

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
12 JULY 2018	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Wendi Ogle Welbourn, Executive Director, People and Communities	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Ayres, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University	
Contact Officer(s):	Gary Perkins, Assistant Director for Education	Tel. 07920 160285

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Executive Director, People and Communities	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge the outcomes stated in the report and offer their support to relevant officers in pursuing actions to promote continued improvement in attendance at school. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report has been requested by members of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report is presented in order to inform members of the Committee regarding rates of absence at Peterborough schools in 2016/17.

2.2 This report is for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council :

Education, including

- a) University and Higher Education;
- b) Youth Service;
- c) Careers; and
- d) Special Needs and Inclusion.

2.3 This report links into the Corporate Priority, Improve educational attainment and skills.

2.4 This report links to the Children in care Pledge promises:

- support you to have a good education
- make sure you are treated at school like any other pupil
- support you to learn and achieve your full potential

- help you to get skills so you can care for yourselves when you are older

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The Department for Education (DfE) release data at two points during the year. In November they release data covering the previous autumn and spring terms (i.e in November 2017 they released data for autumn 2016 and spring 2017). In March they release data from the previous full school year. The data referred to in this report is for the full school year 2016/17.
- 4.2 The data is only ever released at local authority-level and not at individual school level. The full comparative dataset, including outcomes for all schools aggregated, for primary schools, secondary schools and special schools, is available in Appendix A - "180326 Attendance Data 1617". The position of the local authority in relation to its rankings against other local authorities and the national average is available in Appendix B - "180326 Absence – LA Rankings 1617"
- 4.3 The rate of attendance at schools in Peterborough in 2016-17 has been sustained for a second year at the level of the national average. Having reached national average performance for the first time in 2016, it is encouraging that this has been sustained. Overall attendance was 95.3%, exactly matching the average attendance nationally. This is an improvement for Peterborough of 0.8% over 5 years and 1.5% over 6 years.
- 4.4 Overall attendance in Peterborough schools was 0.2% better than the average of its Statistical Neighbours, with Peterborough ranked equal 2nd out of 11 statistical neighbours. This is a widening of the positive gap to the SN average by 0.1%.
- 4.5 Attendance at Peterborough primary schools was 96%, exactly matching the national average and showing an improvement of 0.6% over 5 years and 1.3% over 6 years.
- 4.6 Overall attendance in Peterborough primary schools was 0.2% better than the average of its Statistical Neighbours, with Peterborough ranked equal 2nd out of 11 statistical neighbours. This is a widening of the positive gap to the SN average by 0.1%.
- 4.7 Attendance at Peterborough secondary schools was 94.5%, just 0.1% below the national average. This is a decline of 0.2% from 2016, but an improvement by 0.9% over 5 years and of 1.6% over 6 years.
- 4.8 Overall attendance in Peterborough secondary schools was 0.3% better than the average of its Statistical Neighbours, with Peterborough ranked 2nd out of 11 statistical neighbours.
- 4.9 Attendance at Peterborough special schools was 90.5%, 0.2% better than the national average and showing an improvement of 0.7% over 5 years but a decline of 0.8% from 6 years ago.
- 4.10 Overall attendance in Peterborough special schools was 0.8% better than the average of its Statistical Neighbours, with Peterborough ranked equal 3rd out of 11 statistical neighbours. This is a widening of the positive gap to the SN average by 0.6%.
- 4.11 It is very pleasing to see this sustained improvement in rates of attendance at Peterborough schools, with the authority ranked 56th out of 152 authorities nationally and primary schools ranked 53rd. Both statistics are an improvement on 2016.
- 4.12 These outcomes are a testament to the hard work of staff in schools and local authority officers to continually promote the importance of good rates of school attendance, and also the care of parents in fulfilling their duty to ensure that children attend school.

- 4.13 There are almost 650 more children attending school regularly now than there were 5 years ago, and this is something of which the city should be very proud.
- 4.14 Rates of persistent absence (i.e absence of more than 10%) have declined consistently and substantially over the past 5 years. It is not possible to compare persistent absence rates in 2017 with earlier years than 2016 due to the change in the measure reported from 15% to 10% in 2016. The gap to the national average has worsened from 0.3% to 0.4%, but is slightly improved from that of 5 years ago. This is an issue which remains stubbornly worse than national average, though.
- 4.15 Rates of persistent absence at primary schools have remained above the national average by 0.1%, an improvement from the gap of 0.2% in 2016. Peterborough primary schools' persistent absence rates are 0.8% better than the average of Statistical Neighbours, and are ranked 2nd out of 11 statistical neighbours
- 4.16 Rates of persistent absence in secondary schools remain as the most challenging area for future improvement and the gap to the national average is wider for secondary schools than for primary or special schools at 1.0%. This is unchanged from 2016, although the gap to the national average has improved by 0.1%. Peterborough secondary schools' persistent absence rates are 0.6% better than the average of Statistical Neighbours, and are ranked 5th out of 11 statistical neighbours, an improvement from 2016.
- 4.17 There is much work for secondary schools to do to improve this performance. The vast majority of secondary schools are academies and most employ their own attendance officers rather than accessing support from the local authority. The gap to the national average has widened and this is of concern.
- 4.18 Rates of persistent absence in special schools have increased since 2016, by 4.7% and the positive gap to the national average has narrowed from 1.4% to 0.8%. This still remains significantly better than the negative gap of 1.7% of 5 years ago. Peterborough special schools' persistent absence rates are 2.3% better than the average of Statistical Neighbours, and are ranked 5th out of 11 statistical neighbours.
- 4.19 Officers continue to promote good school attendance via regular communication with schools and the work of our School Attendance Officers. Our next aim is to see rates of attendance which are above the national average, although our ability to influence these outcomes becomes increasingly restricted as the number of academy schools increases.
- 4.20 Nevertheless, we continue to exercise all available powers to influence, advise and encourage schools to take a robust approach to the promotion of good school attendance. We are encouraged by the increasing number of schools, both LA maintained and academy schools, who are taking advantage of a Service Level Agreement with the Attendance Service, and some schools are now requesting and accessing greater levels of support, advice and challenge.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 No formal consultation has taken place, although schools have been informed of the outcomes at local authority-level.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 Continuation of support from elected members for officers of the council to continue their successful work in assisting schools in improving rates of attendance at school.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 I am recommending this report to the committee and requesting that it gives its full support to the ongoing actions taken by officers to help schools to secure improved rates of attendance and a reduction in levels of persistent absence. There is a direct link between rates of attendance and attainment outcomes for pupils.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 None.

Legal Implications

9.2 None.

Equalities Implications

9.3 All process, protocols, practices and legislation applies equally to all, with due consideration given in individual cases where appropriate.

Rural Implications

9.4 None

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 Department for Education School Absence Statistics – Official Data release

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A - “180326 Attendance Data 1617”
Appendix B – “180326 Absence – LA Rankings 1617”