

Pupil attendance and absence in schools in Jersey



Academic year 2017/2018

Introduction

This report summarises pupil attendance and absence patterns in schools in Jersey in academic year 2017/2018 and describes trends in attendance and absence over time.

Unless otherwise explicitly stated, figures in this report reflect attendance and absence behaviour over the entire academic year (six half terms) and represent pupils in Years 1-11 in Government primary, secondary and special schools (see Background notes for full details of data coverage).

To account for high levels of study leave and other authorised absences of pupils in Year 11 in the second half of the summer term (June and July), all attendance and absence sessions relating to this period for this year group are removed prior to any analysis being undertaken. Study leave sessions taken outside of the last half term of the academic year are included in figures in this report and are categorised as authorised absence.

Summary

In academic year 2017/2018:

- attendance rates fell for all school types due to increases in both authorised and unauthorised absence
- the most common reasons for pupil absence were illness and family holidays
- overall absence of secondary school pupils increased with each curriculum year group
- overall absence in primary schools was lower in Jersey than in England due to lower rates of unauthorised absence
- the overall absence rate for secondary school pupils was higher in Jersey than in England due predominantly to the proportion of sessions missed due to illness and study leave
- the persistent absentee rate¹ was lower in Jersey than in England for the majority of year groups, but was significantly higher in Jersey for Year 11 due primarily to the proportion of sessions missed as a result of study leave

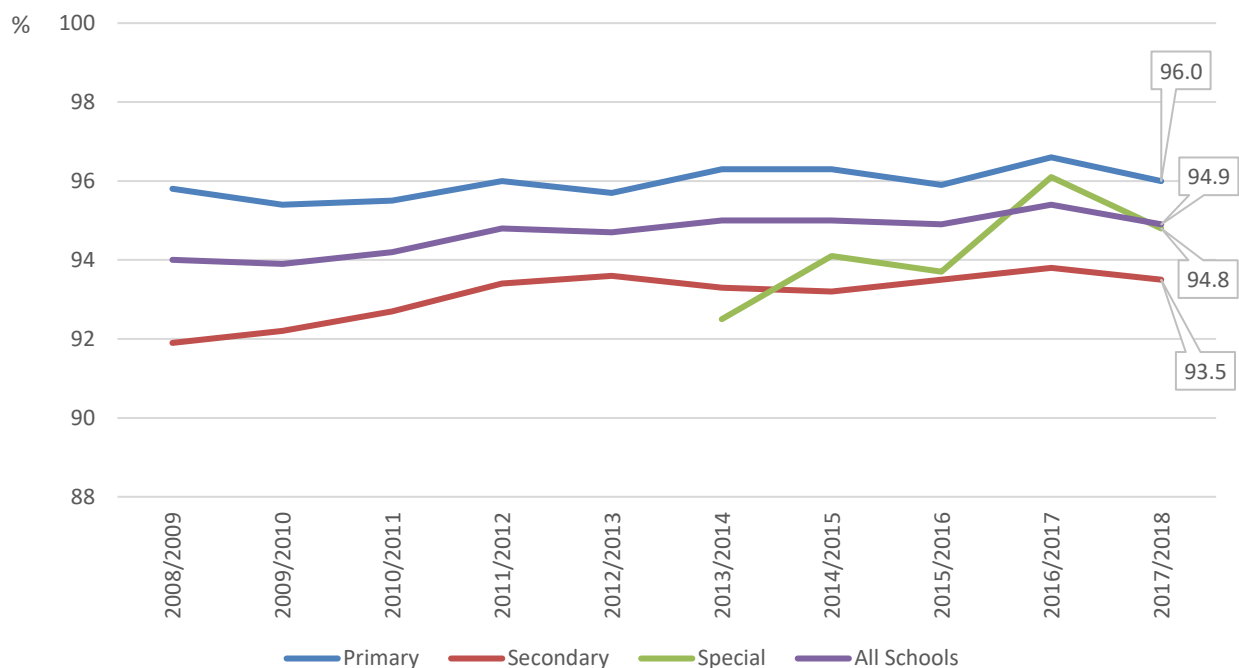
¹ The proportion of pupils absent for 10 per cent or more of the sessions that they could have attended.

