

Pupil Attendance and Absence in Schools in Jersey

Academic year 2013/2014

Introduction

This report presents key indicators of pupil attendance and absence behaviour in schools in Jersey in academic year 2013/2014 and describes trends in attendance and absence behaviour over time.

Unless otherwise explicitly stated, figures in this report reflect attendance and absence behaviour over the entire academic year (6 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, all attendance and absence sessions relating to this period for this year group are removed prior to any analysis being undertaken and are not included in figures in this report. This is in alignment with methodology employed by the U.K. Department of Education.

Summary

In academic year 2013/2014:

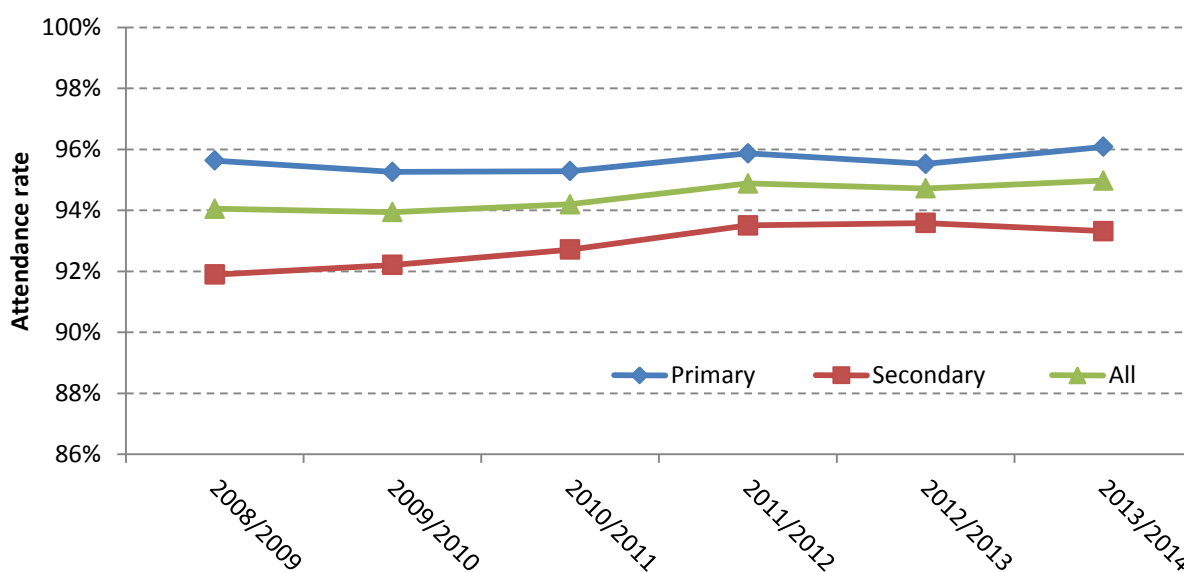
- overall pupil attendance was at the highest level recorded for at least 5 years;
- the rate of unauthorised absence in primary schools remained low at 0.2 per cent of all available sessions;
- unauthorised absence in secondary schools (1.1% of all available sessions) increased marginally compared to in the previous year;
- the most common reason provided for pupil absence was 'illness' followed by 'family holidays' and 'study leave';
- overall absence of secondary school pupils increases with each curriculum year group;
- overall absence levels were similar for primary school pupils in Jersey compared to England;
- the overall absence rate for secondary school pupils was higher in Jersey than in England due to the proportion of sessions missed to 'illness' and 'study leave'.

Attendance

Schools are required to take attendance registers twice a day; once at the start of the first/morning session and once during the second/afternoon session. Pupils are classified as being in attendance if they are present in class before the register is closed or engaged in an education activity such as taking part in a sporting event or on an educational visit or trip.

Figure 1 shows attendance rates for pupils in States and States fee-paying schools (special schools and private fee-paying schools are not included) in Jersey during academic years 2008/2009 to 2013/2014, broken down by school type; primary and secondary.

Figure 1: Pupil attendance in primary and secondary schools in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2013/2014



Over the last six years, the attendance rate for all pupils (reception to year 11) has increased marginally taking the attendance rate in academic year 2013/2014 to 95% of all available sessions and representing the highest level recorded since at least 2008/2009 (the first year that robust attendance and absence data was provided).

Since 2008/2009 the attendance rate of primary school pupils has remained essentially stable. The percentage of all possible sessions that were attended by primary school pupils in academic year 2013/2014 (96.1%) was 0.6 percentage points higher than in the previous academic year.

