

# Understanding Attendance

**Findings on the drivers of pupil absence from over 30,000 young people in England**

January 2024



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# Foreword

This report makes a very important contribution to our understanding of the issues related to poor school attendance and persistent absences in post-pandemic schooling.

The report's findings, including that a sense of school belonging is a key driver of attendance and that there is an emerging challenge of a 'second transition' from Year 7 to Year 8, are fundamentally important to the ways in which schools and trusts need to think about attendance policies.

On the theme of belonging, there is emerging literature on the importance of pupils and parents feeling connected to their school. There are complex reasons for this which are wider than schooling. There is an historic decline in the psychological wellbeing of our children and this can be traced to a crisis of mental health, rising screen time, loneliness, and for an increasing number of children, the terrible impact of poverty and destitution.

Belonging is a wildly undervalued concept. Doug Lemov and his colleagues offer a beautiful expression of belonging in their recent book, *Reconnect*: "Belonging is a flame that needs to be constantly fed by connection" (p.5). Our connection to one another. Our connection to our school. Our connection to something beyond ourselves – to a greater common good.

We need to pay attention to the data and findings in this report, but not with desperation, with the courage to know that it can be different. As we understand more about the drivers of pupil absence, we are better able to respond and to build school cultures of belonging.



**Leora Cruddas CBE**  
Chief Executive of the  
Confederation of School Trusts

# Acknowledgements

Thank you to all participating schools and Trusts whose participation in the project creates the data from which this report is drawn.

We are also grateful to our strategic partners, Challenge Partners, for their steadfast support for ImpactEd Evaluation's work. Much of the design of the project was in collaboration with their partner schools.

We would also like to thank the Confederation of School Trusts for contributing the foreword, and their ongoing support of the Understanding Attendance project.

Finally, a huge thanks to the ImpactEd Evaluation team for their contribution to this project. We wish to thank our school partnerships team, and in particular Lucy Preston for her oversight of the project, and Ciara Sims and Vicky Fisher as our report leads.

# About ImpactEd Evaluation

**Analysing the impact of programmes, processes and interventions, to help partners do more of what works and less of what doesn't**

ImpactEd Evaluation helps schools and education organisations have a positive impact on young people's lives by understanding what's working and doing less of what isn't. We do this through hands-on partnership, training and consultancy, and our School Impact Platform which makes monitoring and evaluation easier and more effective.

ImpactEd Evaluation is part of ImpactEd Group. Together with ImpactEd Consulting and The Engagement Platform (TEP), ImpactEd Evaluation contributes to the Group mission to support purpose driven partners to make better decisions using high quality evidence. ImpactEd Evaluation is a winner of the Fair Education Alliance Scaling Award, the Teach First Innovation Award, and works with over 1,000 schools and 60 education organisations each year.

The Understanding Attendance project is based on data from ImpactEd Evaluation's **School Impact Platform**. All schools participating in the project have received personalised reports on the drivers of attendance in their setting.



# About the Understanding Attendance project

Attendance is at the top of every school leaders' priority list, with persistent absenteeism rates rising to 22.3% during the 2022-23 academic year.<sup>1</sup> However, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to improving attendance, and the effectiveness of interventions is context-dependent.

Recognising this need, ImpactEd Evaluation launched Understanding Attendance as a national project to help schools understand the drivers behind poor attendance in their setting. School leaders explained to us that many of the strategies they used to manage attendance were no longer as effective after Covid-19. Alongside this, the evidence base of what works for attendance in the UK is thinner than it should be, with strategies currently in use often based on inconsistent findings or trialled outside of the UK education sector.<sup>2</sup> We felt that a new approach was needed, empowering schools to collect meaningful data to understand what was and wasn't working in their contexts.

The Understanding Attendance project launched in Spring 2023 to address this need. This report shares our early findings using survey data from over 30,000 young people and attendance data from over 200,000 pupils.

We are continuing to actively expand the project to help more schools and build the collective evidence base. If your school or Trust would be interested in participating to understand the drivers of pupil absence in your settings, **please get in touch**.



# Executive Summary

Local and individual context is critical in identifying and addressing the drivers of attendance challenges. However, through the emerging ImpactEd Evaluation dataset, we are now able to gain a clearer picture of factors that are having an impact on attendance in schools at a national level:

1

**Sense of school belonging is a key driver of attendance across all contexts. This may be particularly important for females and is closely linked with feeling safe at school.**

Pupils with higher attendance rates consistently demonstrate higher scores in sense of school membership compared to those who are persistently absent. Overall, female pupils feel less strongly connected to the school community as well as less safe in school, and this appears to impact their likelihood to attend.

