

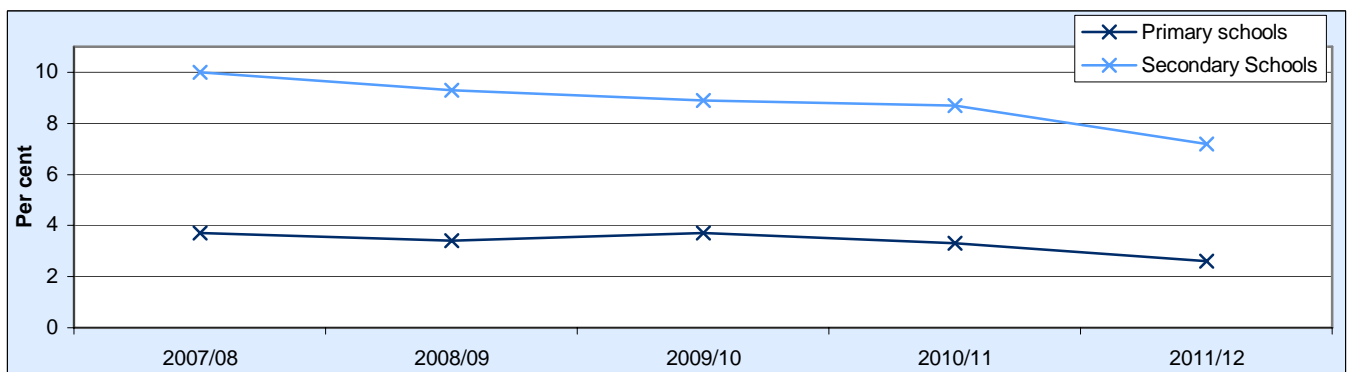
## Absenteeism by Pupil Characteristics, 2011/12

This Statistical Bulletin reports on absenteeism by persistent absentees and all pupils of compulsory school age (5-15) in maintained primary and secondary schools in Wales. Persistent absentees are pupils who have been absent for at least 20 per cent of the possible half-day school sessions for the year (for more information see the Notes section). Information relates to the whole academic year for primary schools and for the period September to the late May bank holiday for secondary schools for the years 2007/08 to 2011/12.

### Key results

The percentage of persistent absentees in maintained secondary schools has been decreasing since 2007/08. Following a peak in 2009/10, the percentage of persistent absentees in maintained primary schools has also been decreasing.

**Chart 1: Percentage of pupil enrolments in maintained schools who were persistent absentees**



### Persistent absenteeism

- In 2011/12 7.2 per cent of pupils in maintained secondary schools were persistent absentees, a decrease of 1.4 percentage points from 2010/11 (Table 1);
- The percentage of persistent absentees in maintained primary schools fell from 3.3 per cent in 2010/11 to 2.6 per cent in 2011/12 (Table 1);
- Persistent absentees were responsible for 11.9 per cent of half-day sessions missed in maintained primary schools and 29.9 per cent of half-day sessions missed in maintained secondary schools due to overall absence in 2011/12 (Table 1);
- Ceredigion had the lowest percentage of persistent absentees in maintained primary and secondary schools (1.1 and 3.2 per cent of pupils respectively) (Table 2).

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## **Absenteeism by pupil characteristics**

- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals had higher rates of absenteeism in maintained primary and secondary schools than other pupils (Tables 3a and 3b);
- Pupils in year 11 and over in secondary schools had higher rates of absenteeism than other year groups (Table 3b);
- In maintained primary schools pupils with statements of special educational need had the highest rate of authorised absence than pupils of any other special educational need status. (7.7 per cent of half-day sessions missed) (Table 3a)
- In maintained secondary schools school action plus pupils had the highest rate of authorised absence (8.6 per cent of half-day sessions missed) (Table 3b);
- Traveller and Gypsy/Roma pupils had the highest rates of absenteeism in both primary and secondary schools. (Table 4a and 4b)

## **Introduction**

Chart 1 shows how the percentage of persistent absentees in Wales has changed over the years. Tables 1 and 2 provide additional information regarding the number of persistent absentees, including their absenteeism rates and a local authority breakdown.

Charts 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 2011/12. 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.

