



**MANCHESTER**  
CITY COUNCIL

**Children's Services**

**CYPOS SUB-GROUP**

**MONDAY, 8 MARCH 2010**

**09:00 – 11:00**

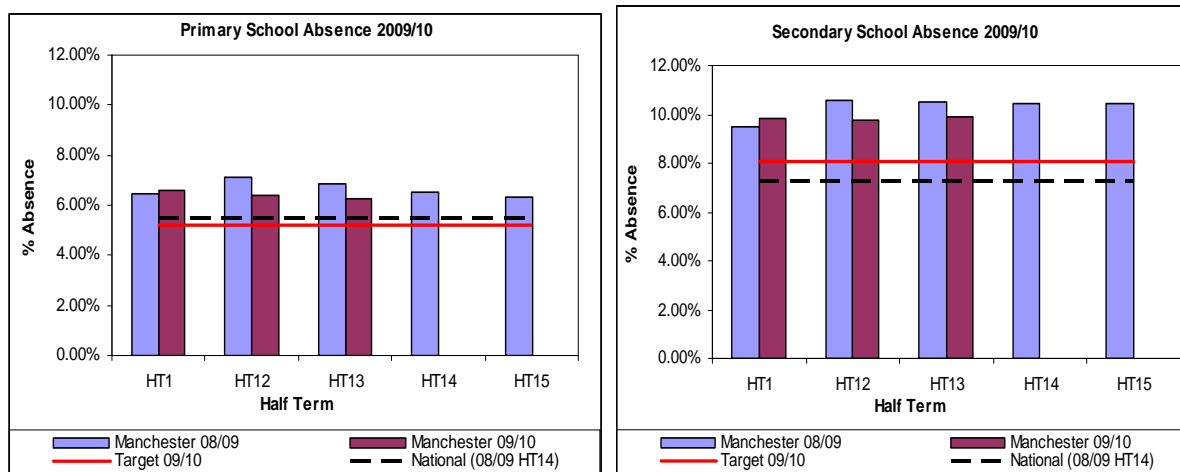
**ATTENDANCE**



Jenny Andrews

**March 2010**

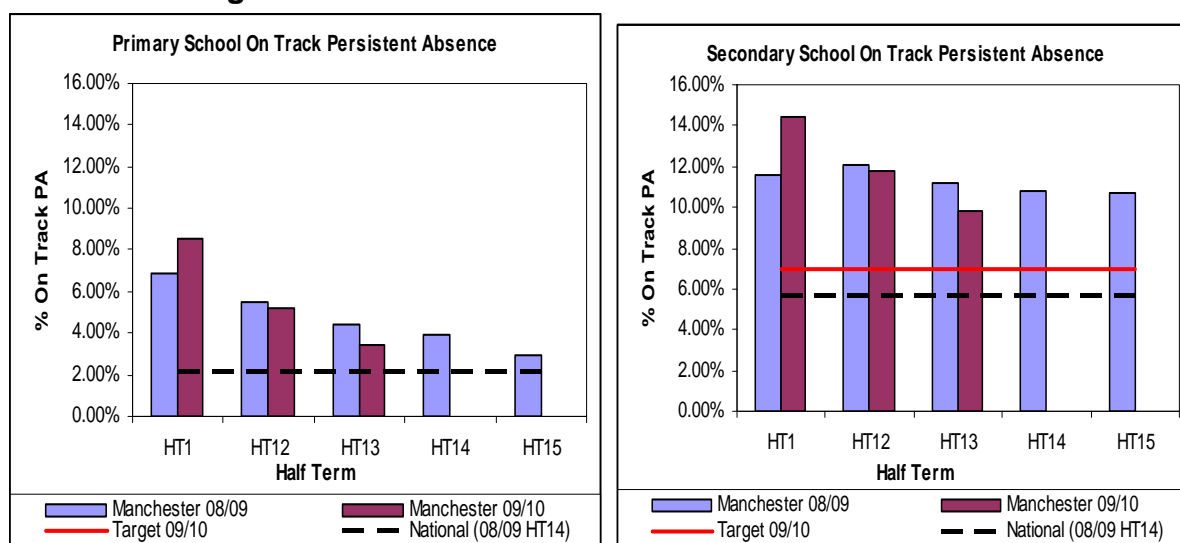
### Manchester Overall Absence Results (Half terms 1 -3, 2008/09 & 2009/10) and Targets Compared to National Averages



Primary school overall absence has been lower this year than last at the end of half terms 2 and 3. The 2009/10 target in Manchester is 5.19% compared to half term 3 result of 6.25%. The latest available national figure of 5.46% is from half terms 1-4 of the 2008/09 academic year.

In Secondary schools, including the Academies, absence has again been lower than last year at the end of half terms 2 and 3, but the gap between the current performance of 9.9% and the 2009/10 target of 8.04% is greater than for primary schools.