2

**There is an emerging challenge of a 'second transition' from Year 7 to Year 8 that deserves greater attention.**

The drop-off in attendance rates and attendance drivers from Year 7 to Year 8 isn't counter-intuitive, but it is noticeable that in our sample the dip is larger than for any other year group. This challenge of a 'second transition' from Year 7 to Year 8 is particularly pronounced for Pupil Premium pupils with SEND. Sense of belonging appears to be particularly associated with likelihood of attendance for Year 8 pupils.

3

**Attendance drivers are intersectional. School leaders should avoid considering demographic factors in isolation. Female pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium and have a special educational need are particularly likely to be low attending.**

Pupil Premium status is associated with an attendance rate that is 6 percentage points lower than non-Pupil Premium children. However the biggest drops in attendance are intersectional, with KS4 Pupil Premium females with SEND attending at an average of just 77%. Pupils with English as an additional language were consistently more likely to attend.

4

**Awareness of sanctions and consequences isn't strongly linked to improved attendance. Understanding of the importance of school and relationships with peers and teachers were more strongly associated with attendance.**

While schools should ensure a clear policy for unauthorised absences, our data suggests that awareness of sanctions and consequences is not generally the limiting factor for attendance. Schools should be cautious of inadvertently reinforcing potentially negative perceptions of education. Developing peer leadership and a positive, whole-school culture around attendance is likely to be more sustainable in the long-term.

## Join the Understanding Attendance project

We are expanding the Understanding Attendance project to help more schools and Trusts analyse the drivers of attendance in their setting, and access effective strategies. The more schools that participate in the project, the clearer the picture will become. To participate in the project, [register your interest here](#).

# Methodology

The Understanding Attendance project consists of two phases:

## Phase One

For the first part of the project, schools undertake an attendance diagnostic to understand the drivers of low attendance in their settings. This uses short pupil questionnaires based on the most recent evidence on the drivers of pupil attendance, which are correlated against attendance rates. A personalised report for each school or Trust shows which drivers are most predictive of pupil attendance in their setting, and provides a breakdown by different pupil groups and at an individual level.

## Phase Two

The next step of the project helps schools to put in place attendance strategies and interventions related to the findings from their attendance diagnostic. Using our School Impact Platform, schools continue to collect data to understand what impact different strategies are having on particular target groups, and compare the effectiveness of different interventions. To promote the sharing of good practice, Phase Two also involves connecting schools with each other to support those who are working on implementing similar approaches.



This report predominantly focuses on the findings from Phase One of our project, looking at attendance rates of over 200,000 pupils and questionnaire data on the drivers of attendance for over 30,000 of those pupils between the ages of 4 and 18 during the Autumn term 2023.

The questionnaires used have been developed or identified by ImpactEd Evaluation's research team and are based on the most recent evidence of predictors of poor attendance rates. Schools participating in the project are able to select a maximum of four measures out of a possible eight to allow them to explore drivers most relevant to their school context. Sample size varies by questionnaire.<sup>3</sup> Questionnaires used include:

	<b>Sense of belonging</b>	This survey, adapted from the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale <sup>4</sup> gets to the heart of what it means to feel like you belong and you matter. Pupils who feel they belong at school are more likely to have successful school experiences and increased levels of motivation. <sup>5</sup>
	<b>Safe in school</b>	This tool measures the extent to which pupils feel safe in the context of their school environment. Feeling unsafe at school is a key driver of low school attendance. <sup>6</sup>
	<b>Understanding the importance of attendance</b>	Clear communication with pupils regarding expectations, routines, and consequences related to their attendance is a crucial part of improving school attendance rates. <sup>7</sup> This survey measures how well pupils understand and value their school's attendance system.
	<b>Attendance contextual drivers</b>	Following conversations with schools, and research with other organisations such as the Children's Commissioner, this question set was developed to help understand pupils' behaviours around attendance, and how events in wider society may influence on their attendance rates.
	<b>School engagement</b>	This tool measures pupils' behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement with school. Higher levels of school engagement are associated with greater academic performance and improved attendance. <sup>8</sup>
	<b>Wellbeing</b>	Wellbeing refers to a state in which individuals thrive and flourish, including contentment and overall sense of purpose as well as day-to-day happiness. Wellbeing is associated with a range of positive outcomes in school, including improved attendance. <sup>9</sup>
	<b>Anxiety</b>	Feelings of anxiety are associated with significant negative outcomes including impaired academic, social and health functioning. <sup>10</sup> This tool measures pupils' anxiety levels in relation to their physical sensations, thought patterns, and feelings.
	<b>Grit</b>	Grit is defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals. It is closely related to academic and social resilience. Pupils with high levels of grit have increased school attendance and higher academic achievement. <sup>11</sup>

# Limitations

The data collected for the social and emotional questionnaires used in this report was gathered from across 126 schools in England. Participation in the project was driven by school sign-up, which means that the sample is not designed to be nationally representative, although all English regions are represented in the project.

