.estyn.gov.uk/download/publication/296942.1/working-together-to-tackle-the-impact-of-poverty-on-educational-achievement-december-2013
[7] http://www.estyn.gov.uk/download/publication/259977.9/effective-practice-in-tackling-poverty-and-disadvantage-in-schools-november-2012/

understanding of why pupils are absent to tackle these concerns directly. As a result, these schools have developed initiatives and programmes such as restorative practice, peer mentoring, (see Glossary) breakfast clubs and school transport improvement.

44 For example, St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High School in Wrexham identified that Portuguese pupils were often absent. Pupils and parents appeared not to value the education provided. The school then introduced early entry for GCSE Portuguese, which gave the Portuguese pupils an early experience of success, which they valued. This initiative also helped the school to gain the support of parents in developing a positive attitude towards attendance and school.

45 For a very few pupils, the high expectations placed on them by themselves and by others contributes to their non-attendance. Most pupils recognise the importance of homework. However, the ad-hoc nature with which homework is planned by schools adds to the pressure that a few older pupils experience and they feel unable to cope.

46 Most pupils can identify the range of support systems in place in school. Nearly all of the pupils that inspectors spoke to during visits stated that they knew whom to go to if they had a worry. Pupils report that "staff go out of their way" to help. There are good examples where pupils receive individual support from teachers to help them to catch up on missed work. The provision of lunch-time and homework clubs and staff mentoring assist pupils in this.

47 Pupil support centres and nurture groups are used to good effect and have enabled pupils to attend school more often. These vulnerable pupils receive high levels of support. In addition to attending lessons, staff work on developing pupils' self-esteem and often advocate on their behalf. Peer-mentoring programmes are used effectively in the majority of schools.

48 Many schools have developed effective relationships with parents. Where these are most effective, schools have created a strong sense of community that values the views and contributions parents make. Schools build trust with their parents early on and have open and honest communications with them. However, a few schools do not engage with families as well as they could. They are not sufficiently aware of the family circumstances of its pupils.

49 Opportunities to develop staff understanding of the issues affecting pupils outside the school environment are generally too limited. As a result, staff do not always have an appropriate understanding or appreciation of these issues, for example those pupils with caring responsibilities. As a result, the support pupils receive from school staff is not always tailored well enough to their needs.

Pupil engagement

50 In schools where attendance is good or better, pupils generally have mature attitudes to learning and are supportive of one another. Generally, there are well-understood strategies for dealing with bullying. Older pupils provide good role models and schools have effective mentoring schemes. Pupils feel valued by the school. Their views are listened to and they are involved in decisions that affect them. They have a clear understanding of their role within school and the wider community.

51   Most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of attendance and many schools have made the links between attendance and attainment very clear. Pupils know these well. In a few schools, for example St Cyres in Penarth and Cardiff High School, pupils know their current attendance percentage. Pupils at St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High School know their class and year attendance targets and the impact that pupil absence has on these.

52   In a few of the schools visited, a few pupils identified the threat of court action against their parents as the reason for improving their attendance. These pupils generally had histories of very low attendance and schools had difficulties in engaging with the families. As a result or their low attendance, they were in receipt of high levels of daily support.

53   Nearly all pupils are clear about why they think pupils absent themselves from school. Reasons given by pupils include:

- disengagement from the curriculum;
- poor relationships with teachers;
- parental disengagement;
- bullying; and
- the high expectations that pupils place on themselves, and those from parents and teachers.

54   Most pupils feel that staff address issues of bullying well. However, a few pupils say that school staff lack knowledge of bullying-related issues and are not sufficiently aware of how to deal with them.

55   In spite of the fact that pupils understand the reasons for non-attendance, only a few schools have formally engaged with pupils through their school councils to develop strategies to improve attendance. In a few schools, pupils are not aware of the existence of the school council and in a very few schools, the school councils are considered by pupils to be ineffective and unrepresentative. Understanding why a certain group of pupils did not attend allowed Cathays High School to address the issue.

Addressing the needs of pupils from the Czech and Slovak Roma community in Cathays High School, Cardiff

Context

Cathays High School is a multi-cultural 11-19 secondary school, close to Cardiff city centre. Thirty-seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 38% of pupils have special educational needs. Over 50 languages are spoken within the community, often as the first language at home. Around 60 different minority ethnic groups are represented in the school. A significant number of pupils leave during the school year to return to their home country.

The number of pupils from the Czech and Slovak community has increased from 45 (December 2011) to 103 (January 2014). Many had low levels of school attendance in their homeland; a minority had not attended school at all.

Strategy

The main areas of focus for the strategy are to:

- improve the school's engagement with the parents from the Czech and Slovak community;
- reduce issues related to bullying and discrimination against pupils from the Czech and Slovak Roma community;
- improve the self-esteem of pupils from this community through engaging pupil voice and increasing engagement in curricular and extra-curricular opportunities; and
- improve the basic literacy skills of pupils from the Czech and Slovak Roma community.

Actions

The school identified the need to adapt its approach to engaging with the community Initially a volunteer from the Czech and Slovak Roma community was appointed. As a result of the success of this role, the school created and Inclusion and Wellbeing Officer (IWBO), specifically to act as a link between the school and the Czech Roma community. In addition to making contacts and building links in the community, the IWBO supports pupil wellbeing including attendance, punctuality and behaviour.

School managers and the IWBO met groups of families to discuss school expectations and to listen to concerns. The school acted on these discussions, with the result that:

- the school gave support to parents to attend parents' evenings and other school events;
- families met with the IWBO at the school gate before the start of school;
- key documents were translated;
- there was improved identification of and provision for learning needs e.g. for literacy, family literacy sessions, and liaison with partner primary schools on family groups to be targeted; and
- there was an increase in numbers of children from these communities engaging in extra-curricular activities.

All of these actions have resulted in parents being more comfortable in visiting school and speaking to staff.

Outcomes for Czech Roma pupils

Attendance has increased from 69.96% (2011-2012) to 87.34% (October 2012-2013). For the first time, none of the group left without a recognised qualification. A third of pupils achieved the Level 1 threshold and 83% attained GCSE qualifications. The number of pupils progressing into further education has also improved**.**

Working with other agencies

56   The three local authorities visited as part of the survey recognise the importance of working with other partners to support families to improve the attendance and attainment of pupils. There are strong and effective links between the local authority, schools and other agencies, particularly in improving the attendance of hard-to-reach pupils. However, the extent and impact of multi-agency working in schools across Wales are too variable. The degree to which multi-agency approaches support schools effectively is determined by the knowledge that schools have of their services, the willingness of schools to engage with them and the ability of school leaders to ensure that their schools are included in initiatives.

57   There are good examples of multi-agency working. In Denbighshire, each secondary school has a multi-agency panel that oversees attendance and safeguarding issues. As a result, the authority is able to work with its partners to target resources. In Cardiff, members of the education welfare service and headteachers attend neighbourhood management groups. These groups organised across six localities in the city, share local intelligence on neighbourhoods. Each area has an agreed action plan that is relevant to the needs of the community. Plans have actions relating to education and school attendance. Because of the collaboration between agencies, there is an improved awareness and understanding of their respective roles.

