

13 January 2022

Walsall Schools Overview Report

Ward(s) All

Portfolio: Councillor Chris Towe – Education & Skills

1. Aim

This report will give an overview of the schools in Walsall and the quality of provision, including the outcomes of latest OFSTED inspections. It will update members on current attendance figures, including the impact of Covid.

This report will give an overview of all projects currently in place to support school leaders at this time.

This report will also highlight the current Government consultation, in relation to School Improvement, that may impact on the Local Authority's role from April 2022.

2. Recommendations

The committee consider the Ofsted outcomes of Walsall's School and scrutiny considers the contents of this report and decides whether there should be further information or action.

The committee consider the impact of the proposed changes to the School Improvement Grant.

3. Report detail – know

3.1 School attendance

Source: The Department for Education publication 'Attendance in education and early year's settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic'.

This publication provides national and local authority level summary estimates from the Department for Education's daily education settings survey.

Attendance changes daily and we have used the attendance data for 7 and 14 October for the purpose of this report as the published DfE data was available for these dates where we could compare to the national figures for the same day.

National attendance in all state-funded schools was 90% on the 14 October 2021. This was down from 90.3% on the 7 October 2021.

National attendance in state-funded primary schools was 92.3% on the 14 October 2021, down from 93% on the 7 October.

Pupil attendance in secondary schools was 87.6% on the 14 October 2021. This remained unchanged from 87.6% on the 7 October 2021.

	7 October 2021		14 October 2021	
	National	Walsall	National	Walsall
All State-funded Schools	90.3%	89.5%	90%	90.3%
Primary Schools	93%	91.6%	92.3%	92%
Secondary Schools	87.6%	88.1%	87.6%	89.3%

Attendance in all Walsall state-funded schools was 90.3% on the 14 October 2021. This was up from 89.5% on the 7 October 2021 and is roughly in line with national

Pupil attendance in Walsall primary schools was 92% on the 14 October 2021 and again is roughly in line with national.

Attendance in Walsall secondary schools was above national at 89.3% compared to 87.6% nationally.

Pre Covid-19 Attendance Data

Source: Walsall local data based on attendance recorded on Capita One.

The additional Covid-19 sub codes that the DfE added for schools to use to record non-attendance related to coronavirus have been excluded from the current attendance report, these marks are not counted towards possible sessions.

The attendance report has been re-run for the first half term of this academic year compared to the first half term of the 2019/20 academic year.

	Walsall local data	
	2019/20 Half Term 1 Pre Covid	2021/22 Half Term 1
Primary Schools	96.2%	94.9%
Secondary Schools	95.2%	93.5%

Attendance in both primary and secondary schools is lower in the first half term of 2020/21 compared to the first half term in 2019/20 (pre-Covid).

Please note this is based on attendance held in Capita One only.

3.2 School Exclusions

Source: The Department for Education publication 'Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions in England' release for academic years 2016/2017 – 2019/2020 and academic year data for 2020/21 and 2021/22 taken from Capita One.

Suspensions

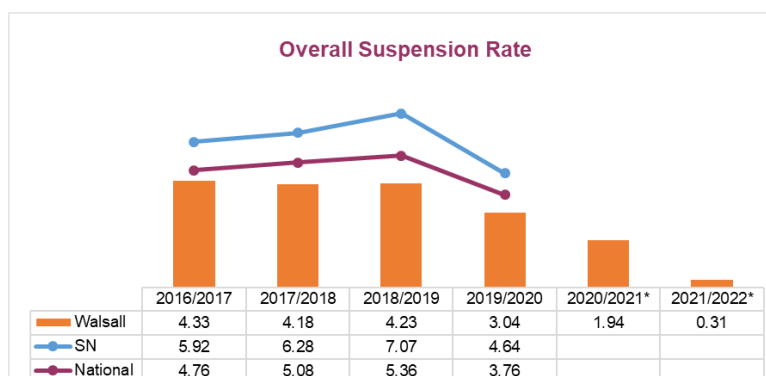
Suspensions, previously known as 'fixed period exclusions', refers to when a pupil who is excluded from a school for a set period of time.

The 2020/21 academic year was interrupted by the second national lockdown. Schools remained open for vulnerable children and children of key workers and all other children were learning remotely. While permanent exclusions and suspensions were still possible throughout the academic year, school closures have had a substantial effect on the number of permanent exclusions and suspensions and therefore caution should be taken when comparing figures across years.

Overall suspensions for Walsall during the first three years were fairly stable at 4.33, 4.18 and 4.23 percent however this decreased in 2019/20 to 3.04 percent before dropping significantly in 2020/21 to 1.94 percent. National rates were slightly higher than Walsall for each of the first four years showing a small upward trend during the first three years before a drop in 2019/20.