The main variation in our sample from the national average is that participating schools have a higher proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals, an average of 30% compared to the average of 24%. Additionally, there is a higher representation of secondary schools than primary schools compared to the national distribution.<sup>12</sup>

Another key limitation is the use of pupil self-report questionnaires. As with any surveys, it cannot be guaranteed that pupils have fully understood each question or taken the time to reflect on their answers. We have mitigated against this through supporting schools to deliver questionnaires under standard conditions and offering guidance materials.

In this report we are commenting on associations between data and providing recommendations based on qualitative research, alongside existing evidence where appropriate. Given that this data is correlational in nature, we cannot comment with any certainty on causal links, and all analysis should be read with this in mind. As schools continue with the project, we will build better evidence on the effectiveness of different strategies over time which will enable further insight.

Finally, our data clearly demonstrates the variety of drivers of poor attendance rates. While this report focuses on emerging national trends, school context matters enormously. We would encourage schools to get involved in the project to assess attendance drivers in their setting, although we hope the national themes will also resonate with readers.



## Key finding 1:

**Sense of school belonging is a key driver of attendance across all contexts. This may be particularly important for females and is closely linked with feeling safe at school.**

Pupils' sense of school membership scores were associated with their attendance rates. The gap between pupils in the top 20 percent of school attendance and those in the bottom 20 percent was a 10% difference on this belonging scale.

The detail behind this is revealing. On a five-point scale, pupils in the bottom 20 percent of school attendance scored 2.83 out of 5 in response to the question "I feel like a real part of the school". By contrast, those same pupils scored 4.19 in response to "There are consequences if I skip lessons". This would seem to indicate that the barrier is not awareness of sanctions as much as more fundamental questions about pupils feeling part of their school.



**2.83 out of 5**

in response to the question  
"I feel like a real part  
of the school"



**4.19 out of 5**

in response to the question  
"There are consequences  
if I skip lessons"

These trends are consistent across a variety of questions relating to belonging. Comparing results for persistently absent pupils to those with 100% attendance, persistently absent pupils scored 13% lower on feeling respected at school and 14% lower in feeling proud of their school. These trends are even more pronounced for severely absent pupils. This doesn't tell us definitively whether belonging drives attendance, or school absenteeism means a lower sense of belonging, but highlights how related the two factors are.

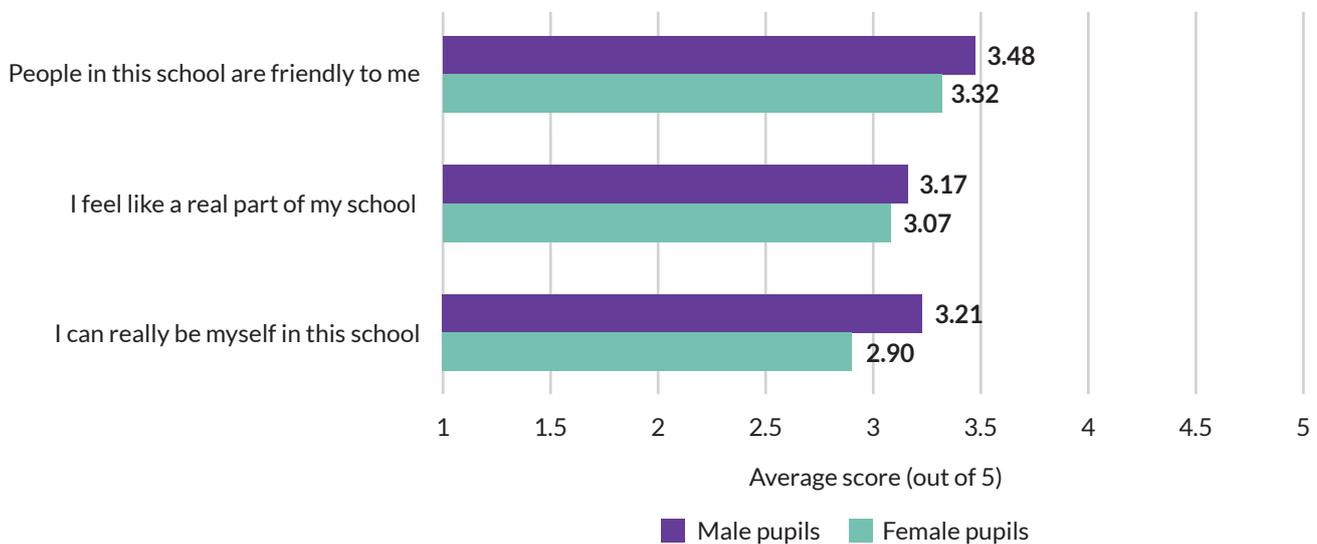
Our data also shows that female pupils have a weaker sense of belonging to the school community than their male peers. Male pupils scored an average of 3.21 out of 5 for the statement "I feel I can really be myself at this school". This is compared to a score of 2.90 out of 5 for female pupils, a difference of nearly 8%. Female pupils also scored 4% lower than male pupils for "I feel like a real part of my school", and 4% lower than their male peers for the statement "People in this school are friendly to me". This last statement has a statistically significant correlation with pupils' attendance.