58   Ebbw Fawr Learning Community in Blaenau Gwent has worked with Communities First to help to improve the attendance of identified groups of pupils eligible for free school meals. Communities First has provided funding for a breakfast club close to the pupil's homes. Pupils are transported to school from the breakfast club. As a result, there has been an improvement in the attendance of half of the targeted group.

59   Another example of effective multi-agency working is in Bryn Elian High School in Conwy where the local authority's parenting officer, school based counsellor, education social worker for primary schools, school nurse and careers officer are all based at the school. As a result, the school, together with the local authority and other partners, has developed an integrated approach that has led to some improvement in pupils' attendance. For example, in the school overall attendance has improved by 0.9 percentage points over a four-year period (2008-2012). The absence rate for pupils that are persistently absent has reduced by 10.3 percentage points and there has been a 2.7 percentage point improvement for pupils that are persistently absent.

60   Conwy local authority secured the services of a health professional to address issues of absence due to medical reasons.

Conwy local authority – improving the attendance of pupils absent for medical reasons

Strategy

The local authority attendance strategy has been in place since 2006. The practical support provided to schools has had an impact on improving attendance levels in the authority.

As part of the strategy, all secondary school pupils undertake a perception to school survey. These results are considered alongside pupils' attendance. Schools are required to use the same management information system to input, monitor and report attendance and they submit attendance returns to the education welfare service. The local authority has adopted a colour codes rating scheme used to highlight greatest need and all local authority officers have access to the management information system.

Actions

As a result of issues identified, a Health Adviser was employed to:

a) consider the frequency of medical absences; and
b) identify pupils that were regularly taking time off for alleged illnesses.

The Health Adviser works closely with colleagues in the health authority, including GPs and consultants to ascertain the needs of pupils. Once these have been identified, the adviser undertakes a home visit and conducts a medical assessment of the pupil. The Health Adviser works closely with local authority and school staff. Where appropriate, changes are made to attendance codes.

Outcomes

286 referrals made over a three year period;
163 medical assessments undertaken by the Health Adviser; and
73% of pupils improved their attendance.

Education welfare service

61   The education welfare service (EWS)[8] provides support to schools, pupils and parents to ensure regular attendance and address problems relating to absenteeism. The service liaises with other agencies and provides an important link between home and school. It helps parents and teachers to work in partnership in order that pupils benefit from the educational opportunities available locally. The EWS acts on behalf of the local authority in enforcing a parent's duty to provide appropriate education. The main function of the EWS is to improve overall attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism in all schools and alternative education provision.

---

[8] In this report, the term education welfare service is taken to include education social work service. Similarly, the term education welfare officer encompasses education social worker, unless stated otherwise.

62	Most local authorities have clearly understood protocols with schools for intervention from the educational welfare service. Where these arrangements are successful, education welfare officers know the schools and its pupils well. They are a visible presence in school and are known by the pupils. They are actively engaged in promoting high attendance and have regular and focused meetings with key members of staff. They provide valuable information to school staff on family-related matters.

63	However, the quality and timeliness of support provided to schools across Wales; and within local authorities are too variable. Across Wales, there are different approaches and thresholds for intervention from the EWS. In some authorities, attendance rates of 85% and below are the trigger for referral to education welfare services; in others the trigger is 80% and below.

64	There are differences too in the requirements for working in education welfare services. Education welfare officers (EWOs) are not required to hold formal qualifications in social work or education. Some local authorities employ education social workers. The advantage that they have is that they can undertake family assessments. Like EWOs, they have a good understanding of how other support services operate and work with both schools and families to improve levels of attendance.

65	In a minority of schools, engaging with persistent absentees is the principal responsibility of education welfare services. This group of pupils present with some of the most complex and challenging needs. Schools generally do not continue to play a big enough role in securing the attendance of these pupils.

66	There are too few planned opportunities for EWS and school staff to receive training in working with families and pupils that present with complex needs and with families from different cultural backgrounds.

67	Early intervention from school and the education welfare service is beneficial. In the most effective schools, all staff are aware of their responsibilities in challenging for unexplained absences and are consistent in the messages that they give on the importance of attendance; and that it is not just a matter for the EWO.

68	The role of education welfare services needs to be clear in relation to consortia arrangements. Currently, school improvement services do not make full use of the knowledge of schools and families that EWOs have. As such, there is sometimes a lack of co-ordination between school improvement services in consortia and the residual inclusion services in local authorities.

Analysis and use of attendance data

69   The development of the Welsh Government's all-Wales Attendance Analysis Framework and the inclusion of attendance data in secondary school banding have both played an important role in raising the profile of attendance in the context of school improvement.

70   The Welsh Government's Attendance Analysis Framework provides a range of information including:

- the overall attendance levels of local authorities in Wales;
- a breakdown of actual attendance against predictions for schools;
- the pattern of attendance of schools in the local authority over a four-year period;
- detailed information on the use of attendance codes; and
- the numbers of pupils who are persistently absent from school.

71   The local authorities visited have good systems in place to analyse attendance data. The sharing of attendance data with schools is relatively new.

72   However, the availability and analysis of data provided to schools by local authorities vary across Wales. As a result, a minority of schools are not sufficiently aware of what the data means for them. They need support to identify the main messages and determine appropriate actions.

73   Many local authorities convene meetings with the senior members of school staff responsible for wellbeing. These meetings are used to share and discuss school attendance data. The majority of schools have relied on information from the local authority to gain a better understanding of the attendance performance of their own and other schools in their authority. However, local authorities need to do more to ensure that schools are fully aware of what the analysis of data for their school means and how to translate this into actions.

74   A few authorities require their secondary schools to submit monthly attendance returns. The returns include identifying initiatives taken by schools to improve attendance. The reports are analysed by the local authority and they can do more to hold the schools to account. This has also improved the ability of the local authority to provide support and challenge that reflect the needs of the school.

75   A minority of schools do not analyse attendance data for different groups or individual pupils well enough. They are not able to account for trends or compare their performance with that of their family of schools, or of schools within their authority. They do not target resources in the most efficient way to improve attendance. In a very few cases, schools do not see the benefit of analysing their attendance data.

76   The majority of schools have good systems in place to analyse data. They regularly analyse attendance codes at a whole school, cohort, group and individual pupil level. This enables schools to adapt their approaches to improve pupil attendance. These schools have quality assurance procedures in place where the member of the senior management team responsible for attendance oversees the coding of attendance. In

addition, these schools take advice from the local authority when they are unsure which attendance code to use. The following case study shows how Rhondda Cynon Taf has analysed attendance data to provide support and challenge to schools.

Using attendance code data to support and challenge schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT)

Context

The inspection of RCT in 2012 identified the need to improve the level of attendance in all schools.

Strategy

As part of its improving school attendance strategy, the local authority identified the need to improve the quality of advice and guidance it provided to schools. Previously, advice provided was retrospective and ad hoc.

Action

The local authority analyses attendance code data to target specific schools that have the following features:

- those that have not achieved their target attendance levels for the past three years;
- those that are in the bottom quarter for in terms of free-school-meal eligibility;
- those that have more than 5% of absence due to illness;
- those where there are high levels of unauthorised absence; or
- those where the local authority has concerns around the use of attendance codes.

