

# Statistical Bulletin 2/2016

## Attendance at grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools in Northern Ireland – 2014/15: Detailed statistics

**18 February 2016**

**Coverage:** Northern Ireland

**Frequency:** Annual

**Theme:** Children, Education  
and Skills

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The purpose of this statistical bulletin is to present detailed, final attendance figures for schools for the 2014/15 academic year. It includes information on the rates of absence, type of absence and reason for absence.

### KEY FINDINGS

Absence is reported by schools in half day sessions and recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

- The overall attendance rate for primary schools in 2014/15 was 95.4% of the total half days; 4.6% of all half days were missed due to absence; 3.5% authorised and 1.1% unauthorised absence.
- The overall attendance rate for post-primary schools in 2014/15 was 93.4% of the total half days; 6.6% of all half days were missed due to absence; 4.5% authorised and 2.1% unauthorised absence.
- The overall attendance rate for special schools in 2014/15 was 90.2% of the total half days; 9.8% of all half days were missed due to absence; 6.7% authorised and 3.1% unauthorised absence.



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## Introduction

Attendance data are collected annually via the school census and are required by a range of organisations and individuals for a variety of purposes. Members of the NI Assembly, the Department of Education, the Education Authority and the Education and Training Inspectorate use the data for benchmarking, policy making and performance monitoring. Responsibility for attendance policy lies with Additional Educational Needs Team in DE which monitors non-attendance and provides guidance to schools in relation to managing attendance. Attendance data are used for monitoring other Departmental policies for example, Achieving Belfast and Derry Bright Futures. The statistics are also used by other departments when developing and monitoring cross-departmental policies, for example, attendance is an indicator in the Education Domain of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure as well as OFMDFM's 10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People. The data are also used by researchers, academics and students, as well as the general public for informing choices about service providers.

Initial findings for 2014/15 were published on 21 January 2016. This statistical bulletin supplements that information and includes analysis of attendance data by school type and characteristics such as management type, as well as pupil characteristics, for example gender and ethnicity.

Attendance data for the 2014/15 academic year was collected from all grant-aided primary, post-primary and special schools in Northern Ireland via the school census which was conducted in October 2015.

## Section 1: All schools by Sector

### 1.1 Key Findings

#### Absence rates

While there does not tend to be large variation in absence rates year on year, overall absence was slightly higher in all phases in 2014/15 than in the previous year. However the largest increase of 0.2 percentage points for primary schools was marginal.

- In primary schools in 2014/15, 4.6% of all half days were missed due to absence; 3.5% authorised and 1.1% unauthorised absence. (See Table 1.1). In 2013/14, overall absence accounted for 4.4% of the total half days; 3.0% authorised and 1.4% unauthorised<sup>1</sup>. The figures show a marginal increase in absence levels on the previous year for overall and authorised absence, while unauthorised absence has decreased.

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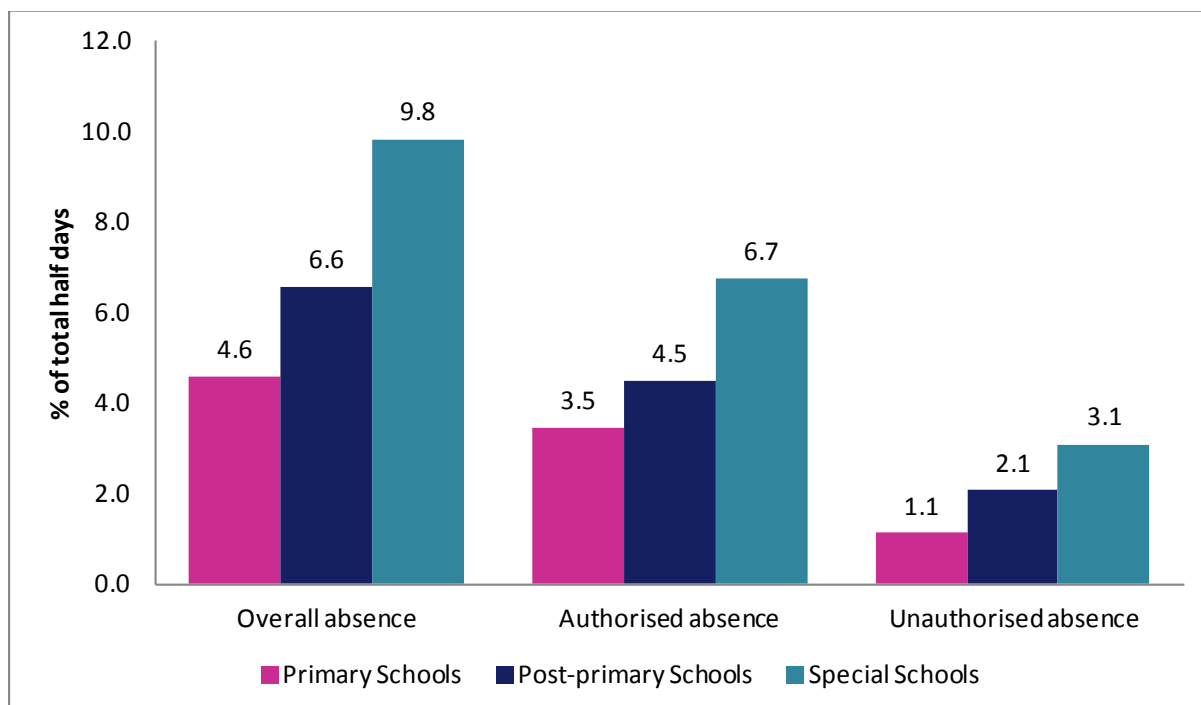
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/statistical-bulletin-attendance-at-grant-aided-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-1314-summary.pdf>

- In post-primary schools in 2014/15, 6.6% of all half days were missed due to absence, 4.5% was authorised absence and 2.1% was unauthorised absence. See Table 1.1 below. In 2013/14, overall absence accounted for 6.5% of the total half days (4.0% authorised and 2.5% unauthorised).
- In special schools, 9.8% of all half days were missed due to absence in 2014/15, comprising 6.7% authorised and 3.1% unauthorised absence. See Table 1.1 below. In 2013/14<sup>2</sup>, overall absence accounted for 9.7% of the total half days (6.4% authorised and 3.4% unauthorised absence).

**Table 1.1: Attendance and absence at school by school type, 2014/15**

	Percentage of total half days		
	Primary Schools	Post-primary Schools	Special Schools
<b>Attended</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>90.2</b>
<b>Overall absence</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>9.8</b>
Authorised absence	3.5	4.5	6.7
Unauthorised absence	1.1	2.1	3.1

**Chart 1.1: Absence from primary, post-primary and special schools, 2014/15**



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/statistical-bulletin-attendance-at-grant-aided-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-1314-summary.pdf>

## 1.2 Reasons for absence

The most common reason for absence in all schools was illness, which is an authorised absence. Illness accounted for 63.9% of all absent half days in primary schools, 52.9% in post-primary schools and 46.2% in special schools. This equates to 2.9%, 3.5% and 4.5% of the total half days respectively. (See Table 1.2).

The level of absence attributable to each reason tends to remain fairly consistent year on year, however, the proportion of absent half days attributable to 'Illness' has increased in comparison to 2013/14, when it was 58.6% in primary schools, 48.4% in post-primary schools and 45.2% in special schools<sup>3</sup>. In 2013/14, this was 2.6%, 3.1% and 4.4% of the total half days respectively.

With regards to unauthorised absence, the proportion of absent half days attributable to 'No reason yet provided' has decreased in comparison with 2013/14. In primary schools, 10.2% of absent half days were missed for this reason in 2014/15 compared with 19.1% in 2013/14; in post-primary schools, it was 19.7% in 2014/15 compared with 30.3% in 2013/14; and in special schools, it was 24.6% in 2014/15 compared with 28.2% in 2013/14. In 2014/15 this was 0.5%, 1.3% and 2.4% of the total half days, respectively, for primary, post-primary and special schools, compared with 0.8%, 2.0% and 2.7% in 2013/14.

The increase in absent half days attributable to 'Illness' accounts for the overall increase in absence levels in 2014/15. However this increase is counteracted somewhat by a decrease in absent half days attributable to 'No reason yet provided'.

**Table 1.2: Absence from schools by reason, 2014/15**

Reason	Primary Schools		Post-Primary Schools		Special Schools	
	% absent half days	% of total half days	% of absent half days	% of total half days	% of absent half days	% of total half days
<b>Authorised absence</b>						
Illness	63.9	2.9	52.9	3.5	46.2	4.5
Medical / dental appointments	3.1	0.1	5.6	0.4	8.5	0.8
Other exceptional circumstances	4.9	0.2	5.8	0.4	10.5	1.0
Family holiday agreed	2.0	0.1	0.6	*	1.9	0.2
Bereavement	1.1	0.1	1.8	0.1	0.6	0.1
Artistic endeavour	0.4	*	0.4	*	0.0	*
Suspended	0.1	*	1.4	0.1	0.7	0.1
Religious observance	0.1	*	0.0	*	0.2	*
<b>Total authorised absence</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>6.7</b>
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>						
No reason yet provided	10.2	0.5	19.7	1.3	24.6	2.4
Family holiday not agreed	8.1	0.4	2.6	0.2	2.5	0.2
Other	5.5	0.2	9.0	0.6	4.1	0.4
Late after registration closed	0.7	*	0.3	*	0.3	*
<b>Total unauthorised absence</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>3.1</b>
<b>Total overall absence</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9.8</b>

Note: \* denotes a figure greater than zero but less than 0.1. In some cases, percentages may not sum due to rounding

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/statistical-bulletin-attendance-at-grant-aided-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-1314-summary.pdf>

