

**Children's Services Select Committee – January 17<sup>th</sup> 2007****Summary of performance on 'red triangle' indicators**

The report for the second quarter of 2006/2007 shows four Children's Services performance indicators with red triangles showing that performance is more than 10% away from the target. Each of the four indicators is considered in detail in this appendix to the quarterly report and includes actions intended to move performance in line with targets.

**BV163 (PAF C23)**

**The number of looked after children adopted during the year as a percentage of the number of children looked after at 31 March who had been looked after for 6 months or more on that day.**

**Background (Numerator)**

The number of children who ceased to be looked after during the year as a result of the granting of an adoption order excluding any unaccompanied asylum seeking children (counting only those children who were adopted after having been looked after by the council immediately prior to adoption). From September 2005 children ceasing to be looked after as a result of the granting of a special guardian ship order should also be included. Children placed for adoption or freed for adoption remain looked after until the adoption order is granted.

**Background (Denominator)**

The total number of children who were looked after at 31 March and who at that date had been looked after for 6 months or more (ie 183 or more days inclusive of 31 March), excluding any unaccompanied asylum seeking children and Children receiving only respite placements are excluded.

**Comment**

For most children the best place to grow up is with their birth parents. Where this is not possible, society has a clear responsibility to provide children with stability and permanence in their lives. The Government believes that more can and should be done to promote the wider use of adoption which offers the only legally secure placement for children unable to return to their birth families. This indicator seeks to encourage the use of adoption.

The Quarter 2 figure for 2006/07 is an estimate. There have been 14 adoptions so far this year, with a further 9 current applications. Assuming that all applications are completed and approved there are likely to be 23 adoptions this financial year. A noticeable difference in this indicator is the significant decrease in the denominator from the end of June to the end of September falling by 26 children. The fall in the number of children looked after for 6 months or more has a positive effect upon the indicator.

As of 4 January 2007, 21 adoption orders had been made putting us well on course to achieve our target. In addition the agency has been notified of three further Adoption Hearings at which four children will be made the subject of Adoption Orders before the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2007. The authority is currently supporting the lodging of applications by a further four families in respect of five children. Some of these Adoption Hearings may be completed within this financial year.

**Performance**

2006/07 target – 6% current performance - 5.7%

### Improvement Plan

- Links with the Adoption In the Black Country recruitment project remain extremely strong and recruitment activity has been greatly enhanced by the success of this targeted project.
- The ABC project is assisting in the revision of the 'Adopt In Dudley' booklet.
- The project also coordinates the bi-monthly information evenings intended to attract a wider pool of Black Country people interested in adoption. As a result of the collaborative working between the four Black Country boroughs, Dudley is able to attract a greater number of prospective families resident outside the borough who can be more readily matched with the pool of children awaiting adoption.
- There is evidence of increasing diversity of application which will assist in reducing waiting time for black and ethnic minority children and make us more self sufficient in using our own adopters for this group of children.
- Adoption Support Services within the council are developing well. The three workers have been proactive in engaging with partner agencies and organisations. In addition they are offering effective case work to families. Adoption Support Plans are now in place for all cases due to be presented for matching at the adoption panel.
- The duty system has been overhauled and the Acting Team Manager reviews all referrals. The district team are aware of the need to refer to the Adoption Team early in the planning process where adoption is one of the likely outcomes.
- A significant development has been the structural change involving permanent fostering. The setting up of a ring fenced identified staff group to address this need has enabled greater focus on completion of Adoption work and more timely securing of Adoption Orders. Clear processes are in place for the smooth transfer of cases between the Adoption Team and the Permanent Fostering Social Workers.

### **BV 050 (PAF A2)**

**The percentage of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with at least 1 GCSE at grade A\*-G or a GNVQ**

#### **Background (Numerator)**

Of the young people in the denominator (see below), the number who on leaving care had obtained at least 1 GCSE at grade A\*-G or a GNVQ. Qualifications gained before the young person was looked after and qualifications from examinations sat while the young person was looked after are included, even if the results were announced after the young person ceased to be looked after. Qualifications gained from examinations sat after the young person ceased to be looked after are not included.

#### **Background (Denominator)**

The number of young people who ceased to be looked after during the year at the age of 16 or over regardless of how long they had been looked after but excluding:

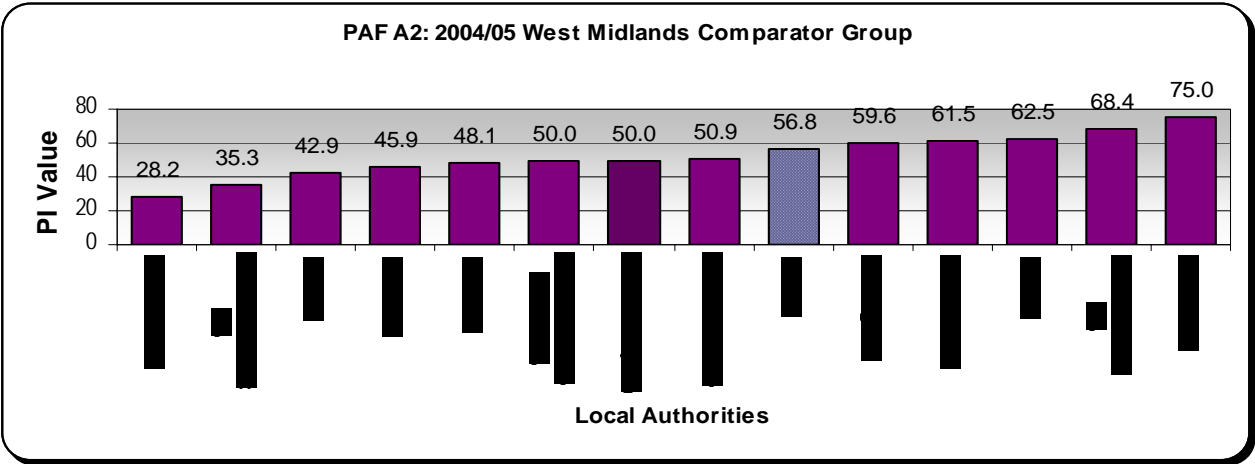
- those aged 15 at 31 August 2003 who leave between 1 April 2004 and 31 May 2004 and those aged 14 at 31 August 2003 who leave care before 31 March 2005;
  - unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) who have been looked after for less than two years at the time that they leave care; and
- young people who ceased after having been looked after during the year only under an agreed series of short term placements.

**Comment**

Educational attainment is one of the most important determinants of future outcomes and a measure that is supported by readily available information. There is clearly a need for co-operation between SSDs, LEAs and Schools to improve the attainment of children looked after. The indicator includes all children looked after as this emphasises the council’s corporate responsibility for the education of vulnerable children. Research published in 1992 and 1995 showed that up to 75% of children looked after left school with no qualifications. The targets set take account of this baseline, and the fact that some 30% of children looked after have a statement of special educational needs. Figures for quarter 2 are based upon those children in the cohort who left care in quarters 1 and 2 and on the results of those young people who will be 18 in the financial year 2006/07.

**Performance**

2006/2007 target – 70%, current performance - 53.8% (the table below shows comparative figures for West Midlands authorities for 2004/05



**Improvement Plan**

1. Implement ICT Strategy for foster carers to maximise access of children looked after to DGFL.
2. Ensure every child looked after has a Personal Education Plan through Educational Support Service.
3. Progress LPSA action plan.

**A&I027**

**The percentage of looked-after children having a current (up to date) Personal Education Plan (PEP).**

**Background**

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) tells the child and all other parties involved in caring for child/ young person in the care of the local authority how their educational needs will be met and is a record of educational progress. There is a statutory responsibility (section 52 of the Children Act 2004) that every looked after child/young person should have a PEP. All young people 16+ should have a PEP as part of the preparation & review of a pathway plan as part of the transition to adult arrangements.

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A PEP should commence as soon as it becomes clear that a child will be entering the care of the Local Authority. Within 20 school days of the child entering care the first PEP should be completed. Thereafter, the PEP should be reviewed at the following intervals:

- 28 days (first statutory review)
- 3 months
- Then at 6 monthly periods

The Social Worker should initiate and co-ordinate the completion of a PEP by arranging a meeting with the young person, parents, carers, the designated teacher and other professionals involved in the care of the child.

### **Performance**

The target for 2006/07 has been increased to 100%, with performance in quarter 1 at 60.2%. Performance dipped in quarter 2 to 57.21%.

### **Improvement Plan**

Performance on PEPs was reviewed in November/December 2006 and an improvement plan cover key areas was developed (see below).

**Good Practice Guidance for Recording and Monitoring PEPs****Key Recommendations and Actions**

<b>Action to be undertaken</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Performance Targets</b>	<b>Monitoring arrangements</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the absence of a social worker, Team Manager to ensure that the PEP process continues</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Team Manager	100%	Team Manger supervision  Independent Review Officers (IROs)  Looked After Children Education Support (LACES) monthly update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email from John Freeman/Cllr Liz Walker to reinforce the statutory responsibility of the LA to ensure all looked after children have an effective high quality PEP</li> </ul>	ASAP	John Freeman	100%	DPT DMT

Action to be undertaken	By when	Responsible Officer	Performance Targets	Monitoring arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education to be a regular item on the Social Work District Team agenda and to include LACES</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Team Manager	100%	Team Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuation of arrangements to undertake and record PEPs for children and young people in care after 20 school days of the child entering care. A PEP must be completed and recorded after the first 28 days of a child/young person entering care. Thereafter, the PEP should be regularly reviewed at the following intervals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>28 days (first statutory review)</li> <li>3 months</li> <li>Then at 6 monthly periods</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	ASAP	Chris Wrigley LACES Social Worker	100%	DPT DMT

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<b>Action to be undertaken</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Performance Targets</b>	<b>Monitoring arrangements</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Worker to forward PEP information request letter to the school to ensure relevant information is available</li> </ul>	Ongoing Immediate	Social Worker	100%	Team Manager LACES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LACES to develop a young persons leaflet on their education entitlement</li> </ul>	Dec/Jan 06	Ruth Tykiff	100%	Team Manager DMT Feedback from young people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PEP process is given priority in the school and the appropriate people are given time to attend (schools cancel meeting)</li> </ul>	Ongoing	John Freeman/ Jane Porter	100%	DMTs DPT Ruth Tykiff