This approach was initially piloted with primary schools in 2012-2013 and has been extended to identified secondary schools.

The pilot highlighted the need for referrals to the attendance and wellbeing service to be managed by a named member of the schools' senior leadership team. In addition, the local authority has a clearer picture of staff deal with absences day by day.

Outcomes

The local authority has a better understanding of how schools strategically support and operationally manage attendance on a termly and annual basis. Schools are able to analyse their attendance data better to identify where improvements need to be made. This has resulted in a sharper focus for involvement from the local authority. The regional consortium is considering implementing the approach across the five local authorities. Systems leaders have access to the information and are able to use this to inform their challenge and support visits with schools.

Attendance codes

77   Schools select one attendance code from a list of 25 to capture the attendance status of pupils. Many schools have procedures for assigning and quality assuring the use of these attendance codes. Even so, across Wales, there is variability in the use of the attendance codes that are classed as approved educational activity. For example, the recording of approved sporting activity is 11 times greater in the highest recording authority than the lowest. Similarly, the recording of work experience is six times greater in the highest recording authority compared to the lowest recording authority.

78   Unpublished data from the Welsh Government for 2012-2013 shows attendance codes that are classed as approved educational activity (see Figure 8). The lowest and highest recorded use of the B code in Wales (pupils educated off site and not dually registered) occurs in one consortium. The recorded use of the B code is 10 times higher than for the local authority with the lowest recorded use (see Figure 17, Appendix 5).

79   Similarly, there is considerable variation across Wales in the use of the D code (pupils that are dually registered and present at another school or pupil referral unit (PRU)). In 2012-2013, the use of this code is 22 times higher than for the lowest recording local authority in Wales (see Figure 17, Appendix 5). The lowest recorded use of the D code occurs in three local authorities. Two of these authorities are within the same consortium as the local authority with the highest recorded use. This highlights that there are significant variations, across Wales and within consortia, regarding approaches taken and provision made for pupils educated away from school.

Figure 8: Percentage attendance classed as approved educational activity, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013

Code	Description	Variation 2011-2012	Wales average 2011-2012	Variation 2012-2013	Wales average 2012-2013
B	Educated off-site (not dual registered)	0.6 – 6.5%	1.6%	0.6 – 6%	1.6%
D	Dual registered (present at another school or PRU)	0 – 2.5%	0.8%	0.1 – 2.2%	0.8%
P	Approved sporting activity	0.1 - 1.1%	0.3%	0.1 – 0.9%	0.2%
V	Educational visit or trip	0.3 – 1.5%	0.6%	0.3 – 1.2%	0.6%
W	Work Experience (not work based learning)	0.1 – 0.6%	0.3%	0.1 – 0.5%	0.3%

Source: Welsh Government[9]

---

[9] Unpublished data provided by Welsh Government – Attendance Analysis Framework

80   Absences from school for religious observance are classed as authorised absence. Where possible, schools have aligned some of their training days with religious festivals. This helps to minimise the impact on their attendance data. However, recording these as authorised absence has a detrimental impact on the overall attendance data at these schools.

81   As a result, and particularly where pupils are absent for extended periods, they are taken off the roll of the school. This practice improves the overall attendance figures for the school. However, this may then trigger referrals to support agencies as pupils are 'missing from education'.

82   Twelve per cent of unauthorised absences are classed as 'other unauthorised absence', where no attendance code or description can be used. It is not clear, therefore, why these pupils are absent from school.

83   In particular, in a few schools, there is uncertainty about applying the correct code for pupils that are educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS). The procedures for correctly identifying the attendance of pupils educated otherwise than at schools are not secure enough. As a result, pupils may be recorded as present, even though they have actually failed to attend the EOTAS provision. This represents a serious safeguarding issue, as these schools are unable to account for the whereabouts of their pupils.

Planning for improvement

Local authority and regional consortia attendance strategies and grants

84   The extent to which senior managers and elected members from local authorities in Wales understand and discuss attendance at a corporate level varies between authorities. The local authorities visited as part of this survey have clear plans to improve attendance. There are good examples where attendance is included in strategic planning. For example, corporate plans identify broad aspirational targets for attendance. This theme is echoed in service or business plans that provide detail on how targets are to be met and the resources required to achieve them. These plans link well with one another, demonstrate clarity of purpose and identify ambitious targets to improve attendance.

85   The local authorities visited recognise that addressing non-attendance is not an issue for the education department or schools alone. It is an issue that needs addressing across local authority services. These local authorities use their data well to plan strategically and use the expertise of colleagues in other departments, for example the children's and youth service. Attendance strategies are not viewed in isolation. They are viewed as a core component in delivering improved standards and reducing the level of young people not engaged in education, training or employment (NEET).

86   These local authorities use attendance data about different groups of pupils to good effect to inform strategy. They share information with relevant groups within authorities including elected members, headteacher and deputy headteacher

reference groups. In Denbighshire, for example, the local authority challenges schools where pupils have not provided a reason for absence. As a result, schools follow-up on these and know why pupils are absent.

87   Since the Welsh Government announced the consortia attendance grant in February 2013, local consortia have taken responsibility for determining the use of the grant. The aim of the grant is for consortia to work directly and jointly with local authorities to secure continued, long-term improvements in school attendance. A common approach for consortia has been to issue letters to all parents advising them that holidays taken during term-time will no longer be authorised.

88   All of the grant submissions include developing the use of attendance data to inform strategy and to identify and increase the level of support and challenge to those schools that need it. However, only one specifically identifies the need to develop stronger links with multi-agency partners. None of the grant submissions makes specific reference to working with local initiatives such as Families and Children's First programmes and only one grant bid identifies the need to engage with pupils to inform strategy.

89   There are good examples where schools in north Wales have been directly engaged in formulating the local authority or consortia strategy for attendance. However, many schools across Wales are not aware of their local authority's approach to improving attendance in schools and nearly all are unaware of the consortia attendance grant. As a result, schools do not know how the grant is used in their consortia, or how their school may benefit.

90   Cardiff local authority has been proactive in working with its partner authorities. Local authority lead officers for attendance from across the consortia meet regularly and share good practice. As a result, the consortia are using Cardiff's useful attendance audit tool (see Appendix 4). The authority has also led on the development of a consortia attendance strategy.

91   Arrangements for target-setting are not clear in one local authority visited. There is a lack of clarity about the role of consortia and the education welfare service in this respect. In addition, the EWS is not used to work closely with systems leaders in providing challenge to schools by the regional consortia.

92   Most local authorities have increased the level of challenge to schools and the majority have increased the capacity to manage attendance issues at a local level. These approaches appear to be having a positive impact.

School attendance policies and strategies

93   The delegation to schools of funding, specifically to address attendance, has had a positive impact on the ability of schools to employ staff to work with identified families and pupils. School-based officers monitor and evaluate approaches taken to support attendance. They oversee the use of registers and regularly meet with parents and other professionals regarding families and individual pupils. They develop knowledge of services available within communities that they can share with other staff in the school. They visit parents in their home, build trust and assist families and pupils.