### 1.3 Comparisons with England, Scotland and Wales

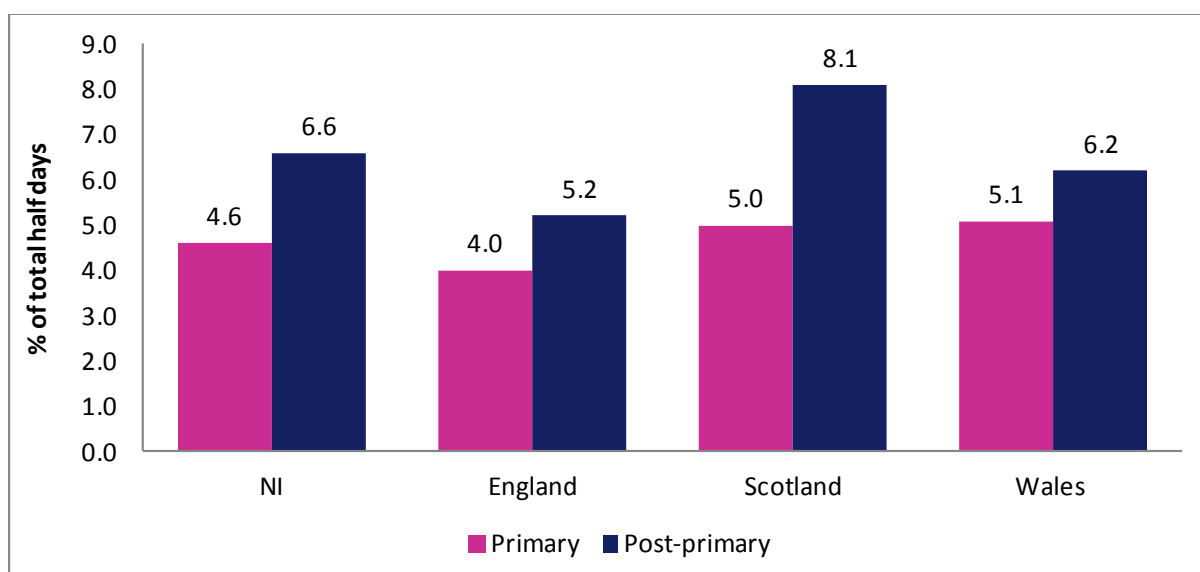
The lowest overall absence rate in primary schools was recorded in England; 4.0% of the total half days, compared with 5.1% in Wales and 4.6% in Northern Ireland. At 1.4% of the total half days, unauthorised absence was higher in Scotland primary schools than in any other region (1.1% in NI, 1.0% in Wales and 0.7% in England). (See Table 1.3).

In post-primary schools, the highest overall absence rate was recorded in Scotland (8.1%). The overall absence rates recorded in Northern Ireland and Wales were lower, at 6.6% and 6.2%, respectively, while overall absence in England, at 5.2%, was considerably lower again. As with primary schools, unauthorised absence was higher in Scotland post-primary schools (2.8%), than any other region. The next highest unauthorised absence rate was recorded in NI (2.1%), while both England and Wales were lower (1.2% and 1.3%, respectively). (See Table 1.3).

**Table 1.3: Absence rates for Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales, 2014/15**

Area	Percentage of total half days			
	Primary Schools		Post-Primary Schools	
	Overall absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence	Unauthorised absence
NI	4.6	1.1	6.6	2.1
England	4.0	0.7	5.2	1.2
Scotland	5.0	1.4	8.1	2.8
Wales	5.1	1.0	6.2	1.3

**Chart 1.2: Comparisons with England, Scotland and Wales – overall absence, 2014/15**



## Section 2: Primary Schools

### 2.1 Key Findings

In primary schools in 2014/15, 4.6% of all half days were missed due to absence; 3.5% authorised and 1.1% unauthorised absence (Table 1.1/Chart 1.1). The most common reason for absence in primary schools was illness, which is an authorised absence and accounted for 2.9% of the total half days or 63.9% of all absent half days in 2014/15 (Table 1.2).

### 2.2 School Level Analysis

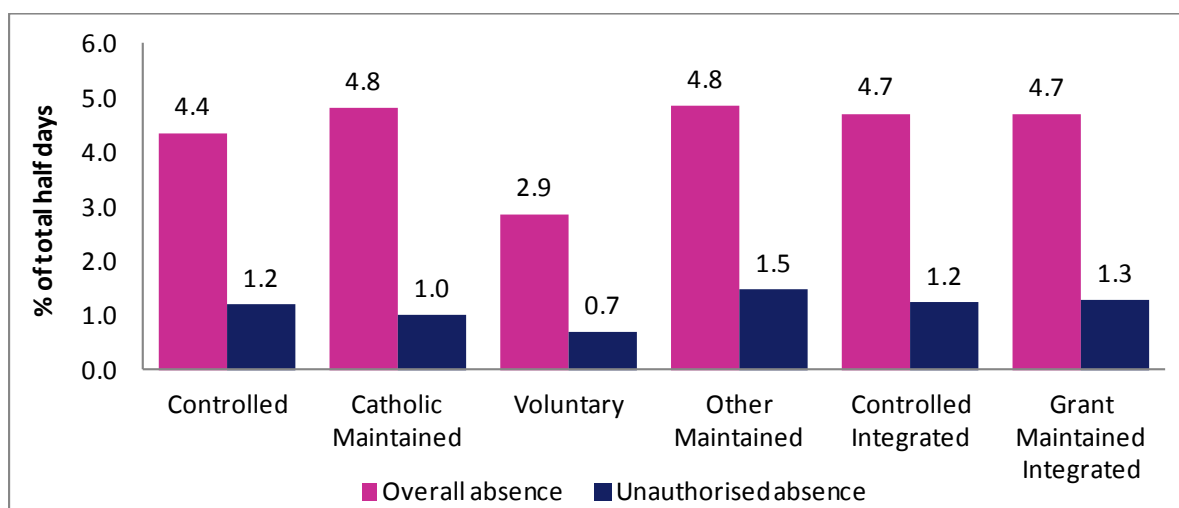
#### 2.2.1 Management Type

Catholic Maintained and Other Maintained primary schools had the highest rate of overall absence (4.8% of the total half days) while voluntary schools had the lowest at 2.9% of the total half days. (See Table 2.1/Chart 2.1).

**Table 2.1 Attendance at primary school by management type, 2014/15**

Management Type	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Controlled	95.6	4.4	3.2	1.2
Catholic Maintained	95.2	4.8	3.8	1.0
Voluntary	97.1	2.9	2.2	0.7
Other Maintained	95.2	4.8	3.4	1.5
Controlled Integrated	95.3	4.7	3.5	1.2
Grant Maintained Integrated	95.3	4.7	3.4	1.3
<b>Primary rate</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>

**Chart 2.1: Absence from primary school by management type, 2014/15**





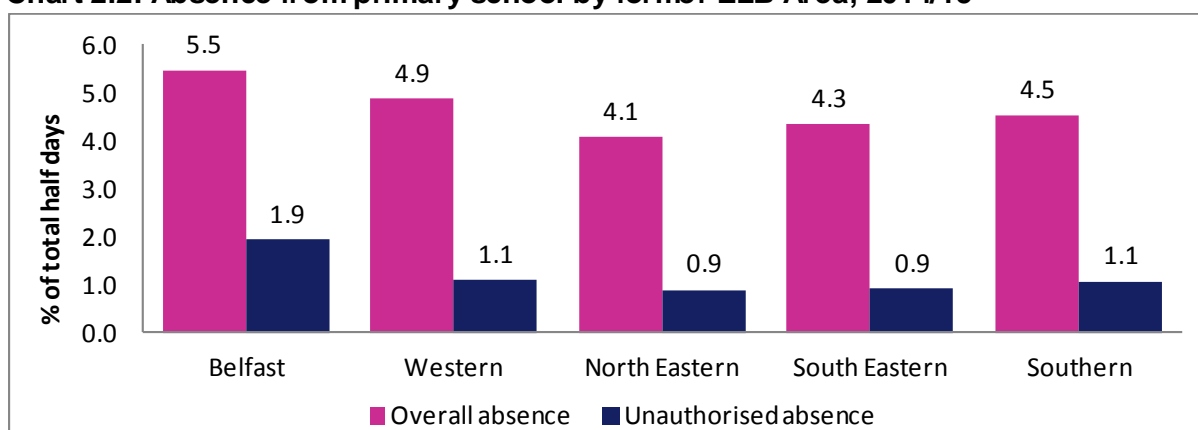
## 2.2.2 Former Education and Library Board (ELB)<sup>4</sup> Area

At 5.5% of the total half days, the highest overall absence rate for primary schools was recorded by the former Belfast Education and Library Board area. The former North Eastern Education and Library Board reported the lowest overall absence rate, with 4.1% of the total half days missed. (See Table 2.2/Chart 2.2).

**Table 2.2: Attendance at primary school by former ELB area, 2014/15**

ELB	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Belfast	94.5	5.5	3.5	1.9
Western	95.1	4.9	3.8	1.1
North Eastern	95.9	4.1	3.2	0.9
South Eastern	95.7	4.3	3.4	0.9
Southern	95.5	4.5	3.5	1.1
<b>Primary rate</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>

**Chart 2.2: Absence from primary school by former ELB Area, 2014/15**



## 2.2.3 Location<sup>5</sup> of school (urban / rural)

Overall absence was higher for urban primary schools (5.0% of the total half days) than for rural primary schools (3.8% of the total half days), as was unauthorised absence (1.4% compared with 0.6% respectively). (See Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3: Attendance at primary school by location of school, 2014/15**

Location	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Urban	95.0	5.0	3.6	1.4
Rural	96.2	3.8	3.2	0.6
<b>Primary rate</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>

<sup>4</sup> As the information relates to 2014/15 and is prior to the establishment of the regional Education Authority, data is available by former ELB area.

<sup>5</sup> Location defined using NISRA Central Postcode Directory urban/rural classification. Boundaries are available for Northern Ireland as defined by the Planning Service. These areas are defined from Settlement Development Limits (SDLs) which are a statistical classification and delineation of settlements. See [http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/geography/digital\\_products/urban\\_rural\\_classifications/ur\\_report.pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/geography/digital_products/urban_rural_classifications/ur_report.pdf) for more information.

