



Department
for Education

Statistical First Release



Neighbourhood Statistics - Small Area Pupil Absence by Pupil Characteristics in England, 2010/11

SFR 08/2012

21 June 2012

Coverage: England

**Theme: Children,
Education and
Skills**

Issued by

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INTRODUCTION

This Statistical First Release (SFR) provides information on 2010/11 small area data on absence by gender on the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Neighbourhood Statistics Service (NeSS) website.

This annual release includes data based on pupil residency presented at national, regional, Local Authority District (LAD), Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) level and Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) level. Please see the technical notes for definitions of these areas.

The coverage of the data being reported is pupils of compulsory school age (5-15 at the start of the school year) resident in England attending maintained primary and secondary schools (including City Technology Colleges (CTCs) and academies) and maintained and non-maintained special schools (excluding general hospital schools), hereafter referred to as 'all schools'. Special schools are included with 'all schools' but not the primary and secondary schools breakdowns.

The data can be viewed or downloaded from the Neighbourhood Statistics website by accessing 'Education, Skills and Training' via the link to the 'Topics' section on the homepage:

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

The Department works closely with the ONS to develop the Department's contribution to NeSS. Information about education has been identified as being critical to the understanding of deprivation and a high priority has been placed on making education data available via NeSS. The tables contribute to the closer monitoring of absence in local areas and are of interest to other government departments, delivery partners, local practitioners and MPs who have previously asked for data on absence at both national and local levels and analysis of information in deprived areas.

HEADLINES

- Levels of persistent absence amongst pupils in secondary schools are generally higher among pupils living in the north of the country than those living in the south. There is greater variation across the regions for pupils in primary schools with the West Midlands having the highest level of persistent absence and the South East the lowest.
- In all schools, pupils in Yorkshire and the Humber have the highest level of unauthorised absence (1.3 per cent of possible pupil sessions (half days) missed), but not the highest level of overall absence which is in the North East (6.1 per cent of half days

missed). Pupils in London have the lowest levels of overall absence (5.5 per cent of half days missed) but a relatively high level of unauthorised absence (1.2 per cent of half days missed) compared to pupils in other regions.

KEY FIGURES

The figures below apply to the new structure of 326 LADs following the local government reorganisation in April 2009, although they exclude a small number of these where values have been suppressed due to very small numbers.

(1) All schools

- The percentage of half days missed due to overall absence ranged from 4.1 per cent in Ribble Valley (Lancashire) to 7.2 per cent in Nottingham. The percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised absence ranged from 0.2 per cent in Eden (Cumbria) to 2.3 per cent in the City of Kingston upon Hull.
- The percentage of enrolments classed as persistent absentees ranged from 2.8 per cent in Ribble Valley (Lancashire)¹ to 10.2 per cent in Nottingham.

(2) Primary schools

- The percentage of half days missed due to overall absence ranged from 3.5 per cent in Ribble Valley (Lancashire) to 6.3 per cent in Nottingham. The percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised absence ranged from 0.1 per cent in Eden (Cumbria) to 1.6 per cent in Fenland (Cambridgeshire).
- The percentage of enrolments classed as persistent absentees ranged from 1.1 per cent in South Northamptonshire to 7.5 per cent in Nottingham.
- Girls have higher levels of overall absence than boys in 160 LADs (49 per cent). However, boys have higher levels of unauthorised absence than girls in 177 LADs (54 per cent) and persistent absence is higher for boys than girls in 184 LADs (56 per cent).

(3) Secondary schools

- The percentage of half days missed due to overall absence ranged from 4.7 per cent in Ribble Valley (Lancashire)¹ to 8.2 per cent in the City of Kingston upon Hull. The percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised absence ranged from 0.2 per cent in Ribble Valley (Lancashire) to 3.5 per cent in the City of Kingston Upon Hull.
- The percentage of enrolments classed as persistent absentees ranged from 4.0 per cent in Ribble Valley (Lancashire) to 13.5 in the City of Kingston upon Hull. Persistent absence is higher for girls than boys in 280 (86 per cent) LADs.

