

Pupil Attendance and Absence in Schools in Jersey

Academic year 2015/2016

Introduction

This report summarises pupil attendance and absence behaviour in schools in Jersey in academic year 2015/2016 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 of compulsory school age (Reception to year 11) in States and States fee-paying schools (see Technical note 4 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. This is in alignment with U.K. Department of Education methodology. 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 2015/2016:

- overall pupil attendance has been stable over the last five years;
- the authorised absence rate for primary schools increased slightly, while the rate for secondary schools was unchanged from the previous year; unauthorised absence rates were stable at primary schools and decreased slightly at secondary schools;
- the most common reasons for pupil absence were illness and family holidays;
- overall absence of secondary school pupils increases with each curriculum year group;
- overall absence in primary schools was similar in Jersey and England;
- 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 for primary schools is lower in Jersey than in England;
- in secondary schools, the persistent absentee rate is similar in Jersey and England for year groups 7 to 10, but is significantly higher in Jersey for year 11 due to the proportion of sessions missed as a result of study leave.

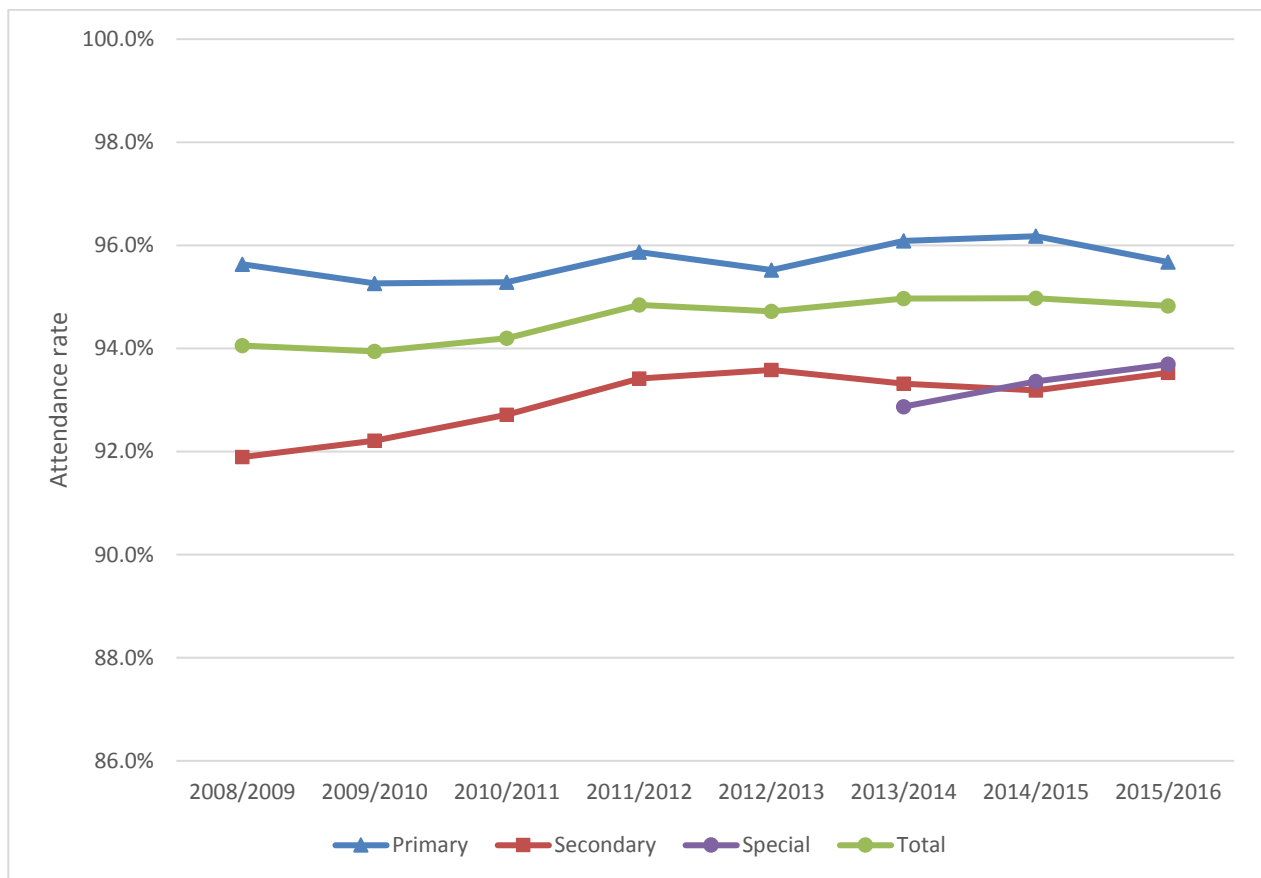
¹ The proportion of pupils absent for 10% or more of the sessions that they could have attended.