Qualitative comments from our partner schools appear to reinforce this trend. A large secondary school partner observed that they saw an increase in friendship issues in female pupils from KS4 onwards. The school observed that this can lead to lower wellbeing for their female pupils as they continue at school, which in turn impacts females' attendance rates.

Female pupils' lower sense of school membership may also be influenced by their lower sense of safety compared to male pupils. Compared to male pupils, female pupils felt less safe during lessons (3% less safe), during break and lunch (3% less safe) and on the journey to and back from school (5% less safe). It is clear that improving female pupils' sense of safety should be a priority in schools and it is hoped that, in turn, this increased safety will lead to a stronger sense of belonging and higher attendance rates for female pupils.



## Breakdown of belonging questions by gender



### Case study: understanding school safety as a driver of belonging and attendance

One of our partner schools was particularly interested in exploring pupils' feeling of safety. Amongst other initiatives, they are trialling changes to timings of the school day and are using data from the Understanding Attendance project to understand if this is having an adverse effect on how safe pupils feel going to and from school, and in turn, on their attendance.

Using the safety in school measure as part of the Understanding Attendance diagnostic also gave the school further insights into some of the differences between pupil groups and how safe they felt during the school day. The school discovered that on average female pupils in Year 9 and 10 scored 12% lower on the statement "I feel safe on the journey to and back from school" than male pupils. However, the data also showed that feeling safe in school and on the journey correlated more closely with attendance for male than for female pupils.

The data also revealed differences between Year 9 and Year 10 pupils' scores, in which Year 9 pupils scored much more positively than Year 10 across all the statements. In particular this was most notable when considering feelings of safety during break and lunch times which saw Year 9 pupils scoring 23% higher than pupils in Year 10. The lowest scores were consistently female pupils in Year 10. Both male and female pupils in Year 9 felt safer at school in lunch and break times than they did going to and from school: this was the reverse for Year 10.

The school is now using the data to support interventions for Year 10 pupils in particular.

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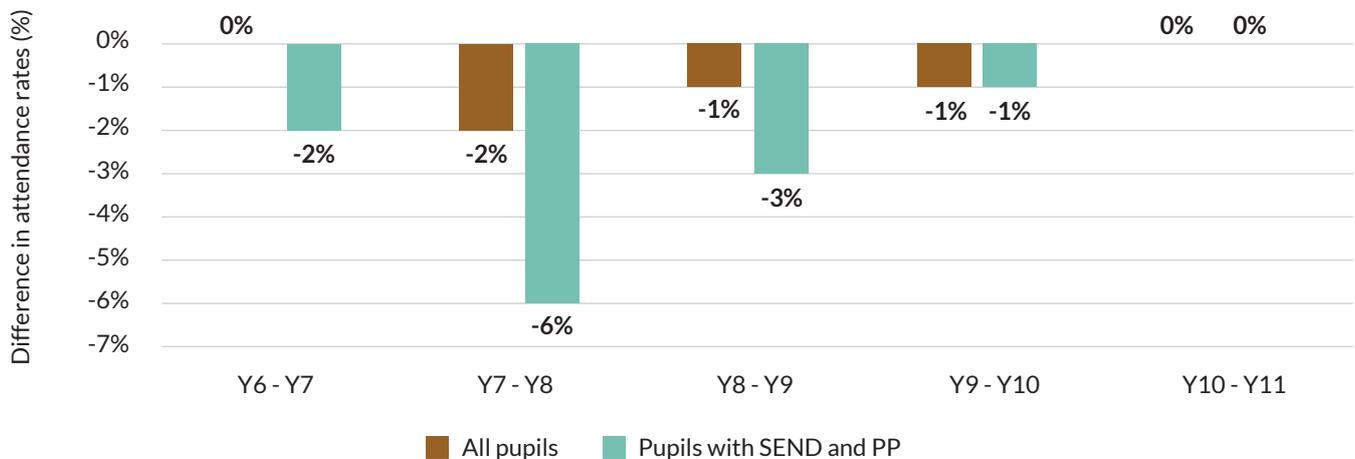
## Key finding 2:

**There is an emerging challenge of a ‘second transition’ from Year 7 to Year 8 that deserves greater attention.**

While national data shows lower attendance in secondary schools than primary schools, our data suggests an additional area of focus should be the Year 7 to Year 8 transition. In our sample, there is a more pronounced difference in attendance rates and the drivers of attendance between these two year groups than any other year group transition. This is most pronounced for Pupil Premium pupils and pupils with SEND.

