

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Children & Young People Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING DATE:	12th January 2016	
TITLE:	School Attendance & Exclusion Update	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: None		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report highlights the current status of school attendance and exclusions across Bath & North East Somerset, highlighting where necessary current concerns and activity to address identified concerns.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the panel are informed of the current status of school attendance in Bath & North East Somerset and the work to monitor, challenge and support schools
- 2.2 That the panel note the emerging pressures on schools around support to manage behaviour and the increased need for alternative provision to support vulnerable learners (presented in a separate panel report)

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 None directly arising from this report

THE REPORT

4 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- 4.1 There is clear evidence that absence from school impacts on a child's attainment; the less time a child has in school the less opportunity a child has for learning. Bath & North East Somerset is not responsible for setting attendance targets for individual schools. The role of the governing body is to monitor and ask questions of headteachers regarding attendance levels and interventions. Ofsted publishes school performance dashboards and is easily accessible to all governors.
- 4.2 However, Bath & North East Somerset Children Missing Education Service (CMES) continues to offer proactive support to maintained primary schools as well as taking necessary statutory intervention against some parents & carers.
- 4.3 Every school (including academies) receive from CMES a termly attendance report. This not only provides the school with important attendance data (they will also have their own access to data via SIMS) but also acts as a reminder that Bath & North East Somerset Council has a duty to identify pupils missing education or at risk of missing education.
- 4.4 Children regularly missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse including child sexual exploitation and becoming NEET later on in life.
- 4.5 The report provides each school with the following information:
- A breakdown of the last term's attendance and absence data.
 - A breakdown of attendance and absence data for the academic year to date;
 - A pie chart showing the top ten reasons for absence at their school; and
 - A list of pupils at their school with under 90% attendance (persistent absence)
- 4.6 The CMES also advises on what to do with their data, for example:
- Are there unexpectedly marked differences in the attendance/absence patterns of boys and girls? For a single sex school this will not apply.
 - Which types of absence are most prevalent in your school?
 - Are your registers being marked in accordance with DfE guidance?
 - Who are your poor attenders?
 - Do you have plans in place for each of them?
 - Which cases have you referred to your area Behaviour & Attendance Panel or other support services?

- Are you coding correctly any pupil that you have placed on a part-time timetable, do you have a pupil support programme (PSP) is it time limited with SMART targets?
- Do you have pupils that are dual registered and have you identified who should follow up absence?

4.7 Overall primary school attendance levels in Bath & North East Somerset compare above the national average for primary attendance.

4.8 The table below illustrates the current status of Primary School Attendance

Maintained Primary School Attendance			
Academic Year	Term 1	Term 2	Overall %
2015-2016	96.87%	96.27%	96.57%
2014-2015	96.91%	95.83%	96.37%

4.9 Primary school attendance across Bath & North East Somerset is very good and causes no concern.

4.10 The table below illustrates the current status of Secondary School attendance in Bath & North East Somerset

Secondary School Attendance		
2015-2016 Terms 1 & 2	94.4%	Individual schools range from 87.2% - 96.3%

4.11 Overall secondary school attendance so far this year is above the national average of 93.6% as can be seen in the table, although there is considerable variation between schools.

4.12 Two secondary schools currently give cause for concern. Progress is being made in both, with CMES support.

4.13 CMES run periodic reports to analyse individual attendance & absence codes, for example B code – off site educational activity. B code counts as a present mark; all children marked in the attendance register with a B code must be taking part in a supervised educational activity (sent home with work should not be considered as ‘off site’ education provision). On occasions schools are challenged if found to be using B code inappropriately. The misuse of this code is a safeguarding concern.

4.14 Another code schools can use is C (other authorised circumstances); C is intended to be used for any session of absence that is authorised as ‘leave’ but

which isn't covered by any of the other codes. C code must not be used for 'unofficial' exclusions.

4.15 Admission to the three special schools are by way of an Education & Health Care Plan; a school placement is identified to meet the individual learning & behavioural needs of the child and will have on their school roll the most vulnerable learners across Bath & North East Somerset.