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Action to be undertaken	By when	Responsible Officer	Performance Targets	Monitoring arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Development Advisors (SDAs) to liaise with LACES team in target setting and where they encounter issues</li> </ul>	Ongoing. To follow Target setting guidance	Jane Porter SDAs	100%	DMT DPT Ruth Tykiff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IRO to ask to view the current PEP at the review meeting and to comment on the quality and the targets set</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Graham Tilby	100%	DMT Ruth Tykiff Graham Tilby
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll out of “Notes for Foster Carers and RCWs” for completion prior to PEPs</li> </ul>	6/12/06 for fostering  Date for unit mangers tbc	Ruth Tykiff	100%	Ruth Tykiff



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<b>Action to be undertaken</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Performance Targets</b>	<b>Monitoring arrangements</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carers to complete “Notes for Foster cares and RSWs” form prior to the PEP (Foster Social Worker to monitor annually)</li> </ul>	Ongoing		100%	IROs Supervising Social Workers for Foster Carers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that 16+ PEPs template is fully implemented</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager of the 16+ Team	100%	16+ LACES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that a copy of the PEP is sent to LACES so it can be entered onto SWIFT and be monitored</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Social Worker	100%	LACES DMT Team Manager

Action to be undertaken	By when	Responsible Officer	Performance Targets	Monitoring arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop a process to monitor social work activity around PEP and identifying barriers and action agreed. E.g. PEP monitoring Form to be completed on a face to face basis - Action November (Name of Social Worker, list of children and date of last PEP). A file will be held to monitor progress made</li> </ul>	End November 2006	Ruth Tykiff (With assistance from Policy, Performance and Information Division)	100%	Chris Wrigley DMT Mike Murray Ruth Tykiff

**BV045**

**The percentage of half days missed due to total (that is authorised and unauthorised) absences in secondary schools maintained by the Local Education Authority.**

**Performance**

The end of year 2005/06 actual (up to 26/05/06) was 8.05% against a target of 8%.

**BV046**

**The percentage of half days missed due to total (that is authorised and unauthorised) absences in primary schools maintained by the Local Education Authority.**

**Performance**

The end of year 2005/06 actual (up to 26/05/06) was 6.1% against a target of 5.4%.

**Comment**

During 2005-2006 absence in Dudley and across the majority of statistical neighbours and nationally increased, this was due to the “Nova” virus and a number of others that swept across the UK. Prior to that the Borough was on schedule to meet its target by 2008, and indeed there is no reason why this is still not achievable.

Whilst BV 045 and 046 are still prevalent, it is important to note the new language coming out of the DfES which is now about reducing “overall absence” and “improving attendance”. Schools should be looking at any child that has 20% absence, either authorised or not and putting in plans to improve or stop the absence getting worse.

The agenda should not be about high levels of unauthorised absence but about promoting high levels/improved attendance. Indeed as with any other authority it is not “truancy” per se that is the problem, it is “condoned absence”, in other words parents submitting notes for no other reason than to cover their child’s absence which the school then authorises.

The schools cannot be blamed for this as the culture responsible for it is the reduction of “unauthorised absence”, but to challenge absence effectively and early, in the short to medium term schools should be encouraged to “unauthorise absence” at an early stage, especially in Primary School.

Importantly also is that the OfSTED targets are being phased out and they are now looking at whether a school is above or below the mean of the quintiles developed in Dudley, and whilst we do have 10 Secondary Schools below the OfSTED target (see Figure 1) we now need to start reviewing all schools against quintiles from 2006-2007.

Schools that do not take this approach are in danger of becoming a “priority school”. 5 Secondary Schools in the Borough are designated as “priority schools”; this as a result means that the LA is a “priority LA”.

**Improvement Plan**

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) has already developed a mechanism of identification to referral of students requiring all schools to review every child who had 20% absence with their Education Welfare Officer (EWO). This is actively being marketed across **all** schools and they are being encouraged to consider whether the absence should be continued to be authorised or not. At this time the EWS is working with those 5 “priority schools” in association with the DfES Regional Consultant. The service has undergone a

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major overhaul in the last six months resulting in a redeployment of officers to meet the current needs of schools and the authority. The service has developed four specific strategic support tools to schools who will be encouraged to use the same to develop whole school approaches to managing attendance. Additionally a system of targeted Case Work Delivery has been introduced which is a performance managed casework system developed to help officers turn around cases referred effectively and efficiently.

**The charts on the following pages provide a summary of school attendance in the Borough in 2005/06.**

Dudley Secondary School Performance 2005/2006

Figure 1:

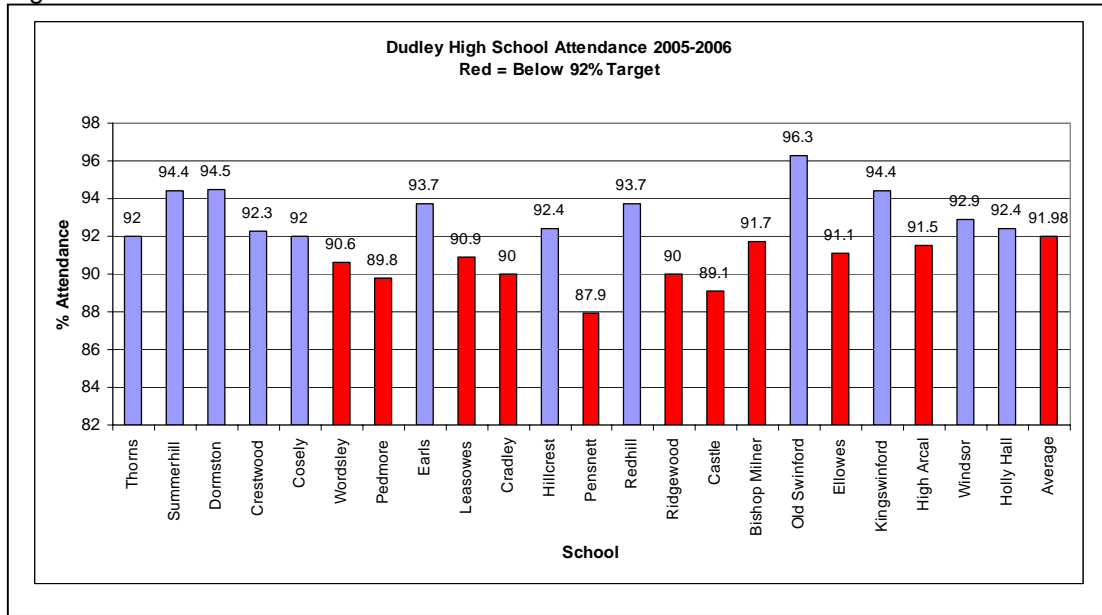


Figure 2:

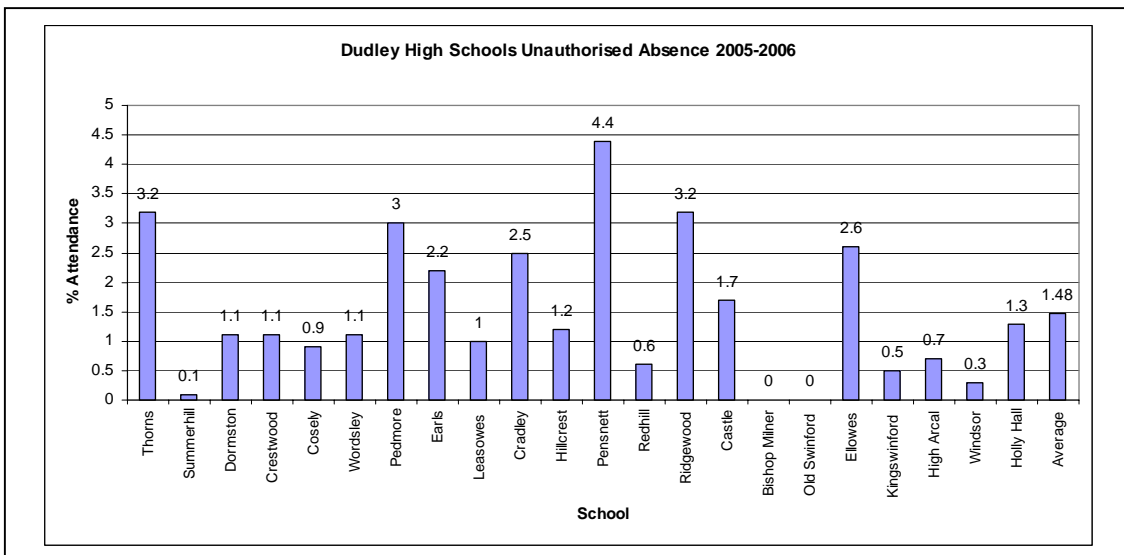
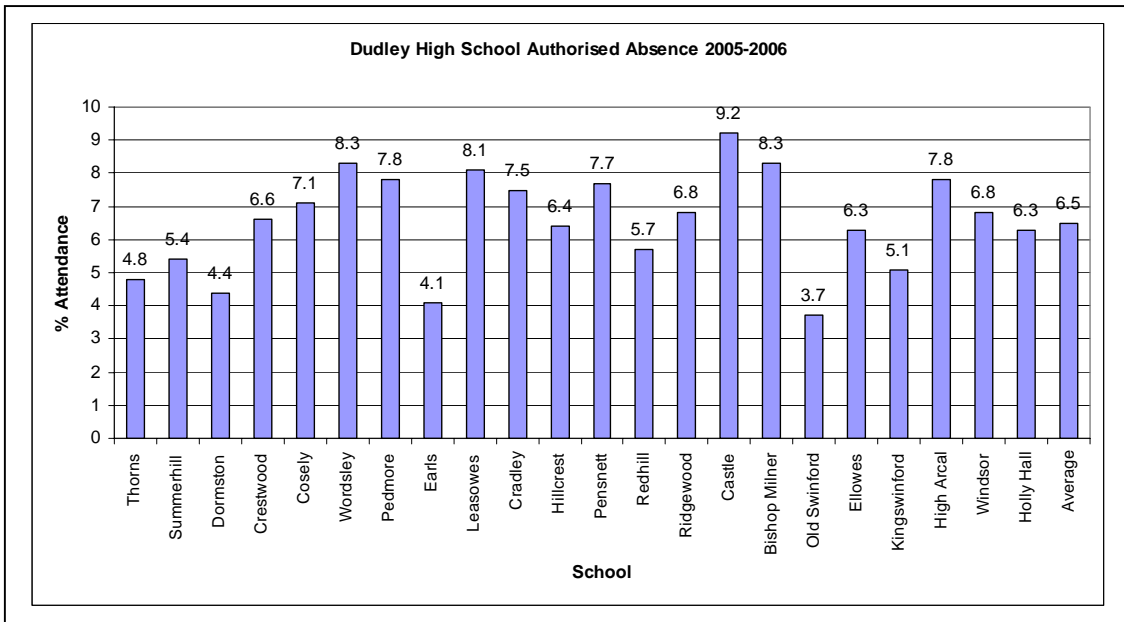