In Autumn 23, the overall attendance rate for all pupils in Year 7 in our sample was 94%, compared to 92% in Year 8 and 90% in Year 10 and 11. Attendance rates for Year 7 eligible for Pupil Premium or with SEND were 92%, but in Year 8 these figures fall to 88% (PP) and 87% (SEND). For Pupil Premium pupils with SEND, attendance rates fell to 83% in Year 8 compared to 89% in Year 7.

### Difference in attendance rates between select year groups



Analysing our data on attendance drivers provides some insights into possible causes. Compared to Year 7 pupils, Year 8 scored lower in all social and emotional measures related to attendance, and reported being more anxious.

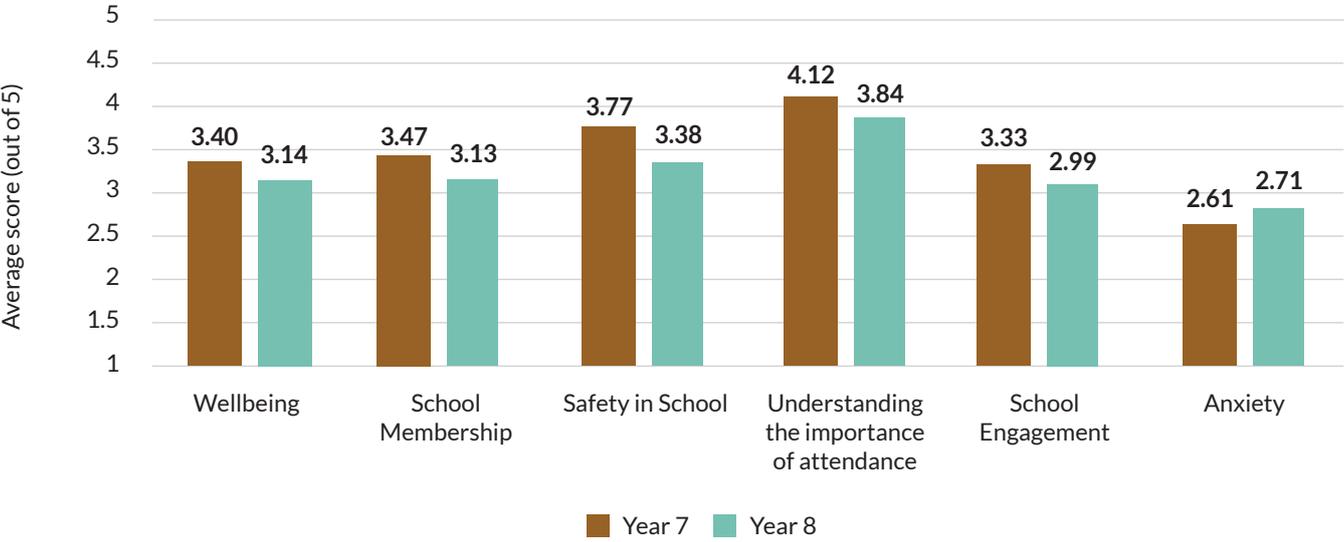
The most notable differences are shown in the sense of school membership measure, used to understand pupils' sense of community and belonging. In Year 8, pupils reported results 9% below that of pupils in Year 7. We also found that there was a

statistically significant correlation between attendance and sense of school membership for Year 8 pupils, but not for Year 7 pupils. This implies that from Year 8 onwards, pupils' sense of community, or lack thereof, plays a more prominent role in their likelihood of coming to school.

Similarly, pupils' school engagement levels in Year 8 were 9% lower than their Year 7 peers, implying a drop off in engagement in lessons and school life.



### Attendance measures - Year 7 and Year 8



We also found stronger correlations with some of the statements in the Attendance Drivers measure for Year 8 pupils compared to Year 7 pupils. For Pupil Premium pupils in Year 8, 19% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they still make the effort to come to school if they are going to be late compared to 14% of PP pupils in Year 7. This statement had a statistically significant correlation of 0.25 with Year 8 pupil attendance.