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 education 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 States 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 2015/2016, broken down by school type. Reliable data for special schools was not available before 2013/2014.

Figure 1: Pupil attendance in primary, secondary and special schools in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2015/2016



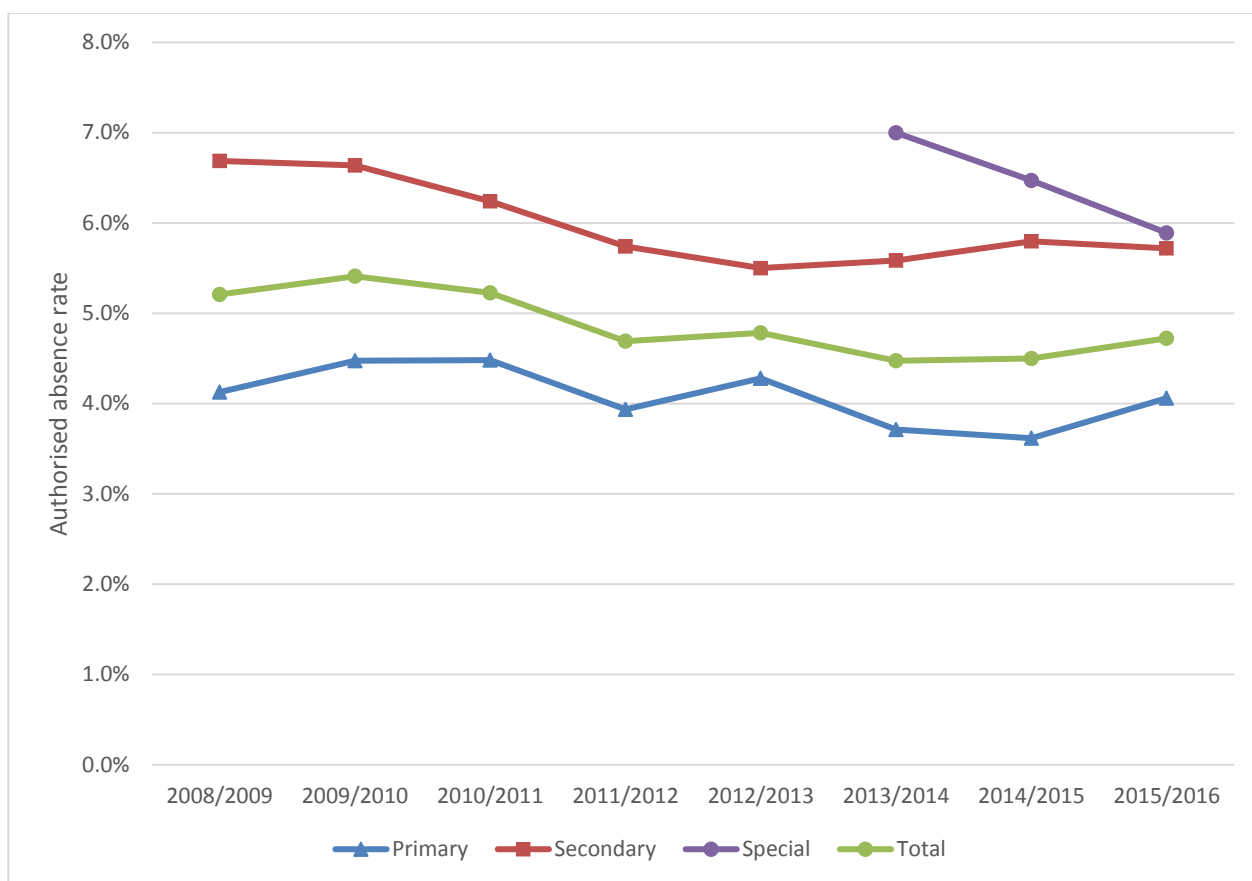
Over the last eight years, the attendance rate for all pupils (Reception to year 11) has increased marginally, taking the attendance rate in academic year 2015/2016 to 94.8%. This increase is largely the result of improvements in the attendance rate at secondary schools between 2008/2009 and 2011/2012.