### Manchester On Track Persistent Absence Results and Targets Compared to National Averages



Persistent absence in primary schools is lower than last year in half terms 2 and 3, following a similar pattern to overall absence but the half term 3 figure of 3.46% is still much higher than the 2008/09 national average of 2.2%.

Secondary school persistent absence has also fallen since last year. The provisional half term 3 figure of 9.86% is higher than the 7% target but with actual persistent absence currently at 4.7% the end of year result may be close to the target. This would still be above the 2008/09 half term 1-4 national average of 5.7% but would represent very good progress.

**DISTRICT DATA** - Central East district shows the most significant improvement across all measure compared with the equivalent period last year. Primary school absence has fallen below 7% at half term 3 for the first time in 3 years. Secondary school absence has fallen below 11% at half term 3 also for the first time in 3 years. There has been a significant reduction in 'on-track' and PA pupils across both primary and secondary schools (Appendix 1).

### **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - ACHIEVING HIGH RELIABILITY**

1. The continued improvement in attendance performance at City, District and school level is supported by improvements in the collection and analysis of data. Schools, Children's Services officers, other partners and external support, for example, Greater Manchester Challenge are then better able to identify trends and patterns and determine appropriate intervention.
2. The self evaluation carried out by the school following data analysis is supported by the School Effectiveness Officer. Each term the SEO reviews with the headteacher, the school's progress towards reaching attendance targets. Schools are analysing their attendance data weekly.
3. School leaders are challenging all staff to take responsibility for improvements in attendance. At pupil progress meetings, by analysing attainment data alongside attendance data, teachers are able to recognize the impact on attainment of pupil attendance.
4. Those schools facing an 'attendance challenge' have identified this as a school priority with the School Improvement Partner (SIP). This ensures that it remains a focus and that progress against the priority is monitored each term by the SIP.
5. There is evidence that schools are using a range of rewards, interventions and sanctions for pupil attendance on a more frequent and systematic basis. For example, reward assemblies, certificates, letters home, Attendance Panels, parent contracts and fixed penalty notices etc.
6. **Holidays/Extended holidays** - School report cards show that schools are tackling this issue more effectively and firmly with clear messages going out to parents about term dates and consequences of failure to return to school. This

includes issuing fixed penalty notices. Clusters of schools are working together to give the same message to parents within an area (Central West).

7. **Illness** - Schools are being sensitive but firm in response to pupil illness. They are supportive and inclusive towards genuine pupil sickness, offering support to ensure that pupils attend school whenever possible but firm in their response to some cases of 'alleged' illness by requesting medical evidence of illness. Analysis of 'reasons for absence' including pupil illness is part of the school self evaluation which is impacting positively on the frequency of absence due to 'feigned' illness. There are examples of good practice in high schools where the school nurse is involved in 'Health Panels'.
8. **Religious observance** – Schools are following LA guidance on school closure to support their actions to address absence due to religious observance such as EID celebrations. Stanley Grove for example, have been more flexible in their use of term dates and their absence rates have fallen quite dramatically e.g. from 9.54% in 2008/09 at HT2 to 5.85% in 2009/10 at HT2.
9. **Parents** – The impact of the Parent Support Advisers on parental partnership work which has involved work on pupil attendance has been significant in those schools where the PSA is an effective practitioner. The work of the PSA has also focused schools on the significance of parental liaison officers and 'family team staff' who have played a significant part in reducing pupil absence in some schools.
10. Most schools are now including 'pupil attendance information' as agenda items within headteachers' reports and involving Governors more, for example, in Attendance Panels. Through the Governors Newsletter and Standard Agenda advice on key questions for governors to ask has been provided.

#### **CITY-WIDE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN**

11. Schools continue to work hard to improve attendance and over the last three years the trend has been encouraging. However despite these efforts the fact remains that Manchester has a 'red flag' for attendance and improving attendance remains a key priority. To accelerate the rate of improvement, the Local Authority launched a high visibility Attendance Campaign in January 2010. The **City-wide 'Attendance Publicity Campaign'** was launched with broadcasts on a number of local radio stations including Wythenshawe FM, Galaxy and Key 103. The radio messages were repeated twice in February.
12. The campaign continued in February with posters around the City. The message is focused on 'No Excuses' and 'Truancy' and designed around a theme of empty chairs located in a classroom, a dentist surgery, an airport and a living room. Posters were also placed on bus stops near to the 35 schools with highest levels of absence. Multiple copies of the posters have now been delivered to all schools.

