

Pupil attendance

Date: 24th October 2024

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1.0. Introduction

1.1. Plymouth's Corporate Plan sets out a commitment to keeping children and families safe, alongside improving education; providing high quality services and engaging communities and empowering staff. We have agreed a vision with our partners, set out in 'A Bright Future 2021-26.' The plan recognises the importance of the local area partnership working together to ensure that children are supported by a system which works seamlessly to spot difficulties early, responds quickly and effectively, and makes sure that help is there for as long as it is needed.

1.2. Many children in Plymouth have a positive experience of school and experience good outcomes. However, we know that some children are not yet well enough supported and included to achieve their full potential. We want all children and their families to benefit from provision in their local communities which meets their needs and helps them to make good progress. This is particularly the case for children who may be more vulnerable to poor outcomes because of their family circumstances or their additional needs.

1.3. This paper provides a deep analysis of school attendance, with a particular focus on severe absence; part time timetables, Children Missing Education and pupil mobility. The attendance strategy is being used across the local area partnership to plan and deliver collaborative, evidenced based approaches, which prevent children from missing or missing out on education and support our collective ambition for children.

2.0. School Attendance in Plymouth

2.1. Over the last 3 academic years Plymouth's overall rates of attendance have consistently sat below national and regional benchmarks. In 2023/24 the Department for Education launched a national data hub for school attendance and pupil absence, providing experimental statistics. In August 2024, daily attendance reporting by schools to the Department for Education became statutory and we now have a reliable data set which enables Plymouth City Council to track school level attendance data on a weekly basis.

2.2. Comparative data provided by the Department for Education in respect of Autumn and Spring Terms 2021/22 – 2023/24 shows that rates of overall absence and persistent absence both nationally, regionally and locally are improving (appendices 1 - 3). In 2022/23 Plymouth's rates of absence improved more rapidly than regional and national benchmarks. 2023/24 Plymouth's rate of persistent and overall absence reduced at a slower rate than regional and national benchmarks. Rates of severe absence have risen nationally, regionally and locally year on year.

2.2.1. Overall absence:

- 2021/22 Plymouth 8.8%, South-West 8.0% and England 7.4%
- 2022/23 Plymouth 8.1% (a reduction of 0.7%), South-West 7.6% (reduction of 0.4%) and England 7.3% (reduction of 0.1%).
- 2023/24 Plymouth 8.1% (no change on previous year), South-West 7.4% (reduction of 0.2%) and England 6.9% (reduction of 0.5%).

2.2.2. Persistent absence:

- 2021/22 Plymouth 29.9%, South-West 24.7% and England 22.3%.
- 2022/23 Plymouth 24.4% (a reduction of 5.4%), South-West 21.9% (reduction of 2.8%) and England 21.2% (reduction of 1.1%)
- 2023/24 Plymouth 23.1% (a reduction of 1.3%), South-West 20.3% (1.6%) and England 19.2% (reduction of 2%).

2.2.3. Severe absence

- 2021/22 Plymouth 1.9%, South-West 1.8%, England 1.5%
- 2022/23 Plymouth 2.3% (increase of 0.4%), South-West 2.2% (increase of 0.4%), England 1.9% (increase of 0.4%). The increase in the rate in Plymouth was on a par with national and regional benchmarks.
- 2023/24 Plymouth 2.9% (increase of 0.4%), South-West 2.6% (increase of 0.4%), England 2.1% (increase of 0.3%)

3.0. Delivering the attendance strategy for Plymouth

3.1. Plymouth's attendance strategy, which is aligned with the Place-Based plan, was launched in November 2023 and sets out the commitment of all partners to ensuring that all children and young people are given the best possible start in life and that they attend school regularly. The strategy sets an ambitious target of 96% attendance across the city. Following the launch of the strategy Plymouth's Service Manager for Inclusion and Welfare has held termly Attendance Networks with school attendance leads. These have been designed and delivered in partnership with schools and Children's Social Care Early Help and Targeted Support Teams. Through the network we share best practice and raise the profile of attendance in Plymouth.

3.2. Throughout the academic year 2023/24 our Place-Based approach has been focused on inclusion, particularly the attendance, mobility and outcomes for children who experience disadvantage or who have special educational needs. As a result, the Attendance Team Plan has been written in order to drive forward the strategy. The plan was approved by the Plymouth Education Board in June 2024. The plan is being delivered at pace, working with schools, families and multi-agency partners to implement consistent, graduated responses to children and young people who are not attending school regularly.

3.3. The headteacher conference held in October 2024, provided an opportunity for school and trust leaders to develop each of the six strands of the Place-Based plan of which the development of a belonging framework specifically targets raising school attendance through developing increasing relational practices with families and schools. In addition, the deep dive reporting of persistent and severe absence, elective home education, suspensions and permanent exclusion will continue to drive the attendance strategy.

3.4. In September 2024 the national rate of attendance was 94.5%. Early analysis taken from Plymouth's inclusion scorecard identifies the rate of attendance in Plymouth as below the national benchmark. Despite this, attendance across all schools in the city has showed early signs of improvement. In September the rate of overall attendance increased to 93.98%; a 0.13% increase when compared to the same period the previous year (93.85%). The rate of persistent absence (attendance below 90%) fell by 1.72% from 20.38% to 18.66%. This means that more children are attending school regularly in Plymouth.

3.5. Severe absence (attendance below 50%) is on the rise nationally and continues to be a stubborn issue in Plymouth. In September 2024, the rate of severe absence was 2.65%. An

increase of 0.27% when compared to the same period in 2023/24. Whilst severe absence is going down in Plymouth primary schools it is increasing in secondary and special schools.

3.6. In September 2024 the national overall attendance rate in primary schools was 95.8%. In Plymouth the rate was 95.63%; this is broadly in line with the national average and represents an improvement of 0.05% when compared to the same period the previous year. The rate of children who were persistently absent from Plymouth primary schools fell by 1.49% to 14.54% when compared to the same period the previous year (16.03%). Severe absence in primary schools also fell by 0.02% to 1.01% (1.03% in September 2023) (appendix 4).

3.7. In September 2024 the national overall attendance rate in secondary schools was 93.2%. In Plymouth the rate was 92.34%; whilst this is below the national benchmark it represents an improvement of 0.36% when compared to the same period the previous year. The rate of children who were persistently absent from Plymouth secondary schools fell by 2.23% to 22.57% when compared to the same period the previous year (24.80%). The rate of severe absence has increased in Plymouth secondary schools and rose by 0.33% to 4.09% when compared to September 2024 (3.76%) (appendix 5).

3.8. In September 2024 the national overall attendance rate for special schools was 88.6%. In Plymouth the rate was 89.38%: 0.78% better than the national benchmark. Despite this improvement, the rate of attendance in Plymouth special schools fell by 1.12% when compared to the same period the previous year. The rate of children who were persistently absent from Plymouth special schools increased by 0.38% to 29.74%. The rate of severe absence has also increased and rose by 2.34% to 5.17% when compared to September 2023 (2.83%) (appendix 6).

3.9. School attendance is a priority for all schools and teams across Children's Services. Multi agency work to support pupils who are severely absent has been a focus of targeted support meetings. These meetings have been held in partnership with schools, Access and Attendance Officers and Early Help workers. The 0-25 SEND Team will begin to attend termly targeted support meetings, where need is greatest, from the summer term to ensure joint planning in respect of children with Education Health and Care Plans and absence (see 4.3 and 4.4).