From 2008/2009 to 2011/2012 marginal improvements were recorded in attendance rates in secondary schools on an annual basis. Since 2011/2012, pupil attendance in secondary schools has remained essentially stable at around 93.5 percent of all available sessions.

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 (see Appendix A for a full list of attendance and absence codes, descriptions and meanings in use in Jersey schools).

Figure 2: Authorised absence of pupils in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2013/2014

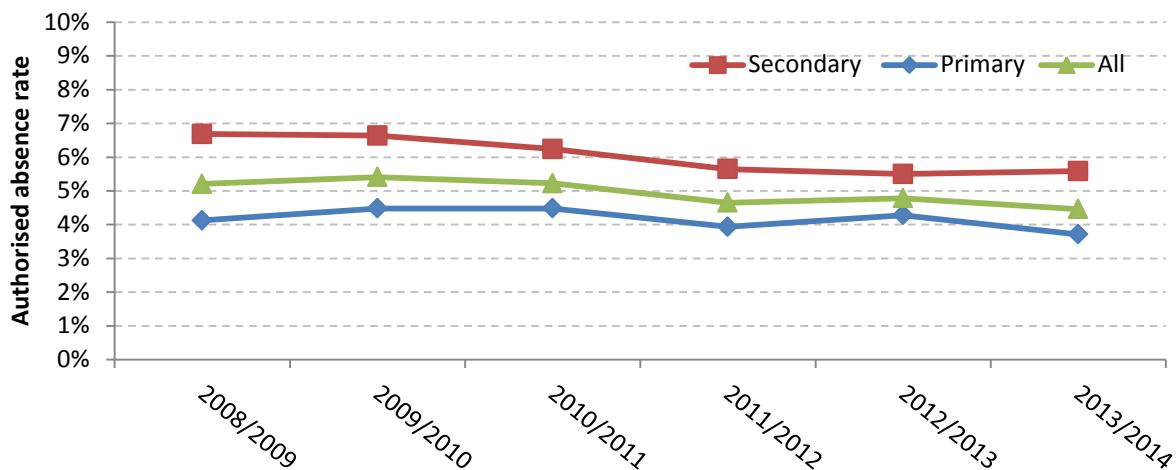


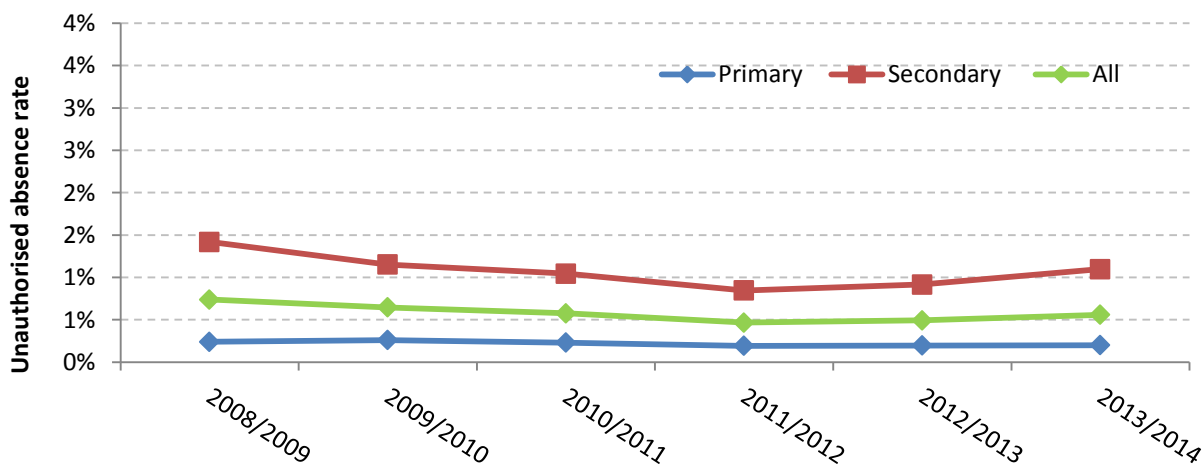
Figure 2 shows that the authorised absence rate of pupils in Jersey primary schools has remained relatively stable over the last six academic years (2008/2009 to 2013/2014). Authorised absence of primary schools pupils in the latest academic year (3.7 per cent of all possible sessions) was the lowest recorded since at least 2008/2009.