## BLITZES

14. A series of '**Attendance Blitzes**' started on the 18 January. 80 schools were identified to take part this term. Based on the register taken on the day, home visits are being made by Attendance Officers and members of staff from the school. Each pair conducts 9 - 10 visits a day. Over 1,927 visits had been made by 12.2.02.
15. To support this initiative and increase the number of home visits that can be made, staff from across the Council, in particular those with good neighbourhood knowledge, are working with Attendance Officers to help undertake the home visits. This includes: Ward Support Officers, Community Safety Co-coordinators, Street Environment Managers who have been allocated 2 days each to support members of the Attendance Team. Currently more than 70 Council staff are involved and there is potential and commitment for this number to increase. There has also been discussion with Connexions, the Youth Offending Service, Leisure Services and Library Services re future engagement with this work and a commitment from a number of Registered Social Landlords.

Date	Number of blitzes completed	Average number of visits per officer	Total visits	Customer (school) satisfaction	Repeat blitz requested
18.01.10 - 22.01.10	15	9.1	430	85%	100%
25.01.10 – 29.01.10	16	9.7	557	85%	100%
01.02.10 – 05.02.10	27	9.7	493	85%	100%
8.02.10 - 12.02.10	17	13.5	447	83%	83%
<b>18.01.10 – 12.02.10 (cumulative)</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>1,927</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>83%</b>

## CITY-WIDE ATTENDANCE REWARD SCHEME

16. The City Council engaged **MOTIV** a Community Interest Company to develop a '100% Attendance and 100% Effort Campaign' with all schools. MOTIV contacted schools directly in January and the first badges were distributed to schools on 22.02.10. There was a presentation to the Behaviour and Attendance Networks (Primary) on 3, 4 and 5 March.

## CITY-WIDE PENALTY NOTICE INITIATIVE

17. During the week beginning 22.02.10 a warning letter was sent to the parents of about 2,500 pupils with between 10 and 30 sessions of **unauthorized absence** last term. The Core Attendance Team will monitor the attendance of these pupils following the warning letter and a penalty notice may be issued if

further unauthorized absences occur. This process is being conducted in consultation with schools.

#### **DIRECT MAIL INITIATIVE**

18. A guidance leaflet is being sent to the home addresses of all parents/carers. The letter will inform them of the importance of good attendance and advise them of their parental responsibilities. The letter, signed by Pauline Newman will include a leaflet with further information about attendance.

#### **CITY-WIDE TRUANCY SWEEPS**

19. City-wide Truancy Sweeps will continue to take place during the term in 'hot-spot' areas and in partnership with Greater Manchester Police. **These have been planned to complement the Blitz schedule. Dates: 5th March - Central, 8th March - North and 12th March - Wythenshawe**

#### **REGISTER AUDIT FOLLOW-UP VISITS**

20. Every school has now had a register audit. Schools have welcomed the audit review and to date have demonstrated how they have addressed the recommendations. The review process has allowed school staff to clarify their understanding of legislation relating to school attendance, maintaining the register, safeguarding and persistent absence. A total of 34 primary schools have been identified to receive a follow-up visit on a targeted basis this term. The follow-up audits will provide further guidance and support on registration and attendance practices. Targeted schools were notified in January.
21. It should be noted that all schools identified from the initial register audit as having inadequate CME (Children Missing Education) procedures in place were advised as to how to improve their processes and that this should be addressed as a matter of urgency. All SEOs have discussed the register audit reports with their schools to ensure that all that recommendations are implemented.

#### **ATTENDANCE SUPPORT WORKER INITIATIVE (ASWs)**

22. This initiative builds on the learning from the successful work of the Parent Support Advisors (PSAs) and aims to further develop frontline practice in schools to improve attendance. The Attendance Support Workers will target those pupils who are on track to become persistently absent or who are already persistently absent. PSAs are currently working to address a full range of needs, sometimes including attendance but usually at a much earlier point of intervention. It should be noted that the current PSAs are working at universal/level 2a on the continuum of need and provision and it is anticipated that the new workers will be deployed at level 2b/transition, just below level 3.
24. The funding will be sufficient to provide 12 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) ASWs between January 2010 and August 2011 and to cover the costs of their ongoing supervision. Based on the availability of 12 FTE ASWs it was

proposed that 20 primary schools and 5 high schools will receive this additional resource.

**IYFAP (IN YEAR FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL)**

25. In 2009-2010 thirteen young people have been placed through IYFAP so far. This is from 23 brought forward for discussion. Three were withdrawn so in effect 13 from 20 young people have been offered a school place or a target school. The other 7 cases are pending as more information is sought on the child's circumstances. Over the three years of the existence of IYFAP there has been a success rate of approximately 2 out of 3 young people discussed through IYFAP being found a school place. (In 2007-2008, 66 young people out of 126 were offered a place and a further 16 offered a managed move; in 2008-2009 47 young people from 74 were offered places)

**APPENDIX 1**

**CENTRAL EAST – ABSENCE DATA for 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10**