3.10. The Department for Education publishes statutory guidance in respect of school attendance and pupil absence ([updated August 2024](#)). The guidance strengthens the role of the local authority with regards to its working arrangements with schools and multi-agency partners. Decisive action is being delivered through the Attendance Strategy and Team Plan as we work together to improve school attendance. We continue to work with schools and multi-agency partners to deliver training; for example, developing a support first approach to attendance casework. We are also continuing to embed evidenced based best practice to support families and remove barriers to attendance as well as promote the importance of school attendance in Plymouth through media campaigns and in the early years.

4.0. Severe absence in Plymouth

4.1. Whilst overall attendance in Plymouth is showing signs of improvement, the number of children who are severely absent from school has risen by 1% in Plymouth over the last three academic years (appendix 7 and 8). These children are missing out on at least 50% of their education due to their absence from school.

4.2. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing out on full time education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET)

later in life. Plymouth City Council is committed to supporting school leaders, settings and practitioners to ensure that all children in Plymouth are supported to receive the education to which they are entitled.

4.3. Plymouth schools each have a single point of contact within the Attendance Team. The Access and Attendance Officer will meet at least once every 6 weeks with each school in their locality to provide information, advice and guidance on matters relating to school attendance. Using data from the DfE and the Plymouth Inclusion Scorecard; Access and Attendance Officers support schools to share best practice and use data to analyse strengths and areas for development. By understanding the drivers of pupil absence, we can work collaboratively to remove barriers to attendance. The meeting also provides an opportunity to discuss and agree casework referrals for severely absent children with a specific focus on those known to Children's Social Care and those with additional vulnerabilities such as SEND. The 0-25 SEND Team will also begin to attend termly Targeted Support Meetings to ensure joint planning in respect of children with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) who have poor attendance. In addition to the termly Targeted Support meetings, Access and Attendance Officers have been using data from the Inclusion Scorecard and Eclipse to have targeted early help conversations with each school on a fortnightly basis to discuss and agree plans for our severely absent, missing and vulnerable children and young people.

4.4. Using national data as a benchmark, Access and Attendance Officers conduct regular analysis of attendance data to prioritise schools within their locality area to target support for severely absent pupils. Access and Attendance Officers then use both national and local data during their fortnightly conversations with identified schools to agree support and action.

5.0. Severe absence, Pupil Characteristics

5.1. In the Academic Year 2023/24, 1146 (3.2%) of Plymouth's statutory school age children had missed 50% or more of their education. When looking at the data in terms of gender there are no significant emerging themes with 580 females and 566 males having an attendance rate of less than 50%. 995 (86%) of severely absent children in 2023/24 identify as white British or white English. The data does not indicate any themes or trends in respect of black and minority ethnic groups.

5.2. Of the 1146 children who were severely absent from school:

- 633 (55.2%) were known to Children's Social Care in the past 6 years.
- 629 (54.9%) have had one or more episodes of child protection planning.
- 496 (43.3%) are entitled to Pupil Premium and/or free school meals.
- 488 (42.5%) had one or more suspension from school.
- 404 (35.2%) require Special Educational Needs Support in school.
- 304 (29.7%) had one or more episodes of part time timetable in school.
- 158 (13.8%) have an Education Health and Care Plan.
- 93 (8.1%) were permanently excluded from school.
- 27 (2.3%) are from service families.

6.0. Severe absence by year group

6.1. Whilst severe absence in primary schools has remained at an average 0.8% over the three academic years, the rate of severe absence in secondary schools has increased by 1.2% across the same period. The data for the academic year 2023/24 shows that severe absence rates more than doubled following the year 6-7 transition with a rise from 32 (2.7%) severely absent pupils in Year 6 to 83 (7.2%) in Year 7. Severe absence rates significantly rise again by a further 6.5% in Year 8.

Rates continued to rise through Years 9 and 10 and by Year 11, 265 (23.1%) pupils were severely absent (see Appendix 9).

7.0. Severe absence and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

7.1. Of the cohort of severely absent children in the city in 2023/24, 158 (13.8%) had an EHCP. Within the primary phase, there were 52 (4.5%) children with EHCPs. At secondary phase, this more than doubled to 106 (9.2%). Of the cohort 404 children (35.2%) require SEN Support. 45 (11.1%) of these children were within the primary phase. Of the 359 (88.9%) children recognised as needing SEN support in the secondary phase, 53.2% (191) were in years 10 and 11 (appendix 9).

7.2. **The Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP)** resource has been co-produced with families and partners across education, health and social care. It includes information and resources to support schools in their work with a specific chapter on collaborating with families. The resource clearly identifies what schools must do support all children and young people and this includes specific reference to school attendance. The universal provision described in the OAP is the offer created by schools to ensure they are inclusive by design and consistently work to reduce as many barriers as possible for children and families. This clearly allows schools and professionals to then identify where a child is making progress with a consistent universal offer and where extra targeted provision will need be given in a mainstream environment. Implementation and impact of the OAP will be monitored and evaluated through applications for targeted funding for individual children; feedback from the educational psychology service and specialist teachers via their termly consultations with SENCOs; parent surveys and a reduction in the number of children being withdrawn to home education.

7.3. Plymouth City Council has collaborated with special schools within the city to develop an outreach offer of support for mainstream schools. This was launched in September 2024. The outreach offer provides specialist advice and support to professionals in mainstream schools so that they can be equipped to meet the needs of complex children and/or cohorts within school; this will include consideration of barriers to school attendance. In September alone, 56 referrals from schools across the city were received, which indicates that there is an appetite across schools to better understand and meet the needs of children with SEND.

7.4. School leaders report children's mental health needs are having a significant impact on school attendance. At the Elective Home Education Task and Finish Group held on 23rd October 2024 the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) reported national, regional and local increases in significant mental health needs in children. However, Plymouth has not seen the rises in hospital admissions which are indicated by south-west and national benchmarks. In feedback to CAHMS, children have described that they feel neuro diversity is not always understood in schools. In response, mental health support teams in schools are supporting school staff with work around neurodiversity and reasonable adjustments. As part of their work CAHMS professionals also continue to develop their parental support offers.

7.5. The research [Frontiers | Parental stress in families of children with special educational needs: a systematic review \(frontiersin.org\)](https://www.frontiersin.org) identifies single parents, in particular females, who have children with SEND as facing increased levels of stress, overwhelm and social isolation. This can lead to withdrawal from engagement with schools. Emotional support is one of the main protective factors to supporting parents of children with SEND. It is important for professionals in schools to provide meaningful opportunities for parents to express their concerns, unmet needs, and worries. Parents also benefit from access to groups where they can share their experiences and hear from others. Evidence in Plymouth shows that there is a strong correlation between severe absence and elective home education. The home education task and finish group are using the analysis from the Elective Home Education deep dive report and individual school level intelligence to develop a risk matrix.

Development of the matrix is being led by a Multi-Academy Trust in Plymouth and will be piloted with schools in the city. If effective in supporting early identification, the methodology will be applied to other cohorts of children who are vulnerable to missing out on full time education in order to prioritise early help.

8.0. Severe absence and pupil mobility.

8.1. Of the 174 primary age children who were severely absent in 2023/24, 62 (35.6%) children attended two or more Primary Schools. Within the secondary age cohort of 972 pupils, 400 (41.1%) had two or more primary school moves. Of those 394, 192 (48%) then went on to have two or more school moves during their secondary education. 196 children became registered as Electively Home Educated (EHE) during the academic year 2023/24. A recent deep dive analysis of EHE has highlighted that children who were persistently and severely absent from school are more likely to become home educated.

