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Attendance at grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools 2012/13: Detailed statistics

Background

Attendance data for the 2012/13 academic year was collected from all grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools via the school census in October 2013.

Initial findings for 2012/13 were published in a Statistical First Release on 31 January 2014. This statistical release supplements that information and includes analysis of attendance data by school type and characteristics such as management type, as well as pupil characteristics, for example gender and ethnicity.

Key findings – All schools

- The overall attendance rate for all primary, post-primary and special schools in 2012/13 was 94.0 per cent of the total half days.
- Overall absence accounted for 6.0 per cent of the total half days – 4.1 per cent was authorised absence and 1.9 per cent was unauthorised absence.

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INTRODUCTION

Attendance data are collected annually via the school census and are required by a range of organisations and individuals for a variety of purposes. Members of the NI Assembly, the Department of Education, Education and Library Boards and the Education and Training Inspectorate use the data for benchmarking, policy making and performance monitoring. Responsibility for attendance policy lies with Additional Educational Needs Team in DE which monitors non-attendance and provides guidance to schools in relation to attendance. Attendance data are used for monitoring other Departmental policies for example, Achieving Belfast and Derry Bright Futures. The statistics are also used by other departments when developing and monitoring cross-departmental policies, for example, attendance is an indicator in the Education Domain of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure as well as OFMdfM's 10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People. The data are also used by researchers, academics and students, as well as the general public for informing choices about service providers.

ALL SCHOOLS BY SECTOR

KEY FINDINGS

Absence rates

While there does not tend to be large variation in absence levels year on year, overall absence was slightly higher in all sectors in 2012/13 than in the previous year.

In primary schools in 2012/13, 5.1 per cent of all half days were missed due to absence, comprising 3.7 per cent authorised and 1.4 per cent unauthorised absence. This represents an increase on 2011/12, when overall absence accounted for 4.8 per cent of the total half days (3.4 per cent authorised and 1.3 per cent unauthorised).

In post-primary schools in 2012/13, 7.1 per cent of all half days were missed due to absence, 4.5 per cent was authorised absence and 2.6 per cent was unauthorised absence. In 2011/12, overall absence represented 7.0 per cent of the total half days, 4.4 per cent authorised and 2.6 per cent unauthorised. As with primary schools, the figures show a slight increase in absence levels on the previous year for overall and authorised absence, while unauthorised absence has remained the same.

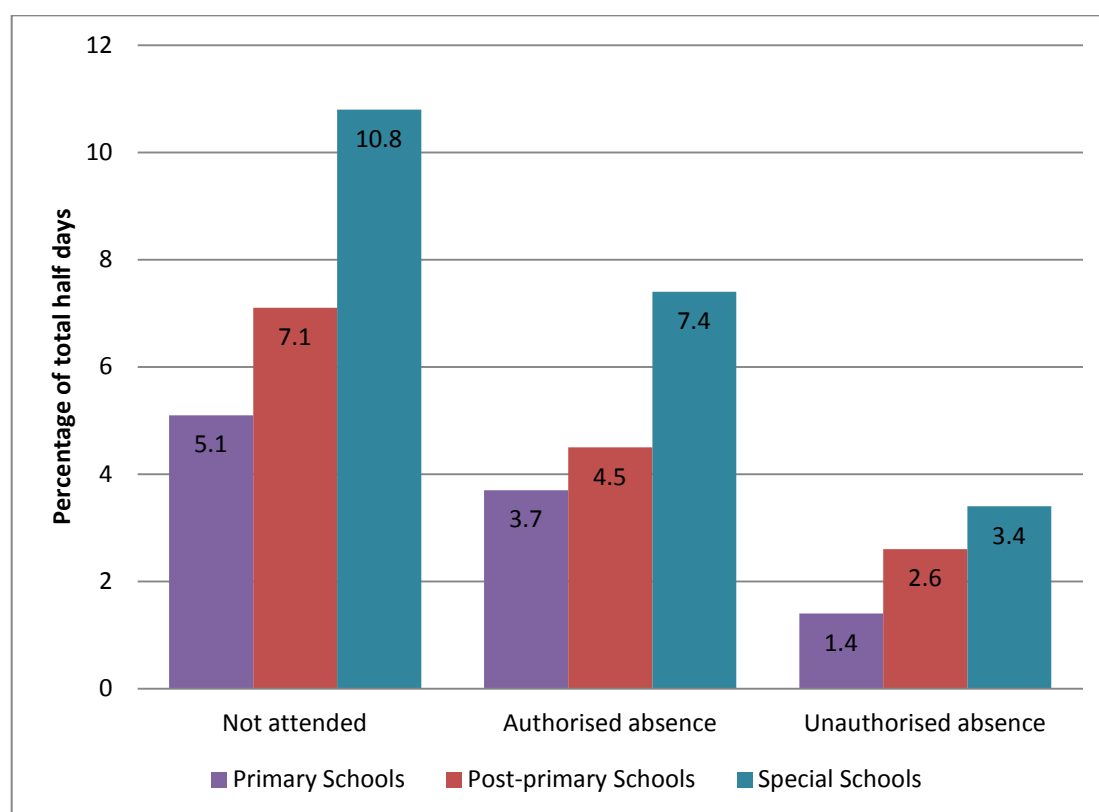
In special schools, 10.8 per cent of all half days were missed due to absence in 2012/13, comprising 7.4 per cent authorised and 3.4 per cent unauthorised absence. These figures show an increase in overall, authorised and unauthorised absence since 2011/12, when levels were 9.8 per cent, 6.5 per cent and 3.3 per cent respectively.

Table 1: Attendance at school, 2012/13

	Per cent of total half days		
	Primary Schools	Post-primary Schools	Special Schools
Attended	94.9	92.9	89.2
Not attended	5.1	7.1	10.8
<i>Comprising:</i>			
Authorised absence	3.7	4.5	7.4
Unauthorised absence	1.4	2.6	3.4

Note: In some cases, percentages may not add due to rounding.

Chart 1: Absence from primary, post-primary and special schools, 2012/13



Reasons for absence

Table 2: Absence from schools by reason, 2012/13

	Primary Schools		Post-Primary Schools		Special Schools	
	Per cent of absent half days	Per cent of total half days	Per cent of absent half days	Per cent of total half days	Per cent of absent half days	Per cent of total half days
Authorised absence						
Artistic endeavour	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bereavement	1.0	0.1	1.5	0.1	0.6	0.1
Suspended	0.1	0.0	1.2	0.1	0.7	0.1
Family holiday agreed	2.4	0.1	0.6	0.0	2.4	0.3
Illness	61.8	3.1	49.2	3.5	45.7	4.9
Medical / dental appointments	2.7	0.1	5.3	0.4	7.0	0.8
Other exceptional circumstances	4.4	0.2	5.6	0.4	12.2	1.3
Religious observance	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Total authorised absence	72.6	3.7	63.8	4.5	68.7	7.4
Unauthorised absence						
Family holiday not agreed	6.4	0.3	2.1	0.2	1.8	0.2
Other	3.7	0.2	5.0	0.4	3.7	0.4
No reason yet provided	16.6	0.8	28.7	2.0	25.5	2.7
Late after registration closed	0.7	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0
Total unauthorised absence	27.4	1.4	36.2	2.6	31.3	3.4
Total overall absence	100	5.1	100	7.1	100	10.8

The most common reason for absence in all schools was illness, which is an authorised absence. Illness accounted for 61.8 per cent of all absent half days in primary schools, 49.2 per cent in post-primary schools and 45.7 per cent in special schools. This equates to 3.1 per cent, 3.5 per cent and 4.9 per cent of the total half days respectively.