94 Work with feeder primary schools has assisted in developing a consistent message and approach. For example, pupils that need additional support are identified at an early stage. This early identification enables secondary schools to put into place appropriate support for pupils and aids pupils' transition from primary to secondary school.

95 Around half of schools are not fully aware of the support services that operate within the locality and for a minority of schools the procedure to access services to support pupils and families is overly complicated. Interventions take too long to implement and schools are uncertain as to the impact. As a result, schools do not engage as well as they could with these agencies.

96 Most of the schools visited have clear strategic approaches and a few schools have a written attendance strategy. However, these strategies vary in content and quality. Most strategies or policies list their routine procedures for dealing with absence and general activities undertaken by the school to support attendance. Written strategies do not use available data, or set out clear targets for improvement. As a result, it is not clear how schools are specifically targeting the attendance of different groups of pupils.

97 References to partners, in written strategies and policies, are generally limited to the role of the EWS. The use of a multi-agency approach to support pupils and families to improve attendance is less common.

98 Where schools directly manage staff to improve attendance, such as school attendance officers, they have greater control over the resource and ensure that these staff are used appropriately to meet the specific needs of the school. For example, these schools make good use of staff to work with pupils and families that are hard-to-reach. They build trust with families, link well with senior staff in the school and support pupils to attend.

99 The following case study shows how Fitzalan High School makes effective use of delegated resources and Cardiff local authority's 5-step Framework to improve joint working with primary schools to improve attendance.

The impact of delegation and implementation of a five-step framework in a secondary high school and its primary school cluster in Cardiff

Context

Between 2007 and 2011, secondary school attendance in Cardiff was consistently below the Wales average and one of the worst in Wales.

Cardiff's previous attendance strategy had a limited impact on the rates of attendance in secondary schools. An Estyn inspection in 2008 judged that the authority's strategy to improve attendance in schools had been largely ineffective.

Fitzalan High School is a multicultural 11-18 secondary school with 36% of pupils eligible for free school meals and 29% have special educational needs. Over 40 languages are spoken within the community and 69% of the pupil population are from minority ethnic groups.

Strategy

A task and finish group consisting of headteachers and local authority officers developed the framework to provide a systematic and rigorous approach to managing attendance. The five steps in the strategy are as follows:

Step 1 – School-based intervention such as demonstrating a clear attendance ethos, interventions of form tutor or heads of year groups;
Step 2 – School Attendance Officer intervention and Education Welfare Service advice, including regular meetings between the education welfare officer and the school attendance officer to discuss approaches;
Step 3 – Education Welfare Service referrals involving joint home visits are undertaken;
Step 4 – Case review and assessment, including intensive casework. Where these are unsuccessful, final warnings will be issues; and
Step 5 – Formal statutory action.

Actions

The local authority reorganised the EWS and delegated financial resources for this service to schools. This has been used to fund 32.5 school attendance officer (SAO) posts.

Fitzalan High School received funding to employ 2.5 school attendance officers to work in the high school and its nine cluster primaries.

One and a half SAOs cover nine primary schools. They visit their schools weekly to monitor and discuss attendance concerns as well as regularly monitoring lateness to schools at school gates. One SAO is based at Fitzalan.

A working group was established. This ensured that the five-step process was understood by all schools. The group agreed a consistent system whereby letters would be sent to parents where attendance was a concern and clarified the school's role in dealing with attendance concerns prior to referral to their school attendance officer. It also discussed issues that were of specific relevance to their cluster such as religious observance and heritage visits.

The group agreed to use a standardised end-of-year attendance report to grade pupils' attendance and highlight to parents how much education their children were missing when they were absent.

All schools in the cluster have a strong attendance ethos, clear policies on absence and work hard to promote the importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and parents. Attendance is consistently monitored and well tracked.

Through joint working, support and advice are provided to families on matters of procedure and in helping pupils to settle into school.

Outcomes

Over the last two, years Fitzalan High School has improved its overall attendance rate from 90.9% in 2010-2011 to 93.3% in 2012-2013. The proportion of pupils absent for 20% or more has reduced by four percentage points.

> Transition arrangements between Fitzalan and its primary schools have been strengthened.
>
> The school attendance officer links with community groups and runs coffee mornings. In addition, the school has linked with local religious leaders and established effective communication with social workers specialising in working with ethnic minority groups.

100 In the last two years, there has been an overall increase of 2.5 percentage points in levels of attendance in secondary schools and steady improvements in primary school attendance. Cardiff has improved its ranking for secondary school attendance from 21st to ninth of the 22 Welsh local authorities.

Sharing good practice and evaluating impact

101 Local authorities are generally aware of where there are aspects of good practice in their secondary schools. Meetings with schools' senior leaders are the most common means of identifying good practice. Denbighshire local authority, for example, is rolling-out Rhyl High School's 'six-stage attendance procedure' to improve attendance in all its secondary schools. This includes guidance and standardised documentation, identifying triggers for non-attendance, and priority coding system.

102 However, in a few authorities, schools with very good attendance levels are not being used to good enough effect by the local authority or consortia to advise and support other schools. Few authorities have systematic approaches for identifying best practice within or outside their authority or for sharing best practice with other schools. Schools' ability to access comparative data within and beyond local authorities is variable. As a result, schools are not sufficiently aware of how others perform and what best practices they can emulate.

103 A few schools are proactive in identifying best practice outside their authority. They have established links with schools and use these to good effect in implementing appropriate strategies within their school. In a few cases, schools have not actively sought to compare their practice to improve attendance with that of other schools and have been inactive in seeking out best practice from others.

104 The majority of local authorities have established arrangements for determining the impact of their approaches on improving attendance levels in schools. However, the attendance of certain groups of pupils is still an issue. Local authorities could do more to ensure that evaluations result in timely and targeted changes to practice.

105 Just under half of schools evaluate the impact of the range of actions they take to improve attendance. These schools use data well on an ongoing basis. They reflect on their practices and amend approaches. They report to the governors on the impact of actions. However, around half of schools do not routinely evaluate the full impact of approaches taken to improve attendance.

Appendix 1: Evidence base

The findings and recommendations in this report draw on visits to 19 secondary schools, three local authorities and a meeting with youth offending team (YOT) managers Cymru. 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 members of school staff responsible for attendance;
- reviewed school, local authority and consortia documentation; and
- met with local authority officers.

Additional evidence was drawn from:

- national attendance statistics;
- the Welsh Government's analysis of attendance and reports to local authorities;
- consortia attendance grant submissions;
- evidence submitted to the National Assembly for Wales Enquiry into Behaviour and Attendance;
- Estyn inspection reports from secondary schools and local authorities; and
- Estyn thematic inspections.