Attendance

Schools are required to take attendance registers twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Pupils are classified as attending a session if they are present in class within 30 minutes of the register closing or they are engaged in an approved off-site educational activity such as taking part in a sporting event or on an educational visit or trip (see Appendix A for a full list of attendance and absence codes, descriptions and meanings in use in Jersey schools).

Figure 1 shows attendance rates for pupils in Government primary, secondary and special schools (data for pupils in alternative provision or private fee-paying schools are not included) in Jersey in academic years 2008/2009 to 2017/2018, broken down by school type. Reliable data for special schools was not available before 2013/2014.

Figure 1: Pupil attendance in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2017/2018



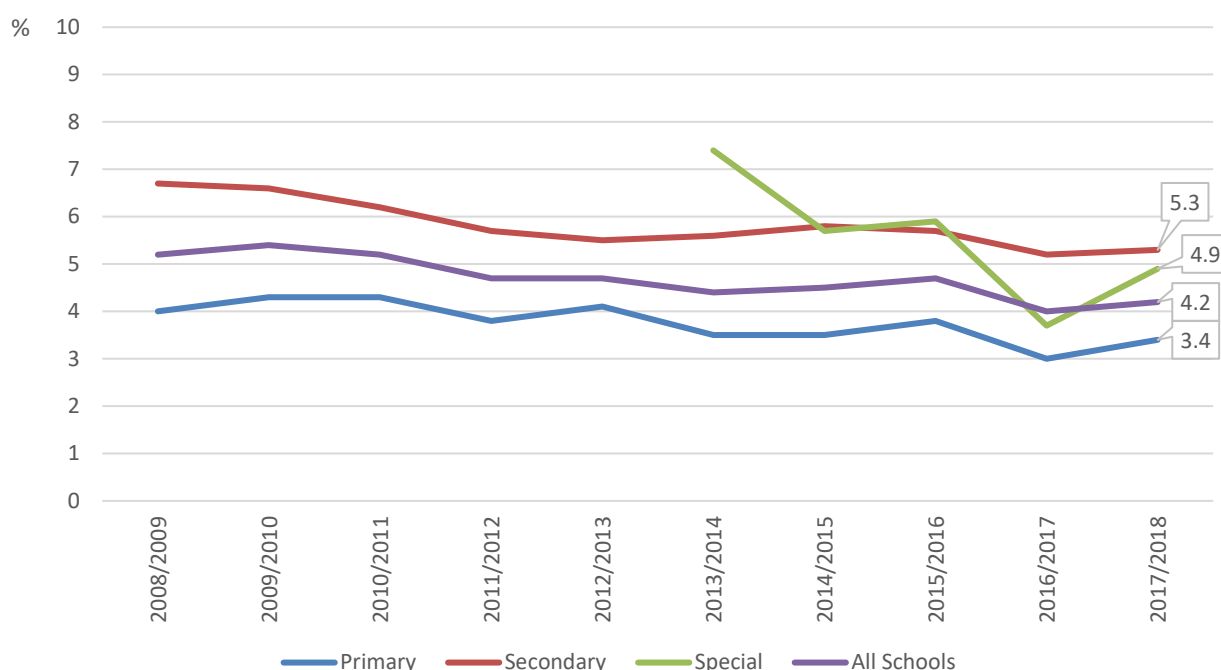
Over the last ten years, the attendance rate for all pupils (Year 1 to Year 11) has increased by about one percentage point, taking the attendance rate in academic year 2017/2018 to 94.9 per cent. This increase is largely the result of improvements in the attendance rate at secondary schools between 2008/2009 and 2011/2012.

Authorised absence

Authorised absence is defined as absence from school with permission from a teacher or other authorised school representative and includes instances of absence for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided. Reasons for authorised absence include illness, authorised family holidays and study leave.

Figure 2 shows that authorised absence for all pupils in Jersey has fallen over the last nine years from 5.2 per cent in 2008/2009 to 4.2 per cent in the latest year, corresponding to about eight days of absence per pupil.

Figure 2: Authorised absence of pupils in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2017/2018



Authorised absence rates were marginally higher in 2017/2018 than in the previous year for both primary and secondary schools. The authorised absence rate increased by around one percentage points for special schools, but some fluctuations are expected from year to year due to the small number of pupils involved.

