



Governor Link Visit Record

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| Governor Link Area | Attendance |
| Governor/s | Helen Robinson |
| Staff | Jane Wainwright |
| Date | 20/04/26 |

Agenda and findings

To discuss the similar schools comparison report from the DfE.

Discussion and challenge

A similar schools comparison report is a DfE-issued document in England that benchmarks a school's attendance against 20 other schools with similar characteristics, such as free school meal rates and pupil demographics. It enables school leaders to analyse performance, set realistic targets, and identify practical improvement strategies by comparing data with similar, rather than local, schools. The report covers the Spring term (January to mid-February), The DfE also now set every school an attendance baseline improvement expectation (ABIE) which is the minimum improvement we should expect to make in an academic year. Our school indicative ABIE for this year is an increase of 0.4 percentage points on our current school attendance of 94.6%. Overall the report is positive – our attendance figure is 0.5% higher than the median attendance of similar schools and we marginally outperform them in every pupil group (all pupils, FSM, SEND, no SEND) but we cannot be complacent. The report highlighted the following areas for the school to focus on:

- Attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals was 92.9%, lower than at least a quarter of similar schools. If we increased it to 93.6%, overall attendance would increase by 0.3 percentage points.
- Attendance of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support was 92.8%, lower than at least a quarter of similar schools. If we increased it to 93.8%, overall attendance would increase by 0.2 percentage points
- Year 1 attendance was 94%, lower than at least a quarter of similar schools. If we increased it to 95.1%, then your overall attendance would go up by 0.2 percentage points

We discussed these points and the following observations were noted:

- We on the other side we are better than $\frac{3}{4}$ of similar schools. We find that some of our parents who do not work struggle to see the urgency to get the children to



school on time and can sometimes keep them home if more convenient. We are working with these families to improve this.

- Some SEND children have reduced timetables which can be coded but still result in counting towards absence. We also have two children who have had more time off this year for appointments related to their SEND needs for assessments/medicals etc.
- With regard to Year 1 attendance, there are a group of children in this cohort who have very poor attendance, they are open to social care and other agencies and have some serious barriers. There are also some children in provision in year 1 on reduced timetables.

Persistent absence is still stubbornly high but, as noted in previous reports, this is due to a core of families who with poor attendance records. Fines have been levied for holidays but four have been knocked back by LEA this week as they have been unable to confirm the addresses of the parents in question. It would seem they are not officially registered as a resident at the address they have registered with school.

Punctuality also remains problematic. Lateness after 9.20am is counted as an absence even though the child is in school which impacts attendance figures overall. In 2025 such lateness stood at 0.429%, in 2026 this has reduced to 0.326%. However, this improvement seems to have precipitated a marked increase in lateness prior to 9.20am from 1.676% in 2025 to 1.757% in 2026.

All standard procedures are still in place and the SLT continues to prioritise attendance across school. The spring 2 figures following on from the comparison report have been positive with a 0.2% increase on the Autumn term figures which is very heartening.

Have approached those schools highlighted in the comparison report to discuss their processes/share best practice?

Yes, but rather frustratingly, none have reverted. Jane conducted a brief review of their websites and noted that one school provides those families struggling to get children in on time with "Punctuality Packs." There was no detail as to what those packs contain but Jane is giving this approach serious consideration for the 2026/2027 academic year.

Spring term 2 data is much more favourable and we hope this is reflected in the comparison data but we need to wait for the report.

Staff Signature:

Governor Signature: Helen Robinson