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

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**Table 1: Persistent absentees of compulsory school age in maintained primary and secondary schools**

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>Primary schools</b>					
Number of pupils who were persistent absentees	7,311	6,749	7,186	6,456	5,137
Total number of pupils	199,673	196,895	194,337	193,885	194,897
Percentage of pupils who were persistent absentees	3.7	3.4	3.7	3.3	2.6
Percentage of half days missed by persistent absentees due to:					
Authorised absence	20.4	20.3	20.2	20.1	20.8
Unauthorised absence	8.2	8.2	7.7	7.8	7.1
Overall absence	28.7	28.5	28.0	27.9	27.9
Percentage of all pupils' absence for which persistent absentees were responsible:					
Authorised absence	12.9	11.9	12.5	11.5	10.2
Unauthorised absence	32.3	28.9	29.4	28.7	24.6
Overall absence	15.6	14.3	14.9	13.8	11.9
<b>Secondary schools</b>					
Number of pupils who were persistent absentees	17,984	16,584	15,619	14,971	12,293
Total number of pupils	180,213	178,004	175,559	172,886	170,081
Percentage of pupils who were persistent absentees	10.0	9.3	8.9	8.7	7.2
Percentage of half days missed by persistent absentees due to:					
Authorised absence	21.7	21.6	21.9	22.0	21.4
Unauthorised absence	10.7	10.9	10.6	10.2	11.2
Overall absence	32.5	32.5	32.6	32.2	32.6
Percentage of all pupils' absence for which persistent absentees were responsible:					
Authorised absence	29.7	27.6	26.6	26.5	23.8
Unauthorised absence	59.9	58.5	58.9	59.8	58.3
Overall absence	35.6	33.6	32.4	32.2	29.9

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record, Welsh Government

### Primary schools

- 2.6 per cent of pupils in maintained primary schools were persistent absentees in 2011/12, a decrease of 0.7 percentage points from 2010/11;
- In 2011/12 persistent absentees missed 27.9 per cent of half-day sessions due to overall absence, no change from 2010/11;
- Persistent absentees were responsible for over 10 per cent of half-day sessions missed from maintained primary schools.

### Secondary schools

- The percentage of pupils who were persistent absentees in maintained secondary schools fell from 8.7 per cent in 2010/11 to 7.2 per cent in 2011/12, a drop of 1.4 percentage points;
- 32.6 per cent of half-day sessions were missed due to overall absence by persistent absentees in 2011/12, and increase of 0.4 percentage points from 2010/11;
- During the 2011/12 academic year persistent absentees were responsible for almost 30 per cent of half-days sessions missed from maintained secondary schools.

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

Local authority	Primary Schools					Secondary Schools				
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Isle of Anglesey	2.9	2.3	2.9	3.2	2.7	11.7	9.4	10.1	9.8	7.1
Gwynedd	2.0	2.2	2.1	2.3	1.7	8.3	8.7	8.3	7.8	6.6
Conwy	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.0	1.7	8.5	7.9	6.5	5.2	5.5
Denbighshire	2.8	2.3	2.6	2.0	1.7	9.8	9.0	8.5	7.3	5.5
Flintshire	2.6	2.6	3.1	3.2	2.1	7.2	7.1	7.4	7.3	5.6
Wrexham	2.4	2.5	2.9	2.4	2.0	8.3	8.2	8.5	7.3	7.0
Powys	2.4	1.7	2.0	1.9	1.5	8.2	7.3	6.8	7.3	5.2
Ceredigion	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.7	1.1	6.5	6.1	6.3	5.0	3.2
Pembrokeshire	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.0	2.0	9.2	8.8	9.5	8.3	5.3
Carmarthenshire	4.0	3.8	4.2	3.3	2.9	10.1	9.6	8.8	9.3	8.6
Swansea	4.6	4.3	4.8	3.5	3.0	11.0	10.1	10.5	10.1	7.7
Neath Port Talbot	3.7	3.8	4.6	3.7	2.8	7.4	7.7	7.7	6.7	6.7
Bridgend	2.9	2.6	3.2	3.1	2.7	9.2	7.7	8.6	7.7	7.2
The Vale of Glamorgan	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.3	1.8	8.4	8.0	7.9	8.0	5.8
Rhondda Cynon Taf	5.2	4.7	4.8	4.5	3.3	12.5	11.9	9.9	10.2	10.0
Merthyr Tydfil	5.5	5.7	4.8	3.6	3.1	11.0	9.2	9.6	9.2	6.7
Caerphilly	4.1	3.8	4.2	4.3	3.5	10.9	10.3	9.8	9.7	7.6
Blaenau Gwent	4.0	3.7	4.1	4.1	2.9	9.6	9.4	8.3	12.1	9.6
Torfaen	3.4	2.8	3.8	2.8	2.1	9.9	10.5	9.6	8.2	7.0
Monmouthshire	1.9	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.2	10.2	7.8	6.7	5.9	4.8
Newport	4.3	4.4	4.2	3.5	3.5	12.0	10.5	9.0	8.1	8.1
Cardiff	5.0	4.5	4.8	4.7	3.3	11.8	10.7	10.3	10.9	8.5