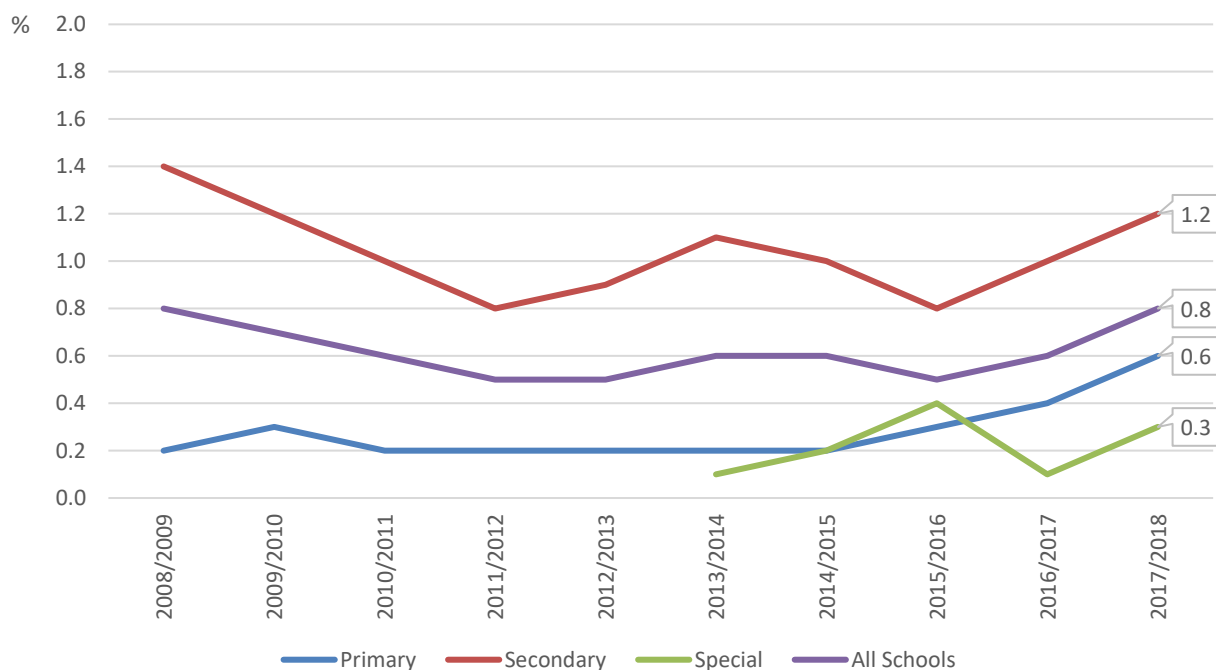
Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is defined as absence from school without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences as well as instances where a pupil arrives more than 30 minutes after the register has closed.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the rate of unauthorised absence increased in the latest year by about 0.2 percentage points across all school types. Most of the increase over the last two years is the result of an increase in unauthorised family holiday.² As before, the small number of pupils involved may lead to some volatility in the rate for special schools.

² Schools were given renewed advice on 'holidays' in term time during the 2016/2017 academic year, as well as the autonomy to authorise holidays or not. The Education Welfare Team worked with primary schools to support their decisions in not authorising holidays.