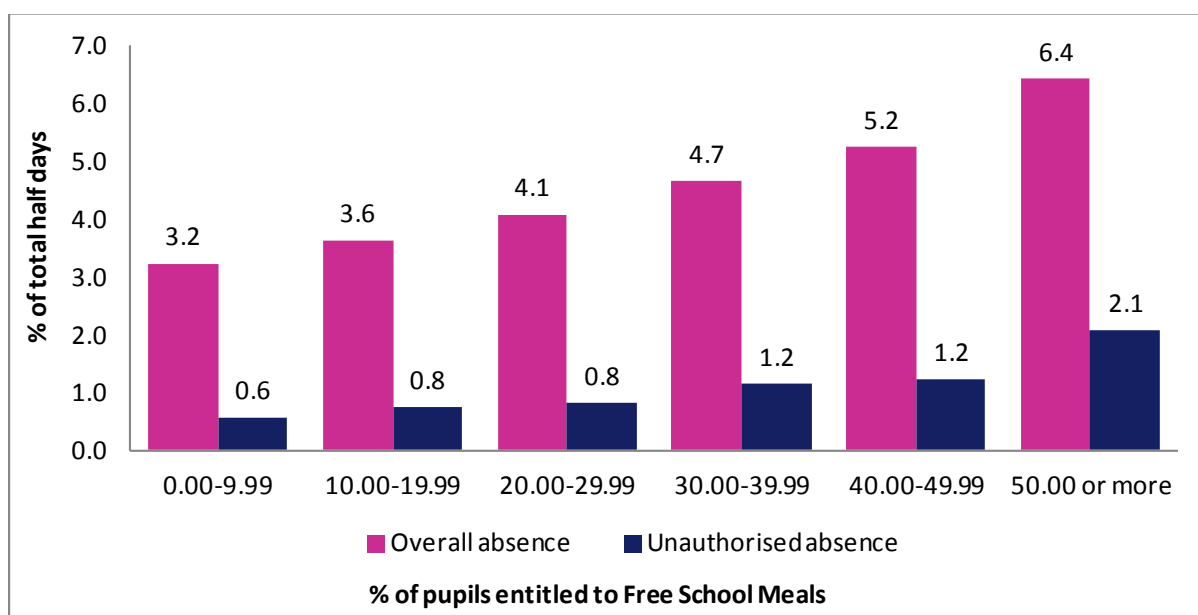
## 2.2.4 Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME)

The figures show that overall absence rates increase in line with the percentage of pupils enrolled who are eligible for free school meals. In schools where less than 10% of enrolled pupils were eligible for free school meals, the overall absence rate was 3.2% of the total half days. This compares with 6.4% of the total half days for schools with more than 50% of enrolled pupils eligible for free school meals. Since the level of free school meal eligibility is indicative of levels of deprivation, the data suggest that absence is higher in more disadvantaged areas. (See Table 2.4/Chart 2.3).

**Table 2.4: Attendance at primary school by FSME, 2014/15**

% of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
0.00-9.99	96.8	3.2	2.7	0.6
10.00-19.99	96.4	3.6	2.9	0.8
20.00-29.99	95.9	4.1	3.3	0.8
30.00-39.99	95.3	4.7	3.5	1.2
40.00-49.99	94.8	5.2	4.0	1.2
50.00 or more	93.6	6.4	4.3	2.1
<b>Primary rate</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>

**Chart 2.3: Absence from primary school by FSME, 2014/15**



## 2.3 Pupil Level Analysis

### 2.3.1 Gender

Overall absence rates were similar for boys and girls of primary school age (4.7% and 4.5% of the total half days respectively). See Table 2.5).

**Table 2.5: Attendance at primary school by gender, 2014/15**

Gender	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Male	95.3	4.7	3.5	1.1
Female	95.5	4.5	3.4	1.1
<b>Primary rate</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>

### 2.3.2 Year group

The highest rate of overall absence occurred in Year 1 of primary school when 5.0% of the total half days were missed. (See Table 2.6). Further analysis shows that, with the exception of illness, rates of absence tend to be similar for all reasons regardless of year group. Year 1 pupils miss more total half days due to illness than any other year group (3.5% compared with a low of 2.7% in Years 3, 4 and 5).

**Table 2.6: Attendance at primary school by year group, 2014/15**

Year Group	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Year 1	95.0	5.0	3.9	1.0
Year 2	95.3	4.7	3.6	1.1
Year 3	95.6	4.4	3.3	1.1
Year 4	95.7	4.3	3.2	1.1
Year 5	95.6	4.4	3.3	1.1
Year 6	95.5	4.5	3.4	1.1
Year 7	95.3	4.7	3.5	1.2
<b>Primary rate</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>

### 2.3.3 Ethnicity

Irish Traveller children attending primary school had a markedly higher absence rate than any other ethnic group. They missed 26.4% of the total half days, compared with 4.4% for white children and 5.7% for children from a minority ethnic background. (See table 2.7). The absence rate for Irish Traveller children has decreased since 2013/14<sup>6</sup>, when it was 27.7%. In comparison, the absence rate for White children was 4.3% in 2013/14 and the absence rate for “Minority Ethnic Background”, at 5.7%, remains the same.

**Table 2.7: Attendance at primary school by ethnicity, 2014/15**

Ethnicity	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
White	95.6	4.4	3.4	1.0
Minority Ethnic Background <sup>7</sup>	94.3	5.7	3.4	2.3
Irish Traveller	73.6	26.4	15.7	10.7
<b>Primary rate</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>

Note: Ethnicity was not available for 40 enrolments at primary schools representing 0.02% of the total enrolments.

### 2.3.4 Home Language

Table 2.8 below shows the attendance of primary pupils for the top ten reported home languages. At 3.5%, the lowest absence rate is reported for pupils whose home language is Chinese (Mandarin/Putonghua), while the highest absence rate (13.6%) is reported for pupils whose home language is Romanian. The lowest rate of unauthorised absence is reported for pupils whose home language is English (1.0%).

**Table 2.8: Attendance at primary school by home language, 2014/15**

Home Language	Percentage of total half days				Proportion of enrolments
	Attended	Absent	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	
English	95.6	4.4	3.4	1.0	93.4
Polish	92.1	7.9	5.5	2.4	2.1
Lithuanian	92.0	8.0	5.7	2.4	0.9
Portuguese	93.5	6.5	4.0	2.4	0.4
Malayalam	94.4	5.6	3.7	2.0	0.3
Romanian	86.4	13.6	4.3	9.4	0.2
Tagalog/Filipino	94.7	5.3	3.7	1.6	0.2
Latvian	92.9	7.1	4.8	2.3	0.2
Slovak	90.7	9.3	6.2	3.2	0.2
Chinese (Mandarin/Putonghua)	96.5	3.5	2.2	1.3	0.2
Other <sup>8</sup>	94.0	6.0	3.7	2.3	1.9
<b>Primary rate</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: The table is presented in descending order of proportion of enrolments. Some rates are based on a small number of enrolments, in which case the attendance of one pupil may significantly impact on that attendance rate. Home language is not known for 32 enrolments, representing 0.02% of the total enrolments.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/statistical-bulletin-attendance-at-grant-aided-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-1314-detailed.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Minority Ethnic Background includes Black African, Black Caribbean, Black Other, Bangladeshi, Chinese/Hong Kong, Indian/Sri Lankan, Korean, Malaysian, Pakistani, Roma, Vietnamese, Mixed, Other

<sup>8</sup> ‘Other’ includes a further 69 languages. For a full list of the languages included here, see Table A1 in Annex 1.

## 2.3.5 Looked After Children<sup>9</sup>

Looked After Children in primary schools had a lower absence rate (4.1%) than those who were not in care (4.6%). This difference is evident year-on-year, however prior to 2013/14, the unauthorised absence rate was higher for Looked After Children than for those not in care. 2013/14 was the first year (of reported data) that unauthorised absence was lower for Looked After Children, and this trend continues in 2014/15 with the unauthorised absence rate for Looked After Children being 0.9% compared to 1.1% for those not in care. (See Table 2.9).

**Table 2.9: Attendance of Looked After Children at primary school, 2014/15**

Looked after status	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Looked after children	95.9	4.1	3.2	0.9
Other	95.4	4.6	3.5	1.1
<b>Primary rate</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>

## 2.3.6 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas<sup>10</sup> (NRAs)

At 6.4%, the absence rate for pupils living in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas was 2.2 percentage points higher than for pupils who did not live in an NRA. See Table 2.10 below.

**Table 2.10: Attendance rates for primary pupils living in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, 2014/15**

Area	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Neighbourhood Renewal Area	93.6	6.4	4.4	2.0
Other	95.8	4.2	3.3	0.9
<b>Primary rate</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>

## 2.3.7 Duration of absence

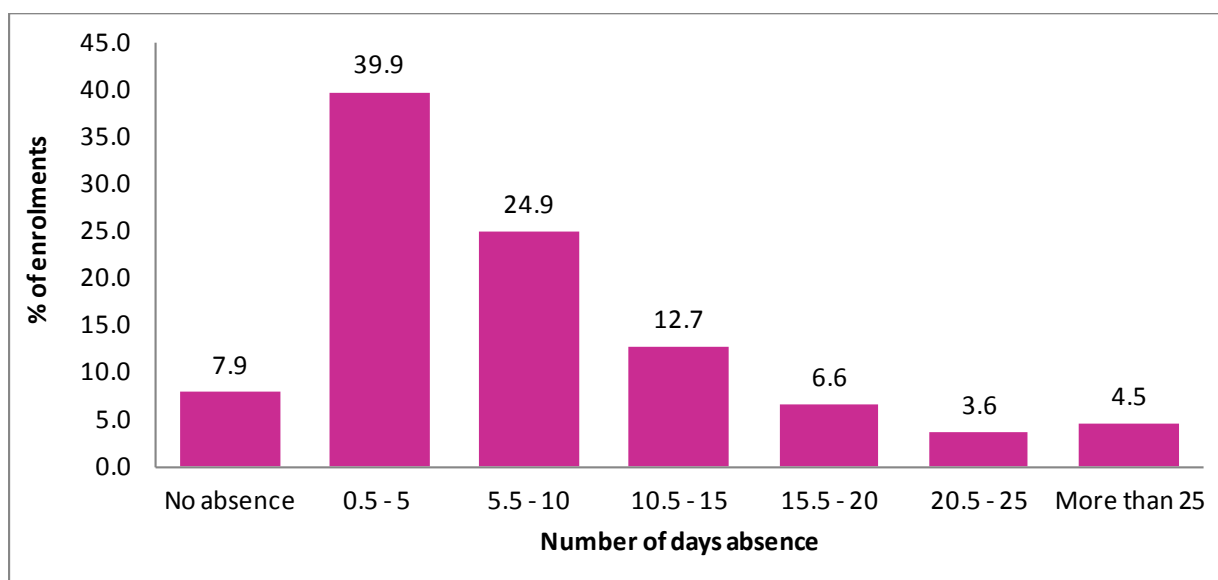
Chart 2.4 shows the number of days absent for all primary pupils enrolled in 2014/15. Of all pupils enrolled in this group in 2014/15, 7.9% had no absence, a decrease on the 8.6% with full attendance in 2013/14<sup>11</sup>. At 39.9% of total enrolments, between '0.5 and 5 days' absence was the group reported most frequently in 2014/15. Approximately 4.5% of pupils enrolled were absent for more than 25 days, compared to 4.3% reported in 2013/14.