While the level of absence attributable to each reason tends to be similar year on year, there was an increase in 'other exceptional circumstances' in 2012/13. In 2011/12, this reason represented 3.3 per cent of all absent half days in primary schools, 3.7 per cent in post-primary and 7.3 per cent in special schools. Levels increased to 4.4 per cent, 5.6 per cent and 12.2 per cent respectively in 2012/13. One reason for this reported increase could be severe weather conditions, which caused widespread disruption to schools in early spring of the reporting year, with pupils affected being recorded as absent due to 'other exceptional circumstances'.

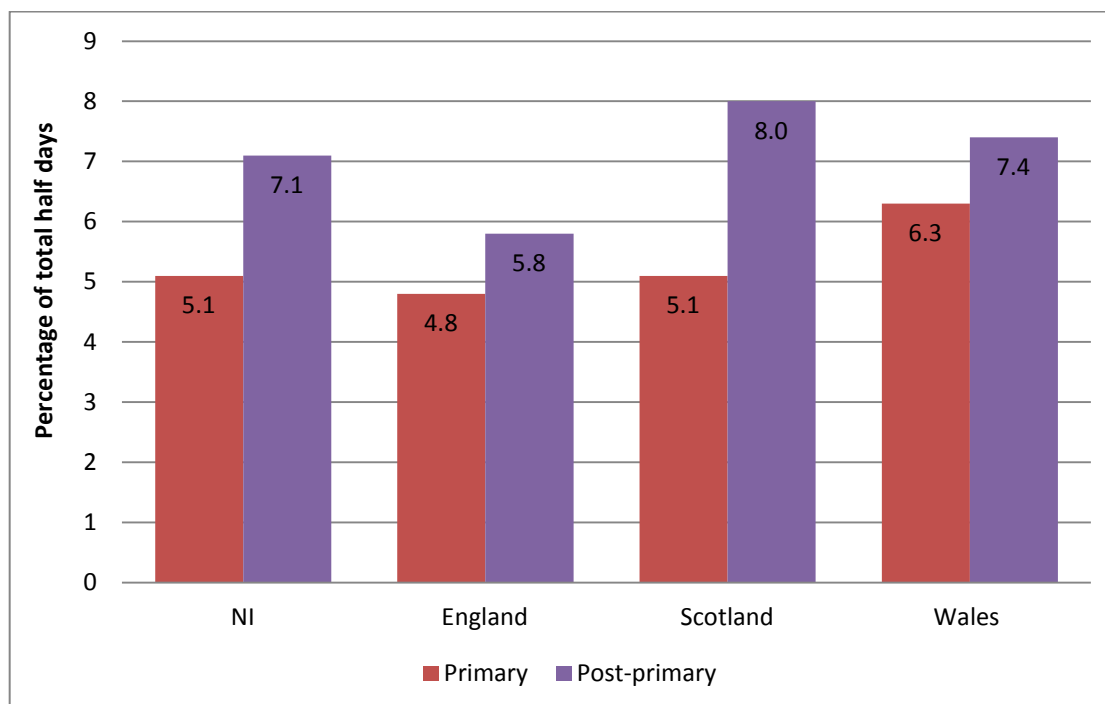
Comparisons with England, Scotland and Wales

The highest overall absence rates in the primary sector were recorded in Wales – 6.3 per cent of the total half days. Scotland had the highest overall absence levels in post-primary, at 8.0 per cent of the total half days. This compares with 5.1 per cent and 7.1 per cent respectively in Northern Ireland. However, unauthorised absence in NI schools, at 1.4 per cent of the total half days in primary and 2.6 per cent in post-primary, was notably higher than in England and Wales, and marginally higher than in Scotland.

Table 3: Comparison with England, Scotland and Wales, 2012/13

	Per cent of total half days			
	Primary Schools		Post-Primary Schools	
	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
NI	1.4	5.1	2.6	7.1
England	0.7	4.8	1.2	5.8
Scotland	1.3	5.1	2.5	8.0
Wales	0.9	6.3	1.3	7.4

Chart 2: Comparisons with England, Scotland and Wales – overall absence, 2012/13



PRIMARY SCHOOLS

KEY FINDINGS

OVERALL

In primary schools in 2012/13, 5.1 per cent of all half days were missed due to absence, comprising 3.7 per cent authorised and 1.4 per cent unauthorised absence (Table 1).

The most common reason for absence in primary schools was illness, which is an authorised absence and accounted for 3.1 per cent of the total half days or 61.8 per cent of all absent half days in 2012/13 (Table 2).

SCHOOL LEVEL ANALYSIS

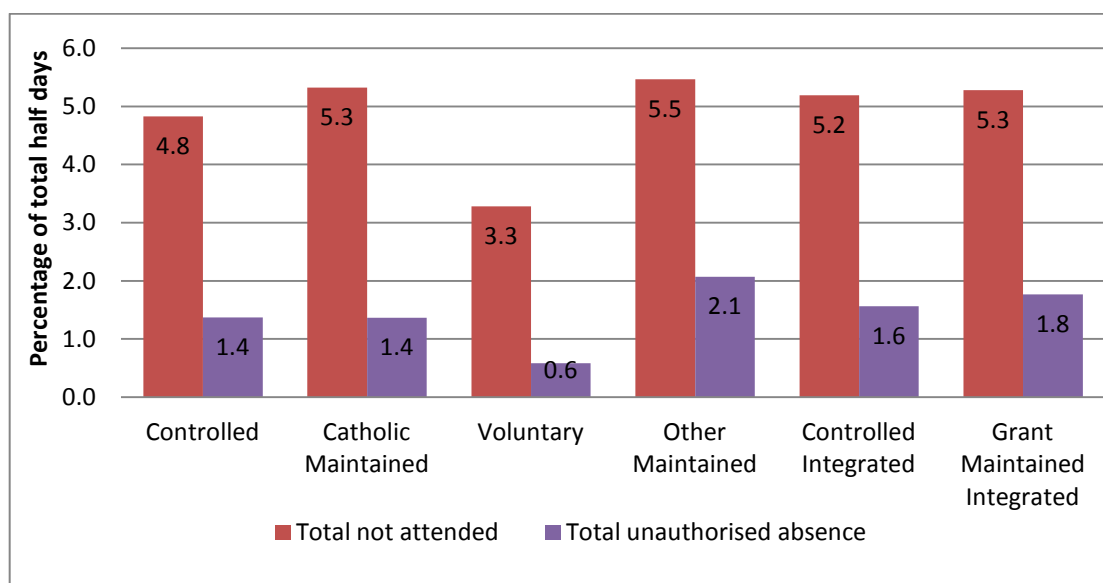
Management Type

Other maintained primary schools had the highest levels of average overall absence (5.5 per cent of the total half days) while voluntary schools had the lowest at 3.3 per cent of the total half days.

