

Absenteeism from Schools in Wales by Pupil Characteristics, 2015/16

30 March 2017
SB 18/2017

This statistical bulletin explores how the characteristics of pupils of compulsory school age (5-15) affect their absenteeism from maintained primary and secondary schools in Wales. A detailed analysis of persistent absenteeism is also provided. The data cover the whole academic year for primary schools, and from September to the late May bank holiday for secondary schools from 2008/09 to 2015/16.

✎ In general, unauthorised absence did not change in secondary schools in 2015/16, but it decreased for pupils with statements of SEN or School Action Plus ([Table 5](#)).

✎ **Illness, medical/dental appointments, family holidays, and religious observance** were less common as reasons for absence among persistent absentees than all pupils ([Tables 8a](#) and [8b](#)).

A persistent absentee is a pupil who was absent for at least 20 per cent of the school year (for more information see the [Notes](#) section).

The percentage of persistent absentees increased for maintained primary schools but continued to fall in maintained secondary schools ([Table 1](#)).

Carmarthenshire had the highest percentage of persistent absentees from primary schools. **Newport** had the highest percentage from secondary schools ([Table 2](#)).

⏏ Persistent absenteeism was more common among pupils eligible for free school meals or with special educational needs ([Tables 3a](#) and [3b](#)).

⏏ Overall absence rates were also higher among pupils eligible for free school meals or with special educational needs ([Tables 3a](#) and [3b](#)).

For an explanation of **free school meal eligibility** or the categories for pupils with **special education needs** see the [Notes](#) section.

About this release

This release covers overall and unauthorised absenteeism from primary and secondary schools, including a breakdown by reason for absence. It also reports on persistent absentees in primary and secondary schools.

Data are shown for Wales and at local authority/consortium level.

In this release

Absenteeism by:-

Persistent absentees	4
Gender, free school meal eligibility, year group, and special educational needs	10
Ethnic background	16
Special educational need provision	18
Major special educational need	19
Free school meal eligibility	21
Reason for absence	22
Notes	26

Change in persistent absentees over time

Table 1	Persistent absentees of compulsory school age in maintained primary and secondary schools	4
Chart 1	Percentage of pupils of compulsory school age in maintained schools who were persistent absentees	5
Table 2	Percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who were persistent absentees in maintained primary and secondary schools, by local authority and consortium	6
Chart 2	Percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who were persistent absentees in maintained primary schools, by local authority, 2015/16	8
Chart 3	Percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who were persistent absentees in maintained secondary schools, by local authority, 2015/16	9

Absenteeism by pupil characteristics

Table 3a	Absenteeism by persistent absentees and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary schools, by gender, free school meal eligibility, year group and special educational need status, 2015/16	10
Table 3b	Absenteeism by persistent absentee and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by gender, free school meal eligibility, year group and special educational need status, 2015/16	13
Table 4a	Absenteeism by persistent absentee and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary schools, by ethnic background, 2015/16	16
Table 4b	Absenteeism by persistent absentee and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by ethnic background, 2015/16	17
Table 5	Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary and secondary schools, by provision for special educational need	18
Table 6a	Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary schools, by major special educational need	19
Table 6b	Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by major special educational need	20
Table 7	Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary and secondary schools, by free school meal (FSM) eligibility	21

Reasons for absence

Table 8a	Distribution of reasons for absence by persistent absentees and all pupils in maintained primary schools, by reason for absence	22
Table 8b	Distribution of reasons for absence by persistent absentees and all pupils in maintained secondary schools, by reason for absence	23

Additional information

[Notes](#)

Introduction

Table 1 provides information about persistent absentees, including their number and absenteeism rates. Chart 1 shows how the percentage of persistent absentees has changed over time. Table 2 displays the percentage of persistent absentees by local authority. Charts 2 and 3 order local authorities by the percentage of persistent absentees that they had in 2015/16.

Tables 3a and 3b split persistent absentees and all pupils by gender, free school meal eligibility, year group and special educational need status and provide the absenteeism rates for these groups of pupils for 2015/16. Tables 4a and 4b do the same, but split both groups of pupils by ethnic background.

Tables 5 to 7 produce the overall and unauthorised absence rates for all pupils over the past five years, splitting these data by special educational need status, major special educational need and free school meal eligibility to allow readers to see how absence rates have changed over time.

Tables 8a and 8b compare the reasons for absence for persistent absentees with the reasons given by all pupils.

All of these tables and charts contain a primary/secondary school breakdown.

Table 1: Persistent absentees of compulsory school age in maintained primary and secondary schools (a) (b)

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Primary schools								
Number of pupils who are persistent absentees	6,749	7,186	6,456	5,137	4,778	3,342	2,858	3,107
Total number of pupils	196,895	194,337	193,885	194,897	197,113	201,891	205,049	208,532
Percentage of pupils who are persistent absentees	3.4	3.7	3.3	2.6	2.4	1.7	1.4	1.5
Percentage of half days missed by persistent absentees due to:								
Authorised absence	20.3	20.2	20.1	20.8	20.3	19.4	19.2	18.9
Unauthorised absence	8.2	7.7	7.8	7.1	7.4	8.2	8.3	9.0
Overall absence	28.5	28.0	27.9	27.9	27.7	27.7	27.5	27.9
Percentage of all pupils' absence for which persistent absentees were responsible:								
Authorised absence	11.9	12.5	11.5	10.2	9.0	7.6	6.6	7.0
Unauthorised absence	28.9	29.4	28.7	24.6	20.8	13.8	11.6	12.4
Overall absence	14.3	14.9	13.8	11.9	10.6	8.7	7.6	8.2
Secondary schools								
Number of pupils who are persistent absentees	16,584	15,619	14,971	12,293	10,399	8,061	7,094	6,119
Total number of pupils	178,004	175,559	172,886	170,081	166,996	161,829	159,041	157,720
Percentage of pupils who are persistent absentees	9.3	8.9	8.7	7.2	6.2	5.0	4.5	3.9
Percentage of half days missed by persistent absentees due to:								
Authorised absence	21.6	21.9	22.0	21.4	20.6	19.5	18.8	18.6
Unauthorised absence	10.9	10.6	10.2	11.2	11.2	12.6	13.8	14.1
Overall absence	32.5	32.6	32.2	32.6	31.8	32.1	32.6	32.7
Percentage of all pupils' absence for which persistent absentees were responsible:								
Authorised absence	27.6	26.6	26.5	23.8	21.1	19.0	17.3	15.9
Unauthorised absence	58.5	58.9	59.8	58.3	54.0	48.8	48.4	43.4
Overall absence	33.6	32.4	32.2	29.9	26.8	25.0	23.7	21.9

Key points

In 2015/16:



The percentage of persistent absentees continues to fall for secondary pupils.



The percentage of persistent absentees in primary schools has increased slightly in the latest year but is still less than half the percentage five years ago.



The gap between persistent absenteeism in primary and secondary schools decreases.

- The percentage of persistent absentees in secondary schools continues to decrease, and has done so each year since 2007/08 (not in table).
- However, the percentage of persistent absentees in primary schools increased a little in 2015/16. This is the first increase in primary schools since 2009/10.
- 1.5 per cent of pupils in primary schools and 3.9 per cent in secondary schools were persistent absentees in 2015/16.

- The gap between the percentage of persistent absentees in primary and secondary schools has been narrowing since 2010/11. This can be seen more easily in [Chart 1](#) that displays how the percentage of persistent absentees has changed in primary and secondary schools.
- Persistent absentees are responsible for a higher percentage of absenteeism in secondary schools than in primary schools. In 2015/16, persistent absentees were responsible for 21.9 per cent of absenteeism in secondary schools and 8.2 per cent of absenteeism in primary schools. This suggests that more of primary schools' absence is caused by pupils with lower rates of absenteeism.