9.0. Severe absence safeguarding and child protection

9.1. Severely absent children are amongst the most vulnerable. Of the 1146 children who were severely absent in 2023/24, 633 (55.2%) of them have been known to Children's Social Care as 'Child in Need' in the past 6 years. Sixty-nine children were open to Children's Social Care under the Child in Need category in 2023/24, and 36 children were subject to Child Protections Plans. Action is being taken to audit and dip sample this cohort to see whether there are common themes and opportunities to support children more effectively in removing barriers to attendance. The dip sample will be completed as a partnership between Children's Social Care and the Inclusion Attendance and Welfare Team in November 2024. The themes arising from the audit will be published as a 'learning on a page' in December 2024 and a briefing session for social workers will be delivered in January 2025.

9.2. A new Vulnerable Pupils Panel has also been set up with schools and multi-agency partners across the local area. The panel is a partnership between education, health, police and Children's Social Care, providing early help and prevention to support children, removing barriers to their access and engagement with education. The first panel meeting will be held on 15th November 2024.

9.3. In April 2023 Access and Attendance Officers co-located with the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) to fulfil the role of the dedicated decision maker for education. Working as part of the multi-disciplinary team has enabled improved information sharing in respect of individual children who are missing out full time education or at risk of exclusion. This is because pupil absence as a potential safeguarding risk is now explored consistently. Access and Attendance Officers also attend the multi-agency Daily Intelligence Briefing and share educational information about children who go missing. Working in this way improves joint planning for children who are missing out on full time education.

10.0. Severe Absence schools, neighbourhood and localities

10.1. There is a strong correlation between deprivation and severe absence. The west locality has the highest prevalence of severely absent children, accounting for 33.6% of the cohort.

10.2. Three mainstream secondary schools have disproportionately high rates of severe absence when compared to other schools in the city. Of the three schools the average rates of severe absence ranged between 8.3% and 8.9% of their statutory school aged cohort. A new framework to offer early help support to vulnerable cohorts of children in schools is under development. Using

data led insight the framework will prioritise schools for support. The framework is being developed between Plymouth's Early Help Team and the Inclusion, Attendance and Welfare Service. It will be piloted and evaluated in the Spring Term 2025.

10.3. Plymouth City Council is acting as system leader with schools and partners to develop inclusive practice and approaches to create the conditions for success and inclusion in schools in order to raise attendance. This is being achieved through a combination of System Change Projects which include priority 3 of the SEND Improvement Strategy and the development of the Place-Based plan. Priority area 3 of the SEND Improvement Strategy is focused on eliminating permanent exclusions for children with an Education, Health and Care plan and Strand 1 of the 'place-based' plan focuses on developing a 'belonging framework' so that parents and children feel an increasing sense of being welcome and included in their school communities in order to raise school attendance.

11.0. Part time timetables

11.1. All children have a right to a full-time, efficient education suitable to their age, ability and any special needs they may have. Part time timetables should be considered only within the context of a school's wider strategic planning for all pupils regardless of their needs. Schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all pupils unless the parent/carer chose to educate their child otherwise.

11.2. All pupils registered at school should receive full time education consistent with their key Stage. As a general rule this equates to:

- 21 hours at Key Stage 1
- 23.5 hours at Key Stage 2
- 24 hours at Key Stage 3
- 25 hours at Key Stage 4

11.3. A part time timetable requires agreement between the pupil, parent/carer and school. The number of hours spent in education must only be reduced for a time-limited period of no more than six weeks, unless there are exceptional circumstances which include professional advice from the multi-agency team around the child, for example, health professionals, the police or Children's Social Care.

12.0. Part time timetables in Plymouth

12.1. In Plymouth, schools notify the local authority of any child who is on a part time timetable using a notification form. The information is held on a central data base and children are tracked on a termly basis. Three-year trend data shows that the numbers of children on part time timetables in Plymouth is increasing. Data for this cohort is not captured nationally and as a result it is not possible to measure Plymouth's performance against national, regional or statistical benchmarks.

12.2. The rate of part time timetables in Plymouth is increasing (appendix 10). In academic year 2021/22, 615 children were placed on a part time timetable. This increased by 8.4% (54) to 669 in 2022/23. In 2023/24 the rate increased by 13% (93) to 762 children on a part time timetable.

13.0. Part time timetables - pupil characteristics

13.1. 762 children in Plymouth were on a part timetable in 2023/24. Males are disproportionately represented within the cohort at 63% (480). 37% (282) of the cohort were female.

13.2. The Department for Education expects that part time timetables will be used in very

limited circumstances i.e. because of a child's physical or mental health needs and the guidance is clear that part-time timetables should not be used as a strategy to manage a child's behaviour. This position is reflected in [guidance](#) published by Plymouth City Council. Where school leaders are found to use part time timetables as part of a behaviour management strategy, Access and Attendance Officers provide consultation, sign-posting and support so that children are returned to full-time education rapidly. This support is delivered through termly Targeted Support Meetings (see 4.3 and 4.4).

13.2.1. The reasons for males to be on a part time timetable were:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability, 43% (208)
- Behaviour, 25% (120)
- Reintegration, 19% (95)
- Medical, 12% (56)

13.2.2. The top three reasons for females to be on a part time timetable were:

- Reintegration, 28% (79)
- Medical, 28% (79)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, 24% (67)
- Behaviour, 20% (57)

13.3. Based on the evidence, males with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are more likely to be placed on a part time timetable than their female counterparts. Of the males on a part timetable in 2023/24, 59% (285) of the cohort have received one or more suspension.

14.4. Of the females on a part time timetable in 2023/24, reintegration and medical needs have the highest prevalence within the cohort and represent 56% (combined) of reasons. Of the females, 44% (124) have received one or more suspension. A higher percentage rate of females with medical needs or who are being reintegrated to school are on a part time timetable than their male counterparts.

14.5. **Part time timetables by year group**

In secondary schools the highest rates of children on part time timetables were in Key Stage 4 and accounted for 43% (327) of the total cohort (762) (appendix 11). The rates remained stable throughout Key Stage 1 (145), Key Stage 2 (152) and Key Stage 3 (138). The numbers increase significantly in Key Stage 4.

15.0. **Part time timetables, hours and duration of provision**

15.1. Hours and duration of part time timetables are varied. The duration should not extend beyond 6 weeks unless there is a significant medical need which limits a child's ability to access a full-time education. In Plymouth 54% (412) of children in a part time timetable received 16 hours or more of education each week. A significant challenge is in respect of the duration of part time timetables. 71% (541) of children were on a part time timetable for more than 24 weeks.

15.2. Of the 762 children on a part time timetable in 2023/24:

- 54 (7%) received five or less hours per week of education.
- 134 (18%) received between six and 10 hours of education per week.
- 162 (21%) received between 11 and 15 hours of education per week.
- 306 (40%) received between 16 and 20 hours of education per week.
- 106 (14%) received between 21 and 25 hours of education per week.

15.3. Of the 762 part time timetables in 2023/24

- 18 had a duration of six weeks or less.
- 25 had a duration of seven-12 weeks
- 178 had a duration of 12 – 24 weeks.
- 541 had a duration of 24 weeks or more.

16.0. Part time timetables by school and academy trust

16.1. In 2023/24 all secondary schools in Plymouth had two or more children on a part time timetable. Four secondary schools within the cohort are overrepresented within the data with the highest numbers of children on part time timetables.