Table 4: Attendance at primary school by management type, 2012/13

Management Type	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Controlled	95.2	4.8	3.5	1.4
Catholic Maintained	94.7	5.3	4.0	1.4
Voluntary	96.7	3.3	2.7	0.6
Other Maintained	94.5	5.5	3.4	2.1
Controlled Integrated	94.8	5.2	3.6	1.6
Grant Maintained Integrated	94.7	5.3	3.5	1.8
Primary average	94.9	5.1	3.7	1.4

Chart 3: Absence from primary school by management type, 2012/13



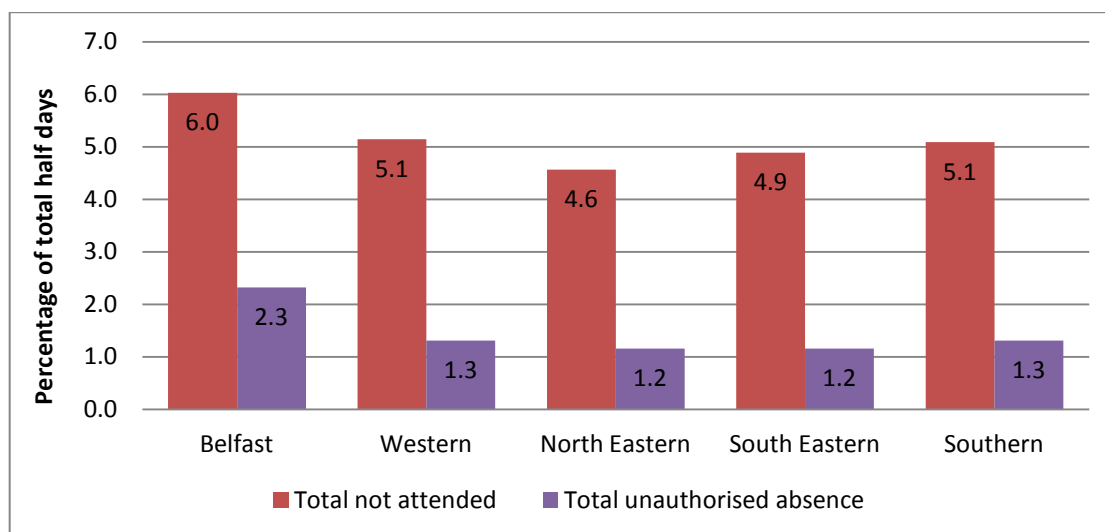
Education and Library Board

At 6.0 per cent of the total half days, the highest average overall absence for primary schools was recorded by the Belfast Education and Library Board. The North Eastern Education and Library Board reported the lowest average overall absence, with 4.6 per cent of the total half days missed.

Table 5: Attendance at primary school by Education and Library Board, 2012/13

ELB	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Belfast	94.0	6.0	3.7	2.3
Western	94.9	5.1	3.8	1.3
North Eastern	95.4	4.6	3.4	1.2
South Eastern	95.1	4.9	3.7	1.2
Southern	94.9	5.1	3.8	1.3
Primary average	94.9	5.1	3.7	1.4

Chart 4: Absence from primary school by Education and Library Board, 2012/13



Location

Overall absence was higher for urban primary schools (5.4 per cent of the total half days) than for rural primary schools (4.4 per cent of the total half days), as was unauthorised absence (1.7 per cent compared with 0.8 per cent respectively).

Table 6: Attendance at primary school by location of school, 2012/13

Location	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Urban	94.6	5.4	3.7	1.7
Rural	95.6	4.4	3.6	0.8
Primary average	94.9	5.1	3.7	1.4

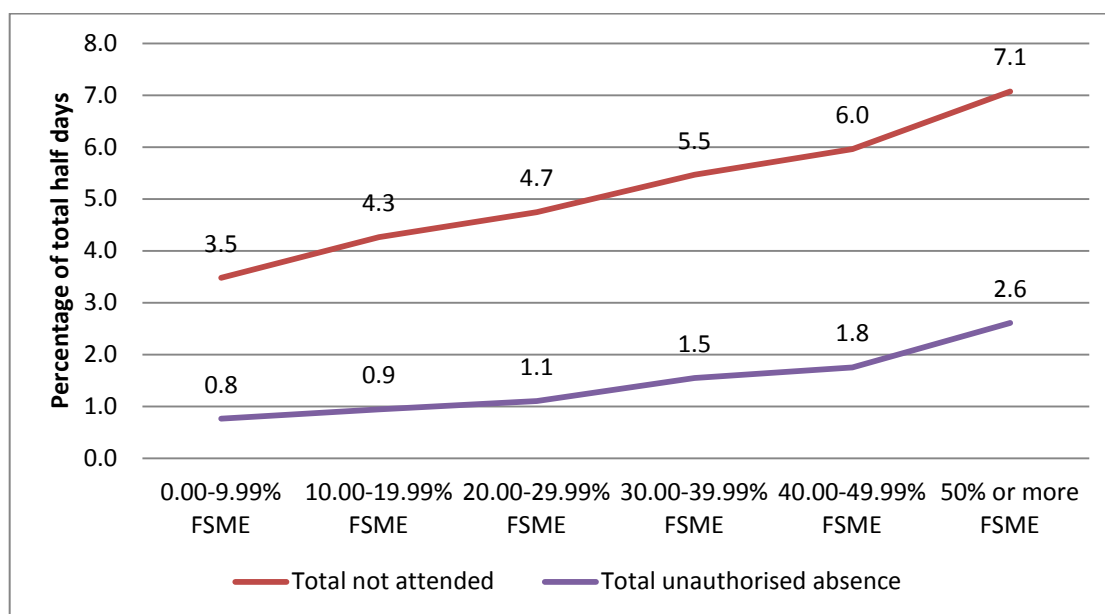
Free school meal entitlement (FSME)

The figures show that average overall absence levels generally increase in line with the percentage of pupils enrolled who are eligible for free school meals. In schools where less than 10 per cent of pupils enrolled were eligible for free school meals, the average overall absence level was 3.5 per cent of the total half days. This compares with 7.1 per cent of the total half days for schools with more than 50 per cent of pupils enrolled eligible for free school meals. Since the level of free school meal eligibility is indicative of levels of deprivation, the data suggest that absence tends to be higher in more disadvantaged areas.

Table 7: Attendance at primary school by free school meal entitlement, 2012/13

Percentage of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
0.00-9.99%	96.5	3.5	2.7	0.8
10.00-19.99%	95.7	4.3	3.3	0.9
20.00-29.99%	95.3	4.7	3.6	1.1
30.00-39.99%	94.5	5.5	3.9	1.5
40.00-49.99%	94.0	6.0	4.2	1.8
50% or more	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6
Primary average	94.9	5.1	3.7	1.4

Chart 5: Absence from primary school by free school meal entitlement, 2012/13



PUPIL LEVEL ANALYSIS

Gender

Average overall absence rates were similar for boys and girls of primary school age (5.1 per cent and 5.0 per cent of the total half days respectively).

Table 8: Attendance at primary school by gender, 2012/13

Gender	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Male	94.9	5.1	3.7	1.4
Female	95.0	5.0	3.6	1.3
Primary average	94.9	5.1	3.7	1.4

Year group

The highest average overall absence occurred in Year 1 of primary school when 5.8 per cent of the total half days are missed. Further analysis shows that, with the exception of illness, levels of absence tend to be similar for all reasons regardless of year group. Year 1 pupils miss more total half days due to illness than any other year group (3.9 per cent compared with a low of 2.9 per cent in Years 4, 5 and 6).

Table 9: Attendance at primary school by year group, 2012/13

Year Group	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
1	94.2	5.8	4.4	1.3
2	94.7	5.3	3.8	1.4
3	95.0	5.0	3.6	1.4
4	95.2	4.8	3.4	1.4
5	95.2	4.8	3.4	1.4
6	95.2	4.8	3.4	1.4
7	95.0	5.0	3.6	1.4
Primary average	94.9	5.1	3.7	1.4

Ethnicity

Irish Traveller children attending primary school had a markedly higher average overall absence rate than any other ethnic group. They missed 26 per cent of the total half days, compared with 4.9 per cent for white children and 7.0 per cent for children from a minority ethnic background.

Table 10: Attendance at primary school by ethnicity, 2012/13

Ethnicity	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
White	95.1	4.9	3.6	1.3
Minority Ethnic Background	93.0	7.0	4.1	2.8
Irish Traveller	74.0	26.0	12.3	13.6
Primary average	94.9	5.1	3.7	1.4

Note: Ethnicity was not available for 82 enrolments at primary schools representing 0.05 per cent of the total enrolments.

Looked after children

Looked after children in primary schools had a slightly lower overall absence rate (4.8 per cent) than those who were not in care (5.1 per cent), however levels of unauthorised absence are slightly higher.