Chart 1: Percentage of pupils of compulsory school age in maintained schools who were persistent absentees

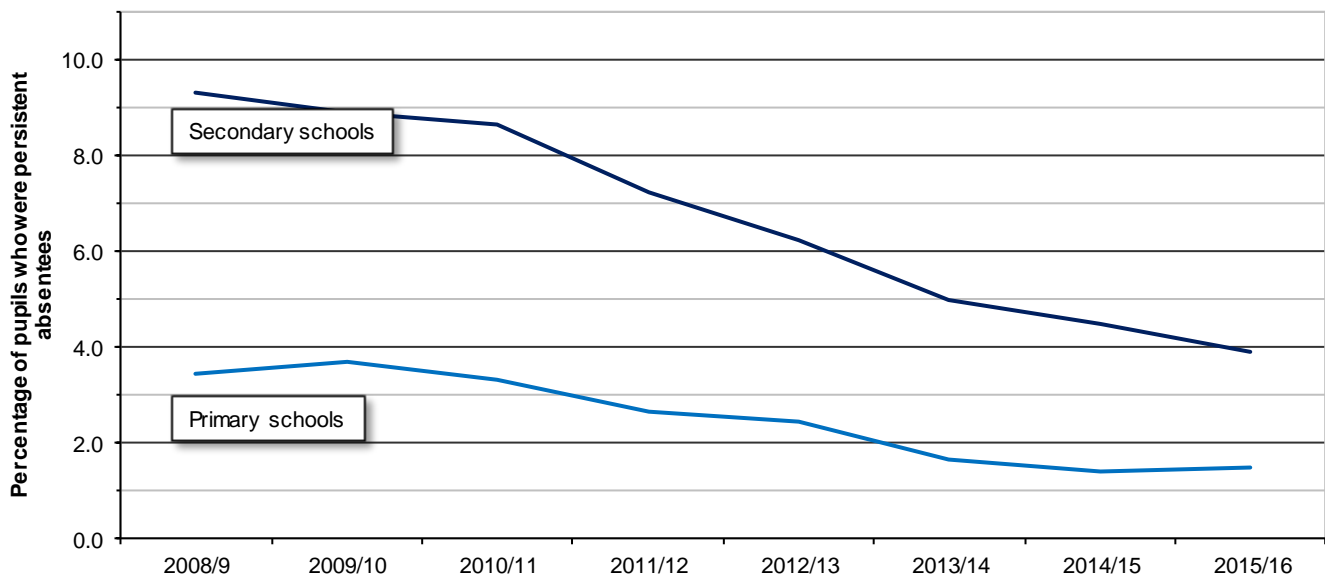


Table 2: Percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who were persistent absentees in maintained primary and secondary schools, by local authority and consortium (a) (b) (c)

Local authority	Primary schools					Secondary schools				
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
North Wales	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.6	1.5	6.2	5.5	4.8	4.3	3.7
Isle of Anglesey	2.7	2.0	1.6	1.8	1.1	7.1	4.9	5.0	4.4	3.5
Gwynedd	1.7	1.8	1.4	1.1	0.6	6.6	4.5	3.2	2.7	1.9
Conwy	1.7	1.9	1.5	1.4	1.5	5.5	4.9	4.1	3.3	3.3
Denbighshire	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.3	5.5	6.5	5.9	6.3	4.7
Flintshire	2.1	2.3	2.1	1.8	2.0	5.6	5.0	4.7	4.0	4.1
Wrexham	2.0	2.2	1.7	1.6	1.7	7.0	6.9	5.7	4.9	4.2
South West and Mid Wales	2.5	2.4	1.5	1.2	1.4	6.7	6.3	4.6	4.1	3.7
Powys	1.5	1.4	0.7	0.7	0.9	5.2	4.5	2.9	2.8	2.7
Ceredigion	1.1	1.4	0.8	0.8	0.6	3.2	3.4	2.6	2.8	2.2
Pembrokeshire	2.0	2.5	1.7	1.5	1.6	5.3	7.1	5.4	5.7	5.3
Carmarthenshire	2.9	2.8	1.7	1.6	2.2	8.6	7.4	4.4	4.0	3.8
Swansea	3.0	2.8	1.8	1.2	1.2	7.7	6.9	5.5	4.3	3.7
Neath Port Talbot	2.8	2.4	1.2	1.2	1.5	6.7	5.8	5.0	4.6	3.8
Central South Wales	3.0	2.4	1.6	1.3	1.4	8.2	6.3	5.0	4.4	3.8
Bridgend	2.7	2.7	1.5	1.1	1.1	7.2	6.9	4.4	3.5	3.1
The Vale of Glamorgan	1.8	1.7	1.1	1.0	1.1	5.8	5.1	4.2	3.3	2.6
Rhondda Cynon Taf	3.3	2.4	1.6	1.2	1.6	10.0	6.9	5.4	4.5	4.2
Merthyr Tydfil	3.1	2.2	1.7	1.3	1.2	6.7	4.9	5.9	5.0	4.4
Cardiff	3.3	2.5	1.9	1.4	1.5	8.5	6.2	4.9	5.1	4.1
South East Wales	2.9	2.8	1.9	1.5	1.7	7.5	6.8	5.7	5.1	4.5
Caerphilly	3.5	3.0	1.8	1.5	1.6	7.6	6.8	5.5	5.8	4.6
Blaenau Gwent	2.9	2.1	1.8	1.3	1.6	9.6	8.4	7.7	5.2	3.4
Torfaen	2.1	2.4	2.1	1.5	1.9	7.0	6.2	5.4	4.3	4.4
Monmouthshire	1.2	1.3	0.8	0.7	1.0	4.8	4.1	3.0	2.9	2.9
Newport	3.5	3.7	2.3	1.9	1.9	8.1	7.7	6.5	5.8	5.6
Wales	2.6	2.4	1.7	1.4	1.5	7.2	6.2	5.0	4.5	3.9

Key points

In 2015/16, for local authorities:

Primary schools

2.2% the highest percentage of persistent absentees (Carmarthenshire).

0.6% the lowest percentage of persistent absentees (Gwynedd and Ceredigion).

Secondary schools

5.6% the highest percentage of persistent absentees (Newport).

1.9% the lowest percentage of persistent absentees (Gwynedd).

- In 2015/16, the local authority with the highest percentage of persistent absentees in primary schools was Carmarthenshire (2.2 per cent). Newport had the highest percentage of persistent absentees in secondary schools in 2015/16 (5.9 per cent).
- The local authority with the lowest percentage of persistent absentees for both primary and secondary schools was Gwynedd (0.6 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively).
- Whilst most local authorities saw a decrease in persistent absenteeism in secondary schools in 2015/16, it increased in Flintshire, Torfaen and Monmouthshire. The percentage of persistent

absentees in secondary schools in all of these local authorities increased by less than 0.1 percentage points from 2014/15.

- South East Wales consortium had the highest percentage of persistent absentees in both primary schools and secondary schools in 2015/16. Central South Wales and South West and Mid Wales had the lowest percentages in primary schools. North Wales and the South West and Mid Wales consortiums had the lowest percentages in secondary schools.
- [Charts 2](#) and [3](#) display the percentage of persistent absentees in primary and secondary schools in 2015/16 by local authority.

Chart 2: Percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who were persistent absentees in maintained primary schools, by local authority, 2015/16

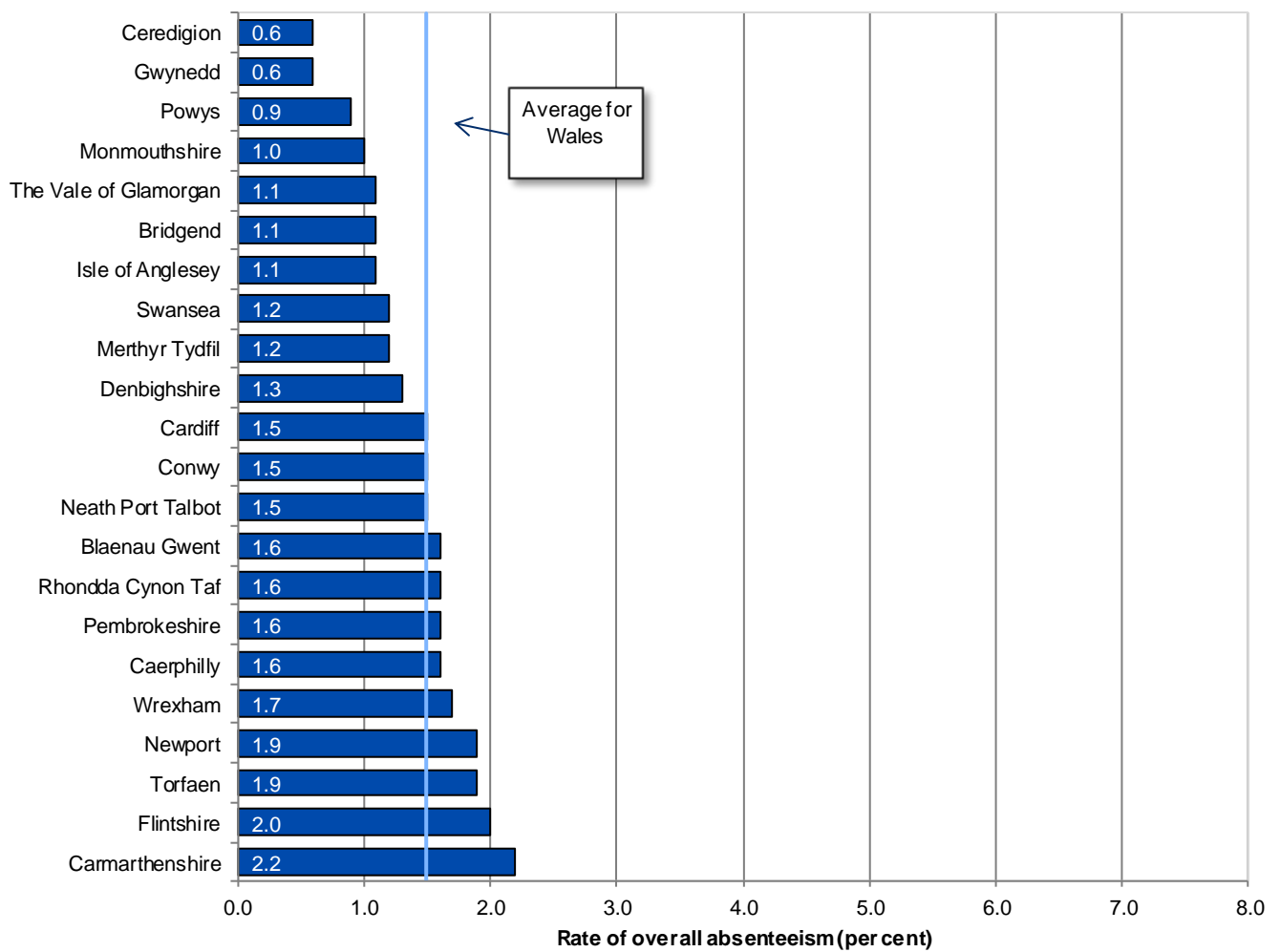


Chart 3: Percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who were persistent absentees in maintained secondary schools, by local authority, 2015/16

