

Children Not In School (CNIS)- Scrutiny Review

Select Committee 12th November
2025

Scope of the scrutiny

CNIS is the overarching term for any child who is not attending school full time and includes children in the following groups: Absentees, accessing alternative provision, reduced timetables, children missing education not on a school roll, children who educated other than at school and children who are electively home educated.

The termly DfE statutory COLLECT for CNIS focuses on children who are EHE and CME.

All reasons for absence from school including authorised absence, unauthorised absence

Pupils on reduced/part-time time tables

Pupils who are accessing Alternative Provision not in a registered school (whether arranged by the school or the local authority)

Pupils receiving Home and Hospital Provision

Pupils who are CME (Children Missing Education)

Children who are EHE (Electively Home Educated)

Children who have no school base and are EOTAS (Educated Other Than at School)

Children who move into the Borough and are waiting for a school place

School Absence

Pupils who are recorded as absentees

The latest DfE data for this academic year shows

Primary absence nationally at 4.56% compared to Stockton figure of 4.42%.

Secondary absence nationally at 7.04% compared to Stockton figure of 7.34%

In Stockton overtime primary levels of absence are better than national averages

Stockton secondary schools are poorer than national averages in particular levels of persistent absence. Last academic year the level of persistent absence improved it remained worse than the national average.

The main reason for absence is illness and this correlates with the main reason nationally for absence from school.

Pupils accessing part time education

Definition – The amount of education expected that a pupil accesses each week is usually based on 25 hours. There is no legal definition in England of exact hours for each age group.

- Any pupil accessing less hours than the length of day for the home school is accessing part time education.
- The DFE *Working Together to Improve Attendance* (2024) states that part time timetables must not be used to manage behaviour even with parental consent.
- Part time timetables are a temporary measure and should be carefully planned for the shortest time that allows before a pupil moves back into full time education.
- It should be reviewed very regularly and must have the consent of the parent.
- Part time education impacts on pupils' academic learning and progress and also on social relationships
- There are currently 164 children of compulsory school age on reduced timetables, 112 of these children have are recorded as having a SEND need.

Pupils accessing Non – School Alternative Provision (NSAP)

Definition - Alternative provision (AP) is education outside school, arranged by local authorities or schools, for pupils who do not attend mainstream school for reasons such as school exclusion, behaviour issues, school refusal, or short- or long-term illness.

- Non School Alternative Provision is a new term promoted by the Department of Education. It means any provision that does not meet the criteria or threshold to legally have to register as a school.
- There are costs when schools and local authorities commission Alternative Provision.
- The commissioners of AP must quality assure, review and monitor the provision to ensure it is safe and provides a quality education and outcomes which are appropriate to the pupil.

What do we do in Stockton to support pupils?

- Have a team in place focused on supporting pupils in AP including having education plans for pupils who are accessing NSAP
- Have half termly AP networks for schools and agencies and AP providers
- Have an AP framework of providers and oversight of AP across the Borough
- Quality assure AP providers

Data for Pupils accessing NSAP

- In Stockton the numbers of pupils accessing NSAP commissioned by schools has risen
- In Stockton the numbers of pupils accessing NSAP commissioned by the LA has risen
- Reasons for the rise in the use of NSAP include managing challenging behaviour and a continued rise in suspensions and exclusions
- The rise in the pupils accessing NSAP includes those from vulnerable groups
- There have been 34 pupils since September accessing NSAP commissioned by schools. There were 43 pupils in the last academic year.
- There has been an increase in queries regarding AP for primary aged pupils over the past year.

Pupils accessing Home and Hospital Tuition

Definition - where a child cannot attend school because of a physical or mental health need, and cannot access suitable full-time education, the local authority is responsible for arranging suitable alternative provision

- Children who are of compulsory school age who are on the roll of a school and are unable to attend due to a long-term medical condition or are recovering from surgery and cannot attend are taught predominately in the home by one of the 2 home and hospital teachers. Home and Hospital is a short term stay service until children are well enough to return to school
- Children are supported with enrichment as well as academic subjects English, Mathematics, and Science
- Currently 13 children are accessing home and hospital tuition.
- Children who are in school year 11 are supported through to take formal exams in their homes
- We have recently worked with the designated clinical officer from health to map out a procedure for schools and agencies to give clarity on referral routes to home and hospital.

Pupils who are Electively Home Educated

Definition - Elective home education is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire, instead of sending them to school full-time.

Children whose parents have made the decision to educate their child outside of the school system.

Parents take full responsibility for sourcing, and funding the child's education.

The local authority has a responsibility to ensure all children are accessing an education and therefore keeping a register, monitoring and tracking progress is carried out by the locality team caseworkers, the LA have a policy and procedure that aligns with DfE national guidance including legal measures to return children to school in cases where education is not meeting the needs of the child. Last academic year 42 children were returned to school via school attendance order statutory measures.

Each year the number of children electively home educated rises (EHE) currently 476 children registered as EHE.

13 children are open to early help services, 6 are child protection and there are 0 children in our care registered.

In Stockton the main reason parents gave last academic year for removing children to home educate was mental health.

An annual report is presented to HSSCB in September each year with the previous academic year details.

Pupils who are Children Missing Education

Definition -CME are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school

Children Missing Education (CME) are those children not on a school roll

Numbers in Stockton have decreased over the last 3 years this may be attributed to off roll audits carried out 3 weekly by the Locality Team and improved access to timely data by Stockton IMS and the DfE View Your Education Data (VYED)

This academic year 115 children have been referred from Stockton schools, to date 61 have been traced. 32 enquiries have been made from other local authorities and 22 of these have been tracked as in a Stockton school.

All referrals are actioned by the locality team, information is sought from a broad range of agencies and investigations are made within Stockton, Nationally and internationally when necessary.

Children who receive Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)

Definition -Education other than at school (EOTAS) means the education or special educational provision of children or young people outside of a formal educational setting.

- EOTAS is different to Elective Home Education
- EOTAS is provided for under Section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which gives local authorities the power to arrange special educational provision outside of a school if they are satisfied that it would be "inappropriate" for the provision to be made in a school or college setting.
- **Responsibility and Funding:** If EOTAS is agreed upon, the local authority remains legally responsible for securing and funding the provision.
- Monitoring – The Local Authority monitors the provision in the plan and it is reviewed annually
- In Stockton the number of pupils who strictly meet this criteria over the past few years has remained low and relatively stable

Pupils who have moved into the Borough and are awaiting a school place

There are 2 groups of pupils who this would apply to:

1. Pupils who move into the Borough who have an Education Health and Care Plan and may or may not require specialist education. For these pupils, the process of admission to a school place is carried out by the SEND service following statutory SEND procedures (for example in the last academic year 74 pupils moved into the Borough who had previously attended a specialist school or a mainstream school with a specialist base/provision attached). We have seen a rise over recent years of pupils moving into the Borough who have EHCPs.
2. Pupils who do not have an Education Health & Care Plan. These pupils would be admitted to school via the usual schools admissions process. The LA Admissions team generally aims to secure an offer of a place and notify the parents of the outcome of their application in writing within 10 school days, some can take up to 15 school days

Fair Access Process – Following on from an admissions request to a school some pupils may meet criteria to be eligible to be placed through a Fair Access process. In Stockton we have a process that was co produced with our schools.