

School Attendance in Edinburgh 2009/10

Education, Children and Families Committee

15th March 2011

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To explain the trends and patterns in the school attendance and to outline the strategies to improve attendance.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The Education [SCOTLAND] Act 1980 provides the legislative framework relating to attendance at school and covers specifically parental duty and responsibilities of the local authority.
- 2.2 Guidance on the management of attendance and absence was published by the Scottish Government in 2007. This clarifies classification and recording requirements, addresses wider issues of promotion and management of attendance and strengthens links between absence and the protection of children.
- 2.3 Summary statistics for schools in Scotland produced by the Government annually report attendance and absence data for all pupils in local authority and mainstream grant aided schools.
- 2.4 There is clear evidence to link school attendance and achievement. Pupils who attend school regularly and are offered access to high quality learning and teaching will have access to greater employment opportunities. Robust monitoring by schools, Education Welfare Service and the Inclusion Coordinator is necessary to ensure that the drive to improve attendance continues.

3 Main report

- 3.1 Nationally the rate of attendance since 2007/2008 has fluctuated by 0.3% in the primary sector, 0.3% in the secondary sector and 0.5% in the special school sector. (Appendix One)
- 3.2 For the same three year period the overall rate of attendance in Edinburgh has varied by 0.58% in the primary sector, 1.26% in the secondary sector and 3.14% in the especial school sector. Attendance at secondary level has improved from 90.10% in 2007/08 to 91.36% in 2009/10 and is better than the national average. Attendance at primary level has improved from 94.20% in 2007/8 to 94.78% in 2009/10 and is just less than the national average. Attendance at special school level has reduced from 92.20% in 2007/08 to

89.06% in 2009/10 and is now slightly lower than the national average. (Appendix One)

- 3.3 Within the comparator authorities Edinburgh sits at fourth for overall attendance in 2009 – 2010. (Appendix One)
- 3.4 In 2009/10 the percentage attendance in Scottish mainstream schools ranged from 91.6% in Glasgow City to 95.1% in East Renfrewshire. This range of variation in attendance rates is consistent with the preceding years. (Appendix Two)
- 3.5 When analysing attendance between authorities and for attendance below the national average caution should be exercised as the data is affected by ongoing differences in recording procedures across the local authorities.
- 3.6 There are examples of good practice in attendance management already in place such as:
 - Support to children with prolonged ill-health
 - School reward systems linked to the promotion of full attendance and the recognition of improvements in attendance
 - Engagement of “hard to reach” parents through the assistance of the Parent Forum or Parent Council
 - Absence procedures to ensure that parents are aware when their child is not in school
 - Use of school answering machine for out of hours contact by parents
 - Attendance monitoring in secondary schools in every lesson
 - 50 Primary schools at or above 95.5% attendance, 10 secondary schools at or above 92% attendance and 8 special schools at or above 91% attendance during 2009-2010
 - Authority policy and procedures to monitor attendance and manage absence
- 3.7 Further strategies to improve attendance have been identified and are being developed to support our shared aspiration that all young people are better educated, more skilled, have the best start in life and are ready to succeed. These are:
 - Monitoring of pupils at risk using Business Office Vision in SEEMIS to inform targeted support by Education Welfare Service
 - Roll out of revised procedures for recording attendance in SEEMIS
 - Improving adult/pupil relationships through a restorative approach

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications at present.

5 Environmental Impact

- 5.1 There are no adverse environmental impacts arising from this report.

6 Conclusions

6.1 The key Factors identified in improving attendance are:

- Ensuring that all schools have in place policies and procedures informing the management of pupils' attendance and absence
- Robust monitoring of absence data by schools and EWS to identify priorities
- Setting of challenging attendance targets annually in all sectors
- Regular review of statistics centrally to inform tracking of individual pupils at risk
- Working in partnership with parents and other agencies to address attendance issues and to promote early intervention

7 Recommendations

7.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the content of this report.

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Appendices	Appendix One: Attendance statistics- National / Local Picture Appendix Two: Percentage attendance by local authority
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Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	Supports National Outcome 4- 'Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.' Supports Local Outcomes – 'Children and young people are successful learners.' 'Young people are confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.'
Background Papers	

Appendix One

National attendance rate

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Primary	95.30%	95.10%	95.20%	94.80%
Secondary	90.60%	90.90%	91.10%	91.20%
Special	91.20%	91.20%	91.20%	90.70%

Edinburgh attendance rate

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Primary	95.18%	94.20%	94.91%	94.78%
Secondary	90.93%	90.10%	90.97%	91.36%
Special	92.03%	92.20%	88.85%	89.06%

Comparator attendance rate

Authority	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Aberdeen City	93.30%	93.30%	93.10%	93.40%
Argyll & Bute	94.10%	94.00%	94.10%	94.30%
Dundee City	92.30%	92.50%	92.40%	92.20%
Edinburgh, City of	93.40%	93.00%	93.10%	93.10%
Renfrewshire	93.30%	93.10%	93.40%	93.80%
South Ayrshire	92.80%	92.80%	93.10%	92.80%

Appendix Two

Percentage attendance by local authority, 2005/06 to 2009/10

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Aberdeen City	93.3	93.3	93.3	93.1	93.4
Aberdeenshire	94.6	94.7	94.9	94.7	94.4
Angus	93.9	94.4	94.5	94.5	94.2
Argyll & Bute	93.6	94.1	94	94.1	94.3
Clackmannanshire	93.6	93.8	93.8	93.6	93.6
Dumfries & Galloway	94.8	94.7	94.3	94.1	94.1
Dundee City	91.7	92.3	92.5	92.4	92.2
East Ayrshire	92.6	93	92.9	93.6	92.9
East Dunbartonshire	94.4	95	94.8	95.2	94.9
East Lothian	94	94.1	94.2	94.4	94.1
East Renfrewshire	95.1	95.6	95.6	95.4	95.1
Edinburgh, City of	92.7	93.4	93	93.1	93.1
Eilean Siar	93.7	93.9	93.9	93.7	94.1
Falkirk	92.2	93.1	93.4	93.9	93.6
Fife	92.9	92.8	92.8	93	92.8
Glasgow City	90.8	91	91.1	91.5	91.6
Highland	93.3	93.3	93.4	93.2	92.6
Inverclyde	92.7	93.2	93.1	93.1	92.6
Midlothian	93.1	93.6	93.5	93.6	93.1
Moray	93.9	93.4	93.8	94.3	93.9
North Ayrshire	92.5	92.8	93	93	93.3
North Lanarkshire	91.9	91.9	92.1	92.4	92.1
Orkney Islands	94.8	94.6	94.9	94.4	93.7
Perth & Kinross	93.7	93.6	93.5	93.7	93.8
Renfrewshire	93.2	93.3	93.1	93.4	93.8
Scottish Borders	94.2	94.5	94.4	94.5	94.2
Shetland Islands	94.5	94.4	94.8	94.7	94.4
South Ayrshire	92.9	92.8	92.8	93.1	92.8
South Lanarkshire	93.1	93.3	93.1	93.2	93.4
Stirling	92.8	93.1	93.5	93.4	92.9
West Dunbartonshire	92.4	92.8	92.8	92.9	93
West Lothian	93.5	93.7	93.7	93.8	93.7

This information will be affected by differing reporting practices across local authorities and over-time