Table 11: Attendance of looked after children at primary school, 2012/13

Status	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Looked after children	95.2	4.8	3.3	1.5
Other	94.9	5.1	3.7	1.4
Primary average	94.9	5.1	3.7	1.4

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRA)

At 7.1 per cent, the overall absence rate for pupils living in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas was 2.4 percentage points higher than for pupils who did not live in an NRA.

Table 12: Attendance rates for primary pupils living in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, 2012/13

Area	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Neighbourhood Renewal Area	92.9	7.1	4.4	2.7
Other	95.3	4.7	3.6	1.2
Primary average	94.9	5.1	3.7	1.4

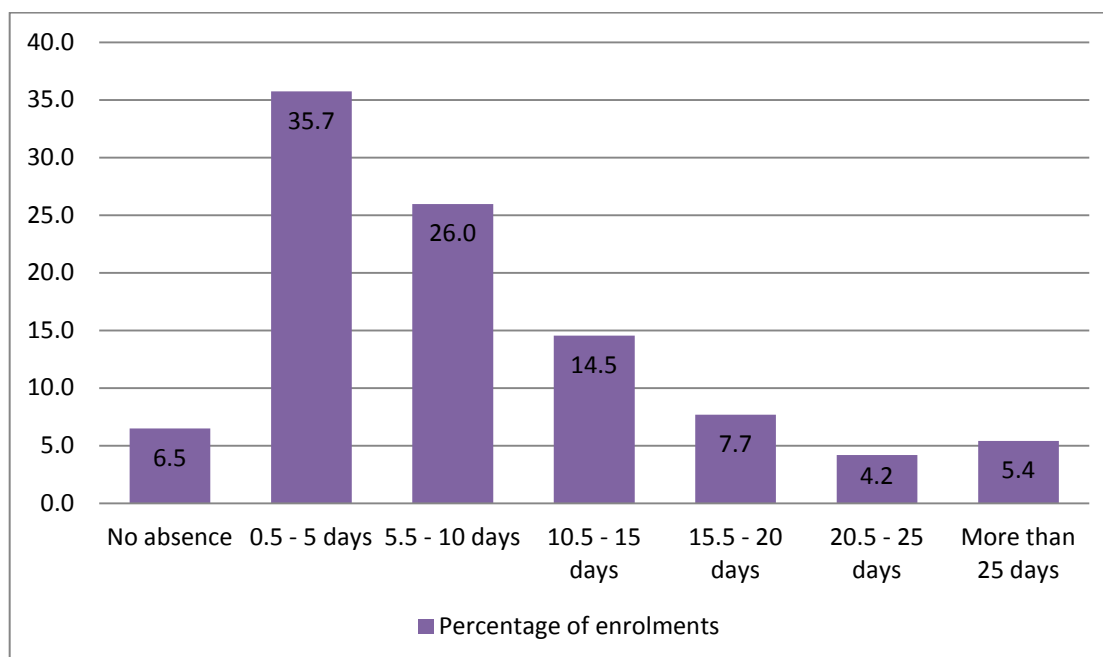
Duration of absence

Of all pupils enrolled in primary schools in 2012/13, 6.5 per cent had no absence throughout the year, a decrease on the 8.0 per cent with full attendance in 2011/12. At 35.7 per cent of total enrolments, between '0.5 and 5 days' absence was the group reported most frequently in 2012/13. Approximately 5.4 per cent of pupils enrolled were absent for more than 25 days, which was slightly more than in 2011/12 (5.0 per cent).

Table 13: Percentage of enrolments at primary school by average number of days overall absence, 2012/13

Average number of days overall absence	Percentage of enrolments
No absence	6.5
0.5 - 5 days	35.7
5.5 - 10 days	26.0
10.5 - 15 days	14.5
15.5 - 20 days	7.7
20.5 - 25 days	4.2
More than 25 days	5.4

Chart 6: Absence from primary school by average number of days absence, 2012/13



Levels of absence

The table below shows that more than half of pupils enrolled at primary school (56.6 per cent) had an absence rate of between 0.01 per cent and 5.00 per cent of the total half days, while 4.8 per cent missed more than 15 per cent of the total half days. This shows a slight increase in the proportion of pupils with less than 85 per cent attendance on the previous year (4.6 per cent). Schools tend to consider referral of pupils to the Education Welfare Service for non-attendance if absence is more than 15 per cent; however, the final decision is at the discretion of the school on consideration of individual circumstances.

Table 14: Percentage of enrolments at primary school by overall absence rates, 2012/13

Average number of days overall absence	Percentage of enrolments
No absence	6.5
0.01% - 5.00% of total half days	56.6
5.01% - 10.00% of total half days	24.3
10.01% - 15.00% of total half days	7.8
More than 15% of total half days	4.8

Less than 85 per cent attendance

Table 15 provides an analysis of those pupils with absence levels of more than 15 per cent, along with a profile of all pupils for comparative purposes. As explained previously, this is one of the points when schools may consider referring a child to the Education Welfare Service for non-attendance. Looking at the characteristics of the pupils with absence levels of more than 15 per cent, almost half were from Catholic maintained schools (48.3 per cent) and over one-fifth (22.4 per cent and 23.5 per cent respectively) from the Belfast Education and Library Board and Southern Education and Library Board. The largest proportion of pupils with absence levels of more than 15 per cent were in Year 1 (20.9 per cent).

Table 15: Characteristics of primary school pupils enrolled with absence levels of more than 15 per cent in 2012/13

Characteristics	Percentage of pupils enrolled with absence levels of more than 15 per cent	Percentage of total pupils enrolled
SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS:		
Management type		
Controlled	44.0	46.2
Catholic maintained	48.3	45.5
Voluntary	0.3	1.0
Other maintained	1.5	1.6
Controlled integrated	2.2	2.2
Grant Maintained Integrated	3.6	3.4
Education and Library Board		
BELB	22.4	14.5
WELB	17.1	17.2
NEELB	17.3	22.7
SEELB	19.7	21.3
SELB	23.5	24.2
PUPIL CHARACTERISTICS:		
Gender		
Male	53.6	51.1
Female	46.4	48.9
Year Group		
1	20.9	15.7
2	15.3	14.9
3	13.4	14.2
4	12.2	14.1
5	12.7	13.9
6	12.6	13.6
7	12.9	13.5
Ethnicity		
White	86.7	96.2
Minority Ethnic Background	7.5	3.3
Traveller	5.5	0.4

Note: Ethnicity was not provided for 22 enrolments with absence levels of 15 per cent or more, representing 0.3 per cent of the total. Ethnicity was not provided for 82 enrolments at primary schools representing 0.05 per cent of the total enrolments.

POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

KEY FINDINGS

OVERALL

In post-primary schools in 2012/13, 7.1 per cent of all half days were missed due to absence, comprising 4.5 per cent authorised and 2.6 per cent unauthorised absence (Table 1).