Statistical neighbours also followed the national trend increasing year on year for the first three years before dropping in 2019/20 however at a much higher rate than Walsall. There is no published data for 2020/21 or 2021/22 for either statistical neighbours or national.

The decreases in 2019/20 and 2020/21 were expected and driven by the effects of the national lockdowns. Data for 2021/22 covers the months of September and October, this currently shows a decrease to 0.31.

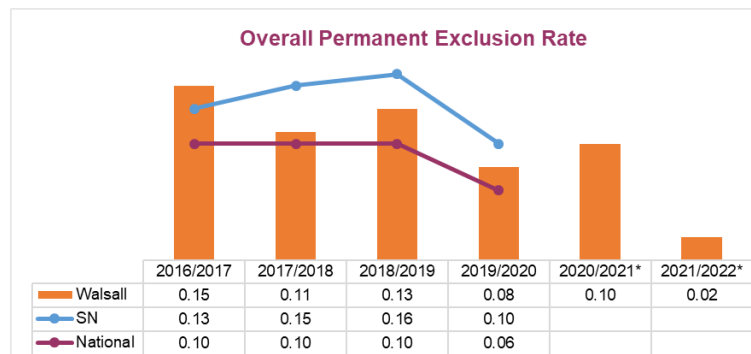


* Unpublished data, source Capita One.

Permanent Exclusions

Overall permanent exclusions for Walsall for the first three years were fairly stable at 0.15, 0.11 and 0.13 percent dropping to 0.08 in 2019/20 before increasing slightly to 0.10 in 2020/21. Both national and statistical neighbours were following the same trend and at a very similar level to Walsall between 2016/17 and 2019/20; however, there is no published data for 2020/21 or 2021/22.

The decreases in 2019/20 and 2020/21 were expected and driven by the effects of the national lockdowns. Data for 2021/22 covers the months of September and October, this currently shows a decrease to 0.02.



* Unpublished data, source Capita One.

3.3 COVID Impact

The following is a snapshot of Covid impact in schools for 22 November 2021

All Voluntarily Reported School Cases over 7 days

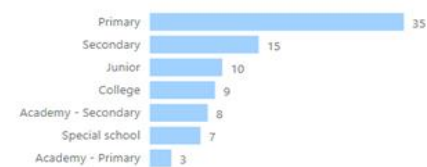
Date Range

15/11/2021 21/11/2021

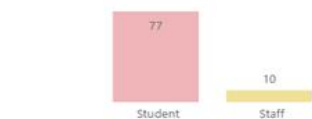
87

Total Reported Cases

School Cases by School Type



School Cases by Role



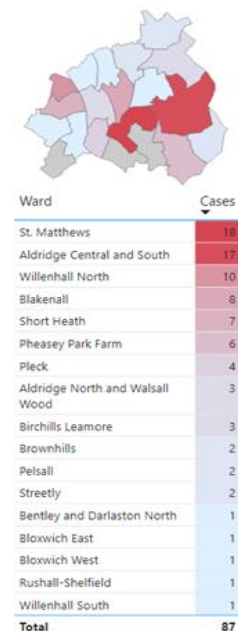
Positive School Cases by Notification Date



School Cases by School

Type	School Name	Staff	Student	Total
Secondary	St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College	0	15	15
Primary	St Mary's The Mount Catholic Primary School	0	13	13
Junior	New Invention Junior School	0	8	8
College	Walsall College	0	6	6
Academy - Secondary	Barr Beacon School	0	5	5
Primary	Pool Hayes Primary	0	5	5
Primary	Hillary Primary School	1	3	4
Special school	Mary Elliot School (Special)	1	2	3
College	University of Wolverhampton	1	2	3
Primary	Beacon Primary School	2	0	2
Primary	Blackwood School	1	1	2
Junior	Blakenall Heath Junior School	2	0	2
Academy - Secondary	Blue Coat Church of England Academy	0	2	2
Special school	Old Hall School (Special)	0	2	2
Primary	Walsall Wood School	0	2	2
Primary	Watling Street Primary School	0	2	2
Primary	Whetstone Field Primary School	0	2	2
Academy - Primary	All Saints National Academy	0	1	1
Special school	Oakwood School (Special)	1	0	1
Academy - Primary	Pheasey Park Farm Primary School	0	1	1
Primary	Rushall Primary School	0	1	1
Academy - Primary	Ryders Hayes School	0	1	1
Primary	St Giles Church of England Primary School	0	1	1
Primary	St Michael's Church of England C Primary	0	1	1
Special school	The Jane Lane School - A College for Cognition (Special)	1	0	1
Academy - Secondary	Walsall Academy	0	1	1
Total		10	77	87