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 marginally over the last eight years from 5.2 per cent in 2008/2009 to 4.7 per cent in the latest year.

Figure 2: Authorised absence of pupils in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2015/2016



The authorised absence rate of pupils in Jersey primary schools increased in the latest year from 3.6 per cent to 4.1 per cent, though it remains slightly below the average for the last eight years.

From 2008/2009 to 2011/2012, the authorised absence rate in secondary schools fell by around 1 percentage point. Since 2011/2012, the authorised absence rate has remained stable at around 5.7 per cent of all possible sessions.

Authorised absence at special schools has fallen from 7.0 per cent in 2013/2014 to 5.9 per cent in 2015/2016. However due to the small number of pupils in special education facilities in Jersey some volatility in attendance and absence rates is expected for this school type.

Unauthorised absence

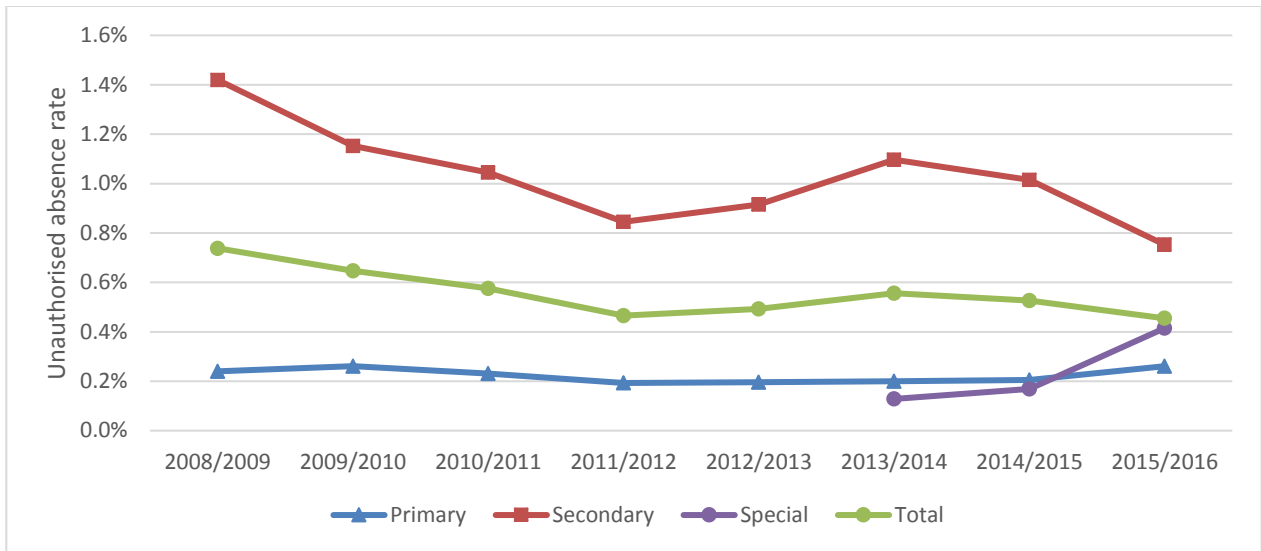
Unauthorised absence is defined as absence from school without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences as well as instances where a pupil arrives more than 30 minutes after the register has closed.

As can be seen in Figure 3 below, the rate of unauthorised absence in primary schools has remained flat over the last eight academic years (2008/2009 to 2015/2016) at around 0.2 to 0.3 per cent of all possible sessions.