<sup>9</sup> 'Looked after children' includes children defined in 'The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995', i.e., 'a child who is looked after by an authority is a reference to a child who is: (a) in the care of the authority; or (b) provided with accommodation by the authority.' This includes children who are fostered.

<sup>10</sup> Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs) are neighbourhoods identified as experiencing the most severe multiple deprivation and have been chosen to receive support under the Department of Social Development People and Place strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/statistical-bulletin-attendance-at-grant-aided-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-1314-detailed.pdf>

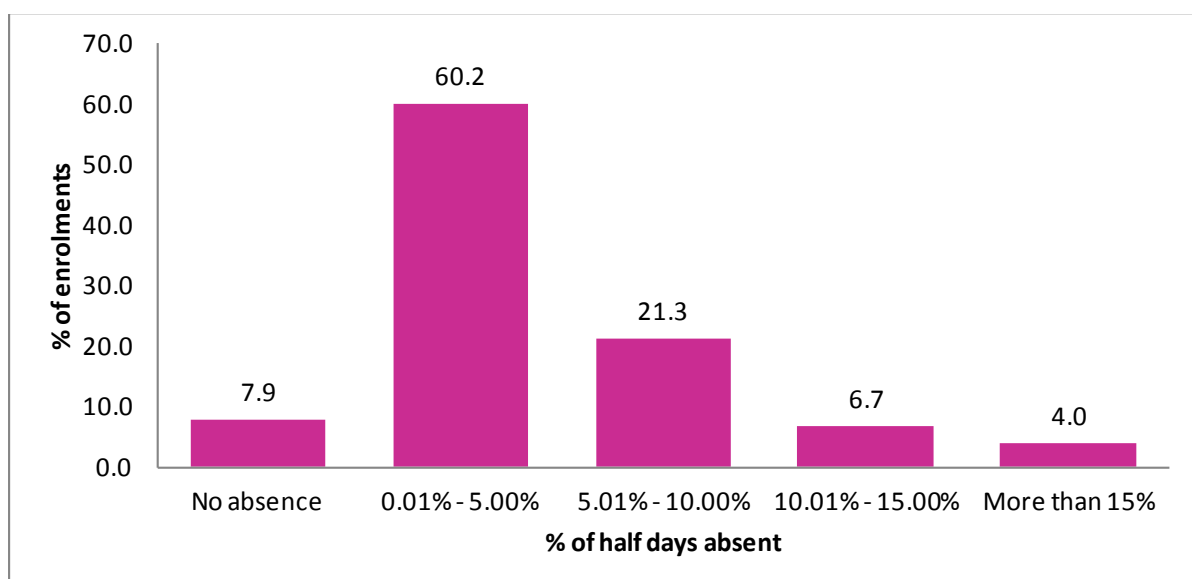
**Chart 2.4: Number of days absence, 2014/15**



### 2.3.8 Levels of absence

Chart 2.5 shows that over three-fifths of pupils enrolled at primary school (60.2%) had an absence rate of between 0.01% and 5.00% of the total half days, while 4.0% missed more than 15% of the total half days. This shows a slight increase in the proportion of pupils with less than 85% attendance on the previous year (3.8%)<sup>12</sup>. Schools tend to consider referral of pupils to the Education Welfare Service for non-attendance if absence is more than 15%; however, the final decision is at the discretion of the school on consideration of individual circumstances.

**Chart 2.5: Percentage of enrolments at primary school by overall absence rates, 2013/14**



<sup>12</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/statistical-bulletin-attendance-at-grant-aided-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-1314-detailed.pdf>

## 2.3.9 More than 15% absence

Table 2.10 provides an analysis of those pupils with an absence rate of more than 15%, along with a profile of all pupils for comparative purposes. As explained previously, this is one of the points when schools may consider referring a child to the Education Welfare Service for non-attendance. Looking at the characteristics of the pupils with absence rates of more than 15%, approximately half were from Catholic maintained schools (48.2%), with 44.4% from Controlled schools; over one-fifth (24.0% and 22.6%, respectively) were from the former Belfast Education and Library Board and the former Southern Education and Library Board. The largest proportion of pupils with absence rates of more than 15% were in Year 1 (18.4%).

**Table 2.10: Characteristics of primary school pupils with absence rates of more than 15% in 2014/15**

	School and pupil characteristics of pupils with >15% absence	School and pupil characteristics of all pupils
<b>SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS:</b>		
<b>Management type</b>		
Controlled	44.4	45.8
Catholic maintained	48.2	45.8
Voluntary	0.2	1.0
Other maintained	1.6	1.7
Controlled integrated	2.4	2.3
Grant Maintained Integrated	3.2	3.4
<b>Education and Library Board</b>		
Belfast (BELB)	24.0	15.0
Western (WELB)	17.8	17.1
North Eastern (NEELB)	16.6	22.2
South Eastern (SEELB)	18.9	21.0
Southern (SELB)	22.6	24.7
<b>PUPIL CHARACTERISTICS:</b>		
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	54.3	51.0
Female	45.7	49.0
<b>Year Group</b>		
Year 1	18.4	15.0
Year 2	15.3	15.1
Year 3	12.9	15.1
Year 4	12.4	14.3
Year 5	12.8	13.7
Year 6	13.8	13.6
Year 7	14.4	13.3
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	85.7	95.8
Minority Ethnic Background	7.5	3.7
Traveller	6.8	0.5

Note: Ethnicity was not provided for 8 enrolments with absence levels of 15% or more, representing 0.1% of the total. Ethnicity was not provided for 40 enrolments at primary schools, representing 0.02% of the total enrolments.

## Section 3: Post-primary schools

### 3.1 Key Findings

In post-primary schools in 2013/14, 6.6% of all half days were missed due to absence; 4.5% authorised and 2.1% unauthorised absence (See Table 1.1/Chart 1.1). The most common reason for absence in post-primary schools was illness, which is an authorised absence and accounted for 3.5% of the total half days (52.9% of all absent half days) (See Table 1.2).

### 3.2 School Level Analysis

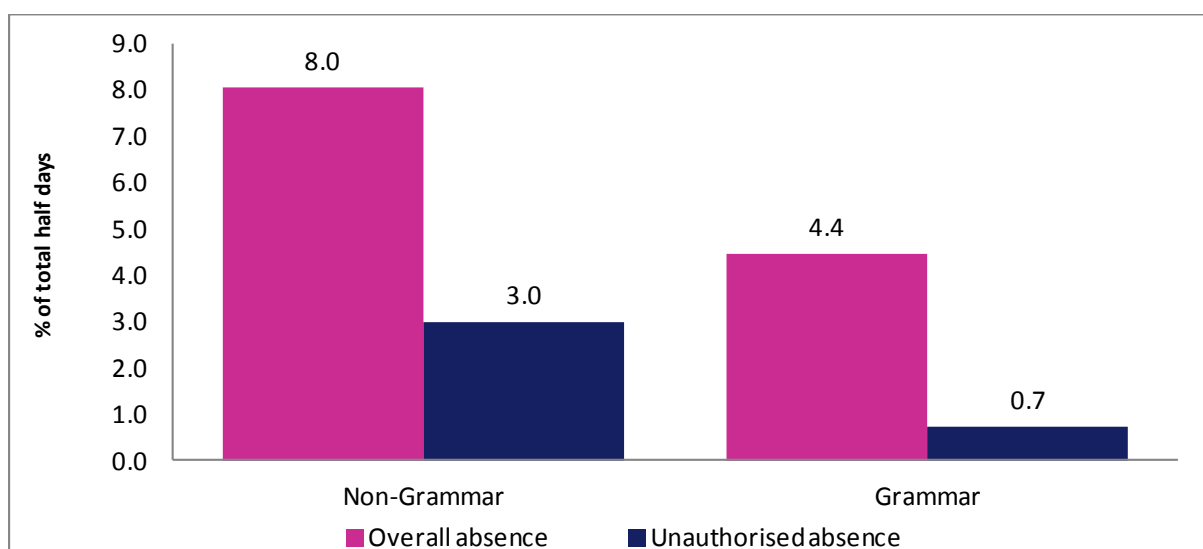
#### 3.2.1 School Type

At 8.0% of the total half days, the rate of overall absence in non-grammar schools was higher than in grammar schools (4.4%). There was a marked difference in the rates of unauthorised absence in non-grammar and grammar schools (3.0% and 0.7% of the total half days respectively). See Table 3.1/Chart 3.1).