Source: Pupils' Attendance Record, Welsh Government

(a) In this table pupils who were on roll at schools in more than one local authority during the academic year are counted against each local authority. Sessions missed due to absence in one local authority are not added to those accumulated within another local authority when evaluating whether such a pupil is a persistent absentee or not.

- Ceredigion had the lowest rate of persistent absenteeism from both maintained primary and secondary schools in 2011/12 (1.1 and 3.2 per cent of pupils respectively);
- Caerphilly and Newport had the highest percentage of persistent absentees from maintained primary schools in 2011/12 (3.5 per cent of pupils), while Rhondda Cynon Taf had the highest percentage of persistent absentees from maintained secondary schools (10.0 per cent of pupils).

**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 (SEN) status, 2011/12 (a)**

	Number of pupil enrolments who are:		Percentage of enrolments who were persistent absentees	Percentage of half day sessions missed due to:					
	Persistent absentees	All pupils		Persistent absentees			All pupils		
				Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
<b>Gender</b>									
Boys	2,713	98,848	2.7	21.1	6.9	28.0	5.4	0.8	6.2
Girls	2,391	93,556	2.6	20.4	7.1	27.5	5.4	0.7	6.1
Pupils	5,104	192,404	2.7	20.8	7.0	27.8	5.4	0.7	6.1
<b>Free school meal (FSM) eligibility</b>									
Known to be eligible for FSM	2,736	39,675	6.9	19.4	8.4	27.8	6.9	1.7	8.6
Other pupils	2,368	152,729	1.6	22.4	5.4	27.7	5.0	0.5	5.5
Total	5,104	192,404	2.7	20.8	7.0	27.8	5.4	0.7	6.1
<b>National curriculum year group</b>									
Under year 1	*	52	*	*	*	*	6.9	0.6	7.5
Year 1	1,101	33,211	3.3	20.7	6.7	27.4	6.0	0.8	6.8
Year 2	859	32,870	2.6	19.8	7.6	27.5	5.4	0.8	6.2
Year 3	754	32,071	2.4	21.0	7.3	28.3	5.2	0.7	5.9
Year 4	802	31,540	2.5	20.9	6.9	27.7	5.2	0.7	5.9
Year 5	770	30,864	2.5	21.1	6.6	27.7	5.2	0.7	5.9
Year 6	812	31,775	2.6	21.0	7.1	28.2	5.2	0.7	5.9
Year 7 or over	*	21	*	*	*	*	13.8	0.1	13.9
Total	5,104	192,404	2.7	20.8	7.0	27.8	5.4	0.7	6.1
<b>Special educational need (SEN) status</b>									
Statement of SEN	252	3,506	7.2	25.9	5.2	31.0	7.7	0.8	8.5
School Action Plus	919	17,255	5.3	21.5	7.1	28.6	6.5	1.1	7.6
School Action	1,344	30,028	4.5	19.0	8.6	27.6	6.1	1.2	7.3
No identified SEN	2,589	141,615	1.8	20.9	6.3	27.2	5.0	0.6	5.6
Total	5,104	192,404	2.7	20.8	7.0	27.8	5.4	0.7	6.1

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

(a) 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, so totals may differ from figures published elsewhere. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

**Table 3b: Absenteeism by persistent absentees and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by gender, free school meal eligibility, year group and special educational need (SEN) status, 2011/12 (a)**