**Case study: focusing on Year 7 and Year 8 at a school level**

One of our school partners reported a 1.6% dip in attendance between Year 7 and Year 8. Our validated measures also revealed a reduction in sense of school membership (-3.3%), and, most notably, sense of school safety (-5.3%) from Year 7 to Year 8. Their lead teacher wasn't surprised after noting the "Year 8 dip" regularly throughout their career, but felt empowered to see this evidenced, and will use this information to better inform attendance interventions going forward. Further evaluation will investigate the efficacy of these interventions later this academic year.

**Key finding 3:  
Attendance drivers are intersectional. School leaders should avoid considering demographic factors in isolation. Female pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium and have a special educational need are particularly likely to be low attending.**

As suggested by other research,<sup>13</sup> socio-economic and other forms of disadvantage are correlated with lower attendance. In our sample, pupils eligible for Pupil Premium have lower attendance rates than their non-Pupil Premium peers by 6 percentage points, and are also more likely to be persistently absent.

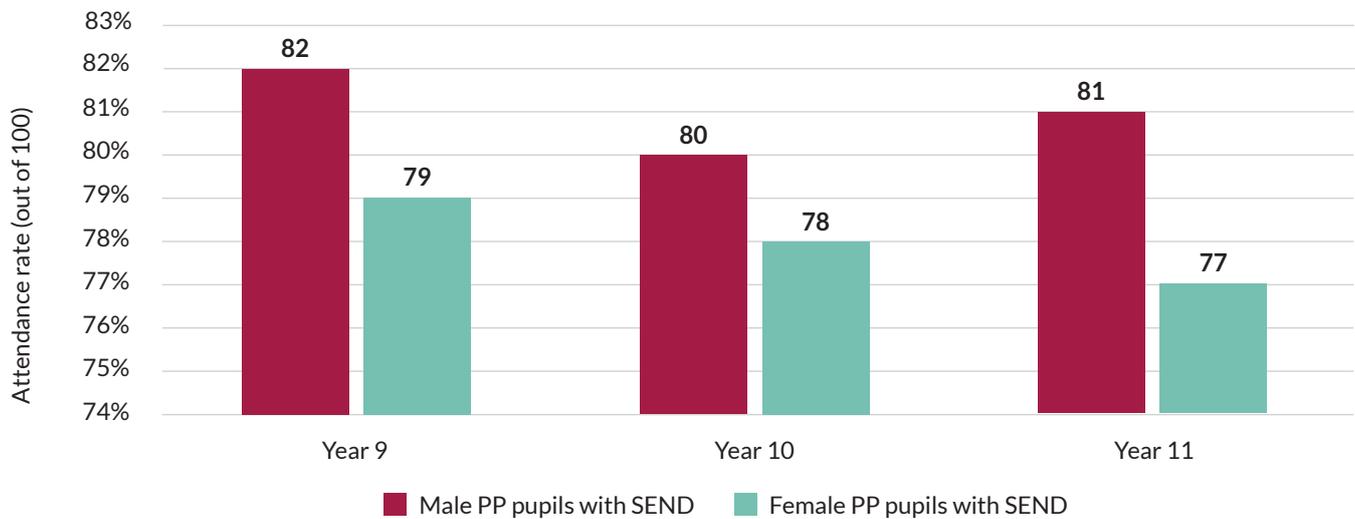
However, the biggest differences in attendance are intersectional. For example, pupils who are both Pupil Premium and have SEND have lower attendance rates still. At primary, this averaged at 90% attendance compared to a whole-school attendance of 94%. At secondary, the difference was greater, 82% compared to a whole-school attendance of 92%.

Comparing this data by gender further compounds this. The difference was particularly stark for female Pupil Premium pupils with SEND from between Year 9 to Year 11. The average attendance for this group in Year 11 was just 77%, considerably lower than the average national attendance and 4% below male pupils in the same subgroup.

Attention to friendships and peer networks are likely to be particularly important drivers here. Females scored 7% lower than males in reporting they were good at making friends, and getting on well with other pupils in their class; differences for pupils with SEND were similar.



## Attendance rates by gender and subgroup



Attendance rates for pupils with English as an Additional Language were more positive. EAL pupils were more likely to have 100% attendance than any other subgroup, maintain high attendance across all year groups from primary through to sixth form, and are less likely to be persistently absent at all stages of their education. This was mirrored in data from our attendance diagnostic, where EAL pupils reported average wellbeing and school engagement above their non-EAL peers (by 5%).

As such, school leaders should take an intersectional approach to analysing attendance groups. Females with Pupil Premium and SEND in particular may benefit from more intensive support.