Schools visited

Afan Taf Comprehensive, Merthyr Tydfil
Barry Comprehensive, Vale of Glamorgan
Bryn Elian High School, Conwy
Cardiff High School, Cardiff
Cathays High School, Cardiff
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Blaenau Gwent
Fitzalan High School, Cardiff
Flint High School, Flintshre
Glan y Mor Comprehensive, Carmarthenshire
Hawthorn Comprehensive, Rhondda Cynon Taff
Milford Haven Comprehensive, Pembrokeshire
Porth Comprehensive, Rhondda Cynon Taff
Rhyl High School, Conwy
St Cyre's School, Vale of Glamorgan
St Joseph's Catholic and Anglican High School, Wrexham
Ysgol Bro Ddyfi, Powys
Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron Comprehensive, Ceredigion
Ysgol Gyfun Llanbedr-Pont-Steffan, Ceredigion
Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi, Ceredigion

Local authorities visited

Cardiff County Council
Conwy County Council
Denbigh County Council

Appendix 2: Attendance reviews, policies and initiatives

Policy or initiative	Summary
Estyn thematic report on 'Improving Attendance' (2006)	The report found that local authorities had succeeded in improving attendance in schools by making good use of funding, putting strong management teams in place and providing extensive information to schools about improving pupils' attendance. However, very few schools used the data provided by the Welsh Assembly Government to set targets for attendance. In addition, almost all schools had policies on attendance, but these policies were not reviewed regularly enough.
National review of behaviour and attendance (NBAR) (2008) and resulting action plan (2009)	Five recommendations related directly to attendance with a further eight allocated to attendance and behaviour. The action plan focused on actions to: • improve use and analysis of attendance codes and attendance data; • produce and implement an All Wales Attendance Framework and guidance regarding, referral processes, multi-agency working, working with parents and children and young people and use of attendance data as management information; • improve schools' work with school councils and all children and young people to consider ways to improve attendance; and • improve schools' work with the EWS to ensure more consistent referral processes for non-attendees.
Minister for Education's "Teaching Makes a Difference Address" (February 2011)	In his speech the Minister noted that "….If attendance in Wales was at the level of England, our young people would effectively, on average, have an additional eight weeks of learning across their school career…."
Revised behaviour and attendance action plan (2011)	The revised action plan identified the following specific actions in relation to attendance: • develop training and development and career framework for the EWS; • develop an Attendance Analysis Framework for use by local authorities; • ensure attendance is included in the new banding system for schools and schools' published information; and • hold an annual 'open and honest' discussion with local authorities to discuss performance on exclusions / attendance and EOTAS pupils.

Welsh Government – All Wales Attendance Analysis Framework (2012)	The All Wales Attendance Analysis Framework is a work stream within the Welsh Government's Behaviour and Attending Action Plan. It aims to enable the EWS and schools to deliver services that are consistent, accessible and of a high standard. It provides: • an overview of the role and responsibility of the EWS; • exemplar materials from local authorities across Wales and the UK; and • good practice guide for schools with strategies and case studies to help improve attendance and manage lateness. In 2012/2013 Welsh Government officials held meetings with each local authority/consortia in Wales and had detailed discussions around attendance. In summary, the Welsh Government concluded that there was a:[10] • disconnection between education welfare services, school improvement services and data managers; • disparity in strategic leadership and use of EWS time and expertise; • lack of challenge and process; • inconsistent practice in the recording of pupil attendance; and • inconsistent setting of attendance targets.
Secondary school banding (2011)	To emphasise the importance of raising attendance levels in secondary schools, the Welsh Government included attendance in the school banding system.
Welsh Government – Consortia Attendance Grant (2013)	Grant funding was available over two financial years, with £200,000 to be divided amongst the four consortia in 2012/2013 and £600,000 in 2013/2014. The grant provides an opportunity for consortia to work both directly and jointly on attendance. Historically, this issue been dealt with at a local authority level. In order to secure the funding, consortia submitted costed proposals to the Welsh Government, outlining the actions they intend to take to secure continued, long-term improvements in school attendance.

---

[10] Welsh Government Feedback to Association of Directors of Education Wales (ADEW)

National Assembly for Wales' Children and Young People Committee's Inquiry into Behaviour and Attendance in Schools (2013) and Welsh Government's response[11]	The overall aim of the inquiry was to review the effectiveness of the Welsh Government's policy and guidance to promote positive behaviour and attendance within education provision for pupils of compulsory school age.
	Of the 12 recommendations from the NAfW inquiry, the Welsh Government accepted seven, rejected two and accepted in principle the remaining three.
	Those that were accepted were:
	- regional consortia having clearly defined roles regarding attendance and behaviour; - explore the feasibility of education welfare and behaviour support services being provided on a regional basis; - schools, local authorities and regional consortia to work on an early intervention basis with children and families; - explore the potential for regional consortia to have a strengthened role in ensuring a clear focus on maintaining and improving attendance rates during the transition between primary and secondary school; - training in evidence-based behaviour management approaches to improving attendance and behaviour to be in all schools in Wales; - training in evidence-based approaches at initial teacher training; and - training for governors on evidence-based approaches and strengthening their understanding and use of data.
Welsh Government's Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school (2013)	Provides advice and sets out responsibilities for local authorities, schools and police. The guidance supports the introduction of the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales).
	Local authorities will be required to consult on and implement a local code of conduct for the use of penalty notices. Schools will be required to update their appropriate attendance policies.

---

[11] http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/ieIssueDetails.aspx?IId=5218&PlanId=0&Opt=3#AI13850

Appendix 3: What research tells us

In its analysis of literature, the National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR) report, noted the importance of whole-school, holistic approaches and the link with school effectiveness and school improvement. Other studies have emphasised the crucial role of headteachers and senior managers as being one of the "key elements for success" (Ofsted, 2007). Engaging parents successfully and meeting the academic, social and emotional needs of children and young people are the two other consistent themes. A third theme emphasises the quality of learning and teaching and the role of the school in meeting pupils' curricular needs. The fourth theme emphasised the need for schools to have effective strategies in place to improve behaviour and attendance and to prevent bullying. Finally, many studies emphasise the requirement for good inter-agency practice (Sims, Bowen and Halton et al., as cited in NBAR, 2008).

Many of the above themes are echoed in RSM McClure Watters research into improving attendance in schools serving deprived areas (2012), it too states the importance of adopting a whole-school approach. The common features of schools that address non-attendance effectively include:

- governors who are aware of the issues;
- school attendance leaders who provide a strategic lead;
- regular reviews of the attendance policy;
- clear targets for attendance;
- well-understood roles and responsibilities among staff; and
- the consistent use of attendance codes, practices and procedures.

In his evidence to the recent National Assembly for Wales inquiry into behaviour and attendance, Professor Ken Reid noted that research has consistently shown a very high correlation between school-age truancy and adult criminality, prison sentences, unemployment, frequent job changes, divorce, reliance upon the state (income support, housing benefit) and mental health problems, among a range of other factors.

Appendix 4: Example of an attendance self-evaluation audit tool

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SELF-EVALUATION AUDIT TOOL – Developed by Education Welfare Service, Cardiff

This self-evaluation checklist is an important tool to help identify issues within school and to target and prioritise action to improve attendance. It will be important to try a range of possible strategies to guarantee that improvement is secured.

Please allocate a colour – Red, Amber or Green to each of the following questions and statements.

Red = inadequate and immediate action required
Amber = satisfactory but requires further work
Green = Good; standards achieved

Where green has been allocated, please ensure that this is reviewed regularly to ensure status is maintained.

Where you have allocated either amber or red please provide a comment as to action(s) you will undertake to address issues highlighted.