Figure 3:



Dudley Primary School Performance 2005/2006 by Township

Figure 4: Dudley Central

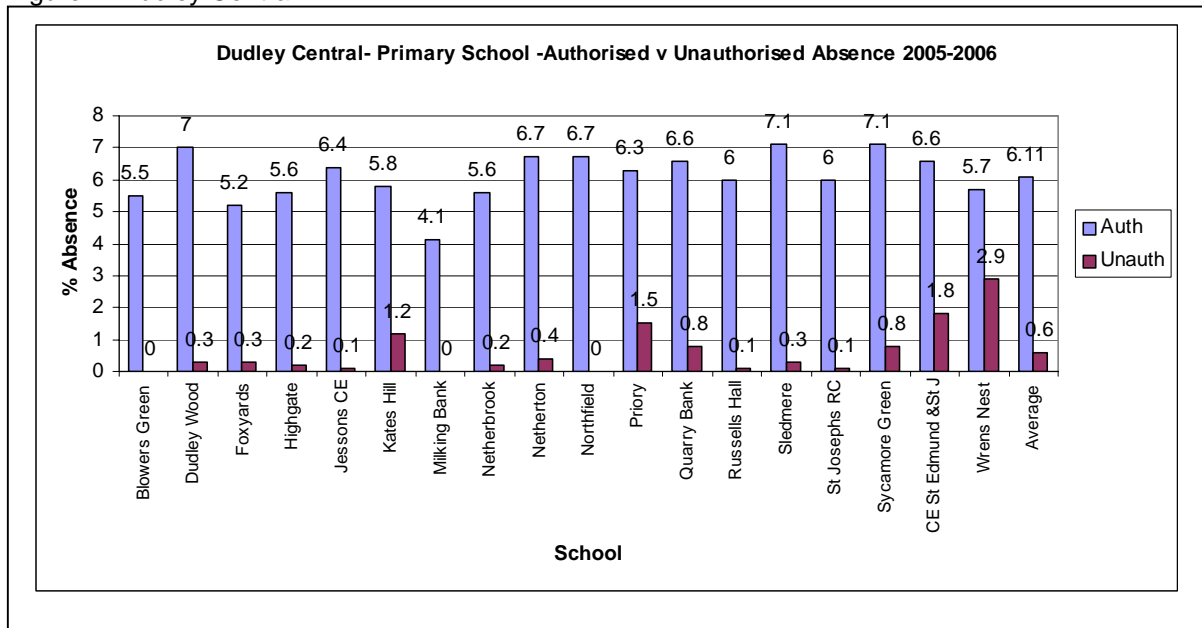


Figure 5: Dudley North

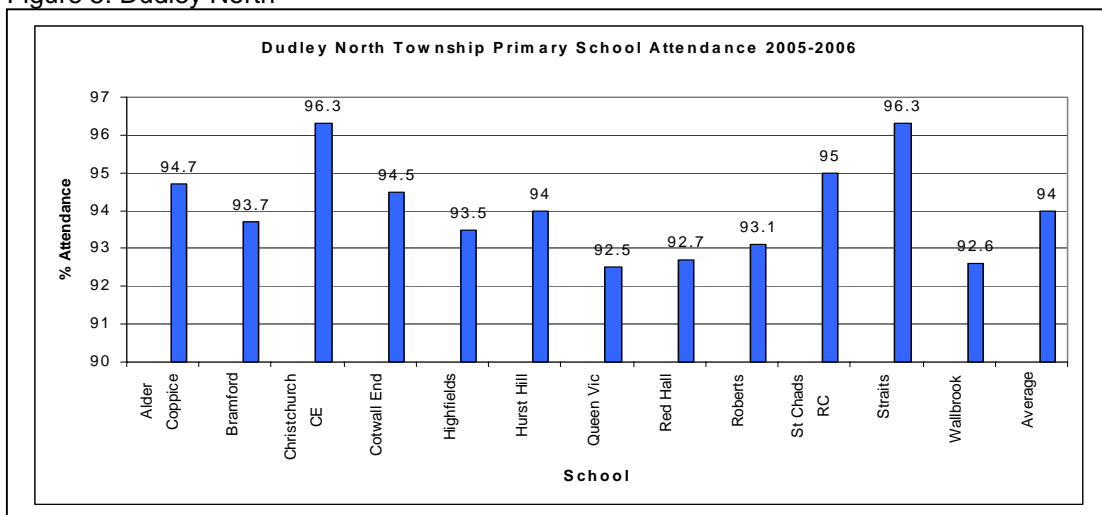