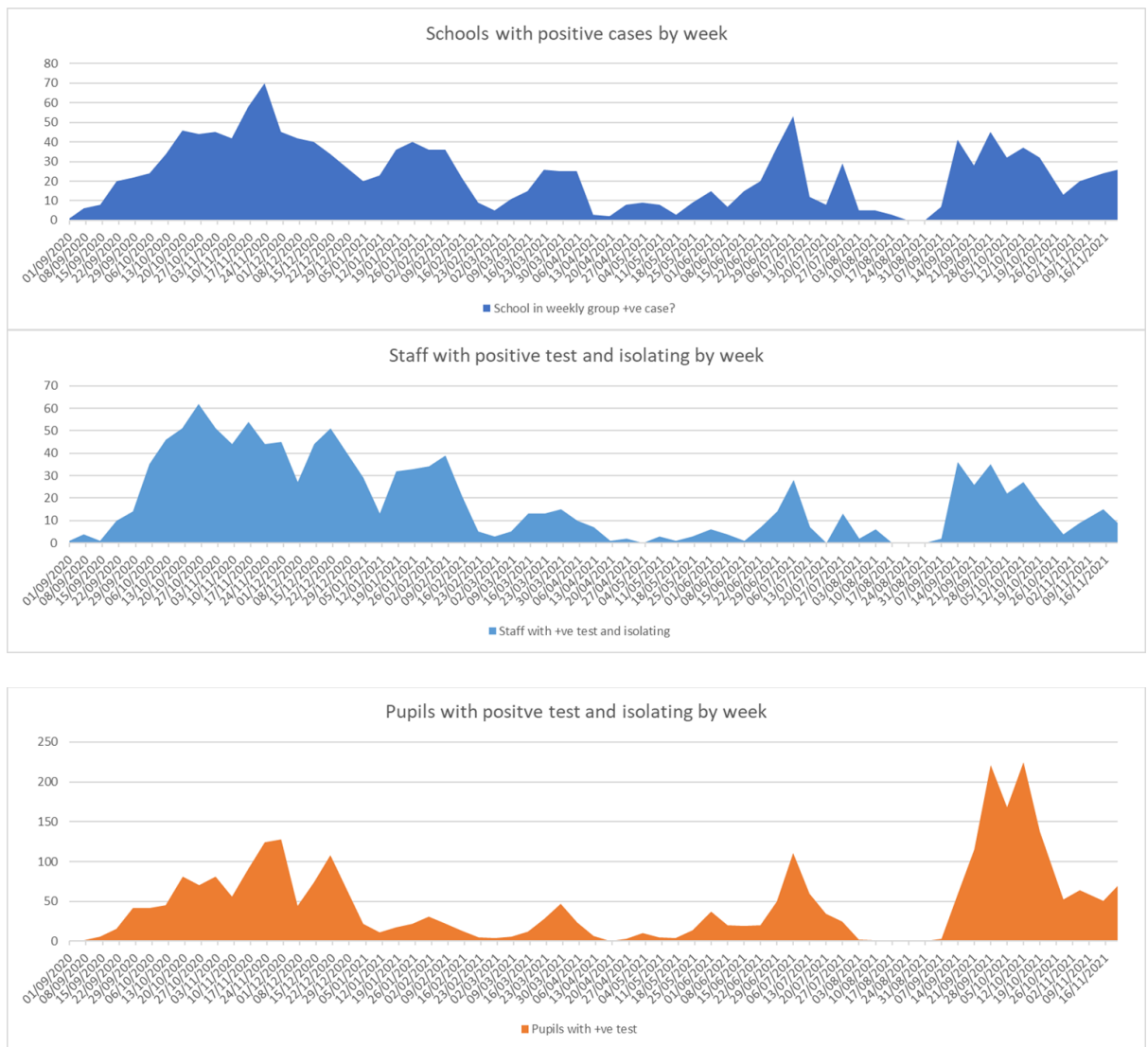
School Cases by Ward (School Location)



In school settings

- The number of staff with positive Covid tests has decreased this week compared with last week by 40% from 15 to 6.
- The number of pupils with positive Covid tests has increased this week compared with last week by 35% from 51 to 69.
- The number of staff isolating has stayed the same this week compared with last week at 0.
- The number of pupils isolating has also stayed the same this week compared with last week at 0.
- The number of settings has increased this week compared with last week by 8% from 24 to 26.