In comparison, the unauthorised absence rate for secondary school pupils has seen more fluctuation over the same period. In 2015/2016, unauthorised absence in secondary schools fell by around 0.3 percentage points compared to in the previous year, taking unauthorised absence (0.8 per cent of all available sessions) to the lowest level recorded since at least 2008/2009.

The unauthorised absence rate for pupils at special schools has increased from 0.1 per cent in 2013/2014 to 0.4 per cent in 2015/2016, though it remains below the rate for all Jersey pupils.

Figure 3: Unauthorised absence of pupils in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2015/2016

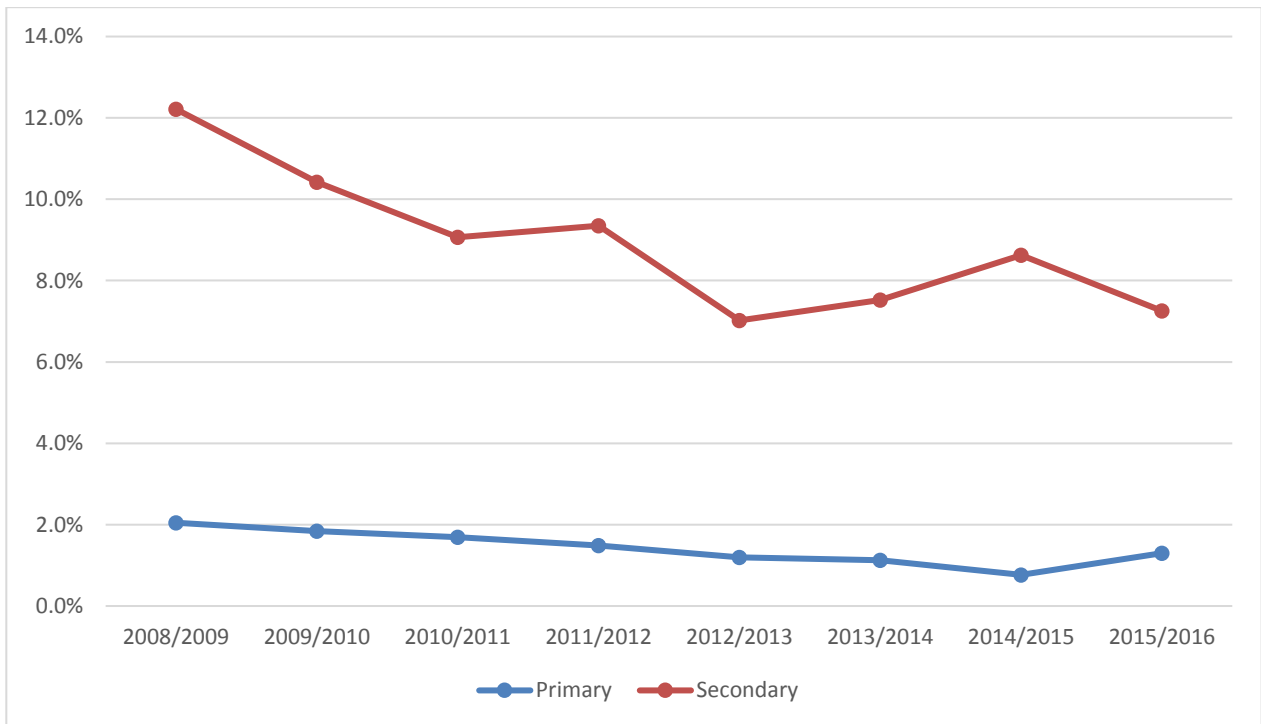


Persistent absence

Persistent absentees are pupils that have missed a significant proportion of the school year due to absence (either authorised or unauthorised).

In Jersey, pupils are classified as persistent absentees if they have been absent from school for more than 15% of the typical total number of sessions available for their year group. This corresponds to 28 days of absence for pupils in Reception to year 10 and 23 days for pupils in year 11.

Figure 4: Persistent absentee rates (15% threshold) in primary and secondary schools in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2015/2016



In the latest year, 1.3 per cent of primary school pupils in Jersey were absent for 15 per cent or more of all available sessions across the year. This is the highest proportion seen since 2011/2012, though it remains slightly below the average level for the last eight years.