This kind of approach is fundamental in order to assess and review the school's capacity to improve and much rests on these types of judgments. Please ensure you have clear evidence for your evaluation.

School	
School staff member completing form	
Designation	
System leader	
EWS representative	
Date	

Performance

	Red	Orange	Green	Actions/Areas for improvement
Attendance target 2012 -13				
Attendance % 2012-13				
Target attendance 2013 -14				
Current attendance %				
FSM quartile				
Is attendance a priority for school improvement and included in the School Improvement Plan?	No		Yes	

Strategic management

	Red	Orange	Green	Actions/Areas for improvement
Do you have a nominated governor with a specific attendance remit?	No		Yes	
Does the school have a designated SLT member of staff responsible for attendance? Please provide name.	No		Yes	
Does the attendance lead ensure early identification of and intervention and support for pupils with attendance issues?				
Is there dedicated time and resources allocated for attendance?				
How well does the attendance lead ensure consistent application of the policy's principles throughout the school?				
How well does the attendance lead oversee the accuracy of the recording of attendance and registration practices? Is this regularly audited?				
Does the attendance lead monitor, analyse and address key issues identified?				
Does the lead ensure all relevant staff with registration responsibilities are trained and practice monitored to ensure high standards of practice?				
Are all staff with registration responsibilities aware of the attendance codes?				
Are supply staff inducted & well prepared with regards to attendance and registration practices?				

The attendance policy

	🟥	🟧	🟩	Actions/Areas for improvement
Is the school's policy up to date, good quality and regularly reviewed?	No		Yes	
Does the school policy/strategy for improving attendance identify the roles of staff and procedures to be followed?				
Do all staff know, understand and consistently apply the policy across the school?				
Is attendance fully integrated into other policy areas e.g. safeguarding?				
How clear are policies & procedures for working with parents/carers, SAOs/EWS and other outside agencies?				
Does the policy include the school's policy on holidays in term time?	No		Yes	
Is the attendance policy and practice monitored rigorously and its impact measured? How?				
Do governors oversee this monitoring process? Is the effectiveness of interventions monitored regularly?				

Managing attendance within the Five Step Framework

	🟥	🟧	🟩	Actions/Areas for improvement
Do you have a SLA between your secondary/primary cluster schools?	No		Yes	
Are there regular meetings with the attendance lead, SAOs and EWS to identify and agree intervention and support for pupils?	No		Yes	
Is there an escalation of interventions which are used systematically and the impact of these interventions widely known?				
Is effective pupil tracking in place to identify any pupil whose attendance begins to slip? How is it used?				
How effectively does the school make sure it knows the whereabouts of all pupils every day for safeguarding purposes?				
Do you have differentiated responsibilities amongst school staff for dealing with pupils with different attendance levels – i.e. form tutors				

dealing with 92%+, HOY/Deputy Head targeting 87-91% etc?				
Does the school offer an appropriate balance of support and challenge to parents/carers?				
Does the school have reintegration strategies for those returning long term absences in which all appropriate staff participate?				
Do you robustly implement Children Missing Education procedures – i.e. school checklist, referral to SAO, EWS which can help limit absences on pupil records?				
Is school supported appropriately by external agencies? Are there any gaps in support required?				

Collection and analysis of data

	🟥	🟧	🟩	Actions/Areas for improvement
Do governors and SLT review attendance data on a regular basis and across identified groups?				
Are attendance related issues discussed weekly by SLT, the governing body and school council?				
Is school data analysed to inform reasons for absence, profile of persistent absence, identification of vulnerable groups and links to standards?				
Do you plan interventions based on these findings?				
Is the correlation between exclusions and impact on attendance investigated?				
Are patterns of attendance from feeder school pupils analysed and preventative strategies put in place in advance for support at transition?				
Is data reliable and routinely submitted to LA on a weekly basis?				

Communication

	■	■	■	Actions/Areas for improvement
Are pupils aware of their individual level of attendance and the target they need to achieve? How is this set and communicated to them/their parents?				
Are pupils, parents & carers regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance, the link with attainment, in newsletters, at parents' evenings, home /school agreements etc?				
Does the school plan the promotion of attendance throughout the year?				
Is there an awards/rewards system for good attendance?				
Are pupils consulted about the nature of rewards to ensure that they are relevant and motivating?				

Appendix 5

Attendance data

Figure 9: Percentage of sessions missed by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by reason for absence

Type of absence	Reason for absence[12]	Total % 2011-2012	Total % 2012-2013
Authorised	Illness	4.2%	4.3%
	Medical or dental appointments	0.8%	0.6%
	Religious observance	-	-
	Study leave	0.2%	0.1%
	Traveller absence	-	-
	Agreed family holiday	0.5%	0.4%
	Agreed extended family holiday	-	-
	Excluded but no alternative provision made	0.1%	0.1%
	Other authorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	0.6%	0.5%
	Total authorised absence	**6.5%**	**6.1%**
Unauthorised	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	0.1%	0.1%
	Late (arrived after the register closed)	-	-
	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	0.9%	0.9%
	No reason for the absence provided yet	0.4%	0.2%
	Total unauthorised absence	**1.4%**	**1.3%**
	Total overall absence	**7.9%**	**7.4%**

Source: Welsh Government

- indicates a figure between 0 and 0.1

---

[12] Prior to 2011-2012 the Welsh Government did not collect data on the reason for pupil absence from school.

Figure 10: Distribution of reasons for absence from school by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, 2011-2013

Reason for absence[13]	% of half-day sessions missed 2011-2012	% of half-day sessions missed 2012-2013
Illness	53.9%	59%
Medical or dental appointments	9.7%	8.2%
Other authorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	7.8%	7.4%
Agreed family holiday	5.9%	5.4%
Excluded and no provision made	1.8%	1.6%
Study leave	3.1%	0.8%
Religious observance	-	0.1%
Traveller absence	-	0.1%
Total authorised absence	**82.4%**	**82.6%**
Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	11.5%	12.3%
No reason for the absence provided yet	4.9%	3.4%
Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	0.8%	1.4%
Late (arrived after the register closed)	-	0.4%
Total unauthorised absence	**17.6%**	**17.4%**
Total overall absence	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Welsh Government

- indicates a figure between 0 and 0.1

Figure 11: Absenteeism by persistent absentees and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by SEN status, 2011-2012

SEN status	Number of pupils who are persistent absentees	All pupils	Authorised absence – persistent absentees	Unauthorised absence – persistent absentees	Overall absence – persistent absentees	Authorised absence – all pupils	Unauthorised absence – all pupils	Overall absence – all pupils
Statement of SEN	484	4,776	24%	10.1%	34.1%	7.7%	1.6%	9.3%
School Action Plus	2,035	12,700	21.7%	13%	34.8%	8.6%	2.9%	11.5%
School Action	2,478	22,182	20.7%	11.7%	32.4%	7.7%	2%	9.7%
No SEN	7,189	128,783	21.3%	10.4%	31.7%	6.0%	1.1%	7.1%
Total	12,186	168,441	21.3%	11.1%	32.4%	6.5%	1.4%	7.8%

Source: Welsh Government

---

[13] Prior to 2011-2012 the Welsh Government did not collect data on the reason for pupil absence from school.