16.2. In 2023/24 53 of the 69 primary schools had one or more child on a part time timetable. Four primary schools within the cohort had a disproportionate number when compared to other mainstream primary schools.

16.3. In 2023/24, 98 children who attended a special school were placed on a part time timetable. Nine special schools had one or more children on a part time timetable however two special schools were over-represented when compared to other special schools. The two special schools with the highest numbers of children on part time timetables and account for 58% of the total cohort.

16.4. Three multi-academy trusts are over-represented within the data in respect of numbers of children on part time timetables. In order to understand reasons and address barriers at a Trust level, the Director for Education meets with the CEO of each Trust on an annual basis. From each meeting a set of improvement actions are agreed which also inform the strategic planning of inclusive approaches and best practice across the city.

16.5. Strand 4 of the 'place-based' plan for the 2024/25 academic year is the development of an early language acquisition project across the city. The aim of this work, based in the primary phase, will be to support children with social, emotional and mental health needs to develop their communication skills. The intended outcome will be a reduction in the number of children at risk of permanent exclusion, subject to part-time timetables and suspension as a result of improved ability to understand and communicate their feelings to key adults.

16.6. Strand 4 of the place-based plan for the 2024/25 academic year is the development of a Pre-16 Vocational Offer to support children in secondary schools to be able to access a curriculum which matches and meets their needs and aspirations. This offer will mean that a greater number of children at Key Stage 4 will be able to spend part of their week at school studying core subjects and part of their week at City College Plymouth undertaking a vocational route. A key impact of this strand, which is in the pilot phase, will be a reduction of children subject to a part-time timetable at Key Stage 4.

16.7. The Service Manager Inclusion and Attendance is exploring opportunities for Access and Attendance Officers to shadow targeted support meetings in good or outstanding local authorities to learn from best practice. Shadowing opportunities will take place in the Autumn term 2024 and complement the monthly dip sampling and learning from quality assurance activities.

17.0. Primary in-year pupil mobility

17.1. There are 69 mainstream primary schools in Plymouth. The School Admissions Team received 1926 in-year applications for children to move primary school in 2023/24. Of the 1926 applications, 1036 were from children currently attending a Plymouth school. The remaining 890 children were not registered at a Plymouth school. Within the dataset some Plymouth primary

schools are overrepresented with regards to the numbers of parents submitting applications to leave.

17.1.1. One Primary Academy had the highest proportion of parental requests to leave the school followed by three other schools. The 15 schools with the highest numbers had a combined number of 415 and accounted for 41% of the in-year parental requests to leave Plymouth primary schools.

18.0. The reasons for applying to leave a Plymouth school in-year, but not moving address, is categorised on the in-year school admissions form as follows:

- Unhappy in some way with the school.
- Behaviour (permanent exclusion or risk of permanent exclusion).
- Other reasons where the current school is not mentioned as an issue, e.g. distance, to be with a sibling, subjects offered at preferred school, etc.

18.1. It is important to consider in-year pupil movement as a percentage of the number on roll of a school. The in-year mobility analysis identifies 10 schools with the highest rates of parental requests to leave due to being unhappy with the school.

18.1.1 Two primary schools had disproportionately high rates of parents wanting to leave. The three schools with the highest rates of parents wanting to leave overall are in the west locality.

19.0. Secondary in-year pupil mobility

19.1. There are 19 mainstream secondary schools in Plymouth. Six schools make up a disproportionate number of applications to leave, with 60% of applications coming from only 32% of schools.

19.2. In 2023/24 The School Admissions Team received 1727 in year applications to move secondary school in-year. Of the 1727 applications; 804 applications were for children who were already attending one of the 19 mainstream secondary Plymouth schools. The remaining 923 children were not registered at a Plymouth school at the time of application.

19.3. Of the 804 applications for children currently attending a Plymouth school, 91 parents stated that the application was as the result of a house move and 713 were not moving. One secondary school in the west locality had the largest number of applications to leave. 9% of the applications stated that a house move was the reason for the request.

19.4. Of the 804 applications 88% (713) were not connected to a house move. Of the 713, 28% of applications were from year 7, 28% from year 8, 29% from year 9, 13% from year 10 and less than 1% from year 11 (Appendix 12). Of the 713 applications with no house move, 60% of the children came from six schools. Of the 713, 84% of the reasons given by parents for wanting to leave the school without a house move were due to unhappiness with the school.

19.5. Of the schools with the highest percentage rate of parents applying to leave:

- One school in the west locality had 7.4% of the school population request to leave the school via an in-year application to another school. 100% of the applications state that the reason for the move is due to unhappiness or risk of permanent exclusion.
- One school in the north locality had 6.4% of the school population request to leave the school via an in-year application to another school.
- One school in the west locality, 6.4% of the school population requested to leave the school via an in-year application to another school. 88% of the applications to leave one school state unhappiness with the school.
- One school in the east locality had 6.2% of the school population request to leave the school via an in-year application to another school.

20.0. Children missing education

20.1. A child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and is at an increased risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, being sexually exploited and becoming not in education, employment or training on reaching school leaving age. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

20.2. A child is classed as a Child Missing Education if they are:

- of compulsory school age; and
- not on a school roll; and
- not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school, for example, at home, privately or in alternative provision.

21.0 Children Missing Education in Plymouth

21.1. Nationally the rates of children missing education is increasing. This trend is reflected locally (appendix 13). The three-year trend shows the rates of Children Missing Education in Plymouth as lower than national and regional benchmarks.

21.2. In Plymouth 2023/24 there were 372 children who were recorded as Children Missing Education, this was an increase of 12 when compared to 2022/23 and 59 when compared to 2021/22. Of these:

- 172 (46%) were believed to have moved to another local authority area in England and did not provide a forwarding address.
- 126 (34%) moved to Plymouth from another local authority area; or had moved address in Plymouth and were waiting to start at a new school.
- 47 (13%) children moved abroad with no forwarding address.
- 28 (8%) children spent a period of time in unregistered provision following a permanent exclusion.
- 14 (4%) children were missing education following a period of unsuitable home education and were issued a Notice to Satisfy.
- Less than ten children have no reason recorded.
- Less than 10 moved to Plymouth from another country.
- Less than 10 were removed from school because of parental dissatisfaction with the school.

21.3. Children who move out area or abroad and whose parents do not provide a forwarding address are tracked by a CME caseworker. This includes liaison with other local authorities, the UK Border Force, the Department for Work and Pensions (benefits), national school census data and the National Health Service (GPs). The UK Border Force and the Police will support local authorities to trace children if there is sufficient evidence of a safeguarding concern.

22.0. Children missing education – vulnerability**22.1. Of the 372 CME in 2023/24:**

- 139 (37%) children have been registered at two or more Plymouth primary schools.
- 128 (34%) children were known to Children’s Social Care within the previous six-year period.
- 127 (34%) children have had one or more episodes of Child in Need.
- 103 (28%) children have been registered at two or more Plymouth secondary schools.
- 82 (22%) children require SEN Support.
- 73 (20%) children have received one or more suspension.
- 60 (16%) children are eligible for the Pupil Premium.
- 59 (16%) children are eligible for Free School Meals.
- 40 (11%) children have had one or more episodes of needing Child Protection.
- 40 (11%) children have had between one-and-two episodes of part time timetable.
- 40 (11%) have had two or more episodes of CME.
- 30 (8%) have an Education Health and Care Plan.
- 28 (8%) have been permanently excluded.