In contrast, the persistent absentee rate in secondary schools fell slightly to 7.3 per cent of pupils in the latest year, the lowest level recorded since 2012/2013.

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 schools in Jersey in 2015/2016 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of reasons for pupil absence in Jersey; academic year 2015/2016

Percentage of absence sessions missed due to:	Primary	Secondary	Special	All
Overall absence	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	65.2	55.1	43.5	60.1
Medical and dental appointments	7.2	4.2	29.5	5.9
Religious observance	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
Study leave	0.0	14.5	0.0	7.1
Traveller absence	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Family holiday (agreed) (maximum 10 days)	16.7	4.6	18.6	10.8
Extended family holiday (agreed) (more than 10 days)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Excluded (no alternative provision made)	0.1	1.3	0.0	0.7
Authorised absence (other)	4.6	8.6	1.9	6.5
Authorised absence	94.0	88.4	93.4	91.2
Family holiday (not agreed)	3.8	3.1	0.0	3.4
Late (more than 30 minutes after register closes)	0.8	1.4	0.0	1.1
Unauthorised absence (other)	1.3	2.9	6.5	2.1
No reason provided for absence	0.2	4.3	0.1	2.2
Unauthorised absence	6.0	11.6	6.6	8.8

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Table 1 shows that around 94 per cent of all pupil absence in primary and special schools was authorised by a teacher or other authorised school representative. This compares to 88 per cent of all pupil absence in secondary 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; in the latest academic year around a fifth (20.5%) of all absence in primary schools resulted from 'family holidays' (authorised and unauthorised).

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 almost 15 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.

Almost a third (29.5%) of all absences at special schools were the result of medical and dental appointments, compared to only around 6 per cent at all schools.

Attendance and absence by pupil characteristics

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 eligibility for Jersey Premium. Rates reflect attendance and absence behaviour in primary, secondary and special States schools in academic year 2015/2016.

Table 2: Attendance and absence rates broken down by pupil characteristics in Jersey; academic year 2015/2016

	Attendance	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
Gender				
Males	94.8	4.7	0.5	5.2
Females	94.8	4.8	0.4	5.2
Total	94.8	4.7	0.5	5.2
National Curriculum Year Group				
0	94.4	5.3	0.3	5.6
1	95.5	4.3	0.2	4.5
2	95.5	4.2	0.3	4.5
3	96.1	3.6	0.3	3.9
4	96.1	3.6	0.3	3.9
5	96.0	3.8	0.2	4.0
6	96.2	3.6	0.2	3.8
7	95.3	4.3	0.4	4.7
8	94.6	4.7	0.7	5.4
9	93.7	5.3	1.0	6.3
10	94.1	5.1	0.8	5.9
11 ¹	89.4	9.7	0.9	10.6
Total	94.8	4.7	0.5	5.2
First Language				
English as an additional language	94.9	4.5	0.6	5.1
First language is English	94.8	4.8	0.4	5.2
Total	94.8	4.7	0.5	5.2
Special Educational Needs (SEN)				
SEN	93.3	6.1	0.7	6.7
Not SEN	95.2	4.4	0.4	4.8
Total	94.8	4.7	0.5	5.2
Jersey Premium				
Eligible for Jersey Premium	93.6	5.7	0.8	6.4
Not eligible for Jersey Premium	95.2	4.5	0.4	4.8
Total	94.8	4.7	0.5	5.2

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

¹Rates for curriculum year group 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, pupil absence was similar in curriculum year groups 3 to 6 at around 4 per cent of all possible sessions; authorised absence rates were marginally higher for younger pupils, particularly for those in reception.

In contrast, overall absence in secondary schools increases with each additional curriculum year group; in 2015/2016, the unauthorised absence rate of pupils in years 10 and 11 was around double 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 (4.8%) was marginally higher than for pupils who have English as an additional language (4.5%).

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The attendance rate for pupils with SEN (93.3%) was lower than for pupils with no special educational need identified (95.2%). This reflects greater rates of both authorised absence (6.1% and 4.4% respectively) and unauthorised absence (0.7% and 0.4% respectively).