From 2008/2009 to 2011/2012 authorised absence in secondary schools fell by more than 1 percentage point. In the last three academic years (2011/2012 to 2013/2014) the authorised absence rate has remained stable at around 5.5 per cent of all possible sessions.

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 after the register has closed.

Figure 3: Unauthorised absence of pupils in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2013/2014



As can be seen in Figure 3 the rate of unauthorised absence in primary schools has remained flat over the last six academic years (2008/2009 to 2013/2014) 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 volatility over the same time period. The percentage of all possible sessions missed due to unauthorised absence in secondary schools fell in each academic year from 2008/2009 to 2011/2012 equating to a drop of almost 0.6 percentage points. Since 2011/2012 the unauthorised absence rate has increased marginally, taking the unauthorised absence rate for secondary school pupils to around 1.1 in the latest year.

Distribution of reasons for absence

In order to further understand absence behaviour in Jersey schools the distribution of reasons provided for absence in primary and secondary schools in Jersey in 2013/2014 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of reasons for pupil absence in primary and secondary schools in Jersey; academic year 2013/2014

Percentage of absence sessions missed due to:	Primary	Secondary	All
Overall absence	100.0	100.0	100.0
Authorised absence (Other)	5.1	6.1	5.8
Excluded (No alternate provision made)	0.2	1.1	0.7
Family holiday (agreed) (maximum 10 days)	19.6	5.2	12.0
Extended family holiday (agreed) (more than 10 days)	0.6	0.0	0.3
Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	60.8	52.2	56.2
Medical and dental appointments	8.4	3.8	6.0
Religious observance	0.1	0.0	0.0
Study leave	0.0	15.2	8.1
Traveller absence	0.0	0.0	0.0
Authorised absence	94.9	84.0	89.1
Family holiday (not agreed)	2.2	1.3	1.7
No reason provided for absence	0.8	8.1	4.7
Unauthorised absence (Other)	1.0	5.0	3.1
Late (more than 30 minutes after register closes)	1.1	1.7	1.4
Unauthorised absence	5.1	16.0	10.9

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Table 1 shows that almost 95 per cent of all pupil absence in primary schools is authorised by a teacher or other authorised school representative. This compares to around four-fifths (84.0%) of pupil absence in secondary schools.

In both primary and secondary schools, 'illness' is 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 more than a fifth (22.4%) 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 all analyses, authorised 'study leave' still accounts for around 15 per cent of all sessions missed by secondary school pupils.

Attendance and absence by pupil characteristics

Table 2 presents attendance and absence rates for pupils in Jersey broken down by gender, curriculum year group and English as a first language. Rates reflect attendance and absence behaviour in both primary and secondary schools (States and States fee-paying schools) in academic year 2013/2014.

Table 2: Attendance and absence rates broken down by pupil characteristics in Jersey; academic year 2013/2014

	Attendance	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
Gender				
Males	95.1	4.4	0.6	4.9
Females	94.8	4.6	0.6	5.2
Total	95.0	4.5	0.6	5.0
National Curriculum Year Group				
0	94.7	5.1	0.3	5.4
1	95.8	4.0	0.3	4.2
2	96.4	3.4	0.2	3.6
3	96.4	3.4	0.2	3.6
4	96.3	3.5	0.2	3.7
5	96.7	3.1	0.2	3.3
6	96.3	3.6	0.2	3.7
7	95.4	4.2	0.4	4.6
8	95.0	4.4	0.6	5.0
9	94.0	4.9	1.1	6.0
10	93.4	4.8	1.8	6.7
11*	88.5	10.0	1.7	11.7
Total	95.0	4.5	0.6	5.0
First Language				
English as an additional Language	94.3	5.1	0.6	6.1
First language is English	95.2	4.3	0.5	4.8
Total	95.0	4.5	0.6	5.0

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

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Gender

Table 2 shows that attendance rates are similar for male and female pupils (95.1% and 94.8% respectively). In the latest year, the unauthorised absence rate for both genders was identical at 0.6 per cent of all possible sessions; the authorised absence rate for females (4.6%) was marginally higher than for males (4.4%).

Curriculum year groups

Within primary schools, pupil absence is similar in curriculum year groups 2 to 6; authorised and unauthorised absence rates are marginally higher for pupils in their first two years of school (reception and year 1).

In contrast, overall absence in secondary schools is greater with each additional curriculum year group; in 2013/2014, the unauthorised absence rate of pupils in years 10 and 11 was around 4.5 times that of pupils in year 7.