	Number of pupil enrolments who are:		Percentage of enrolments who were persistent absentees	Percentage of half day sessions missed due to:					
	Persistent absentees	All pupils		Persistent absentees			All pupils		
				Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
<b>Gender</b>									
Boys	5,853	86,024	6.8	20.9	11.5	32.4	6.3	1.4	7.6
Girls	6,333	82,417	7.7	21.7	10.8	32.5	6.7	1.4	8.0
Pupils	12,186	168,441	7.2	21.3	11.1	32.4	6.5	1.4	7.8
<b>Free school meal (FSM) eligibility</b>									
Known to be eligible for FSM	5,320	29,336	18.1	20.2	13.4	33.7	9.2	3.5	12.7
Other pupils	6,866	139,105	4.9	22.2	9.3	31.5	5.9	0.9	6.8
Total	12,186	168,441	7.2	21.3	11.1	32.4	6.5	1.4	7.8
<b>National curriculum year group</b>									
Year 6 or under	0	6	0.0	.	.	.	3.0	0.0	3.0
Year 7	1,213	32,011	3.8	22.3	7.7	30.0	5.4	0.6	6.0
Year 8	1,758	33,119	5.3	22.6	8.6	31.2	6.3	0.9	7.2
Year 9	2,503	34,124	7.3	22.3	10.0	32.3	6.8	1.3	8.1
Year 10	3,010	35,511	8.5	20.9	12.2	33.0	6.5	1.7	8.2
Year 11 or over (b)	3,702	33,670	11.0	20.2	13.3	33.5	7.4	2.2	9.7
Total	12,186	168,441	7.2	21.3	11.1	32.4	6.5	1.4	7.8
<b>Special educational need (SEN) status</b>									
Statement of SEN	484	4,776	10.1	24.0	10.1	34.1	7.7	1.6	9.3
School Action Plus	2,035	12,700	16.0	21.7	13.0	34.8	8.6	2.9	11.5
School Action	2,478	22,182	11.2	20.7	11.7	32.4	7.7	2.0	9.7
No identified SEN	7,189	128,783	5.6	21.3	10.4	31.7	6.0	1.1	7.1
Total	12,186	168,441	7.2	21.3	11.1	32.4	6.5	1.4	7.8

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

(a) 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, so totals may differ from figures published elsewhere. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

(b) Year 11 and year 12 or over were combined to prevent categories from being disclosive. Percentages were not affected to 1 decimal place.

### **Persistent absentees**

- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals who were persistent absentees was more than 4 times higher than the percentage of other persistent absentees in primary schools and more than 3 times higher in secondary schools;
- Persistent absentees known to be eligible for free school meals had a lower rate of authorised absence and a higher rate of unauthorised absence than other persistent absentees in maintained primary and secondary schools;
- In maintained secondary schools there appears to be a link between year group and persistent absenteeism, with the percentage of pupils who were persistent absentees increasing with each year group from 3.8 per cent in year 7 to 11.0 per cent in year 11 and over;
- In maintained primary schools there was a higher percentage of persistent absentees amongst pupils with statements of special educational need (7.2 per cent) than any other group of special educational need status, whereas in maintained secondary schools the highest proportion of persistent absentees was found amongst school action plus pupils (16.0 per cent);
- Persistent absentees with statements of special educational needs had the highest rate of authorised absence than any other special educational needs status group in maintained primary and secondary schools, 25.9 and 24.0 per cent of half-day sessions missed respectively.

### **All pupils' absence**

- The rate of authorised and unauthorised absence was higher for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals than other pupils in both maintained primary and secondary schools;
- There seems to be a link between year group and overall absence amongst pupils in maintained secondary schools since the rate of unauthorised absence increases with year group from 6.0 per cent of half-day sessions missed in year 7 to 9.7 per cent in year 11 or over;
- In maintained primary schools pupils with statements of special educational need had the highest rate of authorised absence than any other special educational need status group absence (7.7 per cent of half-day sessions missed), while in maintained secondary schools school action plus pupils had the highest rate of authorised absence (8.6 per cent of half-day sessions missed).



**Table 4a: Absenteeism by persistent absentees and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained primary schools, by ethnic background, 2011/12**