**Table 3.1: Attendance at post-primary school by school type, 2014/15**

School Type	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Non-Grammar	92.0	8.0	5.0	3.0
Grammar	95.6	4.4	3.7	0.7
<b>Post-primary rate</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>

**Chart 3.1: Absence from post-primary school by school type, 2014/15**





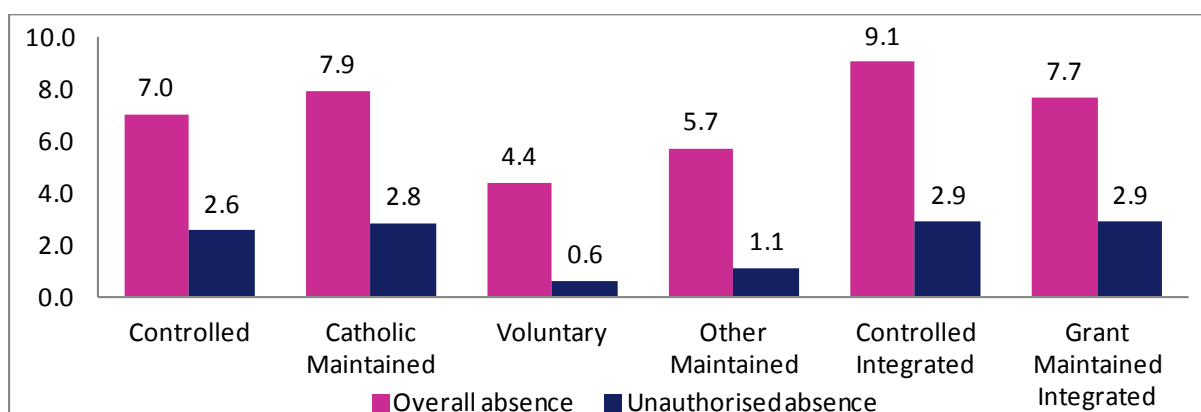
### 3.2.2 Management type

Controlled integrated schools had the highest rate of overall absence (9.1% of the total half days) while voluntary schools had the lowest at 4.4% of the total half days. (See Table 3.2/Chart 3.2).

**Table 3.2: Attendance at post-primary school by management type, 2014/15**

Management Type	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Controlled	93.0	7.0	4.5	2.6
Catholic Maintained	92.1	7.9	5.1	2.8
Voluntary	95.6	4.4	3.8	0.6
Other Maintained	94.3	5.7	4.6	1.1
Controlled Integrated	90.9	9.1	6.2	2.9
Grant Maintained Integrated	92.3	7.7	4.8	2.9
<b>Post-primary rate</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>

**Chart 3.2: Absence from post-primary school by management type, 2014/15**



### 3.2.3 Former Education and Library Board (ELB)<sup>13</sup> areas

At 6.9% of the total half days, the former Western Education and Library Board area had the highest overall absence rate for post-primary schools. The former North Eastern Education and Library Board area reported the lowest rate of overall absence (6.2% of the total half days). (See Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3: Attendance at post-primary school by Former ELB Area, 2014/15**

ELB	% of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Belfast	93.4	6.6	4.6	2.0
Western	93.1	6.9	4.4	2.5
North Eastern	93.8	6.2	4.2	2.1
South Eastern	93.2	6.8	4.8	2.0
Southern	93.6	6.4	4.6	1.8
<b>Post-primary rate</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>

<sup>13</sup> As the information relates to 2014/15 and is prior to the establishment of the regional Education Authority, data is available by former ELB area.

### 3.2.4 Location<sup>14</sup> of school (urban / rural).

Less than one-fifth of post-primary schools are located in a rural area. In 2014/15 overall and authorised absence was higher in rural schools than in urban schools, (6.8% and 6.5% respectively). (See Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4: Attendance at post-primary school by location of school, 2014/15**

Location	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Urban	93.5	6.5	4.4	2.1
Rural	93.2	6.8	4.9	1.9
<b>Post-primary rate</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>

### 3.2.5 Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME)

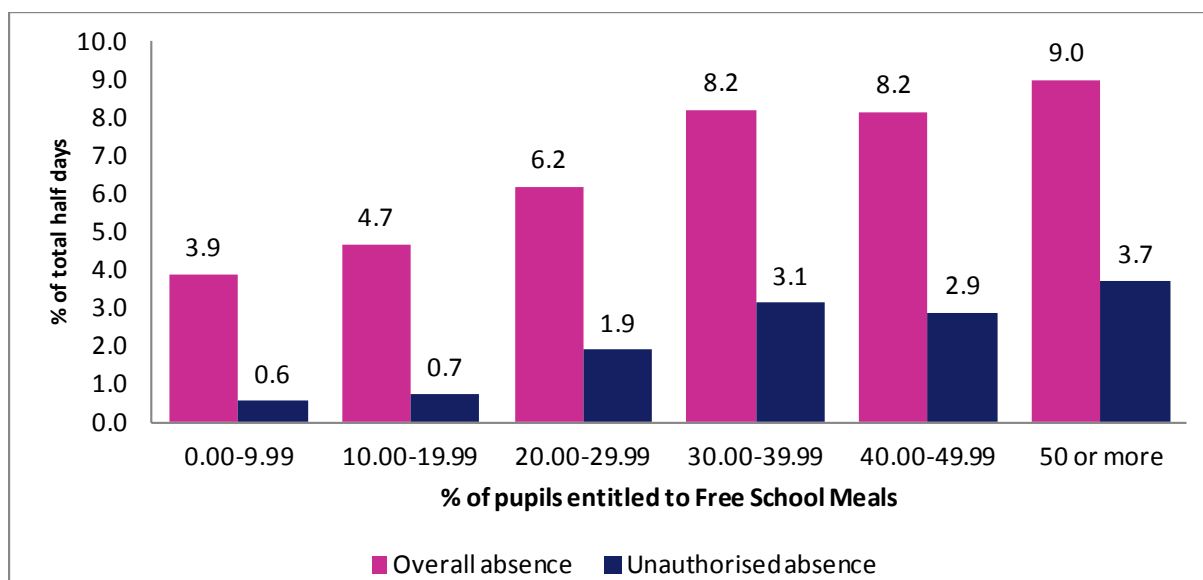
The figures indicate that for the most part, absence rates increase in line with the percentage of pupils enrolled who are eligible for free school meals. In schools where less than 10% of pupils enrolled were eligible for free school meals, the overall absence rate was 3.9% of the total half days. This compares with 9.0% of the total half days for schools with more than 50% of pupils enrolled eligible for free school meals. Unauthorised absence is notably higher for schools with high levels of FSME. Since the level of free school meal eligibility is indicative of levels of deprivation, the data indicate that absence tends to be higher in more disadvantaged areas. (See Table 3.5 /Chart 3.3).

**Table 3.5: Attendance at post-primary school by FSME, 2014/15**

% of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
0.00-9.99	96.1	3.9	3.3	0.6
10.00-19.99	95.3	4.7	4.0	0.7
20.00-29.99	93.8	6.2	4.3	1.9
30.00-39.99	91.8	8.2	5.1	3.1
40.00-49.99	91.8	8.2	5.3	2.9
50 or more	91.0	9.0	5.3	3.7
<b>Post-primary rate</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>

<sup>14</sup> Location defined using NISRA Central Postcode Directory urban/rural classification. Boundaries are available for Northern Ireland as defined by the Planning Service. These areas are defined from Settlement Development Limits (SDLs) which are a statistical classification and delineation of settlements. See [http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/geography/digital\\_products/urban\\_rural\\_classifications/ur\\_report.pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/geography/digital_products/urban_rural_classifications/ur_report.pdf) for more information.

**Chart 3.3: Absence from post-primary school by FSME, 2014/15**



### 3.3 Pupil Level Analysis

#### 3.3.1 Gender

At 6.7% and 6.5% of total half days, respectively, overall absence was similar for males and females. (See Table 3.6). While the predominant cause of absence for both genders was illness, females missed a greater proportion of the total half days for this reason than males (55.2% and 50.8% of the total absent half days, respectively). The proportion of total half days missed due to suspension from school was almost four times higher for males than for females.

**Table 3.6: Attendance at post-primary school by gender, 2014/15**

Gender	% of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Male	93.3	6.7	4.4	2.2
Female	93.5	6.5	4.6	1.9
<b>Post-primary rate</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>

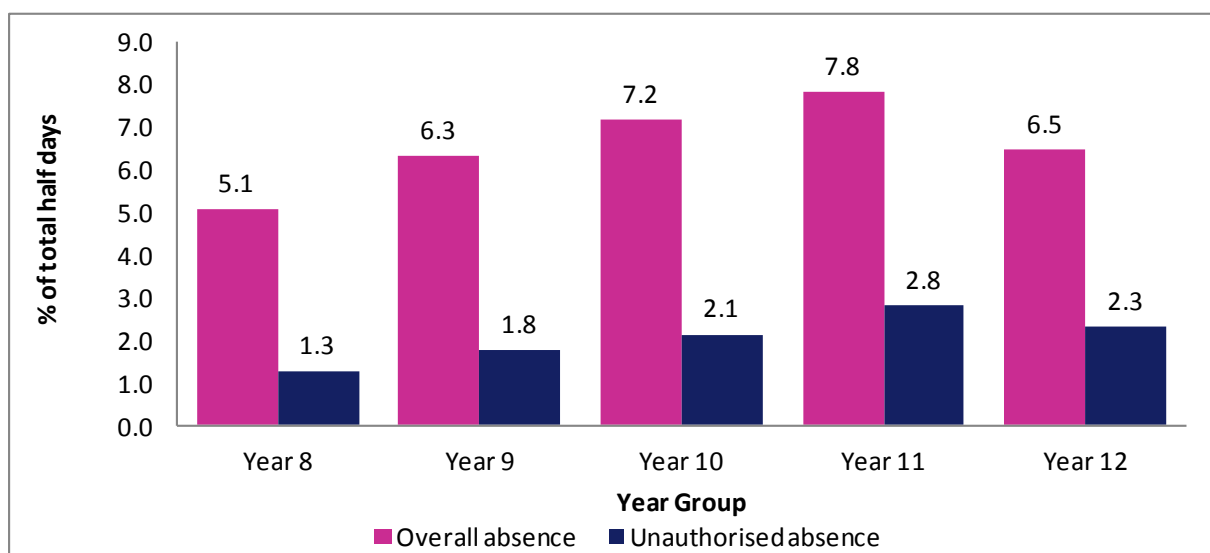
### 3.3.2 Year group

Absence rates increased steadily between Year 8 and Year 11 (from 5.1% to 7.8% of the total half days), before decreasing to 6.5% of the total half days in Year 12. Rates of unauthorised absence followed the same pattern, increasing from 1.3% in Year 8 to 2.8% in Year 11 before falling slightly to 2.3% in Year 12. (See Table 3.7/Chart 3.4).