The most common reason for absence in post-primary schools was illness, which is an authorised absence and accounted for 3.5 per cent of the total half days (49.2 per cent of all absent half days). (Table 2)

SCHOOL LEVEL ANALYSIS

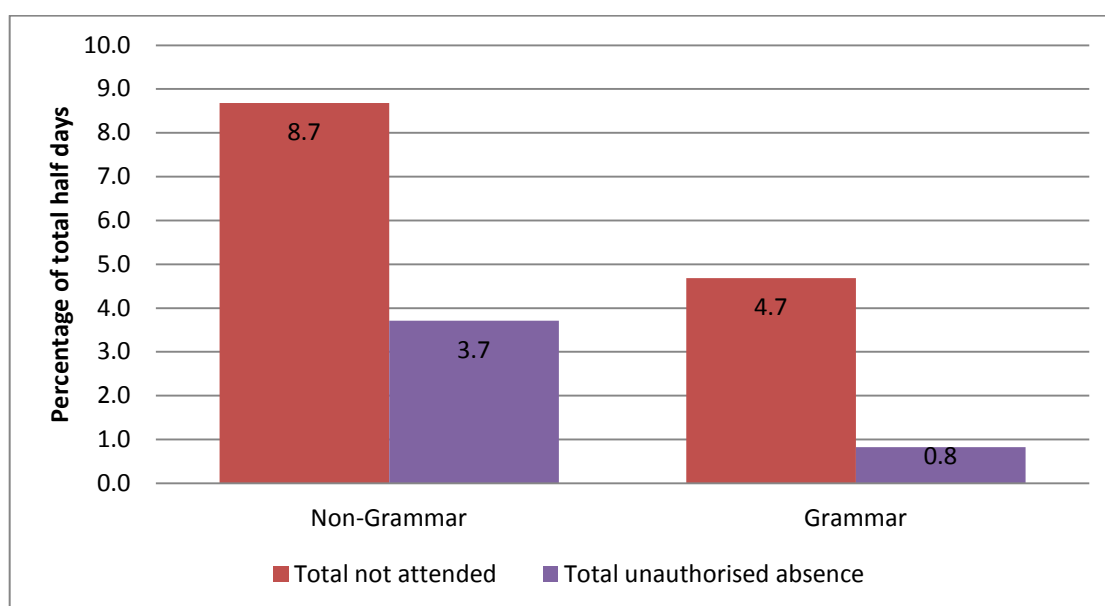
School type

At 8.7 per cent of the total half days, the average level of overall absence in non-grammar schools was higher than in grammar schools (4.7 per cent). There was a marked difference in the levels of unauthorised absence in non-grammar and grammar schools (3.7 per cent and 0.8 per cent of the total half days respectively).

Table 16: Attendance at post-primary school by school type, 2012/13

School Type	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Non-Grammar	91.3	8.7	5.0	3.7
Grammar	95.3	4.7	3.9	0.8
Post-Primary average	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6

Chart 7: Absence from post-primary school by school type, 2012/13



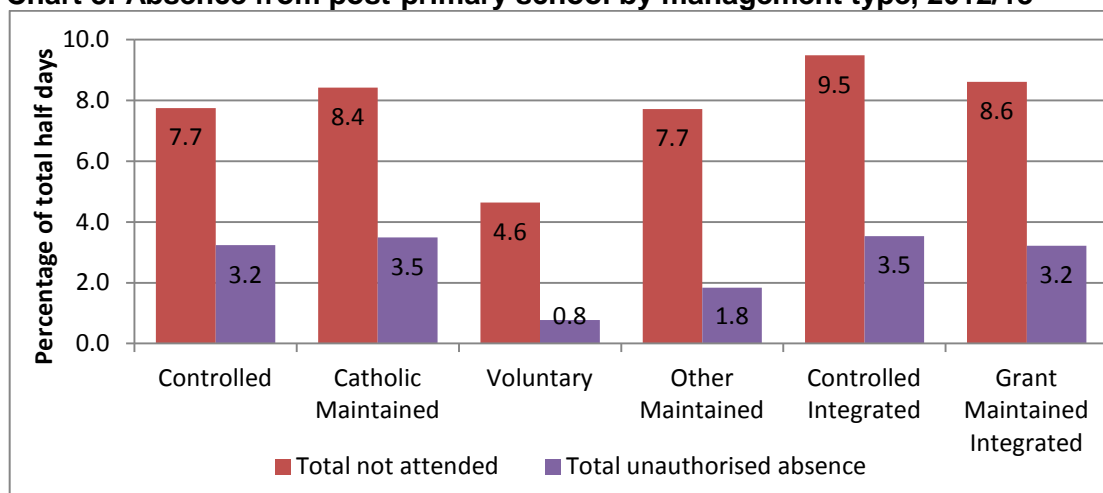
Management type

Controlled integrated schools had the highest levels of overall absence (9.5 per cent of the total half days) while voluntary schools had the lowest at 4.6 per cent of the total half days.

Table 17: Attendance at post-primary school by management type, 2012/13

Management Type	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Controlled	92.3	7.7	4.5	3.2
Catholic Maintained	91.6	8.4	4.9	3.5
Voluntary	95.4	4.6	3.9	0.8
Other Maintained	92.3	7.7	5.9	1.8
Controlled Integrated	90.5	9.5	6.0	3.5
Grant Maintained Integrated	91.4	8.6	5.4	3.2
Post-Primary average	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6

Chart 8: Absence from post-primary school by management type, 2012/13



Education and Library Board

At 7.5 per cent of the total half days, South Eastern Education and Library Board had the highest average overall absence rate for post-primary schools. The North Eastern Education and Library Board reported the lowest level of overall absence (6.8 per cent of the total half days).

Table 18: Attendance at post-primary school by Education and Library Board, 2012/13

ELB	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Belfast	93.0	7.0	4.5	2.4
Western	92.6	7.4	4.3	3.0
North Eastern	93.2	6.8	4.5	2.3
South Eastern	92.5	7.5	4.7	2.8
Southern	93.0	7.0	4.6	2.4
Post-Primary average	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6

Location of school

Only one-fifth of post-primary schools are located in a rural area. In 2012/13 overall and unauthorised absence was slightly higher in rural schools than in urban schools.

Table 19: Attendance at post-primary school by location of school, 2012/13

Location	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Urban	93.0	7.0	4.5	2.5
Rural	92.3	7.7	5.0	2.8
Post-Primary average	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6

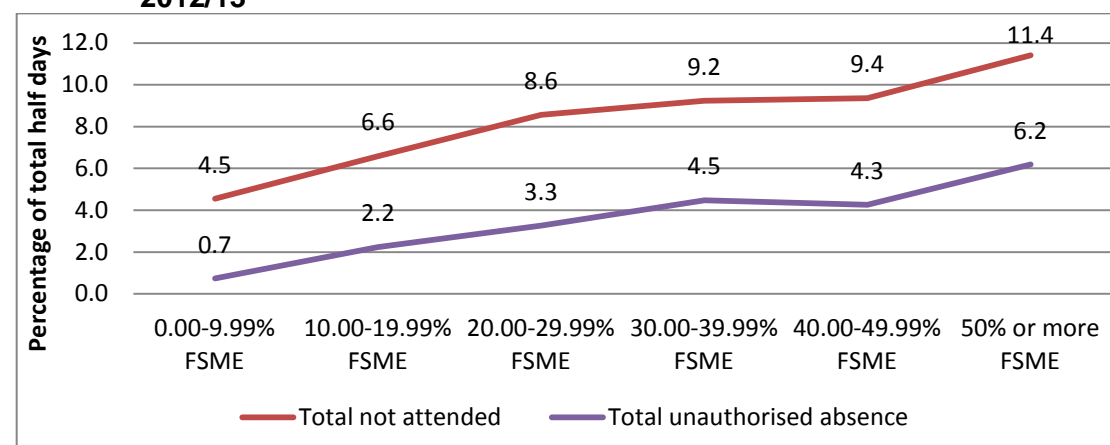
Free school meal entitlement (FSME)

The figures indicate that for the most part, absence levels increase in line with the percentage of pupils enrolled who are eligible for free school meals. In schools where less than 10 per cent of pupils enrolled were eligible for free school meals, the average overall absence level was 4.5 per cent of the total half days. This compares with 11.4 per cent of the total half days for schools with more than 50 per cent of pupils enrolled eligible for free school meals. Unauthorised absence is notably higher for schools with high levels of FSME. Since the level of free school meal eligibility is indicative of levels of deprivation, the data suggest that absence tends to be higher in more disadvantaged areas.