Figure 12: Key stage 4 achievement in level 1 threshold, level 2 threshold and level 2 threshold including, by free school meal eligibility 2008-2013

Year	FSM eligibility	Level 1 (%)	% point difference	Level 2 (%)	% point difference	Level 2 including (%)	% point difference
2008	Eligible for FSM	72.1%	19.5	28%	33.9	18.7%	30
	Not eligible for FSM	91.6%		61.9%		48.7%	
2009	Eligible for FSM	75.7%	17.1	32.5%	33.8	20.1%	31.9
	Not eligible for FSM	92.8%		66.3%		52%	
2010	Eligible for FSM	78.3%	15.6	35.3%	34.3	20.7%	33.9
	Not eligible for FSM	93.9%		69.6%		54.6%	
2011	Eligible for FSM	79.8%	14.9	40.9%	32.6	22%	33.7
	Not eligible for FSM	94.7%		73.5%		55.7%	
2012	Eligible for FSM	83.3%	12.2	50.9%	27.1	23.4%	33.2
	Not eligible for FSM	95.5%		78%		56.6%	
2013	Eligible for FSM	85.8%	10.6	57.8%	25.2	25.8%	32.7
	Not eligible for FSM	96.4%		83%		58.5%	

Source: Welsh Government

Figure 13: Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by free school meal eligibility

	Overall absence %					Unauthorised absence %			
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12		2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Known to be eligible for free school meals	14.1%	13.9%	13.5%	12.7%		4.0%	3.8%	3.6%	3.5%
Not eligible for free school meals	8.0%	7.8%	7.5%	6.8%		1.3%	1.1%	1.0%	0.9%
Total	9.0%	8.9%	8.6%	7.8%		1.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%

Source: Welsh Government

Figure 14: Overall absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by major special educational need

	Overall absence %			
Major need	**2008-2009**	**2009-2010**	**2010-2011**	**2012-2013**
Moderate learning difficulty	11.6%	11.6%	11.4%	10.4%
General learning difficulty	..	..	..	9.4%
Severe learning difficulty	9.7%	10.7%	9.9%	10.5%
Profound and multiple learning difficulty	11.0%	10.5%	10.4%	8.1%
Specific learning difficulties	9.7%	9.7%	9.4%	..
Dyslexia	..	..	..	8.3%
Dyscalculia	..	..	..	6.8%
Dyspraxia	..	..	..	7.5%
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	8.9%	8.2%	8.3%	7.8%
Autistic spectrum disorders	8.9%	8.2%	8.3%	7.8%
Physical and medical difficulties	12.9%	12.0%	12.4%	11.6%
Hearing impairment	9.9%	9.5%	9.4%	7.9%
Visual impairment	9.6%	9.5%	10.0%	9.7%
Multi-sensory impairment	7.0%	10.5%	12.3%	8.7%
Speech, communication and language difficulties	8.9%	9.3%	8.7%	7.9%
Behaviour, emotional and social difficulties	15.3%	15.4%	14.8%	13.7%
No SEN	8.3%	8.1%	7.8%	7.1%
Total	**9.0%**	**8.9%**	**8.6%**	**7.8%**

Source: Welsh Government

Figure 15: Unauthorised absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by major special educational need

Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to unauthorised absence

Major need	**2008-2009**	**2009-2010**	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**
Moderate learning difficulties	2.7%	2.7%	2.6%	2.4%
General learning difficulties	..	..	..	1.9%
Severe learning difficulties	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%
Profound and multiple learning difficulties	1.5%	0.5%	0.8%	0.1%
Specific learning difficulties	1.9%	1.7%	1.5%	..
Dyslexia	..	..	..	1.5%
Dyscalculia	..	..	..	0.8%
Dyspraxia	..	..	..	0.7%
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	..	..	..	2.9%
Autistic spectrum disorders	1.1%	0.8%	1.0%	0.9%
Physical and medical difficulties	1.7%	1.5%	1.1%	1.25
Hearing impairment	1.3%	1.8%	1.3%	0.9%
Visual impairment	1.5%	0.9%	0.8%	1.1%
Multi-sensory impairment	0.3%	0.6%	1.2%	0.3%
Speech, language and communication difficulties	1.6%	1.5%	1.3%	1.2%

Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties	5.0%	4.8%	4.4%	4.0%
No SEN	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%
Total	**1.7%**	**1.6%**	**1.5%**	**1.4%**

Source: Welsh Government

Figure 16: Pupils in maintained secondary schools with special educational need, by major need, January 2013

Major need	Number of pupils	Incidence %[14]
Moderate learning difficulties	12,579	6.6%
General learning difficulties	7,336	3.8%
Severe learning difficulties	387	0.2%
Profound and multiple learning difficulties	81	-
Dyslexia	6,234	3.3%
Dyscalculia	269	0.1%
Dyspraxia	324	0.2%
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	526	0.3%
Autistic spectrum disorders	1,630	0.9%
Physical and medical difficulties	1,762	0.9%
Hearing impairment	849	0.4%
Visual impairment	376	0.2%
Multi-sensory impairment	26	-
Speech, language and communication difficulties	2,646	1.4%
Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties	6,520	3.4%
Total (any special educational need)	41,545	21.7%
Total number of pupils on roll	191,279	

Source: Welsh Government

- indicates a figure between 0 and 0.1

---

[14] The number of pupils expressed as a proportion of the total number of pupils on roll

Figure 17: The use of the B Code (Educated off-site, not dual registered) and D Code (Dual registered-present at another school or pupil referral unit (PRU)

Attendance code as percentage of sessions possible

Local authority	2011-2012 B code	2012-2013 B code	2011-2012 D code	2012-2013 D code
Isle of Angelsey	1.2	1.0	0.1	0.1
Gwynedd	1.6	1.4	0.1	0.4
Conwy	1.1	1.6	0.7	0.8
Denbighshire	1.9	2.2	0.4	0.3
Flintshire	1.1	1.0	0.2	0.3
Wrexham	1.3	1.8	1.2	0.7
Powys	0.9	0.9	0.1	0.1
Ceredigion	0.9	0.9	0.2	0.1
Pembrokeshire	1.5	1.5	2.5	2.2
Carmarthenshire	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.0
Swansea	1.2	1.5	1.3	1.0
Neath Port Talbot	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.2
Bridgend	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.8
Vale of Glamorgan	1.8	2.0	0.4	0.3
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1.1	0.7	0.7	0.8
Merthyr Tydfil	6.5	6.0	2.4	2.1
Caerphilly	1.9	2.2	0.9	0.8
Blaenau Gwent	1.6	1.5	1.0	1.0
Torfaen	1.5	1.4	1.1	0.6
Monmouthshire	1.5	1.4	0.0	0.3
Newport	1.3	1.4	0.8	0.7
Cardiff	3.0	2.8	0.5	0.7
Wales	**1.6**	**1.6**	**0.8**	**0.8**

Source: Welsh Government (unpublished)

Appendix 6: Glossary and references

Glossary

ALN	Additional learning needs – all children and young people with learning needs which are greater than those of the majority of their peers and not just those identified as having special educational needs
CSI	Core subject indicator – represents the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination
Dual registered	Where a pupil is registered at one institution, for example a school, and attends another, for example a pupil referral unit
EOTAS	Education otherwise than at school – See link for fuller explanation of provision[15]
EWO	Education Welfare Officer
EWS	Education Welfare Service
ESW	Education Social Worker
eFSM	Eligible for free school meals
nFSM	Not eligible for free school meals
FSM	Free school meals
Level 1 threshold	A volume of qualifications equivalent to five GCSEs D-G
Level 2 threshold	A volume of qualifications equivalent to five GCSEs A*-C
Level 2 threshold including	A volume of qualifications equivalent to five GCSEs A*-C including English or Welsh first language and mathematics
Nurture groups	Nurture groups offer a short term, focused, intervention strategy, which addresses barriers to learning arising from social / emotional and or behavioural difficulties, in an inclusive, supportive manner.