**Table 3.7: Attendance at post-primary school by year group, 2014/15**

Year Group	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Year 8	94.9	5.1	3.8	1.3
Year 9	93.7	6.3	4.5	1.8
Year 10	92.8	7.2	5.0	2.1
Year 11	92.2	7.8	5.0	2.8
Year 12	93.5	6.5	4.1	2.3
<b>Post-primary rate</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>

**Chart 3.4: Absence from post-primary school by year group, 2013/14**



### 3.3.3 Ethnicity

At 39.0% of the total half days, the rate of overall absence was higher for Irish Traveller children than for any other ethnic group. This compares with 6.5% for white children and 5.7% for children from a minority ethnic background. See Table 3.8 overleaf. The absence rate for Irish Traveller children and those from a minority ethnic background has decreased since 2013/14<sup>15</sup>, when it was 42.8% and 5.8% respectively. In comparison, the absence rate for white children was 6.4% in 2013/14. (See Table 3.8).

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/statistical-bulletin-attendance-at-grant-aided-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-1314-detailed.pdf>

**Table 3.8: Attendance at post-primary school by ethnicity, 2014/15**

Ethnicity	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
White	93.5	6.5	4.5	2.0
Minority Ethnic Background <sup>16</sup>	94.3	5.7	3.6	2.1
Irish Traveller	61.0	39.0	13.0	26.0
<b>Post-primary rate</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>

### 3.3.4 Home Language

Table 3.9 below shows the attendance of post-primary pupils for the most frequently reported home languages. At 2.9%, the lowest absence rate is reported for pupils whose home language is Malayalam, while the highest absence rate (11.9%) was reported for pupils whose home language is Slovak.

**Table 3.9: Attendance at primary school by home language, 2014/15**

Home Language	Percentage of total half days				Proportion of enrolments
	Attended	Absent	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	
English	93.5	6.5	4.5	2.0	95.4
Polish	91.0	9.0	5.6	3.3	1.3
Lithuanian	90.3	9.7	6.2	3.5	0.6
Portuguese	92.5	7.5	4.0	3.4	0.3
Tagalog/Filipino	95.8	4.2	2.9	1.3	0.3
Irish	95.0	5.0	4.0	1.0	0.2
Chinese (Cantonese)	96.2	3.8	2.3	1.5	0.2
Malayalam	97.1	2.9	2.1	0.8	0.2
Latvian	89.7	10.3	6.5	3.8	0.1
Slovak	88.1	11.9	7.3	4.6	0.1
Other <sup>17</sup>	93.1	6.9	4.0	2.9	1.3
<b>Post-Primary rate</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: The table is presented in descending order of proportion of enrolments. Some rates are based on a small number of enrolments, in which case the attendance of one pupil may significantly impact on that attendance rate. Home language is not known for 4 enrolments, representing 0.004% of the total enrolments.

<sup>16</sup> Minority Ethnic Background includes Black African, Black Caribbean, Black Other, Bangladeshi, Chinese/Hong Kong, Indian/Sri Lankan, Korean, Malaysian, Pakistani, Roma, Vietnamese, Mixed, Other

<sup>17</sup> 'Other' includes a further 67 languages. For a full list of the languages included here, see Table A1 in Annex 1.

### 3.3.5 Looked after children<sup>18</sup>

Rates of overall and unauthorised absence were notably higher for looked after children in post-primary schools (10.3% and 5.2% of the total half days respectively), compared with 6.5% and 2.0% for all other children. See Table 3.10 below.

**Table 3.10: Attendance of looked after children at post-primary school, 2014/15**

Looked after children	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Looked after children	89.7	10.3	5.2	5.2
Other	93.5	6.5	4.5	2.0
<b>Post-primary rate</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>

### 3.3.6 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas<sup>19</sup> (NRAs)

At 9.2%, the overall absence rate for pupils living in NRAs was 3.1 percentage points higher than for pupils who did not live in an NRA. (See Table 3.11).

**Table 3.11: Attendance rates for post-primary pupils living in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, 2014/15**

NRA	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Neighbourhood Renewal Area	90.8	9.2	5.6	3.6
Other	93.9	6.1	4.3	1.8
<b>Post-primary rate</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>

### 3.3.7 Duration of absence

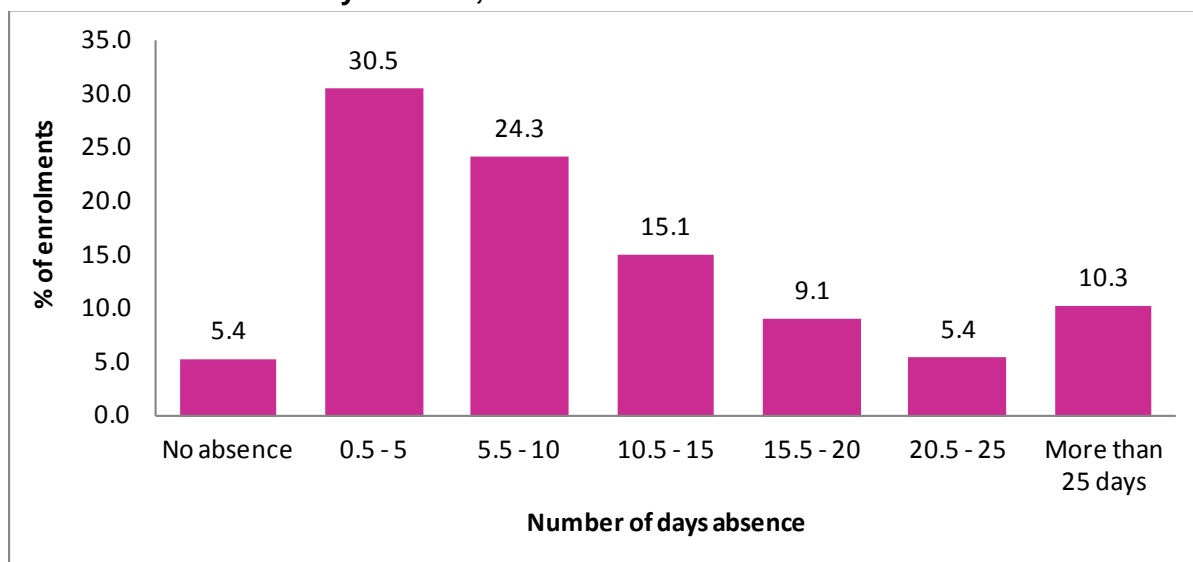
Chart 3.5 shows the number of days absent for post-primary pupils enrolled in 2014/15. Of all pupils enrolled in Year 8 to Year 12 at post-primary schools, 5.4% had no absence during 2014/15, a decrease on the 6.1% that had full attendance in 2013/14<sup>20</sup>. At 30.5% of total enrolments, between '0.5 and 5.0 days' absence was the group reported most frequently in 2014/15; 10.3% of pupils enrolled were absent for more than 25 days, compared with 10.6% in 2013/14.

<sup>18</sup> 'Looked after children' includes children defined in 'The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995', i.e., 'a child who is looked after by an authority is a reference to a child who is: (a) in the care of the authority; or (b) provided with accommodation by the authority.' This includes children who are fostered.

<sup>19</sup> Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs) are neighbourhoods identified as experiencing the most severe multiple deprivation and have been chosen to receive support under the Department of Social Development People and Place strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/default/files/statistical-bulletin-attendance-at-grant-aided-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-1314-detailed.pdf>

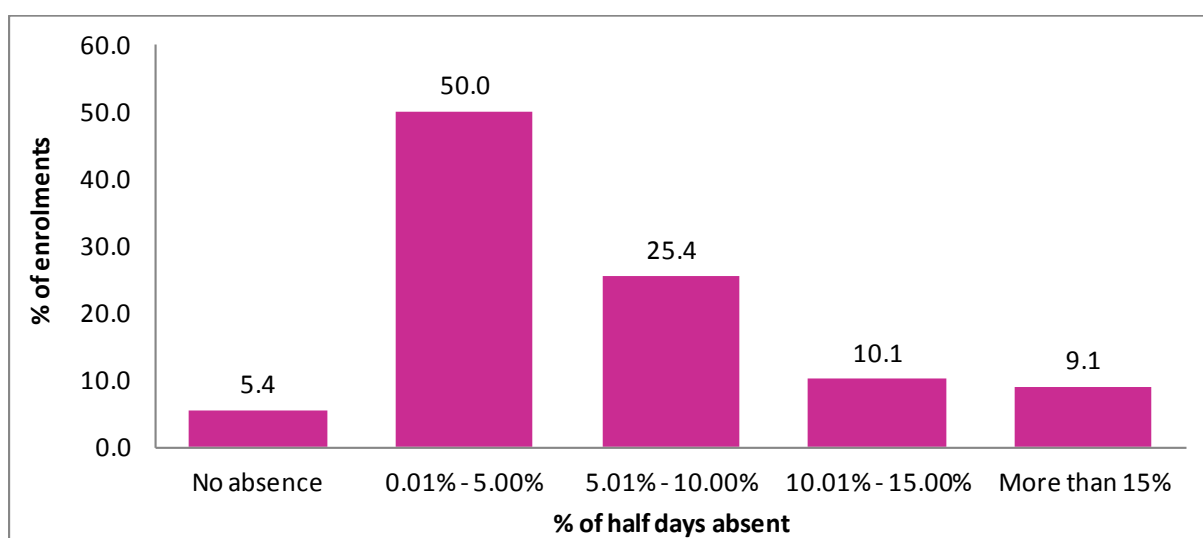
**Chart 3.5: Number of days absent, 2014/15**



### 3.3.8 Levels of absence

Looking at absence rates (number of half days absent as a proportion of all half days), 50.0% of post-primary pupils had an absence rate of between 0.01% and 5.00% of total half days. Of the total pupil enrolments, 9.1% of pupils enrolled were absent for more than 15% of the total half days, compared to 9.3% reported in 2013/14<sup>21</sup>. Schools tend to consider referral of pupils to the Education Welfare Service for non-attendance if absence is more than 15%; however, the final decision is at the discretion of the school on consideration of individual circumstances. (See Chart 3.6).

**Chart 3.6: Percentage of enrolments at post-primary school by overall absence rates, 2014/15**



<sup>21</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/statistical-bulletin-attendance-at-grant-aided-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-1314-detailed.pdf>

### 3.3.9 More than 15% absence

Table 3.12 provides an analysis of those pupils with an absence rate of more than 15%, along with a profile of all pupils for comparative purposes. As explained previously, this is one of the points when schools may consider referring a child to the Education Welfare Service for non-attendance. Analysis of pupils with an absence rate of more than 15% highlights that almost nine out of ten (86.7%) attended non-grammar schools and the largest group in this absence band were Year 11 pupils.