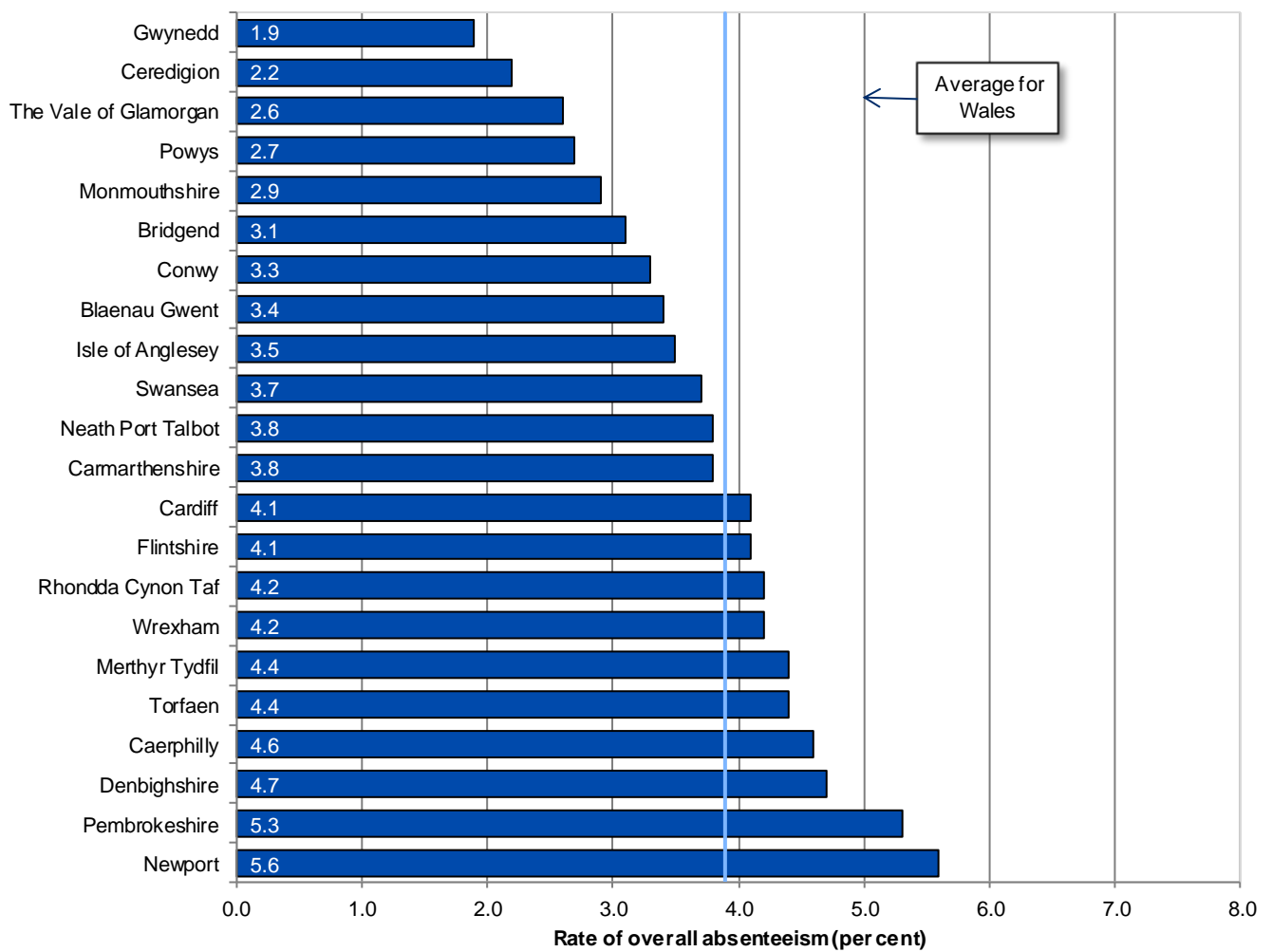


Table 3a: Absenteeism by persistent absentees and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary schools, by gender, free school meal eligibility, year group and special educational need status, 2015/16 (a) (b) (c)

	Number of pupil enrolments		Percentage of pupils w ho were	Percentage of half-day sessions missed by					
	w ho were:			Persistent absentees due to			All pupils due to		
	Persistent absentees	All pupils		Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
Gender									
Boys	1,687	105,229	1.6	19.7	8.8	28.5	4.0	1.1	5.1
Girls	1,391	100,802	1.4	17.7	9.2	26.9	3.9	1.1	5.0
Pupils (d)	3,107	208,532	1.5	18.9	9.0	27.9	4.0	1.1	5.1
Free school meal (FSM) eligibility									
Known to be eligible for FSM	1,761	39,133	4.5	17.7	10.4	28.0	5.4	1.9	7.3
Other pupils	1,317	166,898	0.8	20.2	7.2	27.4	3.7	0.9	4.5
Total (d)	3,107	208,532	1.5	18.9	9.0	27.9	4.0	1.1	5.1
National curriculum year group									
Under year 1	8	133	6.0	22.4	2.5	24.9	6.0	0.8	6.8
Year 1	583	35,296	1.7	19.1	8.8	27.9	4.4	1.1	5.5
Year 2	503	34,763	1.4	18.6	8.9	27.5	3.9	1.1	5.0
Year 3	462	35,559	1.3	17.5	9.8	27.3	3.9	1.1	5.0
Year 4	482	34,023	1.4	19.2	8.8	28.0	3.9	1.1	5.0
Year 5	496	33,315	1.5	18.9	9.5	28.4	3.9	1.0	4.9
Year 6	544	32,941	1.7	19.1	8.5	27.6	3.9	1.0	4.9
Year 7 or over	0	*	*	.	.	.	*	*	*
Total (d)	3,107	208,532	1.5	18.9	9.0	27.9	4.0	1.1	5.1
Special educational need (SEN) status									
Statement of SEN	169	3,395	5.0	26.2	4.2	30.4	6.1	1.1	7.2
School Action Plus	631	16,927	3.7	21.2	8.4	29.7	5.2	1.3	6.5
School Action	822	31,171	2.6	17.4	10.8	28.2	4.6	1.5	6.1
No identified SEN	1,456	154,538	0.9	17.6	8.8	26.4	3.7	1.0	4.7
Total (d)	3,107	208,532	1.5	18.9	9.0	27.9	4.0	1.1	5.1

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record and PLASC, Welsh Assembly Government

(a) Pupils of compulsory school age were aged 5 to 15 on 31 August before the start of the academic year.

(b) Persistent absentees are pupils who were absent for at least 20 per cent of half-day sessions. For 2015/16 this means that persistent absentees missed at least 76 half-day sessions from primary schools. See the Notes section for a more detailed description.

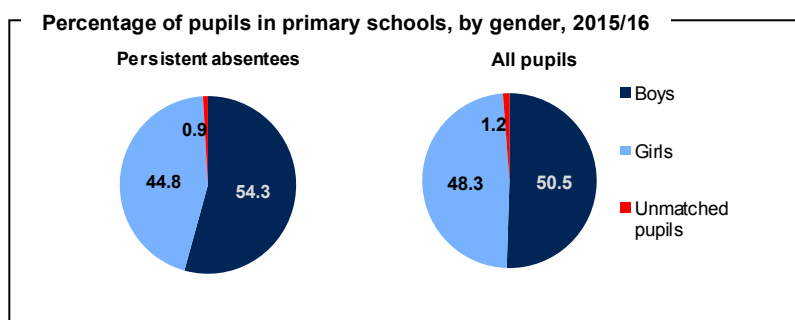
(c) Data were created by matching records in the Pupils' Attendance Record to the Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC). Pupils were not included if no match could be made. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

(d) Totals include data for all pupils included in the Pupils' Attendance Record, not just those that could be matched to PLASC. Therefore the subcategories may not add up to the totals.

