

# How does Ofsted inspect attendance?

Aimee Floyd Senior His Majesty's Inspector  
South East region





**Consultation  
now closed**

**Thank you for sharing your views**

  
**Ofsted**  
raising standards  
improving lives

# Why attendance matters





# What are the implications of pupils not attending school?

Consider:

- social and emotional
- academic
- safeguarding
- life chances for individuals
- anything else that springs to mind



## Inspectors considered (1)...

- Fractured experience of the curriculum.
- Subsequent impact on motivation and engagement.
- Lack of continuity leading to SEND not being identified.
- Not learning to read properly.
- Not catching up with reading.
- Negative impact on progress through the curriculum.
- Negative impact on key stage 4 results.
- Potential impact on earning potential in the future.

## Inspectors considered (2)...

- Missing out on the 'positive voice of the school'.
- Social isolation and not learning how to form and maintain positive relationships.
- Not learning social skills and how to behave well.
- Missing out on PSHE, including RSE.
- Missing careers guidance.
- Lack of enrichment opportunities.
- Safeguarding needs not being identified.
- Facing increased risk of harm when not at school.



# The link between absence and attainment

## Inspectors considered...

- Generally, primary schools with the lowest overall absences had the highest attainment at key stage 2.
- The same is the case at key stage 4 – schools with the lowest overall absence generally had the highest attainment.
- There is a clear association between persistent absence and attainment at key stages 2 and 4.
- Schools with the lowest persistent absences had the highest attainment in 2022/3 and vice versa.





# Pre- and Post-pandemic attendance

## Attendance pre-pandemic

- 2010–2019 absence fell substantially from 6% to 4.7%.
- That represents **15 million more days in school**.
- However, persistent absence was unacceptably high: 1 in 9 pupils missed more than 10% of sessions in 2018–19.
- ‘Gaps remained between vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils’ attendance and their peers’.

*DfE consultation: ‘Attendance: improving consistency and support.’ Spring 2022*

# Attendance post-pandemic

Absence has risen beyond pre-pandemic levels.

Last year:

- Over one and half million pupils were persistently absent.
- Over 125,000 pupils missed over half of their education.
- Over a third of pupils who receive free school meals were persistently absent.
- Roughly one third of pupils with SEND were persistently absent.
- 28,100 children were missing from education (CME)





# Ofsted's annual report

A national  
focus





What do the  
percentages  
actually mean?



# What does 90% attendance actually mean (1)?



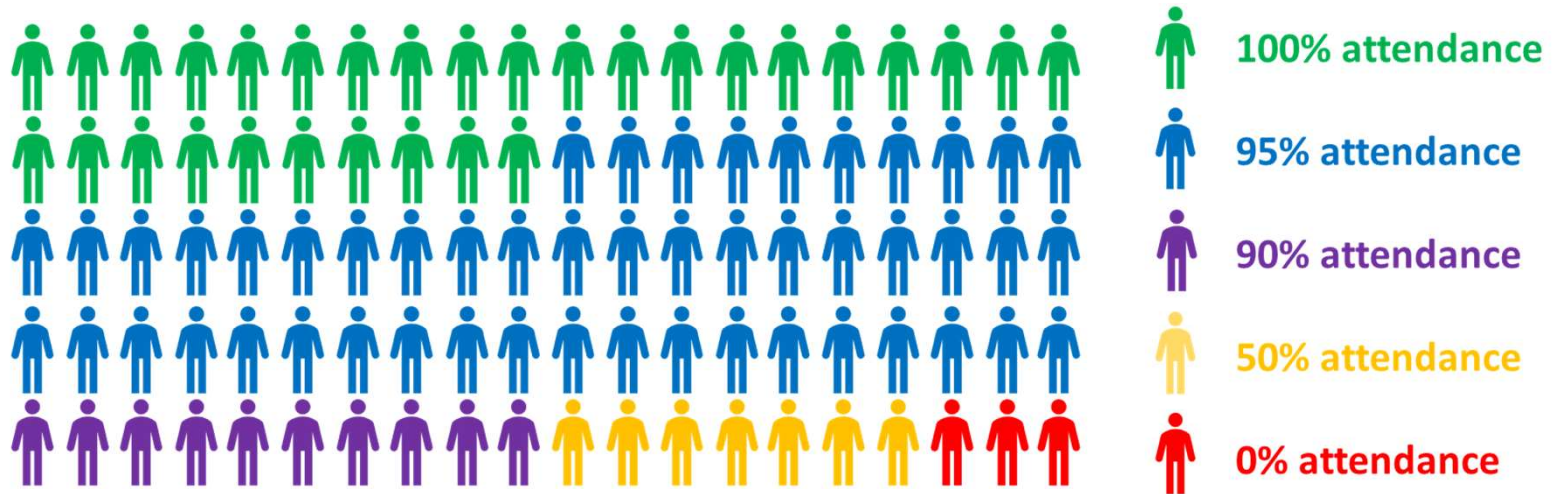
# What does 90% attendance actually mean (2)?