Figure 6: Dudley North

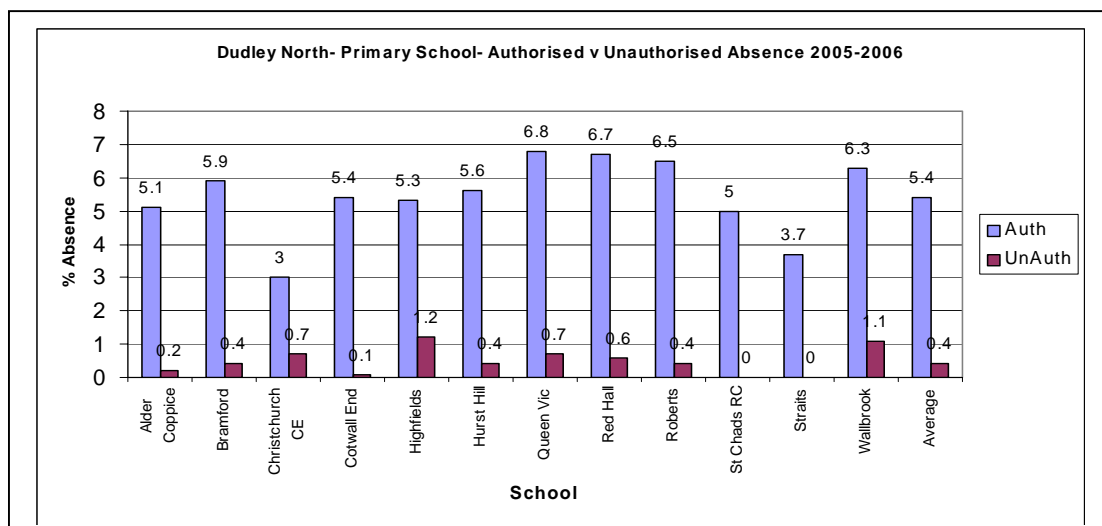


Figure 7: Brierley Hill

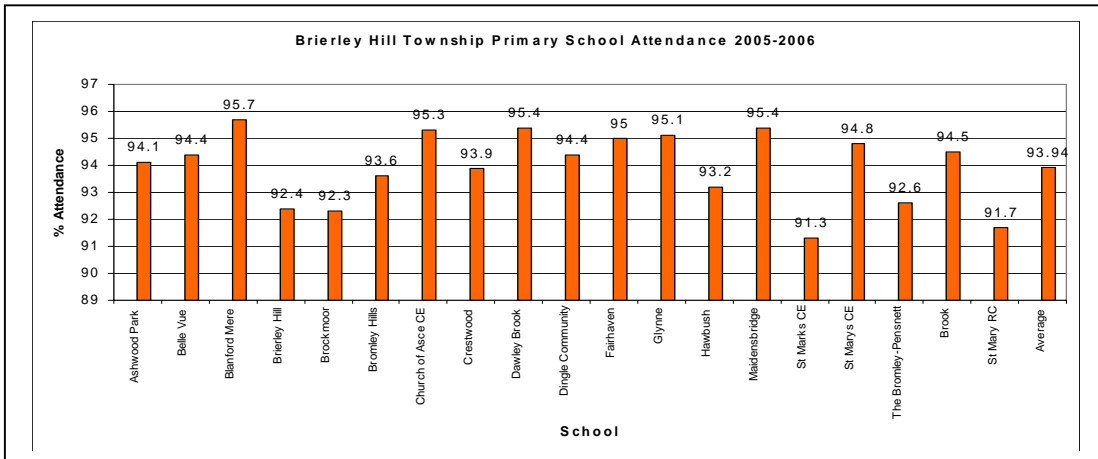


Figure 8: Brierley Hill