Table 20: Attendance at post-primary school by free school meal entitlement, 2012/13

Percentage of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
0.00-9.99%	95.5	4.5	3.8	0.7
10.00-19.99%	93.4	6.6	4.4	2.2
20.00-29.99%	91.4	8.6	5.3	3.3
30.00-39.99%	90.8	9.2	4.8	4.5
40.00-49.99%	90.6	9.4	5.1	4.3
50% or more	88.6	11.4	5.2	6.2
Post-Primary average	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6

Chart 9: Absence from post-primary school by free school meal entitlement, 2012/13



PUPIL LEVEL ANALYSIS

Gender

At 7.2 per cent and 7.0 per cent of total half days respectively, average overall absence was similar for males and females. While the predominant cause of absence for both genders was illness, females missed a greater proportion of the total half days for this reason than males (51.4 per cent and 47.1 per cent of the total absent half days respectively). The proportion of total half days missed due to suspension from school was almost four times higher for males than for females.

Table 21: Attendance at post-primary school by gender, 2012/13

Gender	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Male	92.8	7.2	4.4	2.7
Female	93.0	7.0	4.6	2.4
Post-Primary average	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6

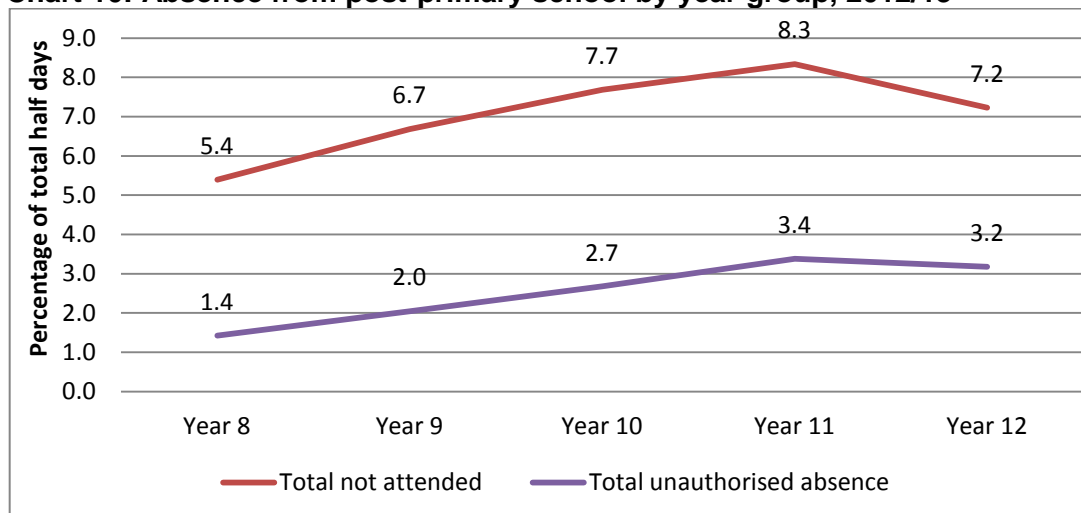
Year group

Average absence levels increased steadily between Year 8 and Year 11 (from 5.4 per cent to 8.3 per cent of the total half days), before decreasing to 7.2 per cent of the total half days in Year 12. Levels of unauthorised absence followed the same pattern, increasing from 1.4 per cent in Year 8 to 3.4 per cent in Year 11 before falling slightly to 3.2 per cent in Year 12.

Table 22: Attendance at post-primary school by year group, 2012/13

Year Group	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Year 8	94.6	5.4	4.0	1.4
Year 9	93.3	6.7	4.6	2.0
Year 10	92.3	7.7	5.0	2.7
Year 11	91.7	8.3	5.0	3.4
Year 12	92.8	7.2	4.0	3.2
Post-Primary average	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6

Chart 10: Absence from post-primary school by year group, 2012/13



Ethnicity

At 42.4 per cent of the total half days, average level of overall absence was higher for Irish Traveller children than for any other ethnic group. This compares with 7.0 per cent for white children and 6.7 per cent for children from a minority ethnic background.

Table 23: Attendance at post-primary school by ethnicity, 2012/13

Ethnicity	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
White	93.0	7.0	4.5	2.5
Minority Ethnic Background	93.3	6.7	3.8	2.9
Irish Traveller	57.6	42.4	10.1	32.4
Post-Primary average	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6

Looked after children

Rates of overall and unauthorised absence were notably higher for looked after children in post-primary schools (9.8 per cent and 4.8 per cent of the total half days respectively), compared with 7.1 per cent and 2.6 per cent for all other children.

Table 24: Attendance of looked after children at post-primary school, 2012/13

Status	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Looked after children	90.2	9.8	4.9	4.8
Other	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6
Post-Primary average	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRA)

At 9.7 per cent, the overall absence rate for pupils living in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas was 3.1 percentage points higher than for pupils who did not live in an NRA.

Table 25: Attendance rates for post-primary pupils living in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, 2012/13

Area	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Neighbourhood Renewal Area	90.3	9.7	5.3	4.4
Other	93.4	6.6	4.4	2.2
Post-Primary average	92.9	7.1	4.5	2.6

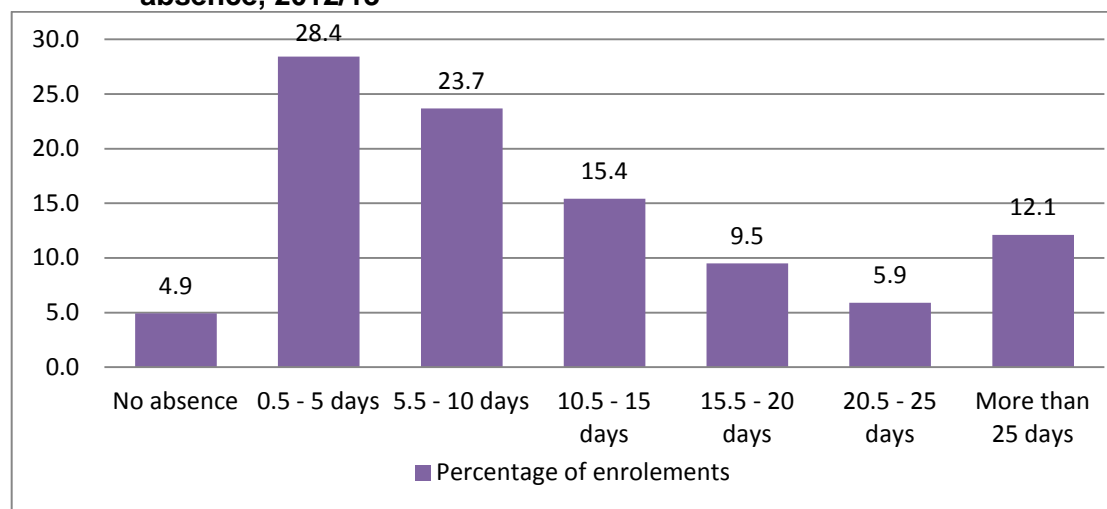
Duration of absence

Almost 5 per cent of pupils enrolled in Year 8 to Year 12 at post-primary schools had no absence during 2012/13, a decrease on the 5.9 per cent that had full attendance in 2011/12. At 28.4 per cent of total enrolments, between '0.5 and 5.0 days' absence was the group reported most frequently in 2012/13; 12.1 per cent of pupils enrolled were absent for more than 25 days.