¹ Absence results for the City of London were at the extreme of the range however, due to relatively small numbers of enrolments (212 for all schools, 79 for secondary schools), results can be variable year on year.

NATIONAL STATISTICS PUBLICATION

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.

The Department has a set of statistical policies in line with the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, these are published here: <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/nat-stats.shtml>.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the Department for Education protect confidentiality.

A cross (x) is used in the tables published in this release to signify a suppressed value where publication of that figure would be disclosive. Values of 1 or 2, or a percentage based on 1 or 2 pupils who are persistent absentees or 1 or 2 pupils who are not persistent absentees are suppressed. Some additional figures have been suppressed to prevent the possibility of a suppressed figure being revealed. This suppression is consistent with the Departmental statistical policy which can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/ns-sp-confidentialityv3.pdf>.

OTHER SYMBOLS USED IN TABLES

A single dot (.) is used in the tables published in this release to signify data not applicable.

TRANSPARENCY

As part of a Government drive for data transparency in official publications, supporting data for this publication will be published in an open standardised format on the Research and Statistics gateway on 21 June 2012.

REVISIONS

The figures in this publication are based on final data for 2010/11.

Any unplanned revisions will be made in accordance with the Departmental statistical policy on revisions which can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/ns-sp-revisionsv3.pdf>

YOUR FEEDBACK

Please contact Ben Howick at benjamin.howick@education.gsi.gov.uk if you have comments on the content or presentation of this release so that we can take account of your needs in future editions.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Pupil Absence in Schools in England, Including Pupil Characteristics: 2010/11
<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001060/index.shtml>

TABLES

The following table is available to view on the ONS' NeSS website:

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

Table title	Geographical levels
Pupil Absence in Schools by Gender (Referenced by Location of Pupil Residence), 2010/11	Region Local Authority District (LAD) Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA)

MAPS

The following maps are available to view on the Department for Education statistics website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001069/index.shtml>

- Overall absence – Percentage of half days missed by Local Authority District of pupil residence, 2010/11
- Overall absence – Percentage of half days missed by Middle Layer Super Output Area of pupil residence, 2010/11
- Persistent Absence – Percentage of enrolments classified as persistent absentees by Local Authority District of pupil residence, 2010/11
- Persistent Absence – Percentage of enrolments classified as persistent absentees by Middle Layer Super Output Area of pupil residence, 2010/11

TECHNICAL NOTES

Neighbourhood Statistics

Neighbourhood Statistics (NeSS) is a free web service run by the Office for National Statistics. It develops, collates and publishes official statistics on topics such as education, health, population, economy, crime and more. Data from many government departments are available in one place, to download and compare, and to create maps, charts and tables using NeSS's built-in functionality.

Source of data

Schools have provided, via the School Census (SC), individual level attendance data relating to the autumn term 2010, spring term 2011 and first half of the summer term 2011 for pupils aged 5 to 15 (at the start of the school year), who are non-boarders at the time of the census. In each term, the School Census has collected the number of possible sessions of attendance; the number of sessions missed, broken down by reason for absence, and overall totals of sessions missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence.

The SC is collected and managed by the DfE and contains individual information for all pupils at maintained primary schools, state-funded secondary schools (including CTCs and Academies), and maintained and non-maintained special schools (excluding general hospital schools) in England. More information about the SC can be obtained via <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datacollections/schoolcensus/a0064400/school-census-2011>

Metadata documents

A document providing a range of information about the absence dataset, including the quality of the data and any points that should be noted when using the data, is published on the Neighbourhood Statistics website alongside the dataset by clicking on the blue 'i' symbol.