	Number of pupil enrolments who are:		Percentage of enrolments who were persistent absentees	Percentage of half day sessions missed due to:					
	Persistent absentees	All pupils		Persistent absentees			All pupils		
				Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
<b>White</b>	<b>4,630</b>	<b>177,999</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>6.1</b>
White - British	4,158	173,813	2.4	20.3	6.9	27.1	5.3	0.7	6.0
Traveller	106	234	45.3	34.8	5.9	40.8	19.0	4.3	23.4
Gypsy/Roma	97	335	29.0	30.5	8.5	39.1	14.1	3.8	17.9
Any other White background	269	3,617	7.4	20.8	9.1	29.9	7.3	1.6	8.9
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>4,540</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>6.5</b>
White and Black Caribbean	59	1,040	5.7	15.4	12.6	28.1	5.5	1.9	7.4
White and Black African	23	562	4.1	13.9	11.6	25.6	5.1	1.3	6.4
White and Asian	32	1,079	3.0	18.2	8.3	26.5	5.3	0.8	6.1
Any other Mixed background	49	1,859	2.6	19.2	9.2	28.4	5.3	1.0	6.3
<b>Asian</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>4,418</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>7.4</b>
Indian	29	986	2.9	25.3	3.1	28.4	5.9	0.8	6.7
Pakistani	66	1,436	4.6	22.1	5.4	27.5	6.4	1.5	7.9
Bangladeshi	72	1,524	4.7	20.9	5.4	26.2	6.5	1.5	8.0
Any other Asian background	6	472	1.3	19.5	4.3	23.8	5.2	0.7	5.8
<b>Black</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1,461</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>5.2</b>
Caribbean	*	97	*	*	*	*	4.5	1.8	6.3
African	21	1,184	1.8	16.5	8.7	25.2	4.0	1.1	5.1
Any other Black background	*	180	*	*	*	*	3.7	1.4	5.1
<b>Chinese or Chinese</b>									
British	*	297	*	*	*	*	4.6	0.5	5.1
Any other ethnic group	67	2,132	3.1	20.9	6.9	27.8	5.8	1.1	6.9
Unknown	43	1,557	2.8	25.1	4.4	29.5	5.8	0.6	6.4
<b>All pupils</b>	<b>5,104</b>	<b>192,404</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>6.1</b>

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

(a) 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, so totals may differ from figures published elsewhere. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

- 45.3 per cent of Traveller and 29.0 per cent of Gypsy/Roma pupils were persistent absentees from maintained primary schools. These two groups of pupils had the highest rates of overall absence, missing 23.4 and 17.9 per cent of half-day sessions respectively;
- Pupils of African, Any other Black background and Chinese or Chinese British ethnic backgrounds had the lowest rate of overall absence (5.1 per cent of half-day sessions).

**Table 4b: Absenteeism by persistent absentees and all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained secondary schools, by ethnic background, 2011/12**

	Number of pupil enrolments who are:		Percentage of enrolments who were persistent absentees	Percentage of half day sessions missed due to:					
	Persistent absentees	All pupils		Persistent absentees			All pupils		
				Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
<b>White</b>	<b>11,667</b>	<b>158,106</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>7.9</b>
White - British	11,307	155,294	7.3	21.5	10.9	32.4	6.5	1.3	7.9
Traveller	51	84	60.7	29.3	14.4	43.7	20.0	9.9	29.9
Gypsy/Roma	54	155	34.8	19.1	16.8	36.0	9.8	7.6	17.4
Any other White background	255	2,573	9.9	17.5	15.5	33.0	6.7	2.5	9.1
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>3,247</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>7.5</b>
White and Black Caribbean	86	867	9.9	16.9	15.9	32.8	6.6	2.5	9.1
White and Black African	23	352	6.5	21.5	14.5	36.0	5.7	1.8	7.5
White and Asian	48	735	6.5	19.1	14.8	33.9	5.8	1.5	7.3
Any other Mixed background	65	1,293	5.0	18.8	14.5	33.2	5.1	1.4	6.5
<b>Asian</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>2,835</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>6.2</b>
Indian	14	522	2.7	19.7	6.5	26.3	4.0	0.8	4.7
Pakistani	62	928	6.7	15.2	14.0	29.2	5.5	2.0	7.5
Bangladeshi	36	1,051	3.4	22.8	7.2	30.0	5.0	1.3	6.3
Any other Asian background	6	334	1.8	22.0	8.8	30.8	4.2	0.7	4.9
<b>Black</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1,019</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>4.9</b>
Caribbean	6	91	6.6	14.3	13.1	27.5	5.1	1.9	7.0
African	16	790	2.0	14.1	13.1	27.2	3.1	1.2	4.3
Any other Black background	8	138	5.8	13.9	16.0	29.9	4.8	2.0	6.8
<b>Chinese or Chinese</b>									
British	*	272	*	*	*	*	2.9	0.5	3.4
Any other ethnic group	*	1,411	*	*	*	*	4.2	1.2	5.4
Unknown	100	1,551	6.4	22.6	9.4	32.0	6.4	1.1	7.5
<b>All pupils</b>	<b>12,186</b>	<b>168,441</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>7.8</b>

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

(a) 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, so totals may differ from figures published elsewhere. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

- Traveller pupils had the highest percentage of persistent absentees (60.7 per cent) and missed 29.9 per cent of half-day sessions because of overall absence;
- Pupils with White ethnic background had a higher percentage of persistent absentees and rate of overall absence than other broad ethnic background groups (Mixed, Asian, etc.).