22.2. Of the 372 children missing education in 2023/24, 332 (89%) have been located and the case has been closed. Of the 40 (8%) children who have not yet been located 8 (20%) are believed to have moved abroad and 24 (60%) are believed to have move to another local authority area in England. Of the remaining children, support is in place to secure suitable, full time education.

22.3. Every child who lives in Plymouth and who is referred as a Child Missing Education has an allocated Officer from the Inclusion, Attendance and Welfare Team who will hold the case and undertake casework until the child is receiving a suitable, full-time education. The Officer will liaise with the family and the professional team around the child to ensure that the right support is in place to secure the child’s education.

Next steps

What	Who	When
Write the Plymouth Place-Based plan following conference feedback from Headteachers.	Rob Williams, Place-Based Co-ordinator.	15 December 2024

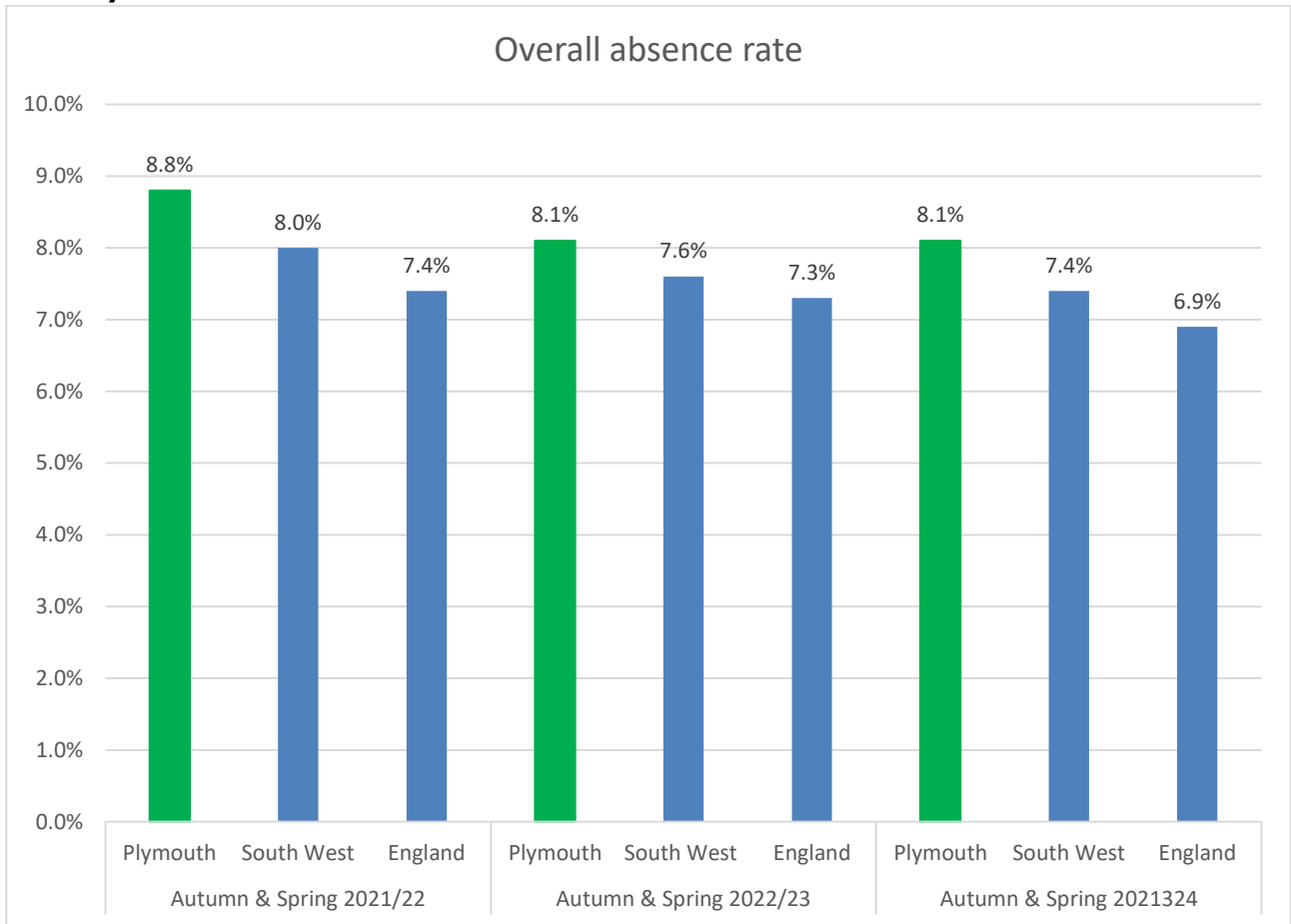
Complete a multi-agency practice review in respect of permanently excluded children.	Isabelle Kolinsky, Service Manager, Inclusion and Attendance.	30 November 2024
Report the findings of the practice review to the Quality Assurance Delivery Group of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership.	Isabelle Kolinsky, Service Manager, Inclusion and Attendance.	17 December 2024
Deliver the attendance professional development programme for schools and multi-agency partners.	Isabelle Kolinsky, Service Manager, Inclusion and Attendance.	1 December 2024 – 15 July 2025
Evaluate the impact of the Vulnerable Pupils Panel on the number of part-time timetables and permanent exclusions within the current academic year.	Isabelle Kolinsky, Service Manager, Inclusion and Attendance.	15 July 2025