Table 26: Percentage of enrolments at post-primary school by average number of days absence, 2012/13

Average number of days overall absence	Percentage of enrolments
No absence	4.9
0.5 - 5 days	28.4
5.5 - 10 days	23.7
10.5 - 15 days	15.4
15.5 - 20 days	9.5
20.5 - 25 days	5.9
More than 25 days	12.1

Chart 11: Absence from post-primary school by average number of days absence, 2012/13



Levels of absence

Looking at absence rates (number of half days absent as a proportion of all half days), 47.5 per cent of post-primary pupils had an absence rate of between 0.01 per cent and 5.00 per cent of total half days. Of the total enrolments, 10.8 per cent of pupils enrolled were absent for more than 15 per cent of the total half days, an increase of 0.1 percentage points on 2011/12. Schools tend to consider referral of pupils to the Education Welfare Service for non-attendance if absence is more than 15 per cent; however, the final decision is at the discretion of the school on consideration of individual circumstances.

Table 27: Percentage of enrolments at post-primary school by overall absence rates, 2012/13

Average number of days overall absence	Percentage of enrolments
No absence	4.9
0.01% - 5.00% of total half days	47.5
5.01% - 10.00% of total half days	25.9
10.01% - 15.00% of total half days	10.8
More than 15% of total half days	10.8

Less than 85 per cent attendance

Table 28 provides an analysis of those pupils with absence levels of more than 15 per cent, along with a profile of all pupils for comparative purposes. As explained previously, this is one of the points when schools may consider referring a child to the Education Welfare Service for non-attendance. Analysis of pupils with more than a 15 per cent overall absence rate highlights that almost nine out of ten attended non-grammar schools and the largest group in this absence band were Year 11 pupils.

Table 28: Characteristics of post-primary pupils enrolled with absence levels of more than 15 per cent in 2012/13

Characteristics	Percentage of pupils enrolled with absence levels of more than 15 per cent	Percentage of total pupils enrolled
SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS		
School type		
Non-grammar	87.1	60.8
Grammar	12.9	39.2
Management type		
Controlled	40.2	32.2
Catholic maintained	36.9	28.7
Voluntary	8.9	29.7
Other maintained	0.4	0.4
Controlled integrated	3.8	2.2
Grant Maintained Integrated	9.9	6.9
Education and Library Board		
BELB	18.8	19.3
WELB	17.5	17.4
NEELB	21.7	22.4
SEELB	20.0	17.7
SELB	22.0	23.2
PUPIL CHARACTERISTICS		
Gender		
Male	52.3	50.9
Female	47.7	49.1
Year Group		
8	10.5	18.8
9	16.7	19.3
10	23.5	20.4
11	27.1	20.6
12	22.2	20.8
Ethnicity		
White	95.9	97.4
Minority Ethnic Background	2.3	2.3
Traveller	1.9	0.3

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

KEY FINDINGS

OVERALL

In special schools in 2012/13, 10.8 per cent of all half days were missed due to absence, comprising 7.4 per cent authorised and 3.4 per cent unauthorised absence (Table1).

The most common reason for absence in special schools was illness, which is an authorised absence and accounted for 4.9 per cent of the total half days (45.7 per cent of all absent half days) (Table 2).

SCHOOL LEVEL ANALYSIS

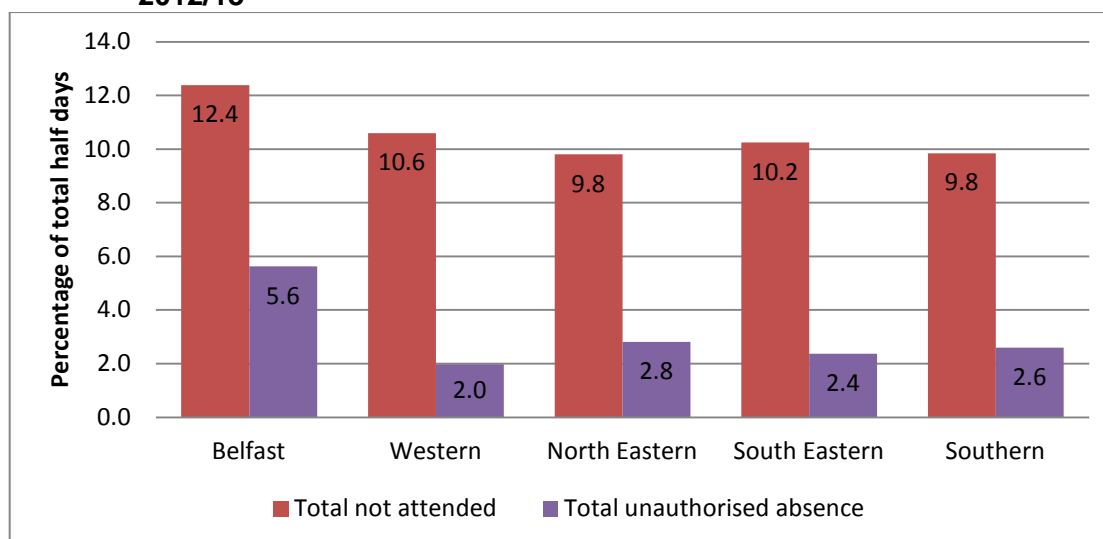
Education and Library Board

Average overall absence was highest (12.4 per cent of total half days) in Belfast Education and Library Board in 2012/13 and lowest in the North Eastern and Southern Education and Library Boards special schools (9.8 per cent of total half days).

Table 29: Attendance at special school by Education and Library Board, 2012/13

ELB	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Belfast	87.6	12.4	6.8	5.6
Western	89.4	10.6	8.6	2.0
North Eastern	90.2	9.8	7.0	2.8
South Eastern	89.8	10.2	7.9	2.4
Southern	90.2	9.8	7.2	2.6
Special average	89.2	10.8	7.4	3.4

Chart 12: Absence from special school by Education and Library Board, 2012/13



PUPIL LEVEL ANALYSIS

Gender

Overall absence rates were higher for females attending special schools than for males (11.3 per cent and 10.5 per cent of total half days respectively).

Table 30: Attendance at special school by gender, 2012/13

Gender	Percentage of total half days			
	Total attended	Total not attended	Total authorised absence	Total unauthorised absence
Male	89.5	10.5	7.0	3.5
Female	88.7	11.3	8.3	3.0
Special average	89.2	10.8	7.4	3.4

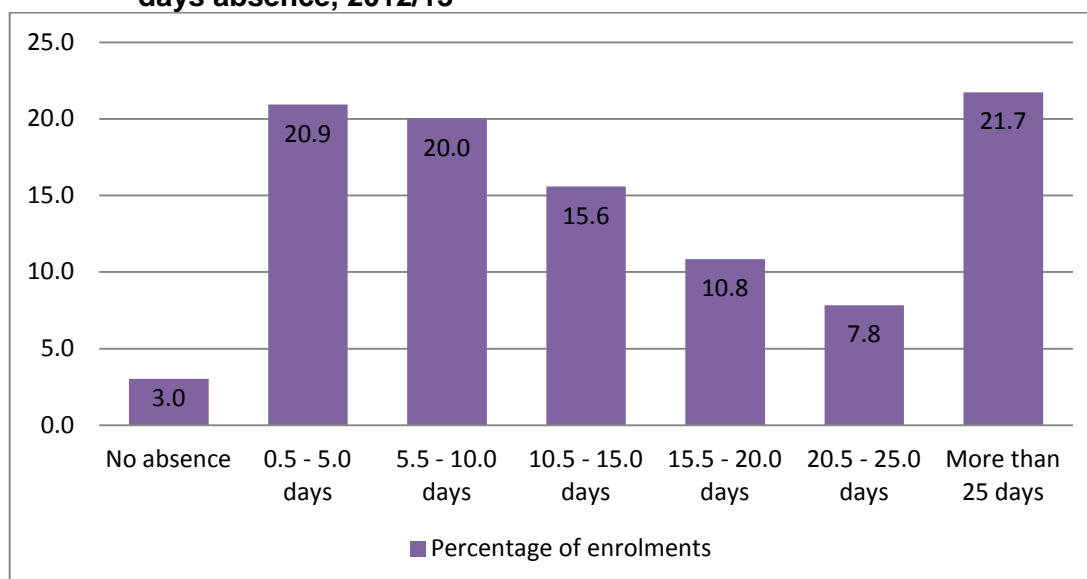
Duration of absence

Three per cent of pupils enrolled at special schools had no absence throughout 2012/13. In terms of days missed, over one-fifth (21.7 per cent) of pupils enrolled missed more than 25 days in the same year.