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

Special educational need (SEN) status	Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to									
	Overall absence					Unauthorised absence				
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>Primary schools</b>										
Statement of SEN	8.6	8.7	9.0	8.8	8.5	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8
School Action Plus	8.7	8.6	8.7	8.2	7.6	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.1
School Action	8.2	8.2	8.3	8.0	7.3	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.2
No identified SEN	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.2	5.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6
Total	6.7	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.1	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.7
<b>Secondary schools</b>										
Statement of SEN	10.8	10.7	10.6	10.4	9.3	2.3	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.6
School Action Plus	13.0	12.7	12.7	12.6	11.5	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.2	2.9
School Action	11.6	11.2	11.1	10.7	9.7	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.0
No identified SEN	8.3	8.3	8.1	7.8	7.1	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1
Total	9.0	9.0	8.9	8.6	7.8	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4

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

(a) 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, so totals may differ from figures published elsewhere. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

- Overall and unauthorised absence have been decreasing across all SEN statuses in maintained primary and secondary schools since 2009/10;
- School action pupils saw the largest drop in overall absence from primary schools between 2010/11 and 2011/12, falling from 8.0 per cent of half-day sessions missed due to overall absence in 2010/11 to 7.3 per cent in 2011/12 (a decrease of 0.7 percentage points);
- School action plus pupils and pupils with a statement of SEN similarly saw the largest drop in overall absence from secondary schools between 2010/11 and 2011/12, both seeing a decrease of 1.1 percentage points.

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

Major special educational need (SEN)	Number of pupils					Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to									
						Overall absence					Unauthorised absence				
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Moderate learning difficulties	26,181	25,931	25,804	25,422	18,815	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.3	7.6	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.3
General learning difficulties	..	..	..	..	10,618	..	..	..	..	7.3	..	..	..	..	1.2
Severe learning difficulties	766	696	661	619	618	9.0	8.9	9.3	8.9	8.4	1.5	1.1	1.2	1.3	0.9
Profound & multiple learning difficulties	161	164	150	138	148	11.0	11.1	11.3	10.6	9.3	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4
Dyslexia	..	..	..	..	2,891	..	..	..	..	6.4	..	..	..	..	0.8
Dyscalculia	..	..	..	..	135	..	..	..	..	5.4	..	..	..	..	0.7
Dyspraxia	..	..	..	..	179	..	..	..	..	5.8	..	..	..	..	0.3
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	..	..	..	..	399	..	..	..	..	7.1	..	..	..	..	1.1
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	972	1,033	1,064	1,113	1,227	8.5	8.7	8.9	8.5	7.8	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.7	0.6
Physical and medical difficulties	1,465	1,580	1,632	1,665	1,798	10.8	10.3	10.8	10.1	10.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8
Hearing impairment	629	610	736	802	932	7.4	7.9	7.9	7.5	6.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.6
Visual impairment	338	320	337	345	365	8.3	8.6	8.6	8.4	8.0	1.1	1.0	1.2	0.9	1.0
Multiple sensory impairment	30	39	37	22	14	10.4	8.2	6.9	8.7	7.1	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.2
Speech, language and communication difficulties	6,270	6,777	6,998	7,174	7,449	7.8	7.9	8.0	7.7	7.1	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.0
Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties	4,892	5,018	5,097	5,244	5,201	8.8	8.7	8.7	8.4	7.8	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.3
Specific learning difficulties	7,477	7,443	7,221	7,024	..	7.2	7.4	7.5	7.2	..	1.0	1.1	1.1	0.9	..
Not stated	127	..	..	..	..	8.0	..	..	..	..	1.8	..	..	..	..
No SEN	147,246	144,628	141,166	141,947	141,615	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.2	5.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6
Total	196,554	194,239	190,903	191,515	192,404	6.7	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.1	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.7

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

(a) 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, so totals may differ from figures published elsewhere. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

(b) Not all categories of special educational need were in use for the entirety of the period from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

- Pupils with physical or medical difficulties had the highest rate of overall absence from primary schools in 2011/12 (10.0 per cent of half-day sessions missed), while between 2007/08 and 2010/11 pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties had the highest rate;
- While SEN pupils as a whole have above average absence rates, pupils with dyscalculia or dyspraxia in primary schools had lower-than-average rates of overall absence in 2011/12 (5.4 and 5.8 per cent of half-day sessions missed respectively).

