



Learning from the DfE Transforming Attendance Conference (March 2025)

Bradford Attendance Network Event
17 June 2025

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Background

- Transforming Attendance Conference on 3 March 2025
- Aimed at secondary schools
- Some learning for primary schools

Agenda

- Banded analysis
- The big opportunity for secondary schools
- 1. Transition and family
- 2. Evidence led implementation
- 3. Strong communication, system and processes
- Take aways

Banded analysis – “catch them before they fall”

Insights dashboard	School	Pupil	Guidance	Feedback
<h2>Absence bandings</h2> <p>Identify pupils with and approaching persistent and severe absence. Select an absence band to get a list of pupils, their overall attendance rate and year group.</p> <p>How to use your absence data to target your resources and interventions.</p>				
Absence band	Total number of pupils	Total percentage of pupils	Status	
Absence from 0% to less than 5%	291	41.6%		
Absence from 5% to less than 10%	180	25.7%	Approaching	
Absence from 10% to less than 15%	70	10.0%	Persistently absent	
Absence from 15% to less than 20%	39	5.5%	Persistently absent	
Absence from 20% to less than 25%	23	3.3%	Persistently absent	
Absence from 25% to less than 30%	15	2.1%	Persistently absent	
Absence from 30% to less than 35%	13	1.8%	Persistently absent	
Absence from 35% to less than 40%	10	1.5%	Persistently absent	
Absence from 40% to less than 45%	9	1.4%	Persistently absent	
Absence from 45% to less than 50%	4	0.6%	Persistently absent	
Absence greater than or equal to 50%	46	6.5%	Severely absent	

Absence by year group

Table showing the percentage of pupils in each year group in 5% absence bands up to 50% and above.

Overall Absence Band	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
less than 5%	54.8%	43.7%	33.9%	34.7%	39.1%
5% to less than 10%	25.5%	25.8%	23.6%	27.3%	26.1%
10% to less than 15%	3.2%	7.9%	14.2%	12.0%	13.8%
15% to less than 20%	2.5%	7.9%	4.7%	6.7%	5.8%
20% to less than 25%	3.2%	2.6%	6.3%	2.0%	2.9%
25% to less than 30%	3.2%	0.7%	3.9%	2.0%	0.7%
30% to less than 35%	0.6%	3.3%	3.1%	0.7%	1.4%
35% to less than 40%	2.5%	2.6%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%
40% to less than 45%	2.5%	0.7%	0.8%	2.0%	0.7%
45% to less than 50%	0.6%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.7%
50% and above (severely absent)	1.3%	4.6%	7.1%	12.0%	8.0%

- Fewer secondary aged children attending 95%+, more children missing 5-15% combined.

The big opportunity for secondary

- Years 6 to 8 are key to making progress, especially slowing the double transition attendance dip, which is bigger for those eligible for free school meals
- The attendance drop off in year 7, and again in year 8, is a big opportunity for secondary schools

	% of <u>all pupils</u> year groups attending nearly everyday (95%+) [FSM eligible]
Y1	51% [33%]
Y2	55% [38%]
Y3	58% [40%]
Y4	58% [41%]
Y5	57% [41%]
Y6	57% [41%]
Y7	54% [35%]
Y8	46% [29%]
Y9	43% [26%]
Y10	43% [26%]
Y11	43% [29%]

DFE – Breaking down the barriers to opportunity (June 2025)

Breaking down the barriers to opportunity: Transforming secondary school attendance

A conference for academy trusts and local authorities

June 2025

 Department for Education

DFE Transition Tool

- FSM – higher risk of poor attendance
 - Enhanced transition for children with and EHCP and SEN
 - Extended transition period 3-5 days can be beneficial
 - Breakfast club in transition week
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- ASO's – supporting the year 6 to year 7 transition

1. Transition and family – Chiltern Learning Trust and ImpactEd

- Transition – Not just starting year 7, but also year groups, subjects, terms
- Transition lead is an all-year job and not just part of the year
- Parents may have had a negative experience which they pass on to the children
- [ACE's](#) (YT video) put children at higher risk of attendance issues
- Staff inductions – Where do the children live, the area and their walk to school

Example – Know your community and engage

- A school with a predominantly Pakistani and Bengali community engaged with some of the local leaders and mosques.
- They understood that within the community respecting the elders is big part of their culture.
- These leaders and elders are involved in school events.
- The school is trusted more by the community and parent engagement is better.
- In this example they also talked about parent's meetings and how parents don't like coming to these to feel like they are being told off by the school. These need to be positive and constructive.

2. Evidence led implementation- Huntington Research School

- Go forward and be part of community and engage with them
- Getting people to “be in, not buy in”.
- Building strong relationships and knowing children and families
- Transform attendance informally – gather feedback from all colleagues
- [‘Think it through Thursdays’](#): Supporting pupil attendance through staff communications (article)
- Attendance implementation team – All aspects of school meet and talk about attendance and what they see.
- Monthly multi-agency drop-ins for support
- Recommendations are available from the [Education Endowment Fund](#)

Example – Team around attendance

- The Assistant Head described how when she started, she worked in her own office and was finding it difficult to share and discuss children.
- She then moved next door to an office where pastoral, attendance, safeguarding and SENDCO all in the same office
- This meant that everyone knew everything about attendance and what is going on.

3. Strong comms, systems and processes – Chiltern Learning Trust

- “Catch attendance before it falls” – 5%-15% absence
- Message must be from leadership at the top
- Ongoing monitoring of attendance
- [Horsforth School Attendance Policy](#) – Everyone’s role and responsibility
- Codification of responsibilities to ensure things get done
- Quality assurance, monitoring and accountability – lack of it things can mutate (when people were doing extra things)
- Escalate and do something different – same thing again and again won’t change anything
- Sub-groups – give each staff about 5 or 6 children of concern are responsible to check in on the child so everyone knows what’s going on rather than assuming someone will

Example – Teachers with 5 or 6 children

- There are lots of children between 5% and 15% absence and in big schools it is not possible to track all children.
- Teachers check in and keep an eye on 5 or 6 children each as light touch approach.
- If they notice the child is not in, they will reach out and check in on the child. They will build that relationship with the child to understand what is going on at home. If more intervention is needed, they will escalate the child to someone in pastoral/attendance.

Take aways

- Catch them early before they fall between 5-15% absence
- More joining up and working together of staff
- Transitions are always happening – especially years 6 to 8
- Know your children and families – ACE's is a predictor of poor attendance
- Lean into the community and be part of it
- Build stronger links

Questions?