**Table 3.12: Characteristics of post-primary pupils with absence rates of more than 15% in 2014/15**

	School and pupil characteristics of pupils with >15% absence	School and pupil characteristics of all pupils
<b>SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS</b>		
<b>School type</b>		
Non-grammar	86.7	59.4
Grammar	13.3	40.6
<b>Management type</b>		
Controlled	37.6	31.1
Catholic maintained	39.4	28.5
Voluntary	9.0	30.6
Other maintained	.2	.4
Controlled integrated	4.1	2.2
Grant Maintained Integrated	9.7	7.2
<b>Education and Library Board</b>		
Belfast (BELB)	20.9	20.0
Western (WELB)	18.8	18.1
North Eastern (NEELB)	20.0	21.4
South Eastern (SEELB)	18.8	17.2
Southern (SELB)	21.4	23.2
<b>PUPIL CHARACTERISTICS</b>		
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	52.4	51.0
Female	47.6	49.0
<b>Year Group</b>		
Year 8	11.4	19.7
Year 9	17.8	19.6
Year 10	22.9	19.6
Year 11	26.8	20.0
Year 12	21.1	21.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	95.7	97.0
Minority Ethnic Background	2.4	2.7
Traveller	2.0	0.3



## Section 4: Special schools

### 4.1 Key Findings

In special schools in 2014/15, 9.8% of all half days were missed due to absence; 6.7% authorised and 3.1% unauthorised absence. (See Table 1.1/Chart 1.1). The most common reason for absence in special schools was illness, which is an authorised absence and accounted for 4.5% of the total half days (46.2% of all absent half days) (See Table 1.2).

### 4.2 School Level Analysis

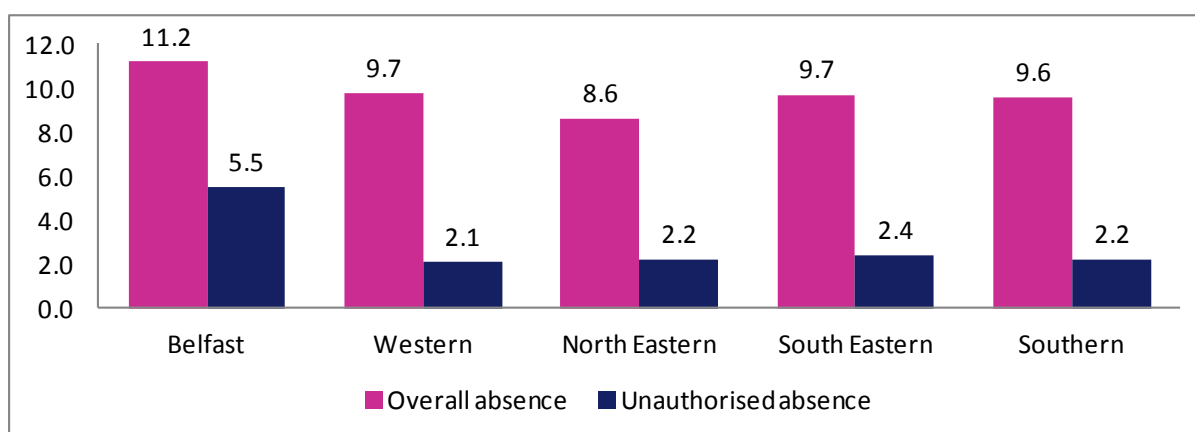
#### 4.2.1 Former Education and Library Board (ELB)<sup>22</sup> areas

Overall absence was highest (11.2% of total half days) in Belfast Education and Library Board in 2014/15 and lowest in the North Eastern Education and Library Board special schools (8.6% of total half days). See Table 4.1/Chart 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Attendance at special school by Education and Library Board, 2014/15**

ELB	% of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Belfast	88.8	11.2	5.8	5.5
Western	90.3	9.7	7.7	2.1
North Eastern	91.4	8.6	6.4	2.2
South Eastern	90.3	9.7	7.3	2.4
Southern	90.4	9.6	7.4	2.2
<b>Special school rate</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>3.1</b>

**Chart 4.1: Absence from special school by Education and Library Board, 2014/15**



<sup>22</sup> As the information relates to 2014/15 and is prior to the establishment of the regional Education Authority, information data is available by former ELB area.

## 4.3 Pupil Level Analysis

### 4.3.1 Gender

Overall absence rates were higher for females attending special schools than for males (10.7% and 9.4% of the total half days, respectively). (See Table 4.2).

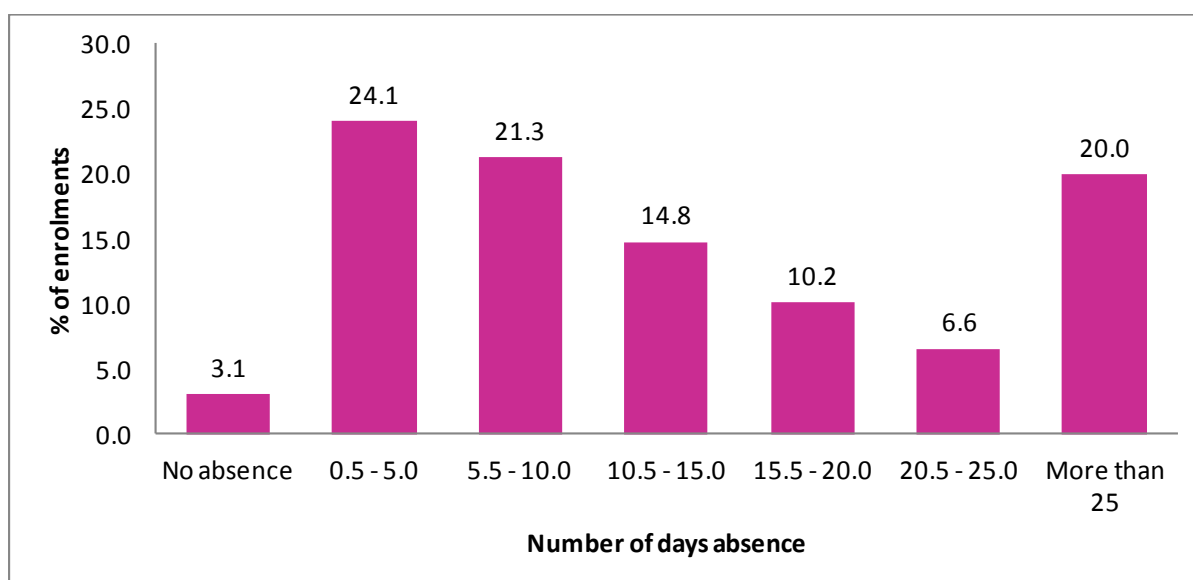
**Table 4.2: Attendance at special school by gender, 2014/15**

Gender	Percentage of total half days			
	Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Male	90.6	9.4	6.2	3.3
Female	89.3	10.7	8.0	2.7
<b>Special school rate</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>3.1</b>

### 4.3.2 Duration of absence

Of all pupils enrolled in special schools in 2014/15, 3.1% had no absence, a decrease on the 4.1% that had full attendance in 2013/14<sup>23</sup>. In terms of days missed, one-fifth (20.0%) of pupils enrolled missed more than 25 days in the same year. The equivalent 2013/14 figure was 19.9%. (See Chart 4.2).

**Chart 4.2: Absence from special school by number of days absent, 2014/15**

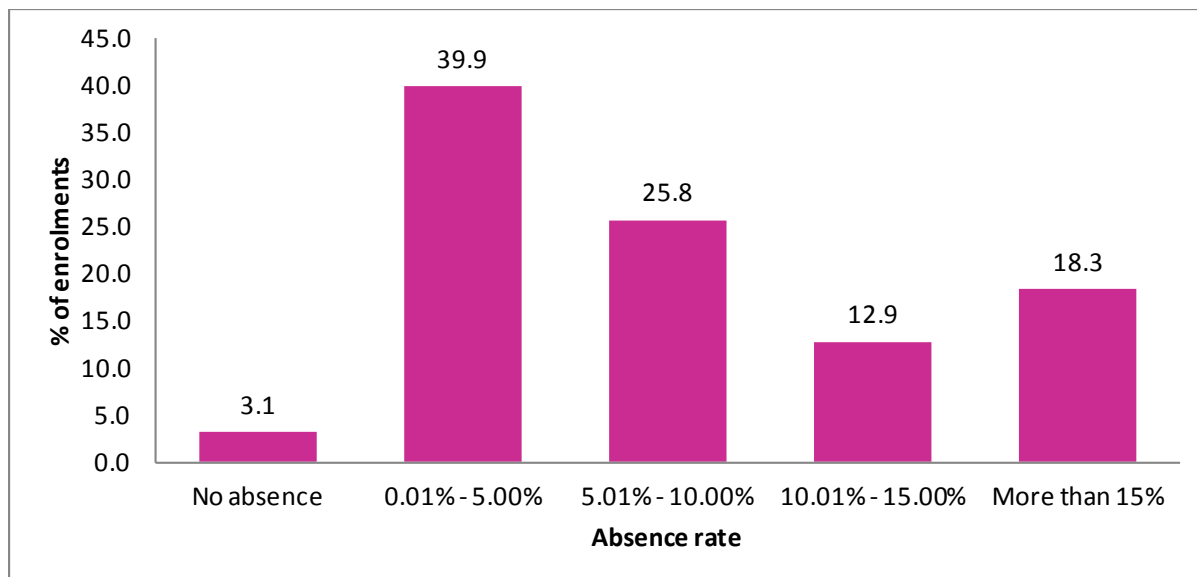


<sup>23</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/statistical-bulletin-attendance-at-grant-aided-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-1314-detailed.pdf>

### 4.3.3 Levels of absence

Just under two-fifths (39.9%) of pupils enrolled had an overall absence rate of between 0.01% and 5.00% of the total half days. Under one-fifth (18.3%) were absent for more than 15% of the total half days, compared to the equivalent 2013/14<sup>24</sup> figure of 18.9%.