Author: Isabelle Kolinsky, Service Manager Inclusion and Welfare,

Date: 24 October 2024

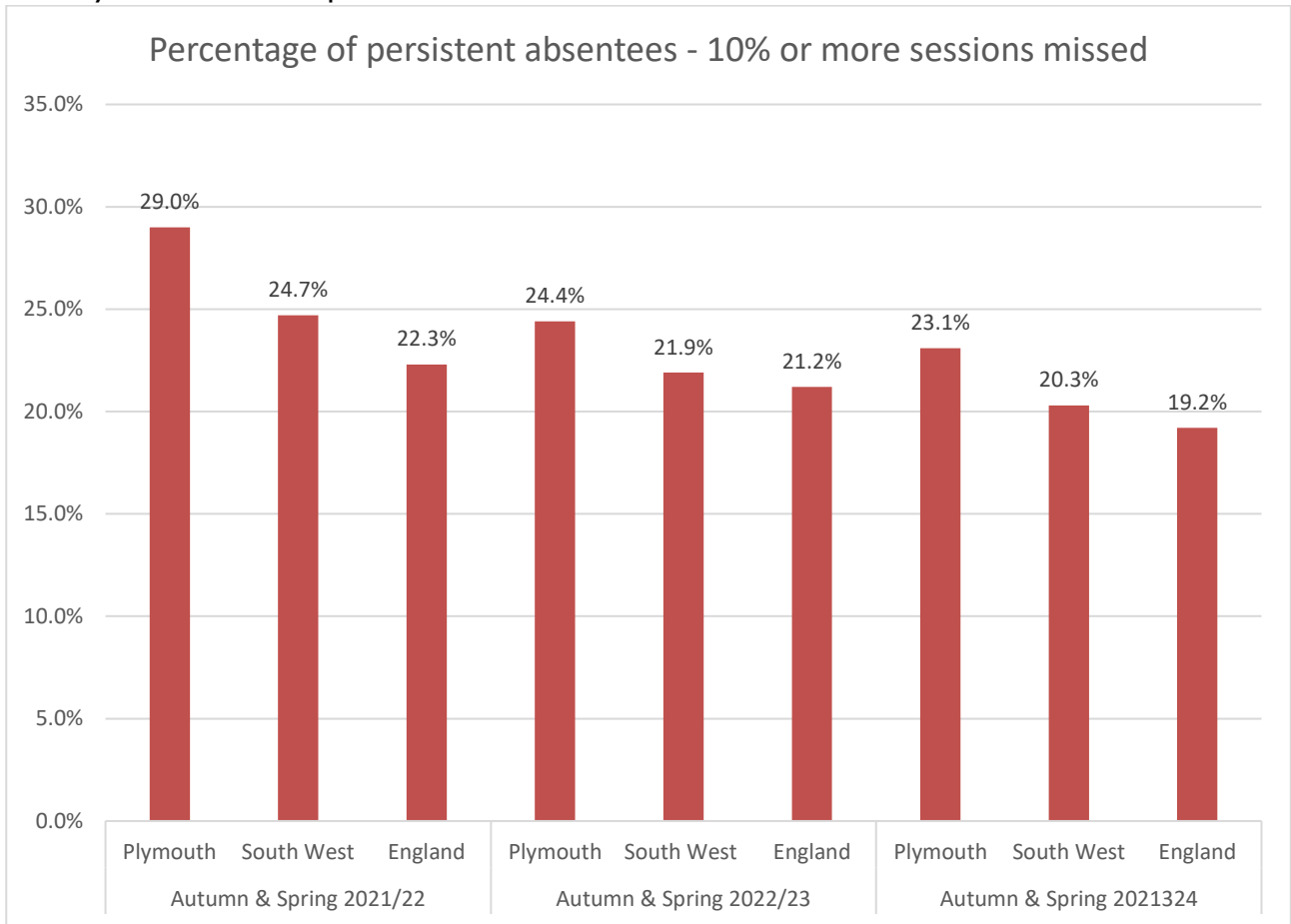
Appendix I

Three-year trend data – overall absence



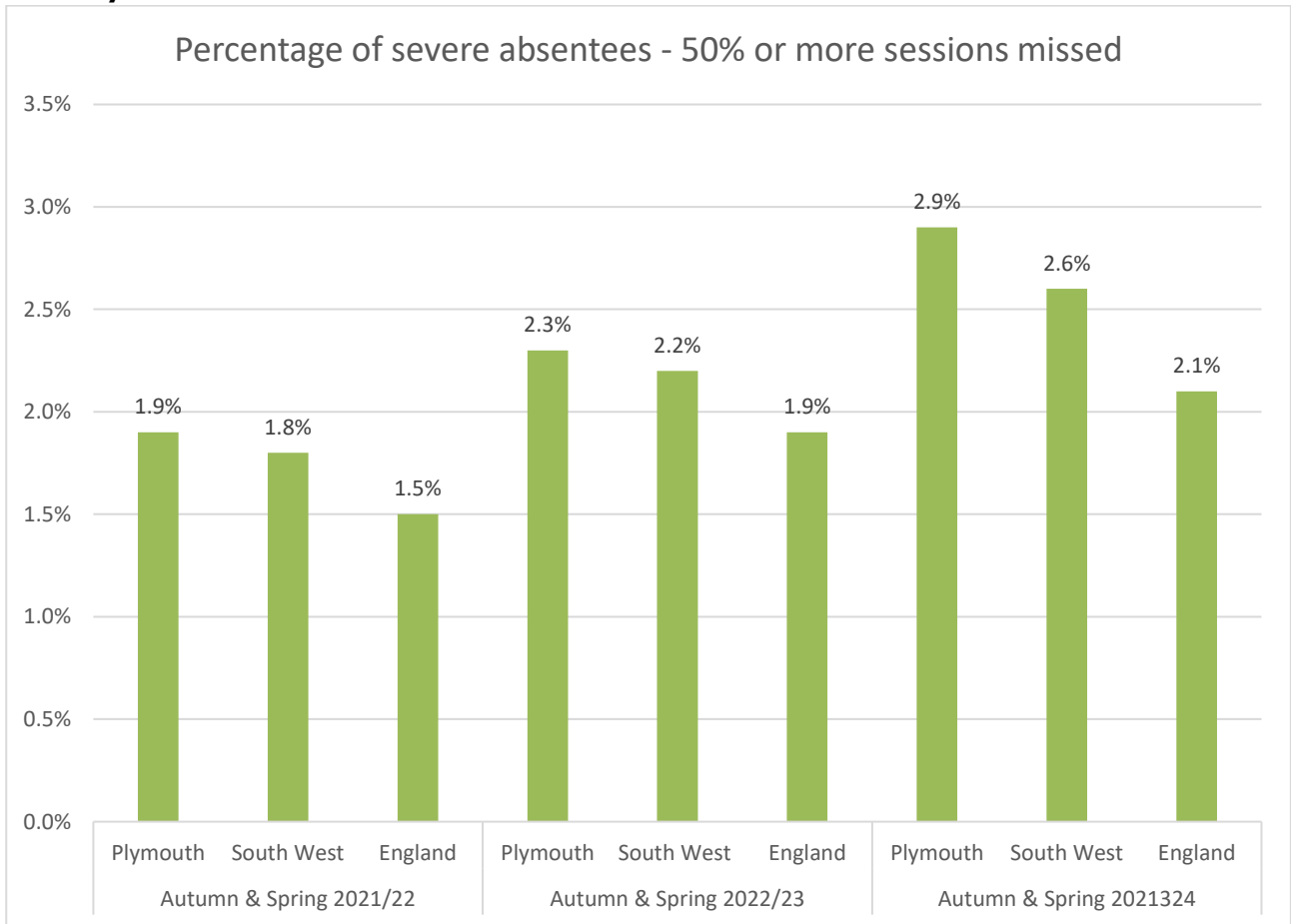
Appendix 2

Three-year trend data – persistent absence



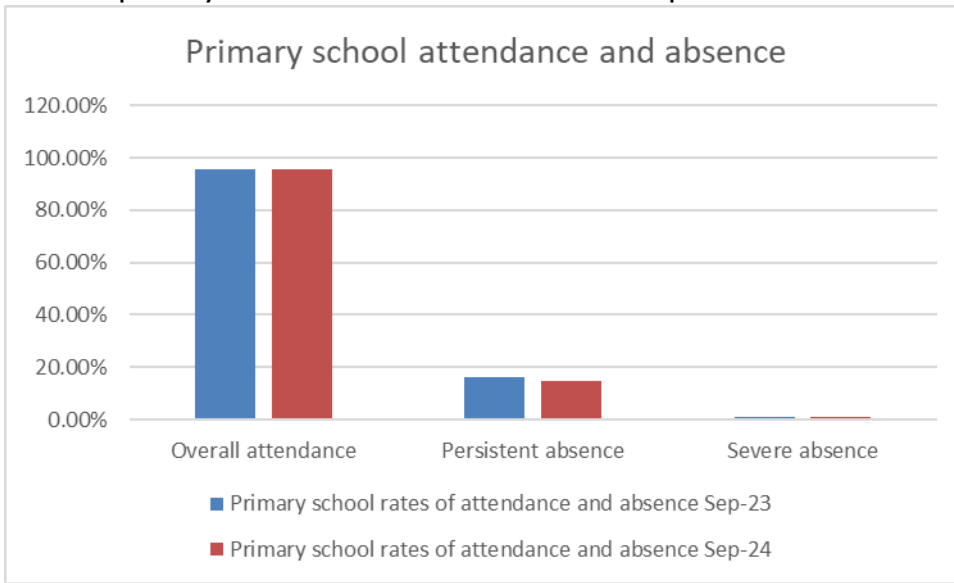
Appendix 3

Three-year trend data – severe absence



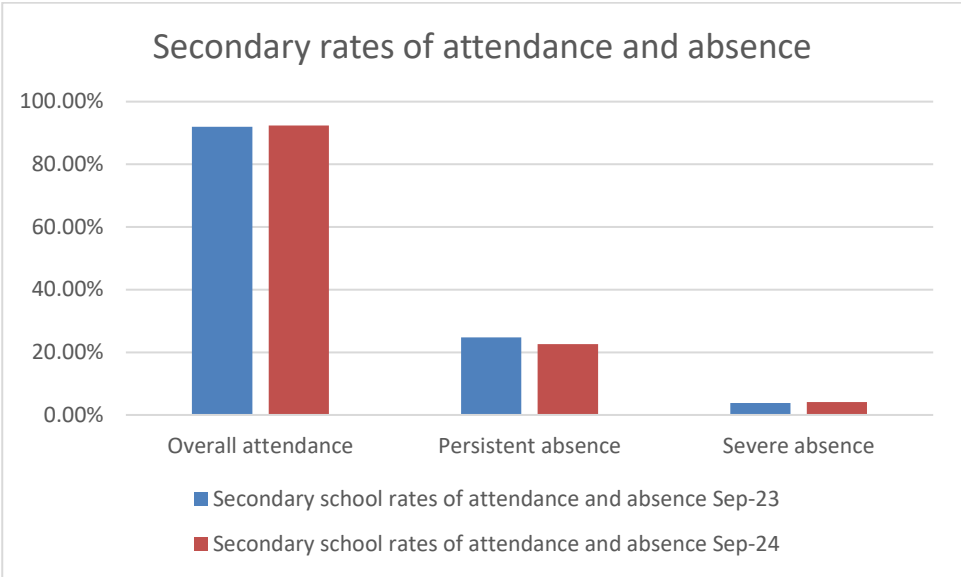
Appendix 4

Rates of primary school attendance and absence September 2023 and 2024