*** means that data item is disclosive.

Boys were more likely to be persistent absentees than girls

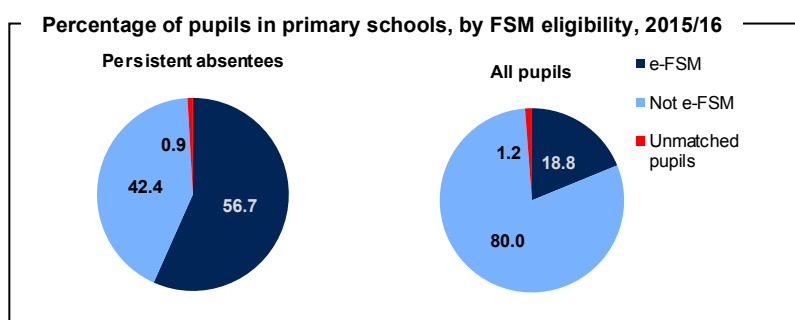
- A slightly higher percentage of boys were persistent absentees from maintained primary schools than girls. In 2015/16, 1.6 per cent of boys in maintained primary schools were persistent absentees, compared with 1.4 per cent of girls.



- The rate of authorised absence was higher amongst male persistent absentees, while unauthorised absence was higher among female persistent absentees.
- Looking at all pupils, the rates for unauthorised absence from maintained primary schools were the same for boys and girls in 2015/16, but the rate of authorised and overall absence was slightly higher for boys.

Primary school children eligible for free school meals were 5 times more likely than other pupils to be persistent absentees

- In maintained primary schools in 2015/16, FSM-eligible pupils were more likely to be persistent absentees than those not eligible for FSM. The percentage of FSM-eligible pupils who were persistent absentees was over 5 times higher than that for pupils not eligible for FSM.



- Authorised and unauthorised absence rates were higher for all FSM-eligible pupils than for those not eligible for FSM. However, for

persistent absentees in maintained primary schools the rate of authorised absenteeism was higher among pupils not eligible for FSM.

Persistent absenteeism doesn't differ very much according to year of study

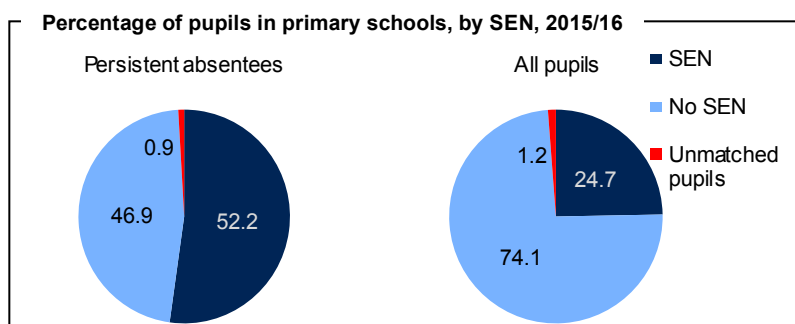
- Looking at year groups 1 to 6 in maintained primary schools, there was little difference in the percentage of their pupils who were persistent absentees. The percentage of pupils who were persistent absentees in each of these year groups varied between 1.3 and 1.7 per cent.
- Persistent absentees in year 5 had the highest rate of overall absence, when comparing years 1 to 6. When looking at all pupils, year 1 had the highest rate of overall absence. Because of the small number of pupils in year groups below 1 or above 6 it is not advisable to make comparisons.

Pupils with Special educational need (SEN) status are most likely to be persistent absentees

- Pupils with statements of SEN had the highest percentage of persistent absentees from maintained primary schools in 2015/16. 5.0 per cent of pupils

with statements of SEN were persistent absentees. Pupils with no identified SEN had the lowest percentage of persistent absentees.

- Among persistent absentees and all pupils, the highest rate of overall absence from maintained primary schools was seen from pupils with statements of SEN.
- Pupils with a SEN status of School Action had the highest rate of unauthorised absence in 2015/16. This was true for persistent absentees and all pupils.



Please note that the small percentage of unmatched pupils is due to matching to PLASC totals.

Table 3b: Absenteeism by persistent absentee and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by gender, free school meal eligibility, year group and special educational need status, 2015/16 (a) (b) (c)

	Number of pupil enrolments		Percentage of pupils w ho were	Percentage of half-day sessions missed by					
	w ho were:			Persistent absentees due to			All pupils due to		
	Persistent absentees	All pupils	persistent absentees	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
Gender									
Boys	2,883	79,479	3.6	18.0	14.0	32.0	4.4	1.2	5.7
Girls	3,124	76,134	4.1	18.8	14.1	32.9	4.6	1.3	5.9
Pupils (d)	6,119	157,720	3.9	18.6	14.1	32.7	4.5	1.3	5.8
Free school meal (FSM) eligibility									
Known to be eligible for FSM	2,943	26,478	11.1	16.9	16.3	33.2	6.6	3.2	9.8
Other pupils	3,064	129,135	2.4	19.9	11.8	31.7	4.1	0.9	5.0
Total (d)	6,119	157,720	3.9	18.6	14.1	32.7	4.5	1.3	5.8
National curriculum year group									
Year 6 or under	0	0	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Year 7	614	31,700	1.9	19.6	10.6	30.3	3.9	0.7	4.6
Year 8	937	31,232	3.0	19.2	12.0	31.2	4.4	1.0	5.4
Year 9	1,203	30,344	4.0	18.5	13.9	32.5	4.8	1.3	6.1
Year 10	1,548	31,327	4.9	18.7	14.2	32.8	4.8	1.5	6.2
Year 11	1,702	30,995	5.5	17.3	16.3	33.6	4.8	1.7	6.5
Year 12 or over	*	15	*	*	*	*	5.4	5.4	10.8
Total (d)	6,119	157,720	3.9	18.6	14.1	32.7	4.5	1.3	5.8
Special educational need (SEN) status									
Statement of SEN	251	3,787	6.6	23.3	10.5	33.9	5.7	1.4	7.1
School Action Plus	1,298	11,949	10.9	18.7	16.1	34.7	6.3	2.8	9.1
School Action	1,406	23,426	6.0	16.7	14.8	31.5	5.4	1.9	7.3
No identified SEN	3,052	116,451	2.6	18.7	13.1	31.8	4.1	1.0	5.1
Total (d)	6,119	157,720	3.9	18.6	14.1	32.7	4.5	1.3	5.8

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record and PLASC, Welsh Assembly Government

(a) Pupils of compulsory school age were aged 5 to 15 on 31 August before the start of the academic year.

(b) Persistent absentees are pupils who were absent for at least 20 per cent of half-day sessions. For 2015/16 this means that persistent absentees missed at least 64 half-day sessions from secondary schools. See the Notes section for a more detailed description.

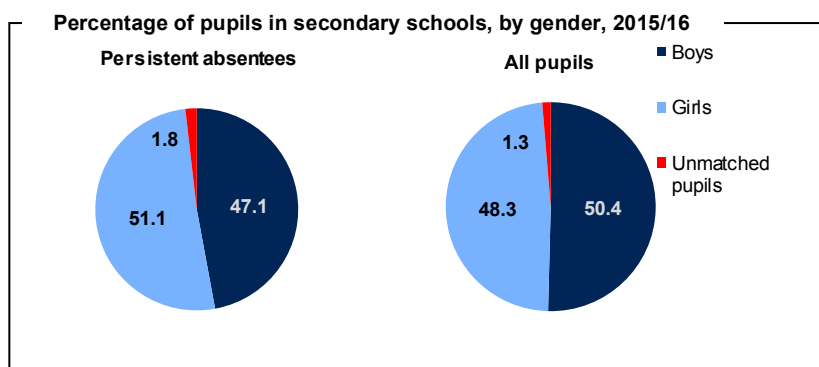
(c) Data were created by matching records in the Pupils' Attendance Record to the Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC). Pupils were not included if no match could be made. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

(d) Totals include data for all pupils included in the Pupils' Attendance Record, not just those that could be matched to PLASC. Therefore the subcategories may not add up to the totals.

*** means that data item is disclosive.

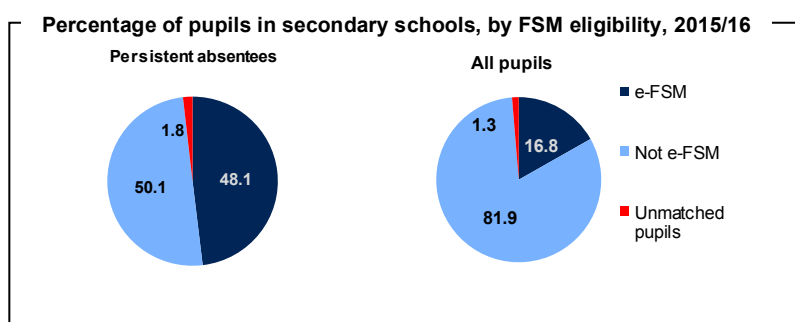
Boys were more likely to be persistent absentees than girls

- A higher percentage of girls were persistent absentees in secondary schools in 2015/16 than boys. 4.1 per cent of girls were persistently absent, compared with 3.6 per cent of boys.
- Persistent absentee girls' overall absence was higher than persistent absentee boys' absence in 2015/16. When looking at all pupils' absence, girls were always higher than boys.