**Chart 4.3: Percentage of enrolments at special school by overall absence rates, 2014/15**



<sup>24</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/default/files/statistical-bulletin-attendance-at-grant-aided-primary-post-primary-and-special-schools-1314-detailed.pdf>

## Notes for readers

### Background information

#### National Statistics

1. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

2. For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service on 0845 601 3034  
minicom: 01633 812399  
E-mail: [info@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:info@statistics.gov.uk)  
Fax: 01633 652747  
Letters: Customer Contact Centre, Office for National Statistics, Rm 1.101, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, NP10 8XG
3. You can also find National Statistics on the Internet: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>
4. The statistics in this release have been derived from the annual school census. More information about the collection of school attendance data can be found at: <https://www.deni.gov.uk/publications/attendance-statistics-data-collection-and-validation>
5. The 2014/15 figures in this statistical release are based on school census information as at 9 October 2015. They may be subject to minor revision and these will be notified in accordance with our revisions policy. This can be accessed at: <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/Statistical%20Revisions.pdf>
6. The data is produced at aggregate level only, therefore individual pupils cannot be identified. More information on confidentiality can be found in the DE Confidentiality and Access Statement at the following link: <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/Confidentiality%20and%20Access.pdf>

#### Definitions

7. Attendance or absence is measured for every pupil in half day sessions (am and pm). Absence can be either authorised or unauthorised.

### Attendance

In addition to actual attendance within the school premises, the following are also considered as attendance at school:

- Late (before registration closed)
- Approved sporting activities
- Study leave
- Educational visits
- Work experience
- Alternative education provision (organised by the EA)\*
- Home/hospital tuition (organised by the EA)\*
- Pupil referral unit\*
- Another mainstream school (under Entitlement Framework)\*
- Training Organisation (under Entitlement Framework)\*
- FE College (under Entitlement Framework)\*
- Intensive Support Learning Unit\*
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)\*

### Authorised absence

An authorised absence is absence with permission from an authorised school representative on provision of a satisfactory explanation. This includes:

- Artistic endeavour\*\*
- Bereavement
- Suspension
- Agreed family holiday (in very exceptional circumstances)
- Illness
- Medical / dental appointments
- Other exceptional circumstances (includes an exceptional event outside control of the school, for example, travelling children, court appearance)
- Religious observance

### Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence is absence without permission from an authorised school representative due to unexplained or unjustified absence. This includes:

- Family holiday not agreed
- Other absence (includes absence not covered by any other code or a reason which is not acceptable to the school, for example, pupil's / parent's or sibling's birthday).
- No reason provided for absence
- Late (after registration closed)

### Notes

The code 'T – Traveller absence' was removed prior to the 2010/11 academic year.

\* In 2010/11, the code 'E – Educated offsite' was removed and broken down into 8 new codes, providing more detail on the type of alternative educational provision.

\*\* New code added in 2010/11.

See [http://www.deni.gov.uk/attendance\\_circular\\_2010\\_07\\_-\\_3rd\\_issue\\_-\\_september\\_2011-2.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/attendance_circular_2010_07_-_3rd_issue_-_september_2011-2.pdf) for further information.

## Data quality and coverage

8. Overall absence is considered to be a more reliable measure of absence than authorised and unauthorised absence. Both figures have been provided, however limitations in comparing rates of unauthorised and authorised absence should be noted - for those absences which are not covered by a specific code, the decision to allocate the absence as authorised or unauthorised is taken by the school.
9. Prior to September 2009, schools were advised to record unexplained absence initially as 'no reason yet provided', however, if a reason was not provided within a specified period of time, these should be changed to 'other'. From September 2009 onwards, schools were instructed that, if a reason was never provided, the code should remain as 'no reason yet provided'. This has resulted in higher rates of unauthorised absence being recorded as 'no reason yet provided' and lower figures for 'other' than in previous years.
10. Primary and post-primary data refer to pupils in Years 1 to 12 only, which aligns with the compulsory school age in Northern Ireland. Figures for special schools include all pupils attending special schools in 2014/15.
11. Attendance information was not available for ten primary schools and 11 post-primary schools which had closed prior to the data being collected. This accounts for 1.2% and 5.3% of the total primary schools and post-primary schools.
12. Comparative data was obtained from the following sources:  
Pupil Absence in Schools in England, Autumn Term 2014 and Spring Term 2015:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-2014-and-spring-2015>  
Absenteeism from Primary Schools, 2014/15 (Wales):  
<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/absenteeism-primary-schools/?lang=en>  
Absenteeism from Secondary Schools, 2014/15 (Wales):  
<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/absenteeism-secondary-schools/?lang=en>  
Attendance and Absence 2014/15 (Scotland):  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/AttendanceAbsenceDatasets/atttab2015>

There are slight differences in definitions between the regions, for example, statistics for England include study leave in authorised absence while the DE statistics categorise it as present. Figures for England do not include Summer Term 2014 (when the majority of study leave is recorded), meaning it is still possible to compare their data with NI with the appropriate caveats. There are also methodological differences in collecting the information. For example, the statistics for England are reported on a term by term basis. Overall absence is considered to be a better measure of comparison, rather than authorised or unauthorised absence.

13. In some cases, percentages may not sum due to rounding.
14. Pupil level information refers to the number of pupil enrolments rather than the number of pupils. A pupil can move schools during the year and will therefore have an attendance record at more than one school.
15. Comparison of the number of looked after children recorded in the school census and the number recorded by the DHSSPS Children Order Statistical Tables suggests some under-reporting of looked after children in the school census. It is possible that schools are unaware

of the child's looked after status. Also, since attendance data is collectively retrospectively from schools and matched with current pupil characteristics, the looked after status may have changed. Despite this, attendance rates for looked after children have been included in this publication since the data are sufficiently robust to produce indicative figures.

16. Analysis by the home language of the pupil is included as this variable is the closest approximation available for Country of Birth.
17. As stated earlier, attendance is measured for each pupil in half day sessions. In order to provide information on the actual number of school days missed, these totals have been divided by two. While this is useful to provide an indication of school days missed, it is generally more accurate to report in terms of half days.
18. Schools are required to be in operation for 190 days in the school year, less any School Development Days (SDDs). Schools can apply for up to five SDDs, which can produce slight variations between the numbers of days individual schools are open to pupils.

#### **Users and uses of the data**

19. The statistics are widely used by a range of groups including members of the NI Assembly, the Department of Education, other government departments, the Education Authority, schools, the Education and Training Inspectorate, researchers, students and the public. The data are used to monitor performance, benchmarking against other schools and areas, and to inform DE's corporate goal of "Raising standards for all". The DE policy area particularly concerned with attendance is Additional Educational Needs Team, which is responsible for related policies, guidance to schools in relation to attendance and monitoring non-attendance referrals. Attendance data feeds into other policies, for example it is a performance indicator in the Achieving Belfast and Derry Bright Futures programme and informs policies on traveller children. DE's Every School A Good School policy emphasises the importance of using data to promote improvement. Attendance data is being used within other departments, for example, it is a key indicator in the Education Domain of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure. The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister has developed a suite of indicators to monitor performance against their 10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People. Attendance data feeds into one of the six high level outcomes – Enjoying, Learning and Achieving. It is in turn, also monitored at local level under the Regional Children's Services Plan.
20. Requests for further information should be addressed to:

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Balloo Road  
Bangor  
Co. Down  
BT19 7PR  
Telephone: 02891 279616  
Fax: 028 9127 9594  
Email: [michael.woods@deni.gov.uk](mailto:michael.woods@deni.gov.uk)

Special analyses of the attendance information can be undertaken on request.

DE Statistical Releases can be accessed on the DE website:

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/facts-and-figures-new.htm>

Feedback on this publication can be provided directly to Michael Woods (contact details above) or via the feedback section on our website:

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/feedback.htm>

## Annex 1

**Table A1: List of languages included under 'Other' in Table 2.7**

<b>Countries recorded under 'Other'</b>
Afrikaans
Albanian/Shqip
Arabic
Bengali/Bangla/Sylheti
Bulgarian
Chinese (Any Other)
Chinese (Cantonese)
Chinese (Hakka)
Creole English
Creole French
Czech
Danish
Dutch/Flemish
Edo/Bini
Fijian
Finnish
French
Gaelic (Scotland)
German
Greek
Gujarati
Hebrew
Hindi
Hungarian
Icelandic
Igbo
Irish
Italian
Japanese
Kannada
Korean
Kurdish
Luganda/Ganda
Macedonian
Malay/Indonesian
Maltese
Marathi
Ndebele
Nepali
Norwegian
Oriya
Other Language
Pahari/Himachali (India)
Panjabi
Pashto/Pakhto
Persian/Farsi



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Rajasthani/Marwari
Romany
Russian
Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian
Shona
Sinhala/Sinhalese
Slovenian
Somali
Spanish
Swahili/Kiswahili
Swedish
Tamil
Telugu
Tetum
Thai
Tswana/Setswana
Turkish
Ukrainian
Urdu
Vietnamese
Xhosa
Yoruba
Zulu

**Table A2: List of languages included under 'Other' in Table 3.9**

<b>Countries recorded under 'Other'</b>
Afrikaans
Albanian/Shqip
Arabic
Bengali/Bangla/Sylheti
British Sign Language
Bulgarian
Chinese (Any Other)
Chinese (Hokkien/Fujianese)
Chinese (Mandarin/Putonghua)
Creole English
Creole French
Czech
Danish
Dutch/Flemish
Edo/Bini
Estonian
Fijian
Finnish
French
German
Greek
Gujarati
Hebrew
Hindi
Hungarian
Icelandic
Igbo
Italian
Japanese
Kannada
Korean
Kurdish
Macedonian
Malay/Indonesian
Marathi
Nepali
Norwegian
Other Language*
Pahari/Himachali (India)
Panjabi
Pashto/Pakhto
Persian/Farsi
Romanian
Romany
Russian
Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian
Shona
Sinhala/Sinhalese

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Slovenian
Somali
Spanish
Swahili/Kiswahili
Swedish
Tamil
Telugu
Tetum
Thai
Tswana/Setswana
Turkish
Ukrainian
Urdu
Venda
Vietnamese
Xhosa
Yiddish
Yoruba
Zulu