---

[15]http://wales.gov.uk/dcells/publications/policy_strategy_and_planning/schools/inclusionandpupilsupport/guidance/section5/summarysection5e.pdf?lang=en

Persistent absence	Persistent absentees are pupils who were absent for at least 20% of half-day sessions that schools were open to pupils (not including inset days)
Peer mentoring	Peer mentoring programs match older pupils with younger ones. Peer mentors provide advice and support on a range of issues such as: problems with schoolwork; social issues, such as pressure to drink or smoke; family problems or tension; and other typical difficulties of growing up.
Pupil referral unit	Both a school and category of EOTAS. Provides education for pupils of compulsory school age who by virtue of exclusion or other reason are unable to attend mainstream school.
Pupil support centre	This generally consists of a base room/s in a school that is staffed. The purpose is to provide individual and small group support to pupils. This may include teaching and guidance. These provisions may be used as an alternative to exclusion.
RAISE	Raising Attainment and Individual Standards in Education
Restorative practice	An approach which focuses on resolving conflicts at the earliest possible stage, seeking to avoid blame and supporting people to take responsibility for finding a constructive solution to issues. It encourages effective communication and working towards positive outcomes.
SEN	Special educational needs
School Action	Interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies
School Action Plus	Advice or support provided to school from outside specialists, so that alternative interventions additional or different strategies to those provided
Statement of SEN	A statement of special educational needs is a formal document that details a child's learning difficulties and the help that will be given. A statement is only necessary if the school is unable to meet a child's needs on its own.

Explanation of words and phrases used to describe our evaluations

The words and phrases used in the left-hand column below are those that we use to describe our evaluations. The phrases in the right hand column are the more precise explanations.

Nearly all	With very few exceptions
Most	90% or more
Many	70% of more
A majority	Over 60%
Half or around a half	50%
A minority	Below 40%
Few	Below 20%
Very few	Less than 10%

References

a) Absenteeism by pupil characteristics, Welsh Government http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/absenteeism-pupil-characteristics/?lang=en (Figures 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 and 15 in this report)

b) Academic achievement by pupil characteristics, Welsh Government http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/academic-achievement-pupil-chracteristics/?lang=en (Figure 5 in this report)

c) Absenteeism from secondary schools, Welsh Government http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/absenteeism-secondary-schools/?lang=en (Figures 1, 2, 3, 9, and 10 in this report)

d) Attendance performance analysis 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, Welsh Government (unpublished) (Figures 8 and 17 in this report)

e) Achievement and entitlement to free school meals in Wales, Welsh Government http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/academic-achievement-free school-meals/?lang=en (Figure 12 in this report)

f) Schools' census results, Welsh Government http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/schools-census/?lang=en (Figure 16 in this report)

g) All Wales Attendance Analysis Framework, Welsh Government, 2012 http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110308section1en.pdf http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110308section2en.pdf http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110308section3en.pdf

h) Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools, Estyn 2012 http://www.estyn.gov.uk/cymraeg/docViewer-w/260005.2/arfer-effeithiol-wrth-fynd-ir-afael-thlodi-ac-anfantais-mewn-ysgolion-tachwedd-2012/?navmap=30,163

i)   Consortia Attendance Grant submissions. 2013

j)   Inquiry into Behaviour and Attendance, National Assembly for Wales, 2013
     http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s19651/Report%20-%20August%202013.pdf

k)   Inquiry into Behaviour and Attendance – Welsh Government Response, 2013
     http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/ieIssueDetails.aspx?IId=5218&PlanId=0&Opt=3#AI13850

l)   Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school. Welsh Government, 2013
     http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130925-guidance-regular-non-attendance-en.pdf

m)   National Behaviour and Attendance Review, Welsh Government, 2008
     http://wales.gov.uk/dcells/publications/publications/reports/3773934/nbarreport?lang=en

n)   Inquiry in Behaviour and Attendance, written evidence, Professor Ken Reid, 2013
     http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=224&MID=1280

o)   Improving Attendance in Schools, RSM McClure Watters, 2012
     http://www.deni.gov.uk/final_research_report_pdf.pdf

p)   Improving Attendance, Thematic Report, Estyn, 2006
     http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/172781.7/improving-attendance-2006/?navmap=30,163,

q)   Pupil Deprivation, Estyn 2014
     http://www.estyn.gov.uk/download/publication/309390.9/pupil-deprivation-may-2014/

r)   Revised Behaviour and Attending Action Plan, Welsh Government. 2011
     http://wales.gov.uk/dcells/policy/info_for_learning_providers/schools/nbar/nbaractionplan1113/nbaractionplan1113en.ppt?lang=en

s)   Teaching makes a difference – Address by Minister for Education in Wales. 2011
     http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110202teachingmakesadifferenceen.pdf

t)   Working together to tackle the impact of poverty on educational achievement, Estyn 2013
     http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/296942.1/working-together-to-tackle-the-impact-of-poverty-on-educational-achievement-december-2013/?navmap=30,163

u)   Action on Bullying, Estyn. June 2014
     http://www.estyn.gov.uk/download/publication/315915.6/action-on-bullying-june-2014/

v)   The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
     http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2010/1954/regulation/7/made

Estyn best practice case studies

The following three schools have recently been inspected and identified as having sector leading practice.

Cefn Hengoed Comprehensive in Swansea has set up a team of Pastoral Support Officers to support pupils, resolve behavioural issues and monitor attendance. As a result, attendance has improved in every year group, progression to post-16 education has increased and fewer pupils are at risk of not being in education, employment or training.
http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/252634.2/a-holistic-approach-to-improving-attendance/?navmap=33,53,159

Maesteg Comprehensive in Bridgend has a range of curriculum and pastoral support. This has resulted in improvements in attendance and pupil attainment.
http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/291482.1/strategies-to-reduce-barriers-to-progress-and-ensure-support-for-every-pupil/?navmap=33,53,159

Ysgol Gyfun Bryn Tawe in Swansea has developed restorative practices with the result that there have been improvements in pupils' standards, attitudes, behaviour, confidence and wellbeing.
http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/299835.9/affective-strategies-improve-behaviour-and-wellbeing/?navmap=33,53,159

The remit author and survey team

Huw Davies HMI	Report author
Denise Wade HMI	Team member
David Ivor Hughes AI	Team member