Welton CE Academy Attendance Strategy 25 - 26

Welton CE Academy is a smaller than average rural primary school for four to eleven year olds. At full capacity the school can take 20 pupils in each year group. There are currently 132 pupils on role. Less than 20% of our pupils come from the village of Welton, the majority travel in from Daventry town. Welton CE Primary Converted to an Academy in 2012. The school elected to join the David Ross Education Trust. The David Ross Education Trust has 34 academies, incorporating primary, secondary and special schools. The school was inspected in May 2022 when it was graded outstanding. Consistently above average results have been achieved since joining the Trust. The school is below National for pupil premium, minority ethnic groups and SEND. The Head is shared with Newnham. He is supported by experienced Deputies who also have shared responsibilities across both schools.

Geographically, Daventry is growing outwards with many new housing estates being built on the outskirts of town. Welton CE is located just North of the town and village housing tends to have older residents/families with above average income…

Historic data:

2021-22 Attendance 95.4%, Absence 4.6%, PA 3.1%, Auth 4.0%, Unauth 0.6%, Lates 0.1%

2022-23 Attendance 96.4%, Absence 3.6%, PA 4.5%, Auth 2.9%, Unauth 0.7%, Lates 0.1%

2023-24 Attendance 95.4%, Absence 4.6%, PA 6%, Auth 3.8%, Unauth 0.8%, Lates 0.2%

2024-25 Attendance 96%, Absence 4%, PA 5.2 %, Auth 3.2%, Unauth 0.9%, Lates 0.1%

Analysis of our data shows that we are above the nationally reported attendance average for this academic year and are consistently in the top 5 schools within our Trust for attendance (out of 22 schools).

Currently Year 1 and EYFS have the highest attendance and Years 2 and 4 the lowest. A difference of 2.1% between them top and bottom. However percentage comparisons are unhelpful due to the differing numbers of children in each year group. Male/female attendance is only marginally different 0.2%.

PP attendance is lower than non-PP by 1.8% but still generally remains above national average. SEND is also lower than non-SEND by 2.% but relatively good compared to national differences between SEND and non-SEND attendance.

Trends over time demonstrate the highest levels of absence occur directly before or after a holiday, often due to families having an extended break either side of a holiday period to avoid peak holiday times. Lowest point of attendance last academic year was wb 14/10/24 (96.2%). This was before a holiday and caused by families having a break either side of a holiday period in order to avoid peak holiday times.

A breakdown of absence demonstrates that approximately 20% in unauthorised with by far the largest percentage (around 70%) being for illness.

At first glance the DFE data would suggest our priorities should be authorised and persistent absence. However these percentages and rankings do not represent the challenges faced by the school. 58% (20 out of 34) of the UA is one child who has been reported as finding transition difficult, who often arrives after the registers are closed. 5 other pupils are currently PA. 3 due to bouts of confirmed illness, 1 due to a series of minor operations and 1 due to an extended holiday.

Attendance measure	Percentage	Ranking ⓘ
Overall attendance	96.0%	You are ranked 30th out of 147 schools
Overall absence	4.0%	You are ranked 30th out of 147 schools
Authorised absence	3.2%	You are ranked 42nd out of 147 schools
Unauthorised absence	0.9%	You are ranked 26th out of 147 schools
Persistently absent	5.2%	You are ranked 18th out of 147 schools
Severely absent	0.0%	You are ranked 1st out of 147 schools

Priorities and Rationale

Reducing absence due to illness – illness and often minor illness forms the majority of absences in our school.

Setting high expectations for new starters – encouraging new starters to attend from day one will build good attendance habits over time.

Text message project – although our attendance is high, there is always room for improvement. Testing the impact of a different approach will enable us to continue to build on our good practise.

Links to research:

SETTING HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR NEW STARTERS

https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/back-into-school-new-insights-into-school-absence-evidence-from-three-multi-academy-trusts/

The specific para from the above link is as follows: *This analysis found two striking things: firstly, children who missed the second, third and fourth day of a new term were predicted an overall absence of almost 45%, or 31 days across the term, significantly more than their peers who attended those first few days. Secondly, whilst Fridays are the most common day for children to be absent, it is actually those children who miss mid-weekdays, Tuesday-Thursday, who are more likely to be habitually absent from school.*

TEXT MESSAGE PROJECT

https://www.bi.team/increasing-attendance-with-parent-messages-supportive-how-to-guide-for-schools/

Increasing attendance with parent messages – Supportive 'how-to' guide for schools

Catching up on lost learning during school closures will only be possible with good school attendance, but attendance rates remain…

www.bi.team

Actions

Priority and task	Date to be completed	Owner	How will you know it has been successful?
Reduce absence due to illness as this currently makes up the majority of our absence. Actions: Send out information to parents about minor illness and being in school. Give clear guidance on when a child should be in school and when they shouldn't. Send out good health and hygiene guidance to try to prevent the spread of illness. Encourage children to come to school if they have a cough or a cold. Continue to ensure that children understand the importance of attendance so that they want to come to school. Work with specific families where children have a lot of time off for minor illnesses – workshops, meetings, letters, info etc.	July 2026	Natalie Blackham – supported by Sol Johnson	Reduce the percentage of absences due to illnesses to below 50% (Currently 67.4%)
Setting high expectations for new starters. Actions:	July 2026	Lauren Mallon – supported by Sol Johnson	Majority of new starters (90%+) to have 100% attendance in their first 4 weeks at the school.

Share expectations for children to attend 100% in their first four weeks at school. Share information through letters. Send encouraging texts to show what their attendance is so far and how much longer to achieve 100% for 4 weeks. Follow up any absence in the first 4 weeks, sharing attendance data and the school's expectations clearly. Address any identified barriers to attendance quickly and effectively using the school's attendance policy.			
To implement a project using a text message with a positive feel and stating number of days absence instead of a percentage, to increase the attendance of persistently absent pupils against a control group. Actions: Select a control group and a test group. Send the message to the test group. Use normal communication with the control group. Collect data each term and note any differences. Evaluate effectiveness of measure and then amend procedures as necessary.	Monitor impact termly	Natalie Blackham Consulting with Wendy Baxter	Compare control group to test group to see if the project has made any impact. Share results to inform others.