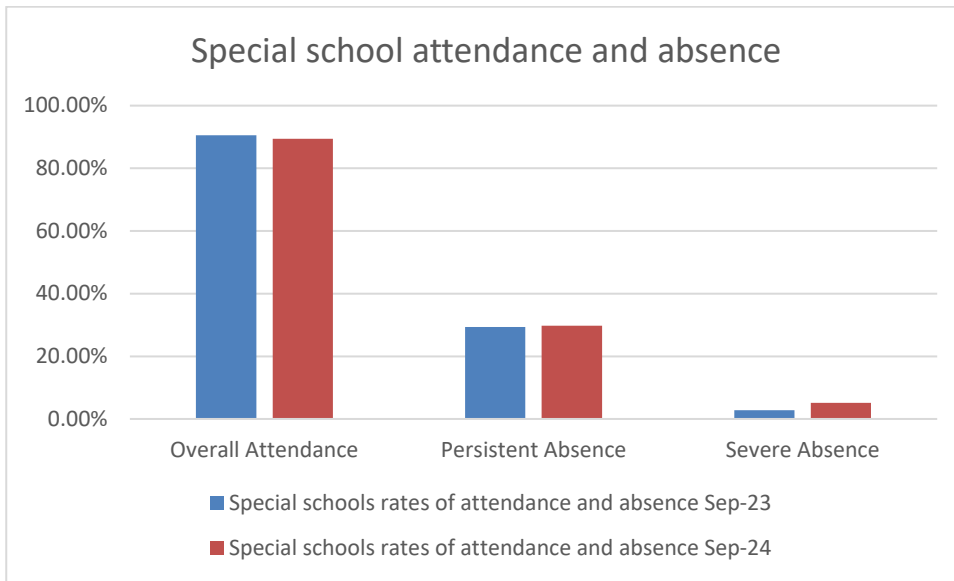
Appendix 5

Rates of secondary school attendance and absence September 2023 and 2024



Appendix 6

Rates of special school attendance and absence September 2023 and 2024



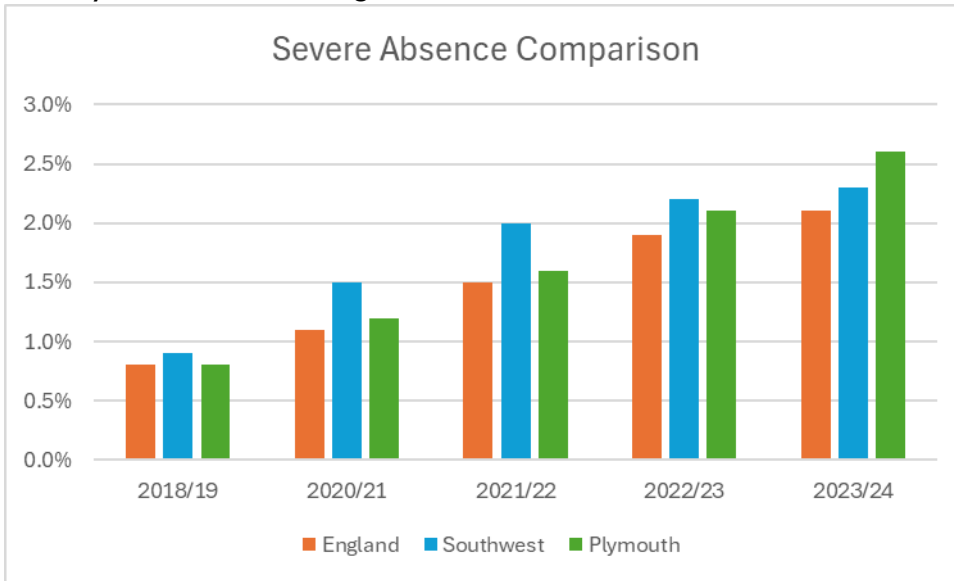
Appendix 7

Plymouth severe absence (< 50%) Autumn Term and Spring Term comparative data national and regional benchmarks

Academic Year	England	Southwest	Plymouth
2018/19	0.8%	0.9%	0.8%
2020/21	1.1%	1.5%	1.2%
2021/22	1.5%	2.0%	1.6%
2022/23	1.9%	2.2%	2.1%
2023/24	2.1%	2.3%	2.6%