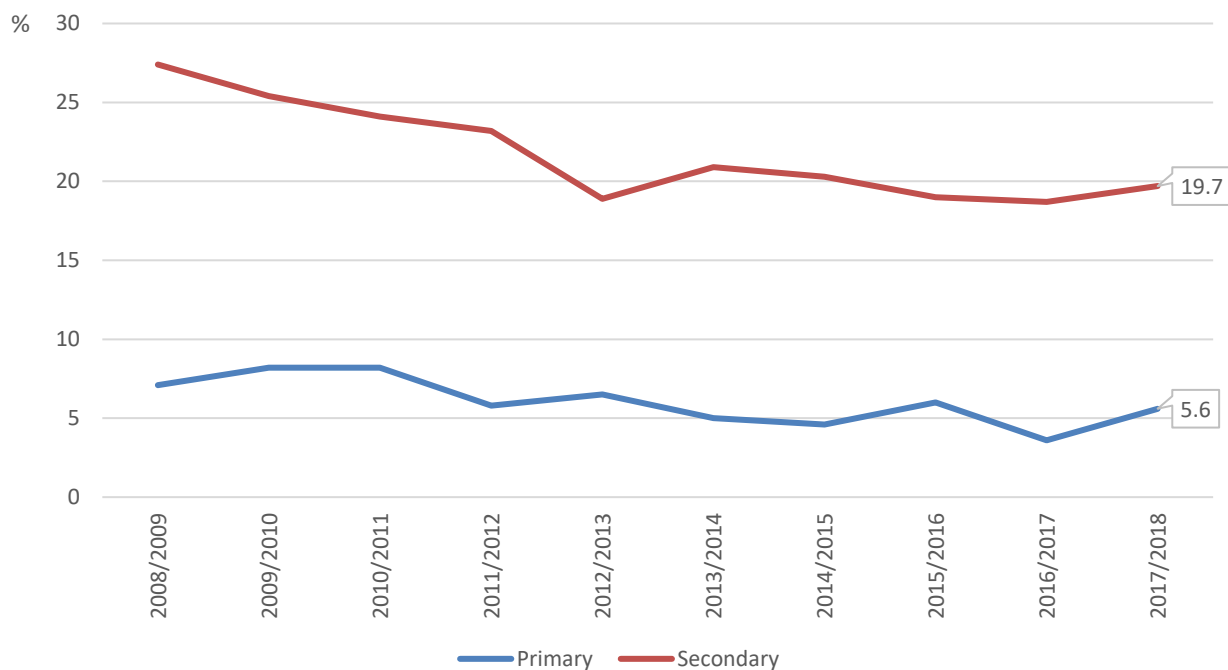
Figure 3: Unauthorised absence of pupils in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2017/2018



Persistent absence

Persistent absentees are pupils that have missed a significant proportion of the school year due to absence (either authorised or unauthorised). Figure 4 gives the percentage of pupils that have been absent from school for more than 10% of the total number of sessions available to them.

Figure 4: Persistent absentee rates in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2017/2018



In the latest year, persistent absence rates increased to 5.6 per cent for primary schools (corresponding to 302 pupils) and 19.7 per cent for secondary schools (corresponding to 818 pupils).³ Due to the small numbers of pupils on roll, special schools are excluded from this analysis.

Distribution of reasons for absence

In order to understand absence behaviour in Jersey further, the distribution of reasons provided for absence in Jersey schools is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of reasons for pupil absence in Jersey; academic year 2017/2018

Percentage of absence due to:	Primary	Secondary	Special	All
Overall absence	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	63.6	55.0	59.1	58.9
Medical and dental appointments	5.4	3.4	14.4	4.4
Religious observance	0.0	0.0	-	0.0
Study leave	-	13.1	-	7.0
Traveller absence	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Family holiday (agreed)	10.1	2.6	12.8	6.1
Excluded (no alternative provision made)	0.4	2.5	0.3	1.5
Authorised absence (other)	6.4	4.6	7.1	5.4
Authorised absence	86.0	81.2	93.7	83.5
Family holiday (not agreed)	10.8	4.7	0.1	7.4
Late (more than 30 minutes after register closes)	1.3	0.8	0.7	1.1
Unauthorised absence (other)	2.1	6.8	4.9	4.7
No reason provided for absence	0.3	5.9	0.6	3.3
Unauthorised absence	14.0	18.8	6.3	16.5

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Table 1 shows that around 86 per cent of all pupil absence in primary schools was authorised by a teacher or other authorised school representative. This compares to 81 per cent in secondary schools and 94 per cent in special schools.

Across all types of school, illness was the most common reason for being absent from school with almost three-fifths of all pupil absence occurring for this reason.

Family holidays are the second most common reason cited for absence in primary schools, accounting for around a fifth of all absence including both authorised and unauthorised holidays.

Although attendance and absence data for Year 11 pupils in the last half term of the academic year is excluded from the analysis, study leave still accounts for around 13 per cent of all sessions missed by secondary school pupils in Jersey. These sessions occurred before the last half term of the academic year or were taken by pupils in Year 10 or below.

³ This is partly due to study leave taken in Year 11 before the May half term. Excluding study leave, 586 secondary pupils had attendance rates below 90 per cent.

One in seven (14.4%) absences at special schools were the result of medical and dental appointments, compared to fewer than one in twenty (4.4%) across all schools.