Secondary school children eligible for free school meals (FSM) were more likely than other pupils to be persistent absentees, and more of their absence was unauthorised

- 11.1 per cent of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were persistent absentees from secondary schools in 2015/16.
- Overall absence rates were higher for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals than for other pupils. In 2015/16, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals missed 9.8 per cent of half-day sessions from secondary schools. In the same period, all other pupils missed 5.0 per cent of half-day sessions.
- Unauthorised absence was higher amongst persistent absentees known to be eligible for free school meals than other persistent absentees. Authorised absence amongst persistent absentees was lower for those eligible for free school meals, than for those who aren't.

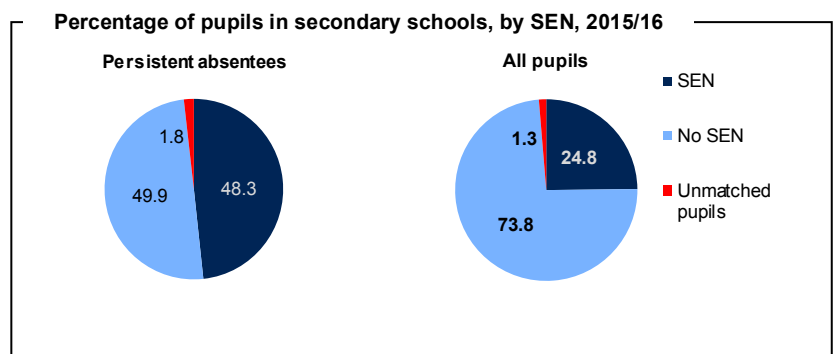


Persistent absenteeism increases with age during secondary school

- Year 11 had the highest percentage of persistent absentees in secondary schools in 2015/16 (5.5 per cent) and there is a consistent increase through the years of study in secondary school. Although authorised absenteeism was lower for persistent absentees in year 11 than other year groups, unauthorised absence was the highest.
- For all pupils, Year 11 also had the highest rate of overall absence from secondary schools out of all other year groups in 2015/16. It had the highest rate of unauthorised absenteeism and the joint-highest rate of authorised absence (joint with Years 9 and 10).

School Action Plus pupils are the most likely amongst those with Special Educational Needs to be persistent absentees

- Pupils with school action plus had the highest percentage of persistent absentees in secondary schools in 2015/16.
- School action plus pupils also had the highest rates of overall, authorised, and unauthorised absence. This characteristic was seen in persistent absentees as well as all pupils.



Please note that the small percentage of unmatched pupils is due to matching to PLASC totals.

Table 4a: Absenteeism by persistent absentee and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary schools, by ethnic background, 2015/16 (a) (b) (c)

	Number of pupil enrolments		Percentage of pupils w ho w ere	Percentage of half-day sessions missed by					
	w ho w ere:			Persistent absentees due to			All pupils due to		
	Persistent absentees	All pupils		Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
White	2,873	188,853	1.5	18.9	8.9	27.8	4.0	1.0	5.1
White - British	2,577	182,012	1.4	18.6	8.9	27.5	4.0	1.0	5.0
Traveller	79	279	28.3	28.4	9.0	37.4	12.0	4.5	16.5
Gypsy/Roma	87	429	20.3	25.3	7.6	32.9	10.1	3.2	13.3
Any other White background	130	6,133	2.1	16.6	8.5	25.1	4.8	1.6	6.4
Mixed	104	6,248	1.7	14.3	13.5	27.8	3.7	1.5	5.1
White and Black Caribbean	*	1,301	*	*	*	*	4.0	2.1	6.1
White and Black African	*	925	*	*	*	*	3.7	1.4	5.1
White and Asian	*	1,344	*	*	*	*	3.7	1.3	5.0
Any other Mixed background	*	2,678	*	*	*	*	3.4	1.3	4.7
Asian	53	5,110	1.0	18.0	8.0	26.0	4.3	1.4	5.6
Indian	*	1,303	*	*	*	*	3.2	1.3	4.4
Pakistani	*	1,616	*	*	*	*	4.6	1.6	6.2
Bangladeshi	*	1,665	*	*	*	*	4.9	1.3	6.2
Any other Asian background	*	526	*	*	*	*	3.8	1.0	4.8
Black	*	1,784	*	*	*	*	2.8	1.3	4.1
Caribbean	*	94	*	*	*	*	3.6	2.3	6.0
African	*	1,464	*	*	*	*	2.8	1.2	4.0
Any other Black background	*	226	*	*	*	*	2.5	1.5	3.9
Chinese or Chinese British	0	419	0.0	.	.	.	2.3	0.8	3.2
Any other ethnic group	*	2,596	*	*	*	*	3.4	1.5	4.8
Unknown	*	1,021	*	*	*	*	4.2	0.9	5.1
All pupils (d)	3,107	208,532	1.5	18.9	9.0	27.9	4.0	1.1	5.1

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record and PLASC, Welsh Assembly Government

(a) Pupils of compulsory school age w ere aged 5 to 15 on 31 August before the start of the academic year.

(b) Persistent absentees are pupils w ho w ere absent for at least 20 per cent of half-day sessions. For 2015/16 this means that persistent absentees missed at least 76 half-day sessions from primary schools. See the Notes section for a more detailed description.

(c) Data w ere created by matching records in the Pupils' Attendance Record to the Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC). Pupils w ere not included if no match could be made. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that w ere excluded.

(d) Totals include data for all pupils included in the Pupils' Attendance Record, not just those that could be matched to PLASC. Therefore the subcategories may not add up to the totals.

*** means that data item is disclosive.

.. means that data item is not applicable.

Table 4b: Absenteeism by persistent absentee and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by ethnic background, 2015/16 (a) (b) (c)

	Number of pupil enrolments		Percentage of pupils w ho were	Percentage of half-day sessions missed by					
	w ho were:			Persistent absentees due to			All pupils due to		
	Persistent absentees	All pupils		Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
White	5,746	144,815	4.0	18.6	13.9	32.5	4.6	1.3	5.9
White - British	5,558	141,107	3.9	18.7	13.8	32.5	4.6	1.2	5.8
Traveller	*	94	*	*	*	*	11.1	4.8	15.9
Gypsy/Roma	*	167	*	*	*	*	7.9	5.6	13.5
Any other White background	133	3,447	3.9	14.4	14.9	29.4	4.3	1.8	6.1
Mixed	156	3,607	4.3	14.6	18.6	33.2	4.1	1.7	5.8
White and Black Caribbean	52	882	5.9	11.5	23.6	35.1	4.6	2.7	7.3
White and Black African	*	387	*	*	*	*	3.9	1.6	5.6
White and Asian	*	817	*	*	*	*	3.9	1.4	5.3
Any other Mixed background	56	1,521	3.7	18.1	13.8	31.9	3.9	1.3	5.2
Asian	52	3,252	1.6	14.9	18.0	32.9	3.3	1.1	4.4
Indian	*	612	*	*	*	*	2.3	0.8	3.1
Pakistani	*	1,088	*	*	*	*	4.1	1.7	5.8
Bangladeshi	*	1,239	*	*	*	*	3.3	0.9	4.3
Any other Asian background	0	313	0.0	.	.	.	2.2	0.5	2.7
Black	*	1,212	*	*	*	*	2.2	0.9	3.2
Caribbean	*	76	*	*	*	*	4.1	2.1	6.2
African	*	983	*	*	*	*	2.1	0.8	2.9
Any other Black background	*	153	*	*	*	*	2.2	1.0	3.3
Chinese or Chinese British	*	217	*	*	*	*	1.5	0.5	2.0
Any other ethnic group	*	1,668	*	*	*	*	2.4	1.1	3.5
Unknown	*	842	*	*	*	*	4.4	1.0	5.4
All pupils (d)	6,119	157,720	3.9	18.6	14.1	32.7	4.5	1.3	5.8

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record and PLASC, Welsh Assembly Government

(a) Pupils of compulsory school age were aged 5 to 15 on 31 August before the start of the academic year.

(b) Persistent absentees are pupils who were absent for at least 20 per cent of half-day sessions. For 2015/16 this means that persistent absentees missed at least 64 half-day sessions from secondary schools. See the Notes section for a more detailed description.

(c) Data were created by matching records in the Pupils' Attendance Record to the Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC). Pupils were not included if no match could be made. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

(d) Totals include data for all pupils included in the Pupils' Attendance Record, not just those that could be matched to PLASC. Therefore the subcategories may not add up to the totals.

*** means that data item is disclosive.

." means that data item is not applicable.