There were no early years settings notifying cases



3.4 School Improvement and Ofsted Outcomes:

The Local Authority adheres to the statutory guidance for local authorities given by the Department for Education, on behalf of the Secretary of State. Section 72 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a statutory duty on all local authorities in England, in exercising their functions in respect of maintained schools causing concern, to have regard to any guidance given from time to time, by the Secretary of State.

All of our schools and academies are categorised using a Red, Amber and Green (RAG) rated system according to the hard and soft data we hold. Our Schools Causing Concern (SCC) matrix, which we use for our categorisation process is extensive and it ensures that pupil outcomes, safeguarding and support for our most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners is at the heart of our process. Our matrix also takes into account governance arrangements, finance, attendance and a whole host of other key factors which contribute to the effective leadership of a school.

Our monitoring, support and challenge of schools is proportional to the categorisation of each individual setting. A school categorised as RED would receive intensive support and challenge compared to that of AMBER and GREEN

schools. Our school improvement consultants have continued to support all maintained settings throughout the pandemic. This has mainly been via remote working however, they have now returned to face to face visits.

The table below shows the current SCC rag ratings for our schools. These have been reviewed and updated for 2021/22 and a letter sent to all schools informing them of the categorisation.

As the table shows there has been a positive movement with less schools in our RED status and more in our GREEN.

SCC categorisation by Phase

	Green			Amber			Red		
	18/19	19/20	20/21	18/19	19/20	20/21	18/19	19/20	20/21
Nursery	8	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Primary	39	55	57	28	20	22	18	10	6
Secondary	5	8	9	8	7	9	5	3	0
All Though	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Special	2	2	2	1	1	2	4	4	3
PRU	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0

Ofsted Data Tables:

Below is the table of percentage of Good or Better Schools by School. This includes all current published reports as of 30th November 2021.

Overall % Good or Better Schools	Walsall	National
Overall effectiveness	81.8	86.5
Primary - Overall	85.9	87.9
Secondary - Overall	63.2	76.7
LA Maintained - Overall	89.2	91.8
Academy Converters - Overall	73.7	88.8
Academy Sponsor Led - Overall	57.9	55.1
LA Maintained - Primary	90.8	91.9
Academy Converters - Primary	88.9	89.9
Academy Sponsor Led - Primary	54.5	59.5
LA Maintained - Secondary	100.0	84.0
Academy Converters - Secondary	55.6	84.4
Academy Sponsor Led - Secondary	62.5	58.6
Walsall Rank - October 2021	121/152	

% By School - Published Ofsted reports by the type of Establishment

Judgement: Overall effectiveness

Overall effectiveness									
Nov-21		Good / Better	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Total Inspections	No Data	Total Schools
Nursery LA		100% (8)	100% (8)	-	-	-	8	0	8
Primary	LA Maintained	90.8% (59)	18.5% (12)	72.3% (47)	9.2% (6)	-	65	0	65
	Academy Converters	88.9% (8)	11.1% (1)	77.8% (7)	11.1% (1)	-	9	0	9
	Academy Sponsor Led	54.5% (6)	-	54.5% (6)	27.3% (3)	18.2% (2)	11	0	11
	Academies Overall	70% (14)	5% (1)	65% (13)	20% (4)	10% (2)	20	0	20
	Primary Overall	85.9% (73)	15.3% (13)	70.6% (60)	11.8% (10)	2.4% (2)	85	0	85
Secondary	LA Maintained	100% (2)	-	100% (2)	-	-	2	0	2
	Academy Converters	55.6% (5)	33.3% (3)	22.2% (2)	44.4% (4)	-	9	0	9
	Academy Sponsor Led	62.5% (5)	-	62.5% (5)	37.5% (3)	-	8	0	8
	Academies Overall	58.8% (10)	17.6% (3)	41.2% (7)	41.2% (7)	0% (0)	17	0	17
	Secondary Overall	63.2% (12)	15.8% (3)	47.4% (9)	36.8% (7)	-	19	0	19
Special	LA Maintained	66.7% (4)	33.3% (2)	33.3% (2)	33.3% (2)	-	6	0	6
	Academy Converters	100% (1)	-	100% (1)	-	-	1	0	1
	Special Overall	71.4% (5)	28.6% (2)	42.9% (3)	28.6% (2)	-	7	0	7
Pru	LA Maintained	50% (1)	-	50% (1)	50% (1)	-	2	0	2
	Academy Sponsor Led	-% (0)	-% (0)	-% (0)	-% (0)	-% (0)	0	1	1
	Pru Overall	50% (1)	-	50% (1)	50% (1)	-	2	1	3
Overall	LA Maintained	89.2% (74)	26.5% (22)	62.7% (52)	10.8% (9)	-	83	0	83
	Academy Converters	73.7% (14)	21.1% (4)	52.6% (10)	26.3% (5)	-	19	0	19
	Academy Sponsor Led	57.9% (11)	-	57.9% (11)	31.6% (6)	10.5% (2)	19	1	20
All Schools		81.8% (99)	21.5% (26)	60.3% (73)	16.5% (20)	1.7% (2)	121	1	122

Attached as Appendix 1 is an overview of all the projects currently running in our schools to ensure high quality provision, as requested by the Committee.