Attendance and absence by pupil characteristics

First language/English as an additional language (EAL)

A pupil's first language is defined as 'the language that a child experienced during early development and continues to experience in the home or community'. Many children start life with more than one language during early development (which may include English). If a pupil experienced more than one language during early development, then they are deemed to have English as an additional language (EAL) and the language other than English is recorded as their first language, irrespective of the child's proficiency in English. **By this definition, a child classed as having 'EAL' may still be fluent in English.**

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

A child may have Special Educational Needs for a wide range of reasons. They may have a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision to be made for the child, or a physical need such as a visual impairment. Pupils may be provided with **SEN Support**, where extra or different help is given from that provided as part of the school's usual curriculum. The class teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) often receive advice or support from outside specialists. In some cases a pupil may have a **Record of Need**, where a formal assessment of their Special Educational Needs has been made and a document is in place that sets out the child's needs and the extra help they should receive.

Jersey Premium

Jersey Premium is a targeted funding programme for schools that has been introduced to help all children get the very best from their education. Government fee-paying and non-fee-paying schools have received extra funding for their eligible pupils since January 2017.

More information about the scheme is available from www.gov.je/JerseyPremium.

Table 2 presents attendance and absence rates for pupils in Jersey broken down by gender, curriculum year group, English as a first language, Special Educational Needs and Jersey Premium status. Rates reflect attendance and absence behaviour in primary, secondary and special Government schools in academic year 2017/2018.

Table 2: Attendance and absence rates broken down by pupil characteristics in Jersey; academic year 2017/2018

	Attendance	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Gender			
Males	94.9	4.2	0.9
Females	94.9	4.3	0.8
Total	94.9	4.2	0.8
National Curriculum Year Group			
1	95.2	4.1	0.7
2	96.0	3.5	0.6
3	96.3	3.1	0.5
4	96.2	3.3	0.5
5	96.2	3.3	0.5
6	96.2	3.3	0.6
7	95.9	3.5	0.6
8	95.0	4.2	0.8
9	93.8	4.8	1.4
10	93.5	5.0	1.5
11 ¹	87.9	10.1	2.0
Total	94.9	4.2	0.8
First Language			
English as an additional language	95.1	3.8	1.1
First language is English	94.9	4.4	0.8
Total	94.9	4.2	0.8
Special Educational Needs (SEN)			
SEN	93.0	5.6	1.4
Not SEN	95.3	4.0	0.7
Total	94.9	4.2	0.8
Jersey Premium			
In receipt of Jersey Premium	93.5	5.2	1.3
Not in receipt of Jersey Premium	95.5	3.9	0.7
Total	94.9	4.2	0.8

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

¹Rates for Year 11 represent the first five half terms of the year only.

Gender

Table 2 shows that attendance and absence rates in the latest year were almost identical for males and females.

Curriculum year groups

Within primary schools, absence rates are highest for Year 1, with little variation for Year 2 to Year 6.

In contrast, overall absence in secondary schools increases with each additional curriculum year group; in 2016/2017, the unauthorised absence rates of pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 were around three times that of pupils in Year 7.

First language

Attendance and absence (authorised and unauthorised) rates of pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) were similar to those recorded for pupils whose first language is English. The authorised absence rate for pupils whose first language is English (4.4%) was marginally higher than for pupils who have English as an additional language (3.8%).

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The attendance rate for pupils with SEN (93.0%) was lower than for pupils with no special educational need identified (95.3%). This reflects greater rates of both authorised absence (5.6% and 4.0% respectively) and unauthorised absence (1.4% and 0.7% respectively).

Jersey Premium

The attendance rate for pupils in receipt of Jersey Premium (93.5%) was lower than for other pupils (95.5%). This reflects greater rates of both authorised absence (5.2% and 3.9% respectively) and unauthorised absence (1.3% and 0.7% respectively).

Reception pupils

In 2017/2018, the absence rate for Reception pupils was 5.9 per cent, around two percentage points higher than the absence rate for Years 1-6 (4.0%), mostly due to higher rates of authorised absence. This represents an increase of just under two percentage points on 2016/2017, when the absence rate for Reception pupils was 4.3 per cent.

Alternative provision

The absence rate for alternative provision was 51.7 per cent in the latest year. More than five-sixths (84.8%) of this absence was unauthorised. These rates may see large fluctuations from year to year because of the small number of pupils involved.