Table 5: Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary and secondary schools, by provision for special educational need (a) (b)




Special educational need (SEN) status	Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to											
	Overall absence						Unauthorised absence					
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Primary schools												
Statement of SEN	8.8	8.5	8.6	7.4	7.2	7.2	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.1
School Action Plus	8.2	7.6	7.7	6.6	6.4	6.5	1.4	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3
School Action	8.0	7.3	7.4	6.2	6.0	6.1	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5
No identified SEN	6.2	5.6	5.8	4.8	4.6	4.7	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.0
Total (c)	6.7	6.1	6.3	5.2	5.0	5.1	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1
Secondary schools												
Statement of SEN	10.4	9.3	8.7	7.8	7.5	7.1	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.4
School Action Plus	12.6	11.5	10.9	9.8	9.5	9.1	3.2	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.8
School Action	10.7	9.7	9.1	7.9	7.6	7.3	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9
No identified SEN	7.8	7.1	6.6	5.7	5.4	5.1	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Total (c)	8.6	7.9	7.4	6.4	6.1	5.8	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record and PLASC, Welsh Assembly Government

- (a) Pupils of compulsory school age were aged 5 to 15 on 31 August before the start of the academic year.
 (b) Data were created by matching records in the Pupils' Attendance Record to the Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC).
 (c) Totals include data for all pupils included in the Pupils' Attendance Record, not just those that could be matched to PLASC. Therefore the subcategories may not add up to the totals.

Key points

In 2015/16:

-  Overall absence decreased for all pupils in secondary schools.
-  Overall absence increased for all pupils in primary schools
-  Unauthorised absence decreased for pupils with statements of SEN or School Action Plus in secondary schools.

Primary schools

- Pupils with Statements of SEN have had the highest rate of overall absence since 2009/10 (not shown in table). Pupils with School Action have had the highest or joint-highest rate of unauthorised absence over this period.
- The rates of overall absence and unauthorised absence for pupils with all SEN statuses increased between 2015/16, except for pupils with Statements of SEN, whose overall absence decreased slightly over the year.

Secondary schools

- Pupils with school action plus have had the highest rates of overall and unauthorised absence since 2009/10.
- The rates of unauthorised absence for pupils with statements of SEN or School Action Plus decreased slightly between 2014/15 and 2015/16. For pupils with Statements of SEN, the rates of unauthorised absence from secondary schools are at the lowest they have been since 2009/10.

Primary and secondary schools

- Pupils with no identified SEN have had the lowest rates of absence since 2009/10.

Table 6a: Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary schools, by major special educational need (a) (b) (c)

Major special educational need (SEN)	Number of pupils (r)						Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to											
							Overall absence					Unauthorised absence						
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Moderate learning difficulties	25,422	18,815	15,449	12,899	10,022	8,902	8.3	7.6	7.7	6.4	6.1	6.2	1.6	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6
General learning difficulties	..	10,618	13,017	14,964	16,715	17,509	..	7.3	7.6	6.4	6.2	6.3	..	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.5
Severe learning difficulties	618	614	613	538	455	394	8.9	8.4	8.4	6.8	7.2	7.3	1.3	0.9	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.4
Profound & multiple learning difficulties	138	148	156	156	151	143	10.6	9.3	8.9	9.2	8.7	8.6	0.5	0.4	0.7	1.2	0.9	1.1
Dyslexia	..	2,891	2,705	2,560	2,445	2,144	..	6.4	6.6	5.3	5.3	5.5	..	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.0
Dyscalculia	..	135	182	235	228	180	..	5.4	5.8	5.4	4.8	5.4	..	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9
Dyspraxia	..	179	201	230	218	198	..	5.8	5.9	4.9	5.1	4.5	..	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.8
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	..	399	431	465	465	482	..	7.1	6.7	5.7	6.0	6.0	..	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	1,113	1,227	1,295	1,411	1,509	1,684	8.5	7.8	7.8	6.8	6.6	7.0	0.7	0.6	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.2
Physical and medical difficulties	1,665	1,797	1,845	2,007	2,059	2,165	10.1	10.0	9.9	8.5	8.3	8.2	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1
Hearing impairment	802	932	1,038	1,073	1,102	1,114	7.5	6.9	7.1	6.1	6.0	5.7	0.8	0.6	0.8	1.1	1.1	1.1
Visual impairment	345	365	368	375	371	385	8.4	8.0	8.2	7.3	6.8	6.3	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.3
Multiple sensory impairment	22	14	18	22	23	25	8.7	7.1	9.8	11.3	10.9	9.9	0.7	0.2	1.1	1.2	1.5	0.9
Speech, language and communication difficulties	7,174	7,449	7,850	8,319	8,814	9,265	7.7	7.1	7.3	6.0	5.9	5.9	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.2
Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties	5,244	5,201	5,599	5,985	6,411	6,903	8.4	7.8	7.8	6.7	6.4	6.5	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4
Specific learning difficulties	7,024	..	..	..	..	..	7.2	..	..	..	..	..	0.9	..	..	..	..	..
No SEN	141,947	141,612	143,832	148,238	151,656	154,538	6.2	5.6	5.8	4.8	4.6	0.0	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.0
Total	193,885	194,897	197,113	201,891	205,049	208,532	6.7	6.1	6.3	5.2	5.0	5.1	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record and PLASC, Welsh Assembly Government

(a) Pupils of compulsory school age were aged 5 to 15 on 31 August before the start of the academic year.

(b) Data were created by matching records in the Pupils' Attendance Record to the Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC). Pupils were not included if no match could be made. See the notes for more detail section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

(c) Not all categories of special educational need were in use for the entirety of the period from 2010/11 to 2015/16.

(d) Totals include data for **all** pupils included in the Pupils' Attendance Record, not just those that could be matched to PLASC. Therefore the subcategories may not add up to the totals.

Table 6b: Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by major special educational need (a) (b) (c)

Major special educational need (SEN)	Number of pupils						Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to											
							Overall absence						Unauthorised absence					
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Moderate learning difficulties	17,132	13,639	12,220	10,442	9,285	7,944	11.4	10.4	9.9	8.6	8.3	7.8	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.2
General learning difficulties	..	5,592	7,249	9,026	10,077	11,018	..	9.4	9.1	8.0	7.7	7.5	..	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9
Severe learning difficulties	401	385	370	372	330	338	9.9	10.5	9.6	8.2	7.5	7.1	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.3	1.8	1.9
Profound & multiple learning difficulties	75	59	74	77	73	69	10.4	8.1	8.1	9.4	7.9	7.0	0.8	0.1	0.4	2.1	1.1	1.4
Dyslexia	..	5,854	5,878	5,814	5,522	5,031	..	8.3	7.8	6.9	6.6	6.2	..	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.3
Dyscalculia	..	278	292	374	317	239	..	6.8	7.5	6.1	6.4	6.1	..	0.8	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.3
Dyspraxia	..	261	277	302	298	306	..	7.5	6.8	6.1	5.4	5.5	..	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.8
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	..	366	513	640	718	808	..	10.6	9.6	8.6	8.6	7.8	..	2.9	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.2
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	1,166	1,371	1,485	1,566	1,634	1,724	8.3	7.8	7.7	6.7	6.6	6.6	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2
Physical and medical difficulties	1,583	1,587	1,570	1,527	1,561	1,525	12.4	11.6	11.2	9.5	8.8	9.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	0.9	1.1	1.3
Hearing impairment	690	732	762	783	791	834	9.4	7.9	8.1	7.1	6.7	6.4	1.3	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2
Visual impairment	314	320	338	340	349	338	10.0	9.7	8.6	6.6	6.6	6.8	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.0	0.9	0.9
Multiple sensory impairment	22	27	24	14	14	14	12.3	8.7	11.6	9.8	9.3	8.7	1.2	0.3	1.4	0.5	0.8	0.1
Speech, language and communication difficulties	2,223	2,377	2,514	2,462	2,480	2,617	8.7	7.9	7.7	6.5	6.2	6.2	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.5
Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties	6,553	6,805	6,414	6,552	6,279	6,357	14.8	13.7	12.8	11.8	11.7	10.8	4.4	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.4	3.9
Specific learning difficulties	8,762	..	..	..	..	..	9.4	..	..	..	..	..	1.5	..	..	..	..	..
No SEN	132,484	128,783	125,341	119,865	117,408	116,451	7.8	7.1	6.6	5.7	5.4	5.1	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Total	172,886	170,081	166,996	161,829	159,041	157,720	8.6	7.9	7.4	6.4	6.1	5.8	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record and PLASC, Welsh Assembly Government

(a) Pupils of compulsory school age were aged 5 to 15 on 31 August before the start of the academic year.

(b) Data were created by matching records in the Pupils' Attendance Record to the Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC). Pupils were not included if no match could be made. See the notes for more detail section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

(c) Not all categories of special educational need were in use for the entirety of the period from 2010/11 to 2015/16.

(d) Totals include data for all pupils included in the Pupils' Attendance Record, not just those that could be matched to PLASC. Therefore the subcategories may not add up to the totals.