  
**School B**  
(100 pupils)

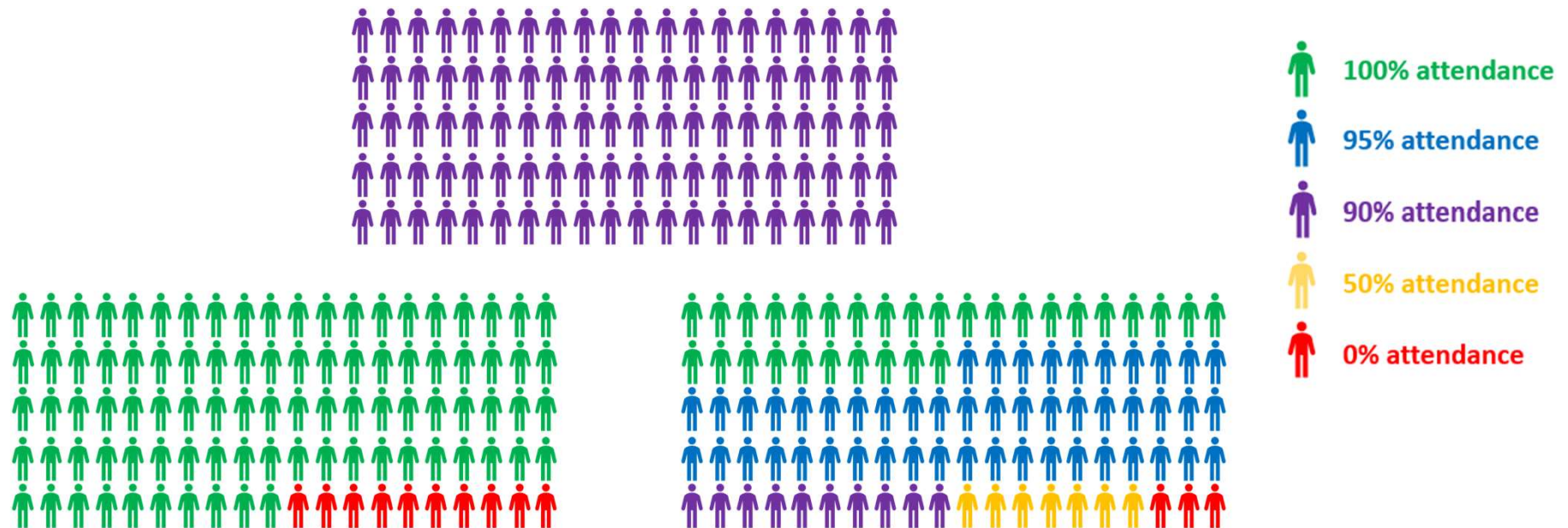


# What does 90% attendance actually mean (3)?

  
School C  
(100 pupils)