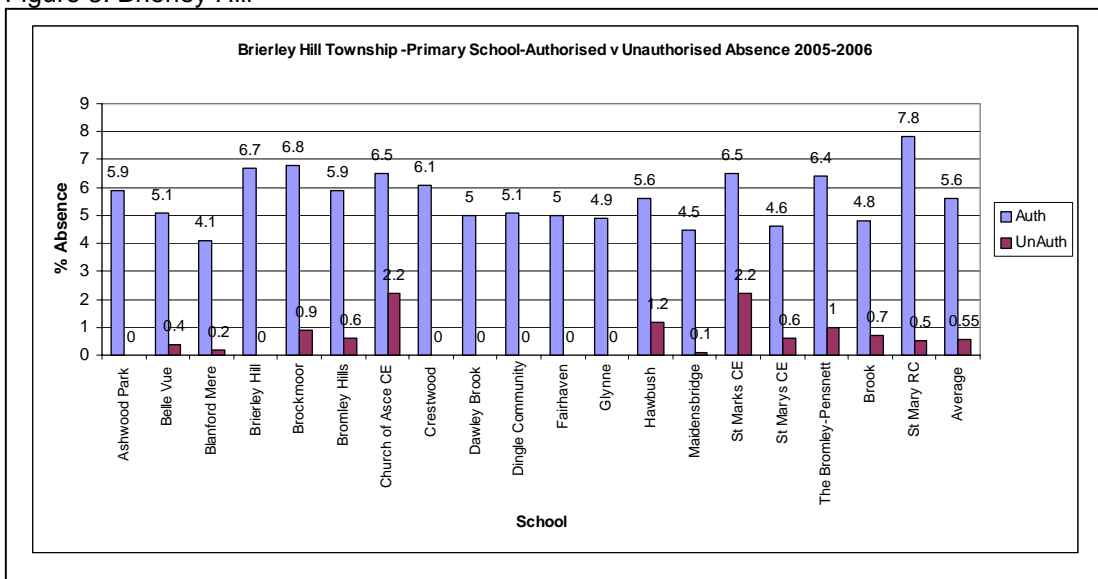


Figure 9: Stourbridge

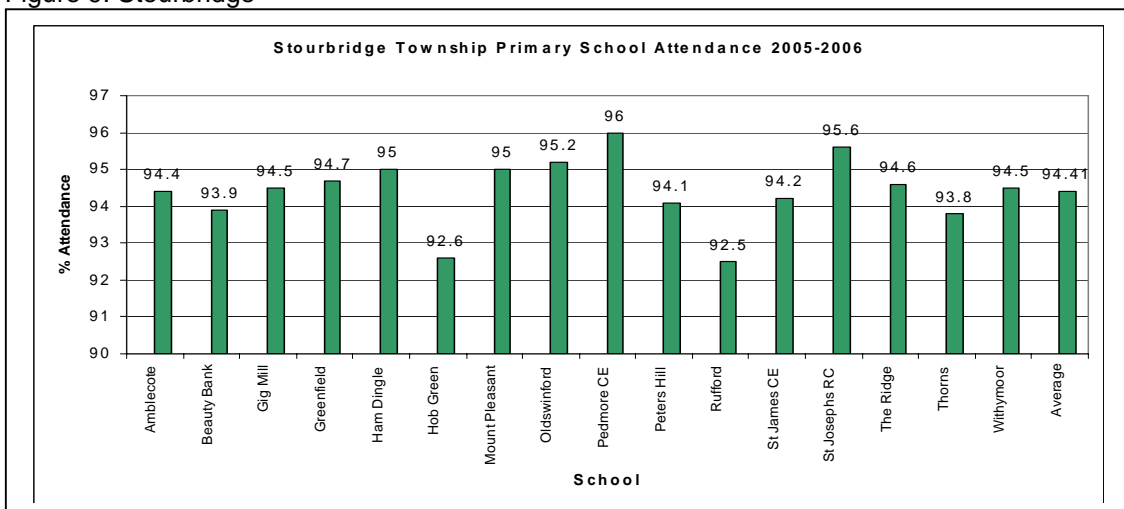


Figure 10: Stourbridge

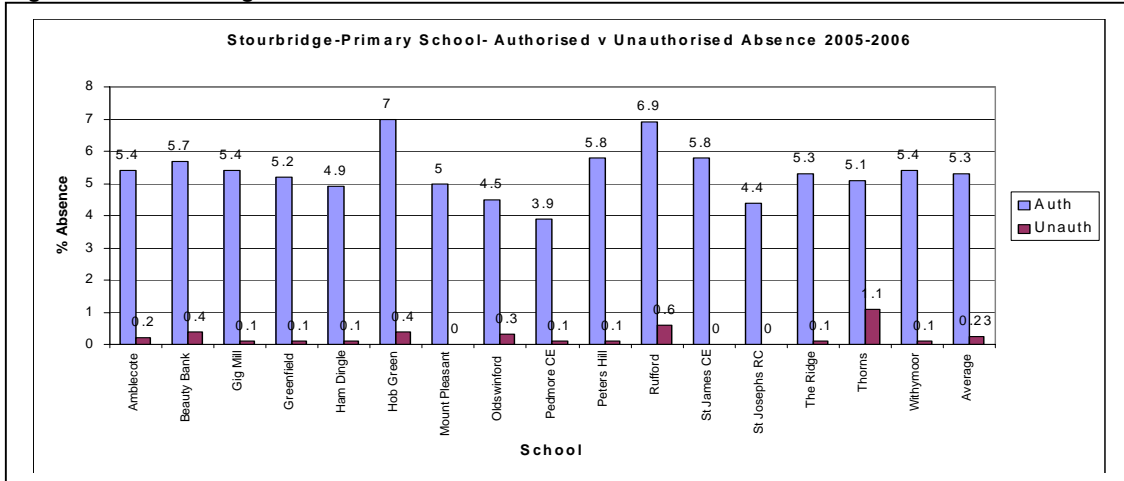


Figure 11: Halesowen