Table 7: Absenteeism by pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary and secondary schools, by free school meal (FSM) eligibility (a) (b)

Free school meal (FSM) eligibility	Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to											
	Overall absence						Unauthorised absence					
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Primary schools												
Known to be eligible for FSM	9.3	8.6	8.6	7.4	7.1	7.3	2.1	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.9
Other pupils	6.0	5.5	5.7	4.7	4.5	4.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.9
Total (c)	6.7	6.1	6.3	5.2	5.0	5.1	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1
Secondary schools												
Known to be eligible for FSM	13.5	12.7	12.0	10.7	10.3	9.8	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2
Other pupils	7.5	6.8	6.4	5.5	5.3	5.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9
Total (c)	8.6	7.9	7.4	6.4	6.1	5.8	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record and PLASC, Welsh Assembly Government

(a) Pupils of compulsory school age were aged 5 to 15 on 31 August before the start of the academic year.




(b) Data were created by matching records in the Pupils' Attendance Record to the Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

(c) Totals include data for all pupils included in the Pupils' Attendance Record, not just those that could be matched to PLASC.

Therefore the subcategories may not add up to the totals.

Key points

For primary and secondary schools:

-  Overall absence is higher for FSM eligible pupils than other pupils.
-  Overall absence has generally been falling among FSM eligible and other pupils since 2009/10 in secondary schools
-  Overall absence has increased among FSM eligible pupils in primary schools for the first time since 2009/10.

Primary schools

- Since 2010/11, the rate of overall absence for pupils eligible for FSM has decreased more than the rate for other pupils, except for this year where the overall absence increased for pupils eligible for FSM and stayed the same for other pupils. However, between 2010/11 and 2015/16 overall absence for FSM eligible pupils dropped by 2.1 percentage points. During the same time period, the rate of overall absence for other pupils fell by 1.4 percentage points.
- The rate of unauthorised absence for pupils eligible for FSM and other pupils increased between 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Secondary schools

- Overall absence from secondary schools has dropped by a greater amount among pupils eligible for FSM than among other pupils over the past 6 years. Each year, the decrease in the rate of overall absence from the previous year was larger for pupils eligible for FSM.
- Unauthorised absence from secondary schools stayed the same for both pupils eligible for FSM and other pupils in 2015/16.

Table 8a: Distribution of reasons for absence by persistent absentees and all pupils in maintained primary schools, by reason for absence (a) (b)

Type of absence	Code	Reason for absence	Persistent absentees			All pupils		
			2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Authorised	I	Illness	48.7	49.4	46.4	57.2	60.5	58.6
	M	Medical or dental appointments	4.6	5.0	5.0	6.3	5.9	5.5
	R	Religious observance	0.1	-	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.6
	S	Study leave	-	-	-	-	-	-
	T	Traveller absence	4.3	4.0	3.8	0.5	0.4	0.4
	H	Agreed family holiday	2.4	1.6	1.3	11.7	8.4	9.0
	F	Agreed extended family holiday	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
	E	Excluded, but no alternative provision made	1.2	1.2	1.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
	C	Other authorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	8.5	8.4	9.8	4.5	4.3	4.2
		Total authorised absence	70.2	69.8	67.7	81.1	80.2	78.8
Unauthorised	G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	3.0	2.9	3.0	8.0	9.7	10.5
	U	Late (arrived after the register closed)	2.5	2.4	2.7	1.1	1.0	1.0
	O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	22.9	23.8	25.6	9.1	8.6	9.3
	N	No reason for the absence provided yet	1.4	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.5	0.4
		Total unauthorised absence	29.8	30.2	32.3	18.9	19.8	21.2
Overall		Total overall absence	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record, Welsh Government; All Pupils' Attendance Record, Welsh Government

(a) Pupils of compulsory school age were aged 5 to 15 on 31 August before the start of the academic year.

(b) Persistent absentees are pupils who were absent for at least 20 per cent of half-day sessions. For 2015/16 this means that persistent absentees missed at least 76 half-day sessions from primary schools. See the Notes section for a more detailed description.

"-" means that the data item is not 0, but would be rounded down to 0 when rounded to 1 decimal place.

Key points

In 2015/16 for primary schools:



Illness, medical/dental appointments and family holidays were less common as reasons for absence among persistent absentees than all pupils.



Traveller absence and other unauthorised reason were more common among persistent absentees than all pupils.

- Illness was the most common reason for absence for persistent absentees in primary schools, as was the case for all pupils. However, both illness and medical/dental appointments accounted for less of persistent absentees' absence than for all pupils. In 2015/16, 51.3 per cent of persistent absentees' absence was for these reasons, while they accounted for 64.2 per cent of all pupils' absence.
- Family holidays that were agreed, agreed extended or unauthorised made up 19.5 per cent of all pupils absence from primary schools in 2015/16. In the same year, holidays only accounted for 4.4 per cent of persistent absentees' absence.

- Traveller absence is more common among persistent absentees in primary schools than all pupils. In 2015/16, 3.8 per cent of persistent absentees' absence was because of traveller absence, compared with 0.4 per cent for all pupils.
- Other unauthorised reasons was the second most frequently used reason for persistent absentees' absence from primary schools in 2015/16. In 2015/16, other unauthorised reasons made up 25.6 per cent of persistent absentees' absence. In the same year, other unauthorised reasons made up 9.3 per cent of all pupils' absence. See the notes section for more information on the definition of *Other Unauthorised Reasons*.

Table 8b: Distribution of reasons for absence by persistent absentees and all pupils in maintained secondary schools, by reason for absence (a) (b)

Type of absence	Code	Reason for absence	Persistent absentees			All pupils		
			2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Authorised	I	Illness	41.9	39.7	38.5	59.5	61.4	60.7
	M	Medical or dental appointments	5.0	4.7	4.8	7.8	7.3	7.1
	R	Religious observance	-	-	-	0.2	0.1	0.2
	S	Study leave	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.2
	T	Traveller absence	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1
	H	Agreed family holiday	0.7	0.4	0.3	3.3	2.0	1.8
	F	Agreed extended family holiday	-	-	-	-	-	-
	E	Excluded, but no alternative provision made	2.8	3.0	2.6	1.5	1.6	1.6
	C	Other authorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	9.4	9.1	10.0	6.9	6.3	6.5
			Total authorised absence	60.8	57.6	56.8	79.9	79.2	78.2
Unauthorised	G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	1.1	1.1	1.0	2.8	3.0	3.6
	U	Late (arrived after the register closed)	0.9	1.0	1.4	0.5	0.5	0.7
	O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	35.0	39.5	40.3	15.3	16.7	17.2
	N	No reason for the absence provided yet	2.2	0.7	0.5	1.5	0.5	0.4
			Total unauthorised absence	39.2	42.4	43.2	20.1	20.8
Overall		Total overall absence	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record, Welsh Government; All Pupils' Attendance Record, Welsh Government

(a) Pupils of compulsory school age were aged 5 to 15 on 31 August before the start of the academic year.

(b) Persistent absentees are pupils who were absent for at least 20 per cent of half-day sessions. For 2015/16 this means that persistent absentees missed at least 64 half-day sessions from secondary schools. See the Notes section for a more detailed description.

"-" means that the data item is not 0, but would be rounded down to 0 when rounded to 1 decimal place.

Key points

In 2015/16 for secondary schools:



Illness, medical/dental appointments and family holidays were less common as reasons for absence among persistent absentees than all pupils.



Other unauthorised reason was more common among persistent absentees than all pupils.

- As with primary schools, the most common reason for absence for persistent absentees and all pupils in secondary schools was illness. Illness and medical/dental appointments also made up a lower percentage of absence for persistent absentees (43.3 per cent) than for all pupils (67.8 per cent) in secondary schools.
- All family holidays (both authorised and unauthorised) accounted for a smaller portion of persistent absentees' absence than for all pupils'. In 2015/16, 1.3 per cent of absence from secondary schools by persistent absentees was because of family holiday. 5.4 per cent of all pupils' absence was because of family holidays.

- Other unauthorised reasons was the most common reason received for persistent absentees' and the second most common for overall absenteeism for all pupils' absence from secondary schools.
- Another similarity between primary and secondary schools is that "other unauthorised reason" was more frequently recorded for persistent absentees than for all pupils. 40.3 per cent of persistent absentees' absence was 'other unauthorised', while 17.2 per cent of all pupils' absence was assigned this reason in 2015/16. See the notes section for more information on the definition of *Other Unauthorised Reasons*.

Notes

Context

Policy/Operational

All children who are receiving an education at school during the normal school day must be placed on the attendance register. An attendance register records every pupil's attendance at every session the school is open to pupils and must be called twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register must show whether each pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site (treated as present if they attend that provision), or absent. In addition, where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Improving attendance continues to be a key Ministerial priority. Data suggest that absence impacts on an individual learner's attainment. Therefore, attendance needs to remain a priority for schools to ensure that children and young people are given the chance to achieve their potential. The development of the Attendance Analysis Framework has played an important role in raising the profile of attendance in the context of school improvement.