### Case study: targeting support at St. John's Marlborough

Through participating in the Understanding Attendance project, schools are using their data to target their interventions in line with drivers identified in their setting. This provides an important supplement to the understanding schools already have about which groups and individuals are most likely to be low attending.

The lead teacher at St John's Marlborough, one of our partner schools, commented that "The attendance diagnostic has helped us to identify that a lack of understanding of the importance of attendance may be a contributing factor to our school attendance. In contrast, our sense of school membership is significantly above the national average. We have already begun making changes to the way in which attendance is reported home to parents and plan to continue to focus on this as part of our pastoral curriculum moving forwards."

For schools who are trying to address the root causes of pupil absence, ensuring that the right data is being collected to drive evidence-informed decision making can help target attendance support and communications that will best meet the needs of young people.

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## Key finding 4: Awareness of sanctions and consequences isn't strongly linked to improved attendance. Understanding of the importance of school and relationships with peers and teachers were more strongly associated with attendance.

While important, the data seems to show that communicating clear consequences of non-attendance is insufficient. Persistently absent pupils were almost as likely as 100% attendees to report there being consequences if they missed lessons (4.21 compared to 4.36 out of 5, where 5 represents "strongly agree"). Severely absent pupils were also generally likely to agree with there being consequences for non-attendance (4.12).

The differences in trends between consistent and inconsistent attenders were greater for factors around relationships and understanding of the importance of school. Focusing on positive factors around the benefits of education and opportunities at school may potentially be more impactful than messaging around sanctions.

Peer relationships were also significantly associated. Severely absent pupils scored themselves 15% lower on being good at making friends than 100% attendees, and 14% lower on getting on well with other children.

A potential implication is that part of the attendance challenge is ensuring the importance of school is fully understood, and providing support for positive relationships with peers, family and teachers. Getting the messaging right on this is key. Schools should be mindful of not reinforcing existing issues with engagement with education, and providing positive messaging.

One of our participating schools in this project, Mounts Bay Academy, an 11-16 school with over 1000 pupils in Cornwall, found that pupils who were worried about the consequences of being late were less likely to come to school. Given this link between anxiety over lateness and absence, Mounts Bay Academy will be revisiting their late procedures to ensure that pupils are rewarded for attendance, and that they realise that the value of attending is more important than any consequences of being late.

**"Looking at differences between pupils in the top 20 percent of school attendance and those in the bottom 20 percent, higher attending pupils reported:**

**11% higher**

*"I think missing school too much could affect my grades"*

**13% higher**

*"I feel the teachers here respect me"*

**6% higher**

*"My teachers care when I miss school"*

**5% higher**

*"My parents/guardians care when I miss school"*



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# Recommendations

The Understanding Attendance project is still at its early stages with a fast-growing cohort of schools coming together to better understand drivers of absence in their own context and learn from each other. ImpactEd Evaluation will continue to report our findings on an ongoing basis.

As schools gather more evidence around the effectiveness of different approaches and interventions, ImpactEd Evaluation will also share more case studies for the benefit of the wider system. Already we are seeing a number of focus areas for schools emerging on the development of student leadership and pupil voice and a positive whole-school culture around attendance.

## Pupil voice and pupil leadership

As the Understanding Attendance dataset shows, there is a strong link between belonging and pupil attendance, with a 10% difference between higher and lower school attenders in their sense of school membership. Links were also seen with feeling respected by teachers and building relationships with other pupils.

Approaches taken by partner schools in the project include developing mechanisms for pupil voice and leadership. For example, tools such as pupil leaders, the use of houses and student newspapers have all been trialled as means to develop the sense of school community. One of our partner schools runs an application process for a pupil leadership programme which is linked into their enrichment and social action offer, and which has been shown to lead to statistically significant impacts on motivation and belonging.

There is wider research evidence to suggest these areas are worth considering. Some sources suggest that pupil voice can lead to an increased likelihood that students will experience self-worth, engagement, and purpose in school.<sup>14 15</sup> The 'Grassroots' project<sup>16</sup> is an example of a pupil leadership project building on successful evidence from the USA and Indonesia, which involves pupils becoming special advisors in their school supported to:

- Identify areas for improvement in student interactions
- Generate possible solutions (for example activities they may do, what they might encourage their friends to do)
- Provide opportunities for action (for example weekly or fortnightly challenges)
- Make initiatives visible to others (for example, putting up posters and handing out wearable items like wristbands to peers for positive behaviours)



## Developing positive whole-school culture around attendance

Getting the language right around attendance is crucial. Higher attending pupils scored 13% higher in response to *“I feel the teachers here respect me”*. Ensuring that any attendance strategy doesn’t inadvertently reinforce existing issues with engagement with school is key.