Comparison of absence in Jersey and England

Table 3 and Table 4 compare absence rates for Jersey and England in primary and secondary schools respectively.

Table 3: Pupil absence in primary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2017/2018

	Authorised absence rate	Unauthorised absence rate	Overall absence
Jersey	3.4	0.6	4.0
England	3.0	1.1	4.2
Region:			
North East	3.0	1.3	4.3
North West	3.0	1.2	4.2
Yorkshire and the Humber	2.9	1.4	4.3
East Midlands	3.0	1.1	4.1
West Midlands	3.0	1.3	4.3
East of England	3.1	1.0	4.2
London	3.0	1.1	4.1
South East	3.1	1.0	4.1
South West	3.3	1.0	4.2

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place

The overall absence rate for primary school pupils in Jersey (4.0%) was slightly lower than in England (4.2%). While Jersey's authorised absence rate was higher than England's, the percentage of all sessions missed due to unauthorised absence in primary schools was lower in Jersey (0.6%) than in England (1.1%) and in each major region of England.

Table 4: Pupil absence in secondary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2017/2018

	Authorised absence rate	Unauthorised absence rate	Overall absence
Jersey	5.3	1.2	6.5
England	3.9	1.6	5.5
Region:			
North East	3.8	2.1	5.9
North West	3.8	1.8	5.6
Yorkshire and the Humber	3.7	2.2	5.9
East Midlands	3.9	1.6	5.5
West Midlands	3.9	1.7	5.5
East of England	4.0	1.4	5.4
London	3.5	1.5	5.0
South East	4.1	1.5	5.6
South West	4.4	1.4	5.8

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

In 2017/2018, overall absence was 1 percentage point higher in secondary schools in Jersey (6.5%) than in England (5.5%) and at least 0.5 percentage points higher than in each major region of England.

While the unauthorised absence rate for secondary school pupils in Jersey (1.2%) was lower than in England (1.6%), the authorised absence rate in Jersey was around 1.5 percentage points higher.

Absence rates by reason

To understand further the difference in absence rates in Jersey and England, absence rates are presented by reason for absence.

Table 5: Absence rates by reason for absence in primary and secondary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2017/2018

	Jersey		England	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Overall absence	4.0	6.5	4.2	5.5
Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	2.5	3.6	2.4	2.9
Medical and dental appointments	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Religious observance	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Study leave	-	0.9	0.0	0.1
Traveller absence	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Family holiday (agreed)	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.0
Excluded (no alternative provision made)	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
Authorised absence (other)	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4
Authorised absence	3.4	5.3	3.0	3.9
Family holiday (not agreed)	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.3
Late (more than 30 minutes after register closes)	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Unauthorised absence (other)	0.1	0.4	0.5	1.2
No reason provided for absence	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.1
Unauthorised absence	0.6	1.2	1.1	1.6

*All numbers are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Table 5 shows that in the latest year, 0.4 per cent of all available sessions at primary schools in Jersey were missed due to authorised family holidays compared to 0.1 per cent of all available sessions in England.

The unauthorised absence rate in primary schools in Jersey (0.6%) was lower than in England (1.1%), due predominantly to the percentage of sessions missed due to 'other' unauthorised absence.

The authorised absence rate in secondary schools in Jersey (5.3%) was higher than in England (3.9%), due predominantly to the percentage of all sessions missed due to illness and study leave. In Jersey, 0.9 per cent of all available sessions were missed by secondary school pupils due to study leave, compared to 0.1 per cent of all sessions missed due to this reason in England. Figures for both Jersey and England exclude Year 11 pupils in the last half term of the academic year, who generally account for high levels of study leave and other authorised absence. 3.6 per cent of all sessions in Jersey were missed as a result of illness compared to 2.9 per cent in England.

Persistent absentees

Table 6: Persistent absentee rates by year group in primary, secondary and special schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2017/2018

Year group	Persistent absentee rate	
	Jersey	England
1	8.4	10.1
2	5.6	8.2
3	4.5	8.1
4	4.8	8.3
5	5.5	8.6
6	5.4	8.3
7	7.6	10.1
8	11.9	13.1
9	14.8	15.2
10	17.1	16.5
11 ¹	49.8 ²	16.2

¹Rates for curriculum year group 11 represent the first five half terms of the year only.