Jersey Premium

Jersey Premium is a new approach to support the Education Department's drive to raise standards and to support individual Jersey pupils. Jersey Premium funding is available to States schools across Primary and Secondary education.

Funding is targeted at pupils with socio-economic disadvantage who are at risk of lower attainment. Evidence shows that some pupils are impacted by social, emotional or economic influences and do not always reach their full academic potential.

This programme is being introduced to provide an opportunity for Jersey schools with eligible pupils to significantly increase their capacity to improve teaching and learning for **all** pupils, with particular benefit for disadvantaged pupils.

Objectives:

- to improve standards for all Jersey pupils but specifically those who are at risk of underachievement due to their socio-economic background;
- to develop a greater understanding of 'disadvantage' in Jersey and how to remove the barriers to achievement this can generate;
- to ensure that Jersey schools adopt the most effective approaches to tackle underachievement by disadvantaged learners.

Eligible pupils must

- currently be (or have ever been) a Looked After Child,
- live in a household claiming income support, or

- live in a household that could receive income support (i.e. it has a low income and meets the other requirements of the Social Security Department), but parents have not yet lived in Jersey for five years continuously.

As this initiative was not implemented until January 2017², any impact of the project on attendance rates cannot be evaluated until late 2017 at the earliest. This year's figures will provide a baseline for measuring success over time.

The attendance rate for pupils identified as being eligible for Jersey Premium (93.6%) was lower than for pupils not identified as being eligible (95.2%). This reflects greater rates of both authorised absence (5.7% and 4.5% respectively) and unauthorised absence (0.8% and 0.4% respectively).

Comparison of absence in Jersey and England

Table 3: Pupil absence in primary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2015/2016

	Authorised absence rate	Unauthorised absence rate	Overall absence
Jersey	4.1	0.3	4.3
England	3.1	0.9	4.0
Region:			
North East	3.0	1.1	4.1
North West	3.1	1.0	4.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	3.0	1.1	4.1
East Midlands	3.0	0.9	3.9
West Midlands	3.0	1.0	4.0
East of England	3.1	0.8	4.0
London	3.1	1.0	4.1
South East	3.1	0.8	3.9
South West	3.3	0.8	4.0

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place

Table 3 shows that the overall absence rate for primary school pupils was slightly higher in Jersey than in England. The authorised absence rate in Jersey (4.1%) was one percentage point higher than that recorded in England (3.1%). In comparison, the percentage of all sessions missed due to unauthorised absence in primary schools was lower in Jersey (0.3%) than in England (0.9%) and in each major region of England.

² A pilot scheme for Jersey Premium was delivered throughout 2016.

Table 4: Pupil absence in secondary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2015/2016

	Authorised absence rate	Unauthorised absence rate	Overall absence
Jersey	5.7	0.8	6.5
England	3.8	1.4	5.2
Region:			
North East	3.7	1.6	5.4
North West	3.8	1.5	5.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	3.7	1.8	5.5
East Midlands	3.8	1.4	5.2
West Midlands	3.8	1.4	5.2
East of England	3.9	1.2	5.0
London	3.5	1.4	4.9
South East	4.0	1.2	5.2
South West	4.2	1.2	5.4

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Table 4 shows that in 2015/2016, overall absence was more than 1 percentage point higher in secondary schools in Jersey (6.5%) than in England (5.2%) and in each major region of England.

While the unauthorised absence rate for secondary school pupils in Jersey (0.8%) is lower than in England (1.4%), the authorised absence rate in Jersey is at least 1.5 percentage points higher than in all regions.

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 2015/2016

	Jersey		England	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Overall absence	4.3	6.5	4.0	5.2
Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	2.8	3.6	2.4	2.8
Medical and dental appointments	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4
Religious observance	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
Study leave	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.1
Traveller absence	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Family holiday (agreed)	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.0
Extended family holiday (agreed) (more than 10 days)	0.0	0.0		
Excluded (no alternative provision made)	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Authorised absence (other)	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.3
Authorised absence	4.1	5.7	3.1	3.8
Family holiday (not agreed)	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2
Late (more than 30 minutes after register closes) ¹	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Unauthorised absence (other)	0.1	0.2	0.4	1.0
No reason provided for absence	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1
Unauthorised absence	0.3	0.8	0.9	1.4

*All numbers are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Table 5 shows that the rate of authorised absence in Jersey primary schools (4.1%) was higher than in England (3.1%) in the latest year, due predominantly to percentage of sessions missed due to agreed family holidays: in Jersey 0.7 per cent of all available sessions are missed due to authorised family holidays compared to 0.1 per cent of all available sessions in England.