One of our partner primary schools has summarised their approach as *“creating a positive buzz”* around attendance. With their staff team they put in place a *“small wins”* section in regular meetings and also made sure to celebrate pupils who had gone from inconsistent to more consistent attenders. They also developed *“attendance ambassadors”*: pupils who had improved attendance over time, and were supported to lead on celebrations for peers and demonstrate ownership of attendance.

The wider research suggests this approach is particularly important with parental engagement in mind. For example, the DfE has issued advice based on *Thinks Insight and Strategy (Thinks)* research which aimed to understand parents’ views on school attendance.<sup>17</sup> This research showed that parents did not see themselves as the type of parents who let their children miss school for frivolous reasons and felt that the values and information they use to make judgements about attendance have changed post pandemic.

As such, developing a positive approach to family and child communication that avoids reinforcing potential negative perceptions of attendance is crucial. An example of one of these programmes is *“the positive family support programme”* which is a school-based approach providing a range of parental partnership interventions for children aged 10-14 and their caregivers.<sup>18</sup>

## Making the most of wraparound opportunities

The link between attendance and factors around disadvantage are clear: we found Pupil Premium status to be associated with lower attendance and lower scores on attendance drivers throughout, with this impact particularly large when pupils also had SEND. Most schools have invested in opportunities such as after school clubs, breakfast clubs and enrichment opportunities to address these structural disadvantages, and there is evidence that using these as part of a deliberate attendance strategy can be of particular benefit.

For example, research funded by the Nuffield Foundation found positive correlations between club participation and pupil outcomes like sense of belonging and understanding the importance of attendance. As pupils’ social networks expanded by participating in the club so did their sense of school membership to their school and club participation encouraged pupils to view their school in a different light creating stronger links to pupils’ understanding on the importance of attendance.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, research on breakfast clubs has found positive impacts on pupil attendance,<sup>20</sup> and there is some evidence to suggest that providing outdoor learning opportunities and other methods to support a rounded curriculum offer can help increase pupil engagement.<sup>21</sup>

Our partner schools have reported that the sense of routine created by breakfast clubs and after school activities can be particularly important for disadvantaged pupils. And with our data also pointing to the challenge in Year 7 to Year 8 transition, these opportunities can be crucial for helping pupils to build social connections that will support school attendance.

## Next steps

ImpactEd Evaluation will continue the Understanding Attendance project to support educators in understanding and acting on the drivers of pupil absence in their setting.

For schools who are interested in participating in the project to understand these drivers in their context, please get in touch. The more schools that collaborate, the clearer the picture on school attendance will become.

As we move into the next stages of the project, we will also be doing more to share effective practice on strategies that can be implemented, and how effectiveness varies by different

contexts. For our partner schools and organisations, we will be running attendance events and will be releasing other insights on a regular basis.

Addressing attendance challenges is a collective effort across the sector with no quick solutions. If you are from an organisation where you think we could work together on this, please don't hesitate to get in touch at [hello@impacted.org.uk](mailto:hello@impacted.org.uk).

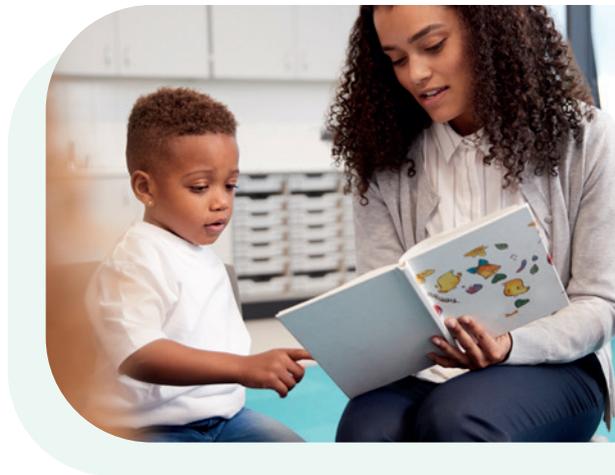


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# References

- <sup>1</sup> Department for Education. (2023, August 10). *Pupil attendance in schools*. Explore education statistics. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools/2023-week-29>
- <sup>2</sup> Education Endowment Foundation. (2022, March). *Attendance Interventions: Rapid Evidence Assessment*. <https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/pages/Attendance-REA-report.pdf?v=1704199789>
- <sup>3</sup> Sample sizes as follows:  
Sense of belonging: 25,567 pupils  
Safe in school: 21,264 pupils  
Understanding the importance of attendance: 4,297 pupils  
Attendance contextual drivers: 5,759 pupils  
School engagement: 8,172 pupils  
Wellbeing: 26,046 pupils  
Anxiety: 2,434 pupils
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