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

Major special educational need (SEN)	Number of pupils					Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to									
						Overall absence					Unauthorised absence				
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Moderate learning difficulties	15,463	16,056	16,805	17,133	13,640	11.9	11.6	11.6	11.4	10.4	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.4
General learning difficulties	..	..	..	..	5,592	..	..	..	..	9.4	..	..	..	..	1.9
Severe learning difficulties	368	355	371	401	385	9.3	9.7	10.7	9.9	10.5	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.9
Profound & multiple learning difficulties	54	66	79	75	60	9.3	11.0	10.5	10.4	8.1	1.2	1.5	0.5	0.8	0.1
Dyslexia	..	..	..	..	5,854	..	..	..	..	8.3	..	..	..	..	1.5
Dyscalculia	..	..	..	..	278	..	..	..	..	6.8	..	..	..	..	0.8
Dyspraxia	..	..	..	..	261	..	..	..	..	7.5	..	..	..	..	0.7
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	..	..	..	..	366	..	..	..	..	10.6	..	..	..	..	2.9
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	757	905	973	1,166	1,371	8.5	8.9	8.2	8.3	7.8	1.1	1.1	0.8	1.0	0.9
Physical and medical difficulties	1,165	1,325	1,622	1,583	1,587	12.8	12.9	12.0	12.4	11.6	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.1	1.2
Hearing impairment	538	587	678	690	732	10.1	9.9	9.5	9.4	7.9	1.4	1.3	1.8	1.3	0.9
Visual impairment	266	284	303	314	320	9.9	9.6	9.5	10.0	9.7	1.8	1.5	0.9	0.8	1.1
Multiple sensory impairment	14	19	18	22	27	6.2	7.0	10.5	12.3	8.7	0.2	0.3	0.6	1.2	0.3
Speech, language and communication difficulties	1,665	1,817	2,087	2,223	2,378	8.6	8.9	9.3	8.7	7.9	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.2
Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties	6,530	6,802	6,592	6,554	6,807	16.1	15.3	15.4	14.8	13.7	5.3	5.0	4.8	4.4	4.0
Specific learning difficulties	8,202	8,728	8,773	8,762	..	9.8	9.7	9.7	9.4	..	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.5	..
Not stated	99	..	..	..	..	9.0	..	..	..	..	0.8	..	..	..	..
No SEN	142,338	139,582	135,324	132,484	128,783	8.3	8.3	8.1	7.8	7.1	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1
Total	177,459	176,526	173,625	171,407	168,441	9.0	9.0	8.9	8.6	7.8	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4

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

(a) 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, so totals may differ from figures published elsewhere. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

(b) Not all categories of special educational need were in use for the entirety of the period from 2007/08 to 2011/12.

- Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties had the highest rate of overall and unauthorised absence from secondary schools in 2011/12 (13.7 and 4.0 per cent of half-day sessions missed respectively) and have had the highest rates since 2007/08;
- Pupils with dyscalculia and dyspraxia had below average overall absence rates in secondary schools (6.8 and 7.5 per cent of half-day sessions missed respectively). Nine groups of pupils with special educational needs also had below average unauthorised absenteeism rates.

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

Free school meal (FSM) eligibility	Percentage of half-day sessions missed due to									
	Overall absence					Unauthorised absence				
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>Primary schools</b>										
Known to be eligible for FSM	9.5	9.7	9.7	9.3	8.6	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.1	1.7
Other pupils	6.1	6.1	6.2	6.0	5.5	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5
Total	6.7	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.1	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.7
<b>Secondary schools</b>										
Known to be eligible for FSM	14.1	14.1	13.9	13.5	12.7	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.5
Other pupils	8.1	8.0	7.8	7.5	6.8	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.0	0.9
Total	9.0	9.0	8.9	8.6	7.8	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4

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

(a) 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, so totals may differ from figures published elsewhere. See the notes section for information regarding the number of pupil records that were excluded.

- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals have had higher rates of overall and unauthorised absenteeism from maintained primary and secondary schools since 2007/08;
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals saw a larger percentage point drop in overall absence rates in maintained primary and secondary schools than other pupils between 2010/11 and 2011/12, but this may be because their absence rates are higher;
- Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 the rate of overall absence for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in primary schools fell by 8.0 per cent, but the rate for other pupils fell by 8.2 per cent;
- Similarly, the rate of overall absence for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in secondary schools dropped by 6.4 per cent, while the same rate for other pupils fell by 9.6 per cent
- So although at a glance it looks like absenteeism amongst pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is decreasing quicker than amongst other pupils, on closer inspection this may not be the case.

## Notes

### 1 Context

#### 1.1 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 has been a key Ministerial priority over the past year. The development of an 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.

Using the Framework as a basis an extensive analysis has been carried out on each local authority's attendance data. The Framework, along with an analysis report which highlighted areas which the Welsh Government felt were weaknesses or strengths were sent to each local authority. Welsh Government officials then met with each authority to discuss the findings.

#### 1.2 Related Publications

Statistical releases relating to absenteeism from maintained primary or secondary schools, special and independent schools in Wales during the 2011/12 academic year entitled 'Absenteeism from Primary Schools, 2011/12' and 'Absenteeism from Secondary Schools, 2011/12' were released on 25 September 2012 and 22 January 2013 and can be found here:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/schools/?lang=en>

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, Including Pupil Characteristics'. The latest available statistics can be found here:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/index.shtml>

Scotland publish attendance data for primary and secondary schools by gender, ethnic background and additional support needs in supplementary dataset tables. The latest available statistics can be found on their website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/AttendanceAbsenceDatasets>

Northern Ireland publish primary and post-primary (secondary) school attendance data by pupil characteristics, including gender, year group and ethnic background, and their latest statistics can be found here: [http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch\\_pg/32-statistics\\_and\\_research\\_statistics\\_on\\_education\\_pg/32\\_statistics\\_and\\_research\\_statistics\\_on\\_education-pupil\\_attendance.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32-statistics_and_research_statistics_on_education_pg/32_statistics_and_research_statistics_on_education-pupil_attendance.htm)

## 2 Data Source

The data in tables 1 and 2 relating to persistent absentees were taken from the Pupils' Attendance Record. Subsequent 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 Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS) within the Welsh Government.

## 3 Definitions

### 3.1 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
<b>Primary schools</b>				
2007/08	196,554	2,930	199,484	98.5
2008/09	194,239	2,464	196,703	98.7
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
<b>Secondary schools</b>				
2007/08	177,459	2,725	180,184	98.5
2008/09	176,526	1,450	177,976	99.2
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

### 3.2 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.

### 3.3 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 2011/12 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 frequent number of sessions that they were open to pupils. For the 2011/12 academic year most maintained primary schools were open to pupils for 372 half-day sessions;
- Twenty per cent of that figure equals 74.4 ( $372 * 0.2 = 74.4$ ) half-day sessions, but since pupil attendance is only recorded in half day sessions that figure has to be rounded up to the nearest whole number, 75;
- So a persistent absentee from primary schools in 2011/12 was someone who was absent for at least 75 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 2007/08 to 2011/12.

#### Values used to calculate persistent absenteeism

	Mode of sessions possible	Number of sessions missed to be a persistent absentee
<b>Primary schools</b>		
2007/08	374	75
2008/09	376	76
2009/10	368	74
2010/11	372	75
2011/12	372	75
<b>Secondary schools</b>		
2007/08	304	61
2008/09	304	61
2009/10	308	62
2010/11	308	62
2011/12	306	62

## 4 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 and is available here: <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/statistics/education/?lang=en>

## 4.1 Relevance

The underlying statistics used to produce this bulletin 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 in England;
- other government departments;
- Local Authorities and schools;
- ESTYN, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales;
- Wales Audit Office;
- The Department for Education and Skills in the Welsh Government;
- other areas of the Welsh Government;
- the research community;
- students, academics and universities;
- individual citizens, private companies and the media.

The underlying data sets 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 national banding system for Wales;
- to inform ESTYN during school inspections;
- contributes to the National Performance Indicators;
- international benchmarking;
- the education domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation;
- to assist in research in educational attainment.

## 4.2 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.

## 4.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

This statistical bulletin could not be published as early as was initially hoped. Because this is the first time that it has been published it took longer to produce than was expected, but effort will be put forth to ensure that next year's update to this statistical bulletin will be available earlier.

## 4.4 Accessibility and Clarity

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

#### **4.5 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.