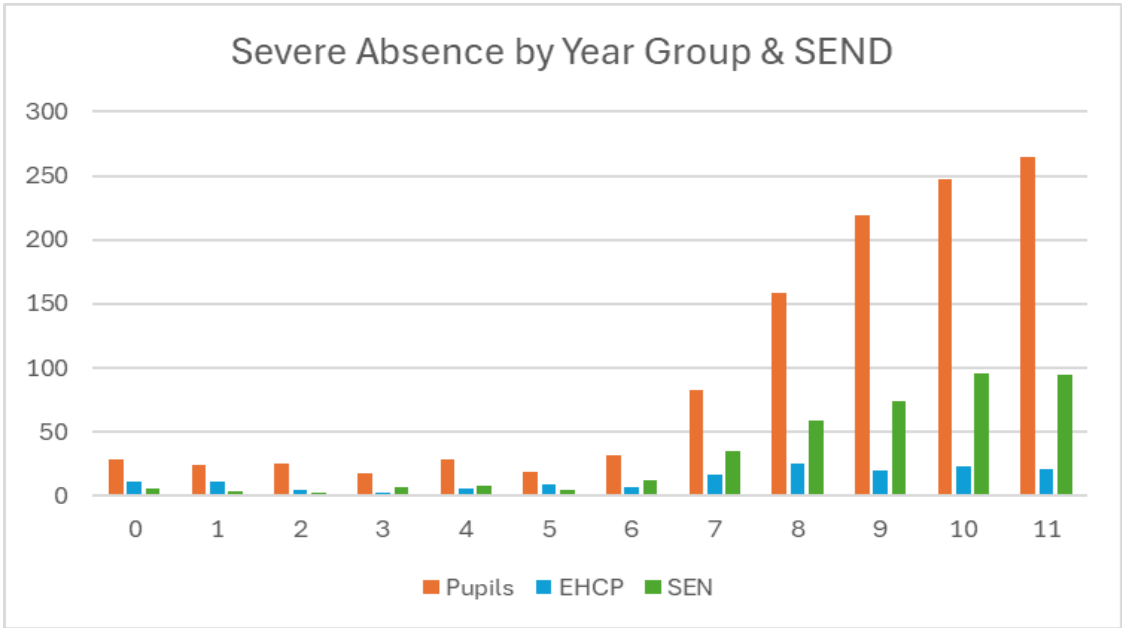
Appendix 8

Three-year trend data – regional and statistical benchmarks

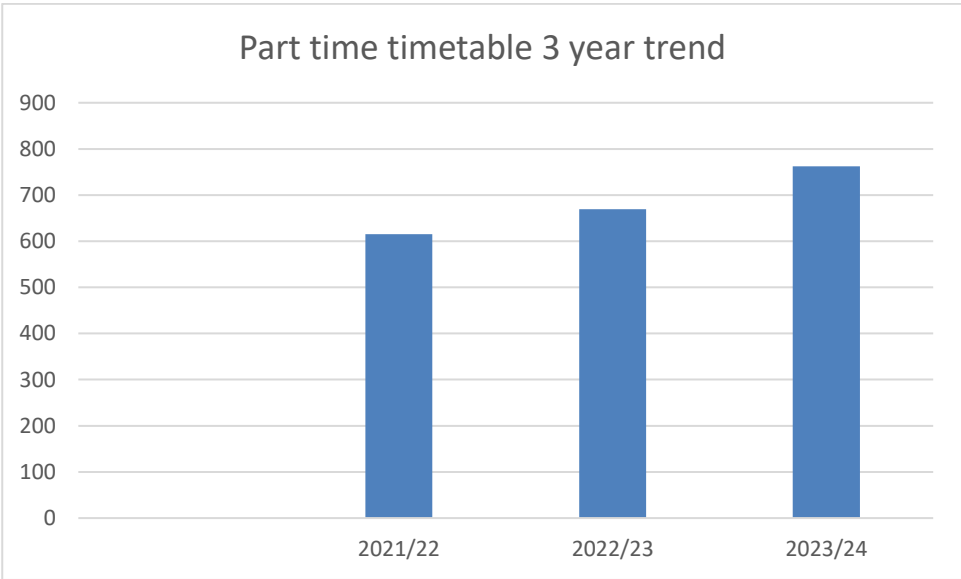


Appendix 9

Severe absence by Year group and SEND

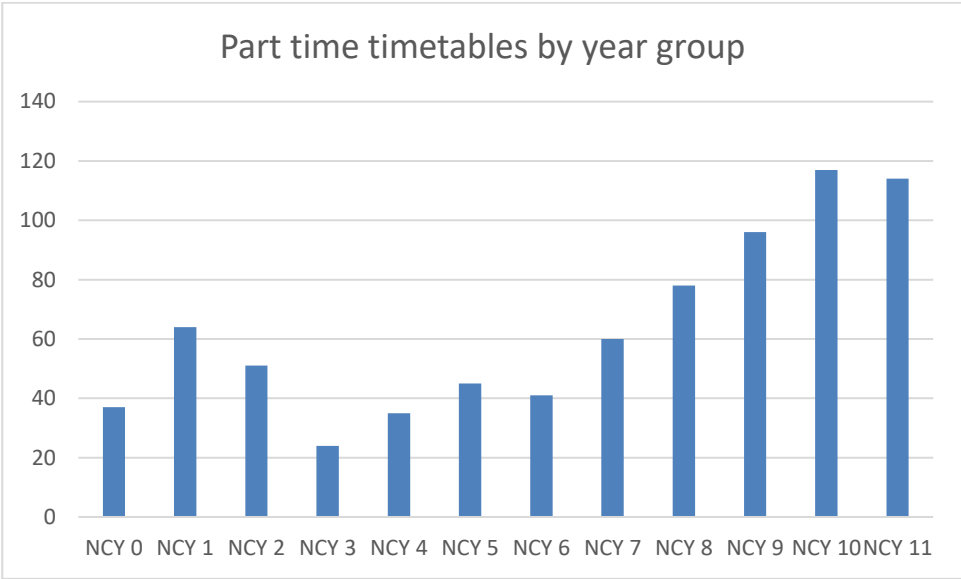


Appendix 10
Part time timetable three year trend

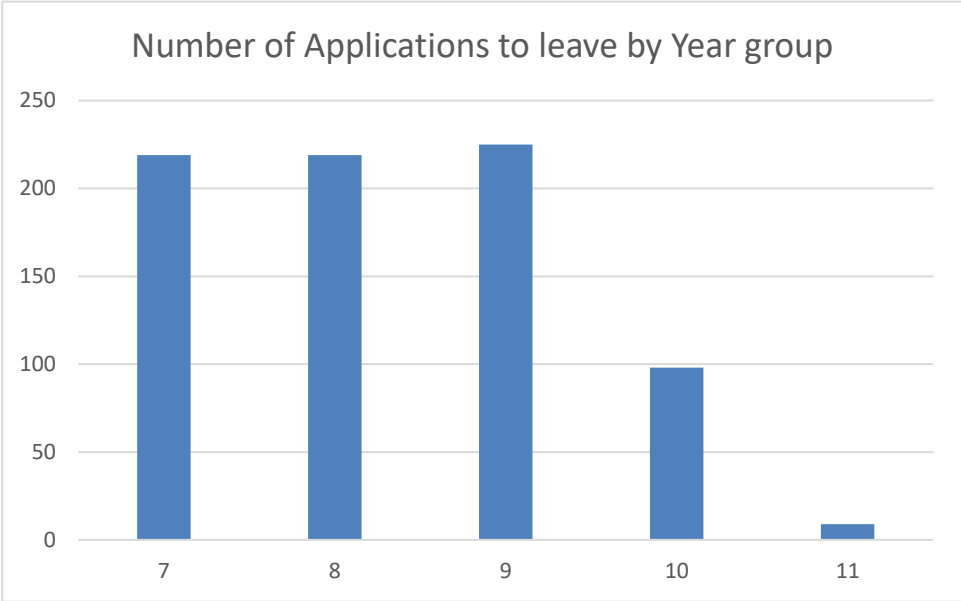


Appendix II

Part time timetables by year group



Appendix I2



Appendix 13

Rate of CME on census day by population for 'CME at census date' in England, Plymouth and South West between 2022/23 Autumn term and 2023/24 Autumn term

		2022/23 Autumn term	2022/23 Spring term	2022/23 Summer term	2023/24 Autumn term
England		0.30%	0.30%	0.30%	0.40%
South West	South West	0.20%	0.20%	0.10%	0.30%
	Plymouth	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%	0.20%