First language

The overall absence rate of pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) is marginally higher than that recorded for pupils whose first language is English. This can be largely attributed to the percentage of all sessions that are missed due to authorised absence.

Comparison of Absence in Jersey and England

Table 3: Pupil absence in primary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2013/2014

	Authorised absence rate	Unauthorised absence rate	Overall absence
Jersey	3.7	0.2	3.9
England	3.0	0.8	3.9
North East	3.1	0.9	4.0
North West	3.0	0.8	3.8
Yorkshire and the Humber	3.0	0.9	3.9
East Midlands	3.0	0.8	3.8
West Midlands	3.0	0.9	3.9
East of England	3.1	0.8	4.0
London	3.0	1.0	3.9
South East	3.0	0.7	3.8
South West	3.2	0.5	3.9

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Table 3 shows that whilst the overall absence rate for primary school pupils is similar in Jersey and England, the authorised absence rate in Jersey (3.7%) is 0.7 percentage points higher than that recorded in England (3.0%). In comparison the percentage of all sessions missed due to unauthorised absence in primary schools is lower in Jersey (0.2) than in England (0.8) and in each of the major regions of England.

Table 4: Pupil absence in secondary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2013/2014

	Authorised absence rate	Unauthorised absence rate	Overall absence
Jersey	5.6	1.1	6.6
England	3.9	1.3	5.2
North East	3.9	1.5	5.4
North West	3.8	1.4	5.2
Yorkshire and the Humber	3.8	1.7	5.4
East Midlands	3.9	1.4	5.3
West Midlands	3.9	1.3	5.1
East of England	4.1	1.2	5.3
London	3.3	1.3	4.8
South East	4.1	1.2	5.3
South West	4.3	1.1	5.4

*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Table 4 shows that the unauthorised absence rate for pupils in secondary schools in Jersey (1.1%) is lower than in England (1.3%) and all major regions in England excluding the South West where the rate is similar.

In comparison, the authorised absence rate in Jersey is more than 1 percentage point higher than in all regions of England.

Absence rates by reason

To further understand the difference between absence rates in Jersey and England, absence rates are calculated by reason for absence. Table 5 shows absence rates by reason for primary and secondary school pupils in Jersey and England in the latest year.

Table 5: Absence rates by reason for absence in primary and secondary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2013/2014

	Jersey		England	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Overall absence	3.9	6.7	3.9	5.2
Authorised absence (Other)	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3
Excluded (No alternate provision made)	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Family holiday (agreed)	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.1
Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	2.4	3.5	2.4	2.9
Medical and dental appointments	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4
Religious observance	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
Study leave	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.1
Traveller absence	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Authorised absence	3.7	5.6	3.0	3.9
Family holiday (not agreed)	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2
No reason provided for absence	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.1
Unauthorised absence (Other)	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.9
Late (more than 30 minutes after register closes)*	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Unauthorised absence	0.2	1.1	0.8	1.3

*All numbers are rounded independently to one decimal place.

*Late in England refers to any occurrence where a pupil arrives after the register has closed

Table 5 shows that the rate of authorised absence in Jersey primary schools (3.7%) is higher than in England (3.0), due predominantly to percentage of sessions missed for agreed 'family holidays'; in Jersey 0.8 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 (0.2%) is lower than England (0.8%) due predominantly to the percentage of sessions missed due to 'other' unauthorised absence and absence sessions for which no reason is provided.

The authorised absence rate for secondary school pupils in Jersey (5.6%) is higher than in England (3.9%) due predominantly to the percentage of all sessions missed due to 'illness' and 'study leave'. In Jersey 4.5% of all available sessions are missed by secondary school pupils due to 'illness' and 'study leave' compared to 3.0% of all sessions missed due to these reasons 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.

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 schools and States fee-paying schools but exclude special schools and private-fee paying schools. Data is collected via the schools management information system, CMIS.
5. A complete set of data on attendance and absence in special schools in Jersey (Mont a L'Abbe primary school, Mont a L'Abbe secondary school and Alternative curriculum) was first made available in academic year 2012/2013. Information on pupil attendance and absence within special schools will be included in future editions of this report at such a time that the department can be confident that the data provided by these schools is robust and of sufficient quality.
6. Attendance and absence data for Jersey's pupil referral unit is not included within this statistical report. Due to the small number of students that are educated within this establishment, attendance and absence rates for this school are extremely volatile year on year i.e. they are subject to significant annual increases and decreases due to changes in pupil composition.
7. 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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