5 EXCLUSIONS

5.1 All schools including academies must adhere to the statutory exclusion guidance when considering excluding a child from school.

5.2 Good discipline in schools is essential to ensure that all children can benefit from the opportunities provided. The Government supports headteachers in using exclusion as a sanction where it is warranted. There are differing thresholds across the schools when using exclusion as a sanction. Each school should have a behaviour Policy that clearly defines the expectations and what good behaviour looks like.

5.3 Exclusions levels within B&NES remain comparatively low both regionally and nationally. However we have a growing issues relating to Fixed Term Exclusions and increased need for Alternative Provision to support pupils to reduce the need for permanent exclusion.

5.4 The table below highlights the current position of Fixed Term Exclusions in relation to primary Schools in comparison to this time in the previous academic year This shows an increase in exclusions compared with the same period last year.

Primary School Fixed Term Exclusion						
	Boys	Girls	Total Incidents	Total Pupils Excluded	Total Days	Average Length of FTE
2015-2016 Terms 1 & 2	48 ↑	5 ↓	53 ↑	31 ↑	127 ↑	2.40 ↑
2014-2015 Terms 1 & 2	39	7	46	27	93.5	2.03

5.5 The table below highlights the current position of Fixed Term Exclusions in relation to secondary schools

Secondary School Fixed Term Exclusion						
	Boys	Girls	Total Incidents	Total Pupils Excluded	Total Days	Average Length of FTE
2015-2016 Terms 1 & 2	198 ↑	90 ↑	288 ↑	203 ↑	612 ↑	2.12 ↑
2014-2015 Terms 1 & 2	119	75	194	147	373	1.92

5.6 The above shows a significant rise in the use of exclusions compared with the same period as the year before.

5.7 It is not known for certain the exact reasons for this increase in the use of FTE's, other than schools are reporting an increase in the level of concern around pupil behaviour. Later in this report you will also see a corresponding significant rise in referrals to the behaviour & attendance panels across the authority

5.8 The table below highlights the current position of Fixed Term Exclusions in relation to Special Schools

Special School Fixed Term Exclusion						
	Boys	Girls	Total Incidents	Total Pupils Excluded	Total Days	Average Length of FTE
2015-2016 Terms 1 & 2	34 ↓	3 ↓	37 ↓	21 ↑	49 ↑	1.32 ↑
2014-2015 Terms 1 & 2	40	5	45	20	47	1.03

5.9 The above shows a slight increase in the total number of children excluded with a decrease in the number of repeated incidents.

5.10 The table below highlights the current position with regards to Permanent Exclusions within Bath & North East Somerset.

Permanent Exclusion by academic year						
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Primary	1	0	0	2	4	6
Secondary	4	13	16	19	11	18
TOTAL	5	13	16	21	15	24
Terms 1 & 2	2014-2015		2015-2016			
Primary	3		1 ↓			
Secondary	6		4 ↓			
Total	9		5 ↓			

5.11 Permanent exclusion has risen over a 6 year period.

5.12 Through the Behaviour & Attendance Panels the CMES is collecting numbers of children who are currently at risk of permanent exclusion as identified by schools. At the end of term 2 the numbers are:

Primary	10
Secondary	15

5.13 The table below highlights the current activity of the Behaviour & Attendance panels in Bath & North East Somerset. These panels are seeing more activity than previously seen in any other years.

Behaviour & Attendance Panels – Activity in Terms 1 & 2 – 2015-16							
	Bath Primary	Bath Secondary	K&CV Primary	K&CV Secondary	NR Primary	NR Secondary	Total
Open Cases	100	50	42	12	47	28	279
Closed Cases	12	25	6	1	9	10	63
New Referrals	62	38	24	9	14	15	162

5.14 The snapshot exclusion data contained in this document demonstrates the need to strengthen the collective approach and enhance the provision available across the local authority to meet the needs of vulnerable learners.

5.15 We have developed a shared local authority and schools strategy for behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The strategy is currently in draft form and has been presented to Schools Forum together with a request for resources to develop an increased and broader Alternative Provision package for our most vulnerable pupils.

Contact person	<i>Chris Wilford</i>
Background papers	<i>None</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	