Table 31: Percentage of enrolments at special school by average number of days absence, 2012/13

Average number of days overall absence	Percentage of enrolments
No absence	3.0
0.5 - 5.0 days	20.9
5.5 - 10.0 days	20.0
10.5 - 15.0 days	15.6
15.5 - 20.0 days	10.8
20.5 - 25.0 days	7.8
More than 25 days	21.7

Chart 13: Percentage of enrolments at special school by average number of days absence, 2012/13



Levels of absence

Over one-third (35.1 per cent) of pupils enrolled had an overall absence rate of between 0.01 per cent and 5.00 per cent of the total half days. More than one-fifth (21.1 per cent) were absent for more than 15 per cent of the total half days.

Table 32: Percentage of enrolments at special school by overall absence rates, 2012/13

Overall absence rate	Percentage of enrolments
No absence	3.0
0.01% - 5.00% of total half days	35.1
5.01% - 10.00% of total half days	26.6
10.01% - 15.00% of total half days	14.1
More than 15% of total half days	21.1

Notes to readers:

Background information

National Statistics

1. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

2. The statistics in this release have been derived from the annual school census. More information about the collection of school attendance data can be found at http://www.deni.gov.uk/updated_data_collection_procedures.doc
3. The 2012/13 figures in this statistical release are based on school census information as at 11 October 2013. They may be subject to minor revision and these will be notified in accordance with our revisions policy. This can be accessed at http://www.deni.gov.uk/de_statement_on_statistical_revisions-2.doc

The data is produced at aggregate level only therefore individual pupils cannot be identified. More information on confidentiality can be found in the DE Confidentiality and Access Statement at the following link

http://www.deni.gov.uk/de_statement_on_confidentiality_new.doc

Definitions

4. Attendance or absence is measured for every pupil in half day sessions (am and pm).

Attendance

In addition to actual attendance within the school premises, attendance also includes:

- Late (before registration closed)
- Approved sporting activities
- Study leave
- Educational visits
- Work experience
- Alternative education provision (organised by the ELB)*
- Home/hospital tuition (organised by the ELB)*
- Pupil referral unit*
- Another mainstream school (under Entitlement Framework)*
- Training Organisation (under Entitlement Framework)*
- FE College (under Entitlement Framework)*
- Intensive Support Learning Unit*
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)*

Authorised absence

An authorised absence is absence with permission from an authorised school representative on provision of a satisfactory explanation. This includes:

- Artistic endeavour**
- Bereavement
- Suspension
- Agreed family holiday (in very exceptional circumstances)
- Illness
- Medical / dental appointments

- Other exceptional circumstances (includes an exceptional event outside control of the school, for example, travelling children, court appearance)
- Religious observance

Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence is absence without permission from an authorised school representative due to unexplained or unjustified absence. This includes:

- Family holiday not agreed
- Other absence (includes absence not covered by any other code or a reason which is not acceptable to the school, for example, pupil's / parent's or sibling's birthday).
- No reason provided for absence
- Late (after registration closed)

* In 2010/11, the code 'E – Educated offsite' was removed and broken down into 8 new codes, providing more detail on the type of alternative educational provision.

** New code added in 2010/11.

Note: The code 'T – Traveller absence' was removed prior to the 2010/11 academic year.

Data quality and coverage

5. As with the data for England, Scotland and Wales, overall absence is considered to be a more reliable measure of absence than authorised and unauthorised absence. Prior to September 2009, schools were advised to record unexplained absence initially as 'no reason yet provided', however, if a reason was not provided within a specified period of time, these should be changed to 'other'. From September 2009 onwards, schools were instructed that, if a reason was never provided, the code should remain as 'no reason yet provided'. This has resulted in higher levels of unauthorised absence being recorded as 'no reason yet provided' and lower figures for 'other' than in previous years.

Both figures have been provided, however limitations in comparing rates of unauthorised and authorised absence should be noted. In addition, for those absences which are not covered by a specific code, the decision to allocate the absence as authorised or unauthorised is taken by the school.

6. Primary and post-primary data refer to pupils in Years 1 to 12 only, which aligns with the compulsory school age in Northern Ireland. Figures for special schools include all pupils attending special schools in 2012/13.
7. Attendance information was not available for ten primary schools and four post-primary schools which had closed prior to the data being collected. This accounts for 1.2 per cent and 1.9 per cent of the total primary schools and post-primary schools, respectively, and 0.6 per cent and 0.2 per cent of all pupils in Years 1 to 7 and Years 8 to 12, respectively.
8. Comparative data was obtained from the following sources:

Pupil Absence in Schools in England, Autumn Term 2012 and Spring Term 2013
 Absenteeism from Primary Schools, 2012/13 (Wales)
 Absenteeism from Secondary Schools, 2012/13 (Wales)
 Attendance and Absence in Scottish Schools, 2012/13

There are slight differences in definitions between the regions, for example, England statistics include study leave in authorised absence while the DE statistics categorise it as present. There are also methodological differences in collecting the information. For example, the statistics for England are reported on a termly basis.

9. For the purpose of this analysis, urban and rural are defined according to the findings of the Inter-Departmental Urban-Rural Definition Group which can be accessed using the following link:
http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk/mapxtreme_towns/Reports/ur_report.pdf

10. In some cases, percentages may not add due to rounding.

Pupil level data

11. Pupil level information refers to the number of pupil enrolments rather than the number of pupils. A pupil can move schools during the year and will therefore have an attendance record at more than one school.
12. Comparison of the number of looked after children recorded in the school census and the number recorded by the DHSSPS Children Order Statistical Tables suggests some under-reporting of looked after children in the school census. It is possible that schools are unaware of the child's looked after status. Also, since attendance data is collectively retrospectively from schools and matched with current pupil characteristics, the looked after status may have changed. Despite this, attendance rates for looked after children have been included in this publication since the data are sufficiently robust to produce indicative figures.
13. As stated earlier, attendance is measured for each pupil in half day sessions. In order to provide information on the actual number of school days missed, these totals have been divided by two. While this is useful to provide an indication of school days missed, it is generally more accurate to report in terms of half days.

Schools are required to be in operation for 190 days in the school year, less any School Development Days (SDDs). Schools can apply for up to five SDDs, which can produce slight variations between the numbers of days individual schools are open to pupils.

Users and uses of the data

14. The statistics are widely used by a range of groups including members of the NI Assembly, the Department of Education, other government departments, Education and Library Boards, schools, the Education and Training Inspectorate, researchers, students and the public. The data are used for benchmarking, performance indicators, policy development and monitoring, cross-departmental indicators e.g. NI Multiple Deprivation Measure, OFMdFM 10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People and research studies.
15. Requests for further information should be addressed to:
Helen Irwin
Statistics and Research Branch
Department of Education
Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor
Co. Down
BT19 7PR
Telephone: 028 9127 9816
Fax: 028 9127 9594
Email: helen.irwin@deni.gov.uk

Special analyses of the attendance information can be undertaken on request.

DE Statistical Releases can be accessed on the DE website (www.deni.gov.uk) under the Statistics and Research section.

If you have any comments or suggestions in relation to attendance data or this release, please let us know via the short questionnaire at the following link:
http://www.deni.gov.uk/attendance_statistics_user_questionnaire.doc