²Pupils in Jersey take significantly more study leave than those in England. After excluding study leave, 19.5 per cent of pupils in Year 11 in Jersey were classified as persistent absentees.

In 2017/2018, persistent absentee rates in Jersey were lower than in England for pupils in Year 7 and below. Rates for Years 8-10 were similar in Jersey and England. Almost half (49.8%) of pupils in Year 11 in Jersey were persistently absent compared to around one in six (16.2%) in England. This difference can largely be attributed to higher rates of authorised study leave in Jersey. If study leave were excluded, the persistent absentee rate for Year 11 pupils in Jersey would fall by 30 percentage points to 19.5 per cent.

Background notes

Recording and data sources

Schools take attendance registers twice a day: once at the beginning of the morning session and once at the beginning of the afternoon session. In their registers, schools are required to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an another approved educational activity, or absent. When a pupil of compulsory school age is absent when the register is taken, the school must record whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, along with the reason for absence. See Appendix A for attendance codes in use in Jersey schools.

Authorised absence is defined as absence with permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school (for example authorised family holiday).

Unauthorised absence is defined as absence without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences as well as instances where a pupil arrives more than thirty minutes after the register has closed.

Data are collected from the schools' management information system, SIMS. Prior to 2017, this information was recorded in CMIS.

Coverage

From the 2013/2014 academic year, figures in this report include pupils in Years 1-11 at Government primary, secondary and special schools, including both non-fee paying and fee-paying schools. They exclude independent schools and pupils in alternative provision. Prior to 2013/2014, they include Government primary and secondary schools only and exclude special schools.

Figures are given separately for pupils in Reception and those attending alternative provision.

Comparisons

Comparisons are made to figures calculated by England's Department for Education and published in the report *Pupil absence in schools in England: 2017 to 2018*⁴.

Timeliness

Figures in this report include attendance up until July 2018.

Methods

Statistics are calculated using methodology developed by England's Department for Education, as described in *A guide to absence statistics*⁵.

Details of the calculations used in this report are given in Appendix B.

⁴ Department for Education, March 2019. Available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-2017-to-2018>.

⁵ Department for Education, May 2015 (revised March 2019). Available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/absence-statistics-guide>.

Accuracy and reliability

Rates calculated for special schools and alternative provision are based on a small number of pupils, so are likely to fluctuate from year to year.

Data quality and completeness

Attendance data are provided to Educational Welfare Officers, allowing them to follow up with schools to ensure the accuracy of recording.

Some data quality issues may remain, particularly for earlier academic years. In particular, sessions recorded as traveller absence are likely to be the result of misclassification, as are sessions recorded as study leave at primary schools.

Contact details

Insight Team
Children, Young People, Education and Skills
PO Box 142
Highlands Campus
Jersey
JE4 8QJ

escdata@gov.je

Appendix A

The below table gives a list of attendance codes, descriptions and classifications.

Code	Description	Classification
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved educational activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved educational activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience	Approved educational activity
Y	Enforced closure due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix B

Attendance rate – percentage of sessions attended

$$\frac{\text{Total number of sessions present or attending an approved educational activity}}{\text{Total number of sessions possible}} \times 100$$

Authorised absence rate – percentage of sessions missed due to authorised absence

$$\frac{\text{Total number of authorised absence sessions}}{\text{Total number of sessions possible}} \times 100$$

Unauthorised absence rate – Percentage of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence

$$\frac{\text{Total number of unauthorised absence sessions}}{\text{Total number of sessions possible}} \times 100$$

Persistent absentee rate

$$\frac{\text{Number of enrolments where absence rate is at least 10\%}}{\text{Total number of enrolments}} \times 100$$

Distribution of reasons for absence – Percentage of absence sessions missed due to...

Individual reasons

$$\frac{\text{Total number of absence sessions due to this reason}}{\text{Total number of absence sessions}} \times 100$$

Authorised absence

$$\frac{\text{Total number of authorised absence sessions}}{\text{Total number of absence sessions}} \times 100$$

Unauthorised absence

$$\frac{\text{Total number of unauthorised absence sessions}}{\text{Total number of absence sessions}} \times 100$$