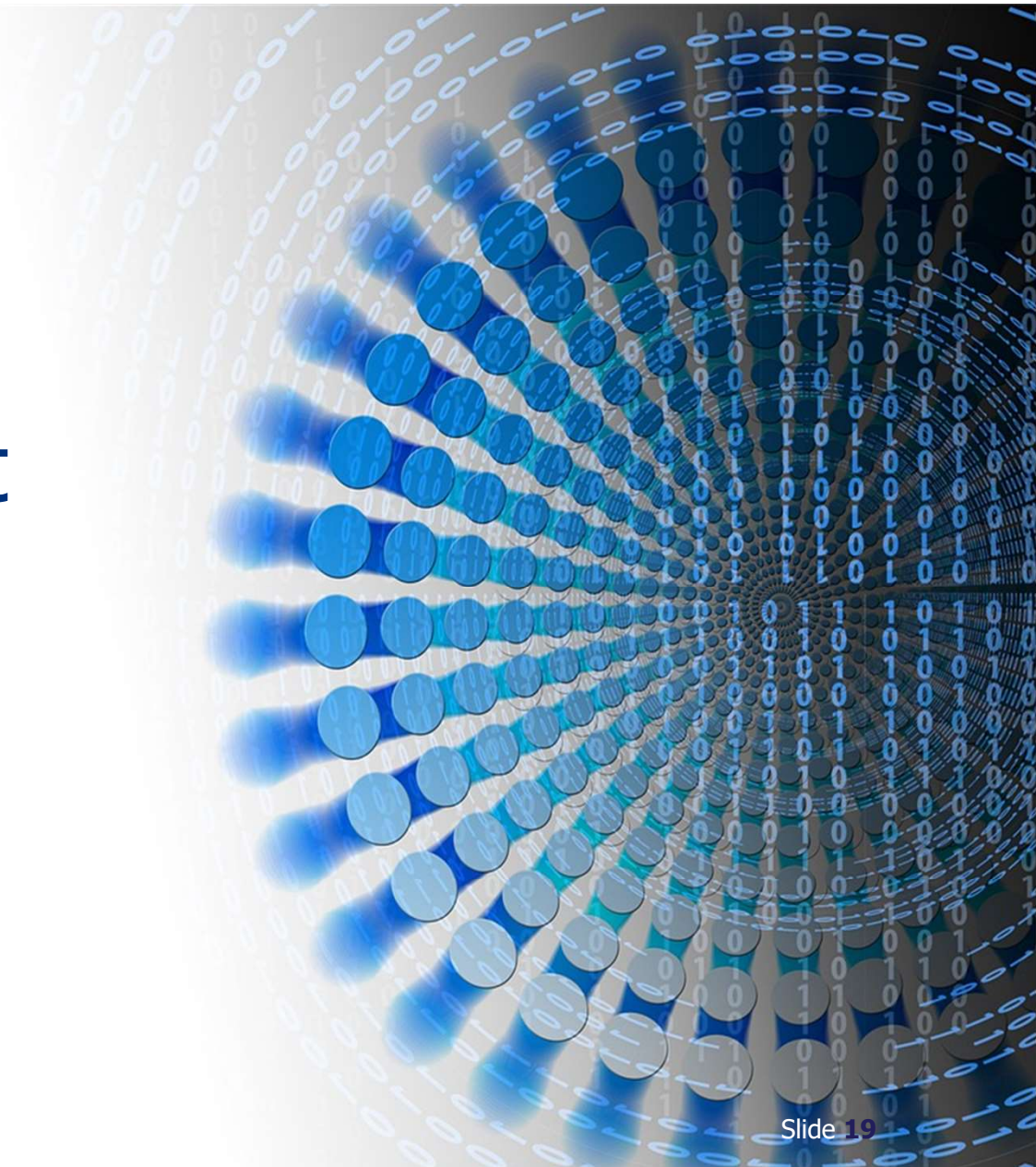


# What does 90% attendance actually mean (4)?






Same data, different  
outcomes:  
What lies beneath?



# Part-time timetables



Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri
Art	English	Maths		
English	Maths	PSHE		Maths
Maths	History		PE	English
	Music		Maths	

# Considerations for inspectors (1)

- Who are the pupils – year groups, EHCPs, LAC, vulnerable?
- How are leaders ensuring pupils are safe when not in school? (Risk assessed for safeguarding concerns, where are they when not in school, vulnerabilities)?
- Actual time in school? How part-time?
- Why is a part-time timetable in place?
- Who made the decision – collaboration, other professionals?
- Have other avenues been explored? Support?

## Considerations for inspectors (2)

- Are the arrangements time-limited?
- How long have these been in place?
- How are the arrangements reviewed and **how often**?
- When was the last review, and what was decided? Next one?
- Are attendance codes being used in the right way?
- Curriculum implications – what are pupils missing when not here? Phonics? PSHE?


# Reasons for non-attendance





“Listen, understand,  
empathise, but do  
not tolerate.”





# What do we do when attendance is non-statutory?

# Non-statutory attendance: below compulsory school age.

Consider:

- how well the school works with parents to promote attendance so that the children **form good habits for future learning**
- the attendance of **disadvantaged children**, including children with SEND, children who have funded places and/or for whom the school receives early years pupil premium
- any links between **attendance and safeguarding**.





# Attendance threaded through

## Takeaway points

- Post-pandemic, attendance remains an issue in many schools.
- Poor attendance has an adverse impact on children and young people in many ways.
- We need to ensure that we evaluate attendance thoroughly in every inspection.
  - Get ‘beyond the percentages’– what lies beneath?
  - Consider: are schools doing all they reasonably can?
- Attendance needs to be ‘everyone’s business, all the time’.



# Area SEND inspections

[Area SEND inspections: framework and handbook - GOV.UK](#)



## Area SEND framework

68. Inspectors may also consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND at education settings. Some pupils with SEND face greater barriers to attendance than their peers and may need additional support to help them access their education. Inspectors will also evaluate information in relation to part-time timetables, and may request further information. Children and young people with SEND have, on average, lower attendance rates than their peers, which affects their education. The DfE's attendance guidance explains the responsibilities of all partners, including local authorities.

### Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local	Maintain the same exhibition for	Regularly review attendance data	Work closely with relevant

# Annex A

## 3.7 Attendance

The most recent evaluation of attendance of children and young people with SEND in the local area

# ILACS inspections

Inspecting local authority children's services - GOV.UK



## Inspection activity and gathering evidence

159. When inspectors select the children and young people whose experiences they will evaluate, they will take into account the factors set out below:

- educational achievement and attendance



# The experiences and progress of children in care

261. A local authority is likely to be judged good if the following apply:

**Learning and enjoyment** Children and young people make good educational progress at school or other provision since being in care. They receive the same support from their carers as they would from a good parent.

Children and young people who do not attend school have prompt access to suitable good-quality registered alternative provision. There is regular review of their progress. Urgent action is taken if children are missing from education or if their attendance reduces.

**3.08** The data the headteacher of the virtual school and the local authority use to monitor the attainment, progress, attendance, exclusion, employment and training of children in care and care leavers.

# Any questions?

# Ofsted on the web and on social media

[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>

 [www.linkedin.com/company/ofsted](http://www.linkedin.com/company/ofsted)

 [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews)

 [www.slideshare.net/ofstednews](http://www.slideshare.net/ofstednews)

 [www.twitter.com/ofstednews](http://www.twitter.com/ofstednews)