The Attendance Analysis Framework sets out a standardised and robust approach to data analysis. The Framework was developed in consultation with LA data, Education Welfare and school improvement officers and is intended to identify systematic problems in schools and local authorities, and identify ways that these might be addressed.

Data source

The data in tables 1, 2, 8a and 8b relating to persistent absentees were taken from the Pupils' Attendance Record. The other tables relate to data matched between the Pupils' Attendance Record and the Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

The maintained primary and secondary school data in the Pupils' Attendance Record is made up of pupil-level attendance data collected electronically from schools, care of their local authority (LA). Data are collected from maintained secondary schools after the late May bank holiday, and data are collected from maintained primary schools in the September following the academic year. PLASC is an annual census, carried out in January, which collects information about pupils in maintained schools. Both collections are carried out by the Statistical Directorate within the Welsh Government.

Key Quality Information

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability. Between September and November 2010 we conducted a public consultation on our Education Statistics outputs in which we asked for feedback on the quality of the outputs. [A summary of the responses](#) has been published.

Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales.
- The Department for Education and Skills in the Welsh Government.
- Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales.
- The Department for Education in England.
- other government departments.
- local authorities and schools.
- Wales Audit Office.
- other areas of the Welsh Government.
- the research community.
- students, academics and universities.
- My Local School.
- individual citizens and private companies and the media.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- advice to Ministers.
- the all-Wales education core data packs (the replacement for the National Pupil Database).
- LA and school comparisons and benchmarks.
- to inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales.
- development of a school categorisation system for Wales.
- to inform Estyn during school inspections.
- contributing to the National Performance Indicators.
- international benchmarking.
- the education domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- to assist in research in educational attainment.

Accuracy

The Welsh Government works closely with schools and local authorities in order to ensure all data are validated before tables are published. Data are collated into an electronic return and submitted to the Welsh Government through DEWi, a secure online data transfer system developed by the Welsh Government. Various stages of automated validation and sense-checking are built into the process to ensure a high quality of data.

The accuracy of the data from the Pupils' Attendance Record and PLASC was confirmed before the publication of the absenteeism and pupil census releases. These data were then sent to an external organisation with experience in matching data sets to ensure that the resulting data were of high quality.

Accessibility and clarity

This Statistical First Release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website.

Comparability

Due to the effect that partial closures of schools due to extreme weather conditions during the 2009/10 academic year had on schools' attendance rates caution should be used when comparing year-on-year changes.

During the 2012/13 academic year outbreaks of illnesses such as Measles may have had an adverse effect on local authorities' attendance. Caution should be taken when comparing local authority-level data for this year.

Also in 2012/13, some schools decided to take a firmer stance on term-time holidays. In the 2013/14 academic year more schools made the same decision. These decisions may have had an effect on the rates of absenteeism in these years.

Definitions

Coverage

The absenteeism information in this Statistical First Release relates to the percentage of half-day sessions missed by pupils due to authorised, unauthorised and overall absence for the whole of the academic year for maintained primary schools and from the start of the academic year to the late May bank holiday for maintained secondary schools. Only pupils of compulsory school age (5-15) registered at maintained primary and secondary schools are included in the data (ages as on 31st August before the start of the academic year).

The absenteeism data presented by pupil characteristics in tables 3a to 7 were obtained by matching the pupil-level data in the Pupils' Attendance Record to those obtained from the January Pupil-Level Annual School Census (PLASC). Not all pupils' records could be matched between the two data sets, so only pupils who appeared in both were included in these tables.

The following table indicates the number of pupil records in the Pupils' Attendance Record that could and could be matched to PLASC:

Match rates between the Pupils' Attendance Record and PLASC

	Number of matched pupils	Number of unmatched pupils	Total number of pupils	Percentage of matched pupils
Primary schools				
2009/10	190,903	3,336	194,239	98.3
2010/11	191,515	2,290	193,805	98.8
2011/12	192,404	2,479	194,883	98.7
2012/13	194,601	2,497	197,098	98.7
2013/14	199,477	2,375	201,852	98.8
2014/15	202,644	2,367	205,011	98.8
2015/16	206,031	2,472	208,503	98.8
Secondary schools				
2009/10	173,625	1,917	175,542	98.9
2010/11	171,407	1,504	172,911	99.1
2011/12	168,441	1,644	170,085	99.0
2012/13	165,321	1,671	166,992	99.0
2013/14	160,156	1,664	161,820	99.0
2014/15	157,136	1,890	159,026	98.8
2015/16	155,613	2,095	157,708	98.7

Types of absence

All (or 'overall') absences comprise those which are authorised and unauthorised:

- an **authorised absence** is an absence with permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes instances of absence for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (e.g. illness, family bereavement or religious observance);
- an **unauthorised absence** is an absence without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

Note that pupils undertaking approved and supervised educational activities conducted away from the school (e.g. work experience or educational visits) are deemed to be present at the school.

Persistent absentees

Persistent absentees are pupils who were absent for at least 20 per cent of the mode number of half-day sessions that schools were open to pupils (which does not include INSET days). The following example of how persistent absentees were evaluated for secondary schools in 2015/16 will help to explain what this means:

- The mode is the number which appears most often, so the mode number of half-day sessions that schools were open to pupils is the most common number of sessions that they were open to pupils. For 2015/16, most maintained secondary schools were open to pupils for 316 half-day sessions from the start of the academic year to the late May bank holiday.
- Twenty per cent of that figure equals 64 ($316 * 0.2 = 63.2$) half-day sessions.
- So a persistent absentee in secondary schools in 2015/16 was someone who was absent for at least 64 half-day sessions.

Because the mode number of sessions that schools were open to pupils changes from year to year and the data collection period is different for primary and secondary schools (the whole academic year for primary schools and up to the late May bank holiday for secondary schools) the figure used to determine

whether a pupil is a persistent absentee or not also changes. The following table shows the values used to evaluate persistent absenteeism from 2009/10 to 2013/14.

Values used to calculate persistent absenteeism

	<u>Mode of sessions possible</u>	<u>Number of sessions missed to be a persistent absentee</u>
Primary schools		
2009/10	368	76
2010/11	372	74
2011/12	372	75
2012/13	378	75
2013/14	376	76
2014/15	380	76
2015/16	380	76
Secondary schools		
2009/10	308	62
2010/11	308	62
2011/12	306	62
2012/13	304	61
2013/14	310	62
2014/15	310	62
2015/16	316	64

Free school meal (FSM) eligibility

Children whose parents receive the following support payments are eligible to receive free school meals in maintained schools in Wales:

- Income Support.
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceed £16,190.
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on'- the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit.

Children who receive income related employment and support allowance, Universal Credit, Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance in their own right are also eligible to receive Free School Meals.

Pupils should only be recorded as eligible if they have applied for free school meals to the local authority and (1) the relevant authority has confirmed their eligibility, or (2) final confirmation of eligibility is still awaited but the school has seen documents that strongly indicate eligibility.

Special educational needs (SEN)

Pupils known to have special educational needs can be in one of the following categories:

- **School Action:** When a class or subject teacher identifies that a pupil has special educational needs they provide interventions that are additional to, or different from, those provided as part of the school's usual curriculum.
- **School Action Plus:** When the class or subject teacher and the SEN Co-ordinator are provided with advice or support from outside specialists, so that alternative interventions additional to, or different from, those provided for the pupil through 'School Action' can be put in place.
- **Statement:** Pupils for whom the local authority maintains a statement of special educational needs under Part IV of the Education Act 1996. A statement may be issued by the local authority after assessment of a child's needs.

3.1 Definition of *Other Unauthorised Absence*

The majority of absences should be covered by an individual code. However, there will be occasions when this is not possible, and in these circumstances Code O – other unauthorised absence will be used. Examples include birthdays, shopping trips, hair cuts or closure of a sibling's school for INSET.

Rounding and symbols

In tables where figures have been rounded to the nearest final digit, there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total shown.

The following symbols have been used throughout this publication:

- . data item is not applicable.
- .. data item is not available.
- data item is not zero, but would be rounded to zero because less than half the final digit is shown.
- * data item is disclosive.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on indicators and associated technical information - [How do you measure a nation's progress? - National Indicators](#)

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

Statistical releases relating to absenteeism from maintained primary or secondary schools, special and independent schools in Wales during the 2015/16 academic year entitled '[Absenteeism from Primary Schools, 2015/16](#)' and '[Absenteeism from Secondary Schools, 2015/16](#)' were released on 31 August 2016 and 15 December 2016.

England publish absenteeism data for primary and secondary schools by pupil characteristics, including data relating to persistent absentees, in the statistical release entitled '[Pupil absence in schools in England: 2014 to 2015](#)'.

Scotland publish [attendance data for primary and secondary schools by gender, ethnic background and additional support needs](#) in supplementary dataset tables.

Northern Ireland publish [primary and post-primary \(secondary\) school attendance data by pupil characteristics, including gender, year group and ethnic background](#).

Next update

March 2019 (provisional)

The next update will include a report covering the 2017/18 academic year.

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to: school.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Open Government Licence

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated.