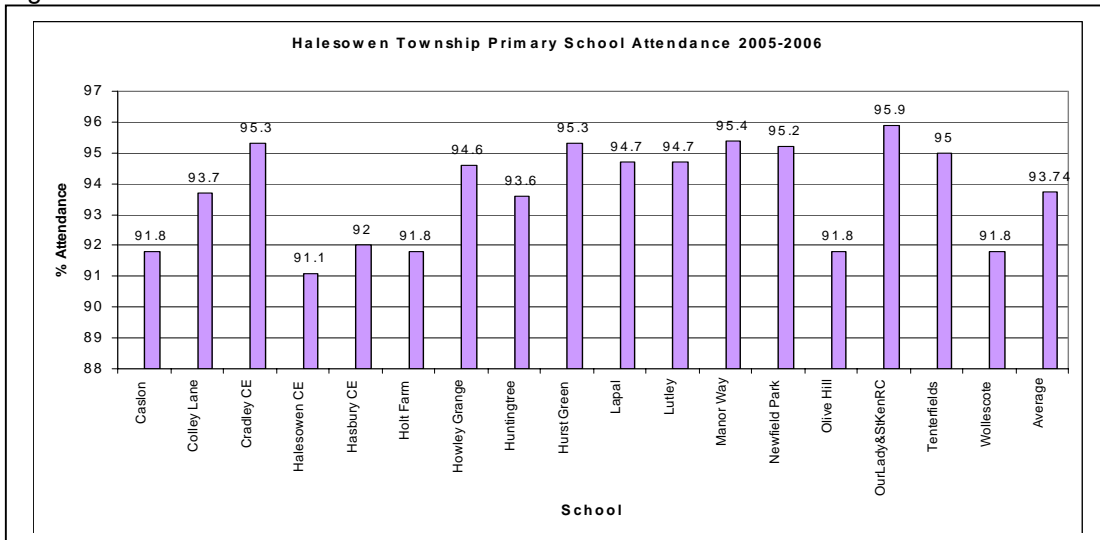


Figure 12: Halesowen

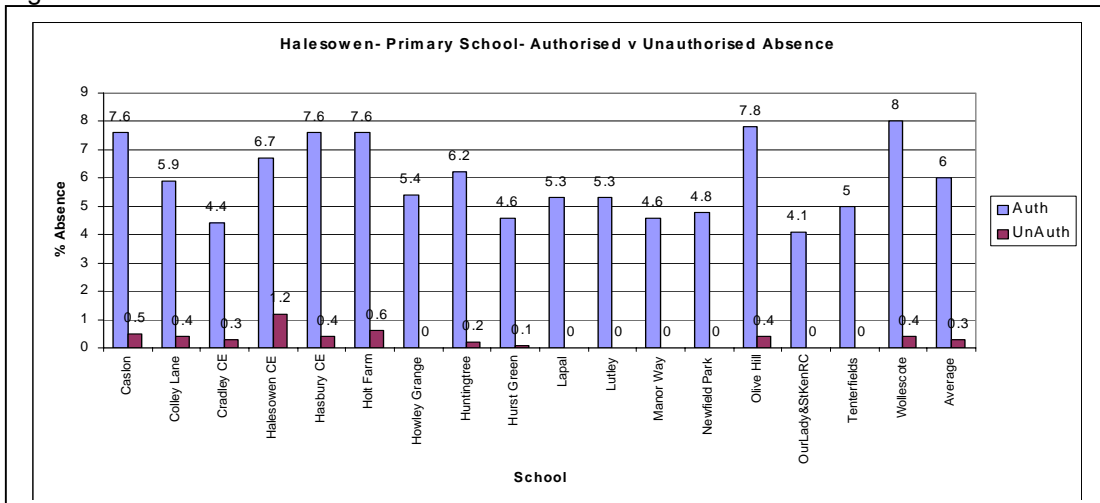




Figure 13: Special Schools

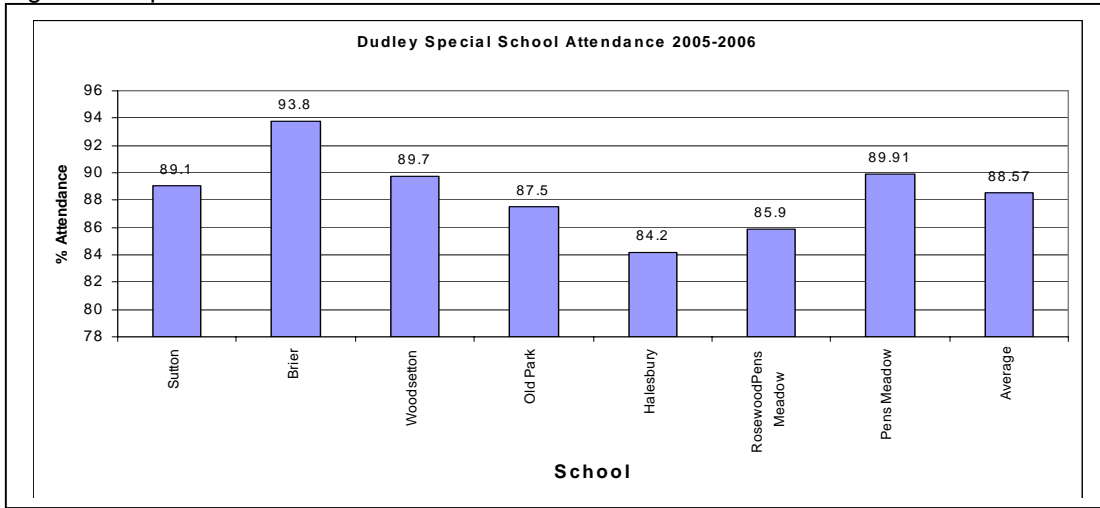


Figure 14: Special Schools