[http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/datasetList.do?\\$ph=60&updateRequired=true&step=1&CurrentTreeIndex=-1&Expand7=1#7](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/datasetList.do?$ph=60&updateRequired=true&step=1&CurrentTreeIndex=-1&Expand7=1#7)

Neighbourhood Statistics geography levels

All of the education datasets on the Neighbourhood Statistics website are published at national, regional and Local Authority District level. Some datasets are published at Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) and Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) level (see 'Tables' section for a description of which datasets are published at which geography levels).

Local Authority Districts

The term 'Local Authority District' refers to the lower tier of local government. This includes non-metropolitan districts, metropolitan districts, unitary authorities and London boroughs.

Lower Layer and Middle Layer Super Output Areas

Super Output Areas are geographies for the collection and publication of small area statistics. They are used on the Neighbourhood Statistics site, and have a wider application across National Statistics. There are currently two layers of SOA, Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) and Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA). The SOA layers form a hierarchy based on aggregations of Output Areas (OAs). These are subdivisions of Statistical Wards. The minimum OA size is 40 resident households and 100 resident persons but the recommended size is rather larger at 125 households.

The two layers of SOA have areas, intermediate in size, between 2001 Census Output Areas (OAs) and local authority districts, with each layer nesting inside the layer above. SOAs give an

improved basis for comparison across the country because the units are more similar in size of population than, for example, electoral wards. They are also intended to be stable, enabling the improved comparison and monitoring of policy over time. In addition, figures for user defined geographies will be aggregated and best fitted from data held for OAs and SOAs.

Lower Layer Super Output Areas - The 34,378 Lower Layer SOAs (LSOAs) in England and Wales were generated automatically and released to the public in February 2004. The LSOAs were built using 2001 Census data from groups of Output Areas (typically four to six) and were constrained by the Standard Table wards used for 2001 Census outputs. They had a minimum size of 1,000 residents and 400 households, but average 1,500 residents. Measures of proximity (to give a reasonably compact shape) and social homogeneity (to encourage areas of similar social background) were also included.

Middle Layer Super Output Areas - The 7,193 Middle Layer SOAs (MSOAs) were defined in a two-stage process: an initial set was generated automatically but the boundaries were then modified in consultation with local authorities and other local bodies. The final boundaries were released to the public in August 2004. As with the LSOAs, initial Middle Layer SOAs were generated automatically by zone-design software. They were built using 2001 Census data from groups of Lower Layer SOAs and had a minimum size of 5,000 residents and 2,000 households. They also fitted within the boundaries of local authorities as at the end of 2002 (corresponding with the geography of the Census). A nationwide consultation exercise gave local authorities the opportunity to amend the initial Middle Layer SOAs to define areas more suited to local requirements. The consultation resulted in 7,193 MSOAs with an average population size of 7,200.

REPRODUCING FIGURES IN THIS PUBLICATION

There are three types of figures in this publication:

1. The total number of enrolments in a given group.
2. The percentage of sessions (pupil half-days) missed due to absence.
3. The percentage of enrolments that are persistent absentees.

The percentage of sessions missed due to absence is calculated by taking the number of sessions for which pupils were absent, dividing by the number of possible sessions and multiplying by 100.

The percentage of persistent absentees is calculated by taking the number of persistent absentees, dividing by the number of enrolments and multiplying by 100.

Percentages are rounded to 1 decimal place. The underlying figures used to calculate these percentages will be published on 21 June 2012 at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001069/index.shtml>

For any given category, the percentage achieving each indicator is calculated by summing all of the pupils that achieved that indicator (the numerator) and dividing this by the total number of pupils (the denominator).

Worked examples

	Number of enrolments	Possible pupil sessions	Number of sessions missed due to absence	Number of enrolments classified as persistent absentees
Primary school boys in region A	900	28,000	3,000	40

In the example above there are 900 enrolments, and 28,000 possible pupil sessions. Therefore the percentage of overall absence would be calculated as

$$\frac{3000}{28000} \times 100 = 10.7\%$$

The percentage of persistent absentees would be calculated as

$$\frac{40}{900} \times 100 = 4.4\%$$

ENQUIRIES

1. Enquiries about the figures in this SFR should be addressed to:

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