
REVIEW OF 2012/13 RECEPTION & YEAR ONE ATTENDANCE DATA

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on actions taken to address the Reception and Year One low attendance issue.

Summary

2. To outline the current position of Year 1 attendance and actions taken to improve this.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) To note the contents of the report
 - (b) Request an additional report in Autumn 2013

Murray Rose, Director of People

Background Papers

Chris Archer: Extension 406001

S17 Crime and Disorder	Increased attendance at school and engagement in education could have a positive impact on crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	Increased attendance could have a positive impact on health and well being.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues this report needs to address.
Wards Affected	There are pockets of low attendance in specific schools. However, the impact is on the whole of Darlington. Therefore, this report does not impact on a particular ward, but Darlington as a whole.
Groups Affected	Pupils in Reception and Year One classes and the parents, schools of the pupils.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Relevant to the education and skills outcomes of the sustainable community strategy.
Efficiency	This report does not identify any efficiency savings.

MAIN REPORT

Background

4. The attendance of Year One pupils has been consistently lower than the overall primary attendance in Darlington. Children enter full-time education aged four in the Reception year, which is the year in which they become five. Children transfer to Year One in the September after they become five.
5. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education. Compulsory school age is from age five onwards. Overall primary school attendance has been similar to the national average for the past four years. However, Year One attendance has been declining. The LA does not hold Reception attendance data.

Current Situation

6. Schools are legally required to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Darlington schools apply this process to Reception age children. The legal requirement to submit the attendance data to DfE extended to Reception age pupils in the 2012-2013 academic year.
7. Attendance data is recorded and submitted at national level. Following submission of Darlington Reception attendance data this academic year it will form the baseline. For the autumn term the data will be collected via the January Census. Thus, data will be a term in arrears and will continue to be.
8. There will be no comparisons available at local level until next year.
9. When the Year One data is collected the LA will be able to compare against previous years for Year One attendance data.

Information and Analysis

10. Low attendance impacts on the pupil's attitude towards learning and attainment. Schools that were identified as having the lowest attendance in Reception and Year One have systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance.
11. Nursery staff alerted Reception staff to potential poor attendance at the Early Years Transition meeting in July. A supporting letter to reception staff raised awareness of the attendance facts.
12. The Children's Centre staff targeted specific attendance related issues with parents and have ensured staff offer consistent messages regarding the importance of good attendance. Specific schools have worked in partnership with Children's Centres to change parental attitude to lateness and non attendance for insignificant

reasons.

13. A PowerPoint raising awareness of the Reception and Year One attendance related issues was shared with schools. A number of schools have defined both the key reasons for low attendance and identified the families that consistently keep children off school. Medical and dental appointment attendance, family holidays and illness are the basis of the majority of sessions lost by children.
14. Following the identification of the schools with the lowest attendance it appeared to be appropriate to disseminate the 'attendance is important' message by targeting parents of the specific schools. The Children's Centre staff/locality early intervention teams have provided the targeted focus and support where appropriate.

Actions to Address Attendance

15. As the legal requirement to submit reception age pupil attendance data to DfE is extended it will be possible to analyse the comparative data year on year and ensure schools/governors challenge Reception and Year One low attendance issues.

Conclusions

16. The focus on Reception and Year One low attendance issues has raised awareness and attracted actions. The collection of data will provide evidence of impact.