In contrast, the unauthorised absence rate in primary schools in Jersey (0.3%) was lower than in England (0.9%), due predominantly to the percentage of sessions missed due to 'other' unauthorised absence and unauthorised family holidays.

The authorised absence rate in secondary schools in Jersey (5.7%) was higher than in England (3.8%), 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 2.8 per cent in England.

Persistent absentees

In previous years, pupils in England were classified as persistent absentees if they had been absent from school for more than 15% of the typical total amount of sessions available for their year group. However in 2016, the UK DfE lowered the threshold for inclusion so that pupils are now classified as persistent absentees if they have been absent for 10% of the total number of sessions available to them. For example, a pupil that has been at a school for 50 days would be classified as a persistent absentee if they were absent for five days or more.

Although no decision to lower the threshold from 15% to 10% has yet been made in Jersey, for the purposes of comparison, persistent absentee rates by year group for Jersey and England are presented below using the 10% threshold.

Table 6: Persistent absentee rates (10% threshold) by year group in primary, secondary and special schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2015/2016

Year group	Persistent absentee rate	
	Jersey	England
0	13.5	9.8 ²
1	7.9	
2	7.9	8.0
3	4.8	7.8
4	4.2	7.7
5	6.8	7.9
6	4.9	7.6
Primary	7.2	8.2
7	9.1	9.3
8	14.0	12.0
9	15.4	14.2
10	13.7	15.5
11 ¹	42.8 ³	15.4
Secondary	19.0⁴	13.6

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

²England reports a joint figure for year groups 0 and 1 rather than reporting the years separately.

³Pupils in Jersey take significantly more study leave than those in England. After excluding study leave, 14.5 per cent of pupils in year 11 in Jersey were classified as persistent absentees.

⁴After excluding study leave, 13.3 per cent of pupils of secondary age in Jersey were persistent absentees.

Persistent absentee rates calculated for years groups 2 to 6 (primary education) were generally lower in Jersey than in England.

Although persistent absentee rates for year groups 7 to 10 are similar in both jurisdictions, the percentage of year 11 pupils missing 10 per cent or more of all available sessions is almost three times as high in Jersey as 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 almost 30 percentage points from 42.8 per cent to 14.5 per cent.

Appendix A

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed) (extended defined as greater than 10 school days)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed) (up to a maximum of 10 school days)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education 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 Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence

S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Technical notes

Definitions

1. 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 approved educational activity or absent. When a pupil of compulsory school age is not present when the register is taken the school must record whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the reason for absence, if known (see Appendix A for attendance codes in use in Jersey schools).
2. Authorised absence is defined as absence with permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school (for example authorised family holiday). Authorised absence includes instances of absence for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (for example illness).
3. 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.
4. Attendance and absence rates for Jersey reflect pupils in States non fee-paying schools and States fee-paying schools but exclude special schools, Jersey pupil referral unit and private-fee paying schools. Data is collected via the schools' management information system, CMIS.
5. The methodology used to calculate attendance and absence rates and the distribution of reasons for absence can be seen below:

Attendance rate – percentage of sessions attended

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

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 for pupils aged 5 to 14 (15% threshold)

$$\frac{\text{Total number of pupils aged 5 to 14 missing 56 or more of all available sessions}}{\text{Total number of pupils aged 5 to 14}} \times 100$$

Persistent absentee rate for pupils aged 15 (15% threshold)

$$\frac{\text{Total number of pupils aged 15 missing 46 or more of all available sessions}}{\text{Total number of pupils aged 15}} \times 100$$

Persistent absentee rate (10% threshold)

$$\frac{\text{Total number of pupils missing at least 10% of the sessions that they could have attended}}{\text{Total number of pupils}} \times 100$$

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

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