
YEAR ONE AND RECEPTION ATTENDANCE

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide details of the impact of the actions to address attendance in reception and year one. Prior to 2012 the attendance of year one pupils was consistently lower than the overall primary attendance in Darlington.

Summary

2. Measures taken to monitor attendance in reception classes and reinforce children's attendance with parents have resulted in a gradual increase in overall attendance. This has an impact in attendance and progress once compulsory school age education is reached.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that Members note the work undertaken to improve attendance levels.

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Background Papers

None

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S17 Crime and Disorder	No impact
Health and Well Being	Early years provision improves development and socialisation skills
Carbon Impact	No impact
Diversity	Early years provision is available to all ethnic minority groups and those with disabilities
Wards Affected	All wards
Groups Affected	Families where a child is 4-5yrs
Budget and Policy Framework	No
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Best start in life- relevant to early years provision
Efficiency	No

MAIN REPORT

Background

4. The majority of Darlington children enter full time education age four in the reception year, which is the year in which they become five. A child is not required to start school until they have reached compulsory school age following their fifth birthday. Flexibility in the admissions code was introduced by DfE in July 2013. Parents can request that their child attends part-time until they reach compulsory school age, or that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the same academic year. In addition the admissions code enables a parent to request that their child is admitted outside of their normal age group.
5. Children transfer to year one in the September after they become five.
6. Attendance data for year one pupils has been collected for many years. The collection of Darlington reception attendance data commenced in 2012/2013.
7. Letters were distributed to nursery settings, prior to transition to reception class, encouraging practitioners to help parents understand the importance of good attendance. Early Years providers were asked to alert schools to poor nursery attendance to enable the school to target attendance as children commence primary education.
8. Schools have taken responsibility by working with locality early intervention teams to help parents understand the value of good attendance.

Current situation

9. Schools are responsible for maintaining an attendance register at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is: present, attending an approved educational activity, absent or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

10. The school is responsible for following up any absences to: ascertain the reason, ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.
11. Attendance in reception and year one remains marginally lower than all other year groups in primary.

	Reception Darlington	Year One Darlington	Primary Darlington
2007/2008		94.2%	94.8%
2008/2009		94.2%	94.7%
2009/2010		94.0%	94.5%
2010/2011		93.9%	94.8%
2011/2012		95.19%	95.60%
2012/2013	93.92%	94.25%	95.05%
2013/2014	95.22%	95.81%	96.01%

Information and Analysis

12. Attendance data for four year olds (reception who are not of compulsory school age) was collected for the first time for the autumn term 2012. Evidence indicates that the overall absence rate for four year olds dropped thus attendance improved.
13. The statistical release of pupil absence in schools in England is issued the year after attendance and absence data is collected. In the 2012-13 National Absence Comparisons Darlington's absence performance for children in reception was good, ranking in 36th position when compared to other LAs and is 0.4% better than national performance. Also, when compared to neighbouring LAs, Darlington's absence in reception ranks 6th out of 19 LAs.
14. The May 2014 statistical release of pupil absence in schools data notes that the overall absence rate across primary schools fell due to a large decrease in illness and agreed family holidays.

Conclusions

15. Reception and year one attendance remains marginally lower than other year groups in the primary age range despite measures to irradiate absence. Overall attendance has improved since 2008/09.
16. Evidence illustrates that the strategies adopted have made a positive impact on the perception of the importance of good attendance. There are less children taking unauthorised absence. However, childhood illnesses tend to impact on reception and year one more than on other year groups.