Government Consultation on School Improvement Grant

The Department for Education (DfE) ran a consultation from 29 October 2021 to 26 November 2021, seeking views on proposals to reform how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded.

They stated the local authority role in school improvement has changed significantly in recent years, with the growth of school-led approaches putting school improvement in the hands of the strongest schools and school leaders. Given these changes in the respective roles and responsibilities of different actors in the school system, they are consulting on proposals to reform how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded.

Their proposal is to:

- Remove the School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant ('the Grant'), which is currently allocated to local authorities to support school improvement activities; and
- Make provisions within the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations for the financial year (FY) 2022-23 to allow local authorities to fund

all of their school improvement activity (including all core school improvement activities) via de-delegation from schools' budget shares.

Councils' school improvement functions and how they are currently funded

Councils' school improvement activity can be divided into 'core improvement activities' and 'additional improvement services' (which councils may opt to provide to maintained schools with their agreement and on a traded basis)

Core improvement activities

Since 2017, the Grant has been provided to support councils to fulfil their core improvement activities, with the amount received by each council proportionate to the number of maintained schools in their area.

These core improvement activities are set out in Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) and on page 36 of our Schools Causing Concern guidance. Part 4 of the 2006 Act provides councils with statutory powers to warn and intervene in schools causing concern.

The Schools Causing Concern guidance sets out expectations that councils should:

- Understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point to identify any that are underperforming, while working with them to explore ways to support progress;
- Work closely with the relevant Regional School Commissioner (RSC), diocese and other local partners to ensure schools receive the support they need to improve;
- Where underperformance has been recognised in a maintained school, proactively work with the relevant RSC, combining local and regional expertise to ensure the right approach, including sending warning notices and using intervention powers where this will improve leadership and standards; and
- Encourage good and outstanding maintained schools to take responsibility for their own improvement; support other schools; and enable other schools to access the support they need to improve.

The DfE recently implemented changes to ensure that, in delivering these core improvement activities, councils receiving this grant are supporting educational recovery from the pandemic, and to also adjust the overall value of the Grant to reflect the reduced number of schools for which councils are now responsible.

With an average uplift in next year's provisional core school funding allocations of 3.2%, as the beneficiaries of improvement support from councils, DfE believe it is right that they contribute to the cost of such support but, in turn, they should have greater influence over the activity undertaken.

This consultation seeks views on the impact of both these proposals. In addition, this consultation asks how we can update government guidance to support these changes

Timeline

Subject to the outcome of this consultation, the proposed timeline would be to make these changes to the School and Early Years Finance Regulations for FY 2022-23, allowing for a phased removal of the Grant over the course of FY 2022-23 – at the end of which it would be expected that all council school improvement activity, including core improvement activities, will be funded via de-delegation, with any non-statutory services which councils choose to continue to offer either provided on a traded basis or also funded through de-delegation.

Timeframe

October 2021

Consultation launched and closes 26 November 2021

December 2021 / early January 2022

Government publishes its response to the consultation, confirming its intentions.

December 2021 / January 2021

Councils agree de-delegation for FY 2022-23 with their schools forums.

Provisions made within the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations allowing councils to de-delegate to fund all improvement activity, including core improvement activities, from FY 2022-23 onward.

Amendments made to relevant government guidance relating to council school improvement activity.

April 2022

The Grant is reduced by 50% on a per school basis.

April 2023

The Grant is removed entirely.

The consultation document can be found here:

[Consultation - Reforming how local authorities' school improvement functions are funded \(education.gov.uk\)](#)

Financial information

The Dedicated Schools Grant is paid in support of the local authority's schools budget. It is the main source of income for the schools budget. Local authorities

are responsible for determining the split of the grant between central expenditure and the individual schools budget (ISB) in conjunction with local schools forums. Total confirmed School Improvement Grant for 2021/22 is £274,990.

This grant is now ring fenced to support the Local Authority's School Improvement functions.

The consultation proposes to reduce the grant by 50% in 2022/23 to c. £137,500 and then remove the grant entirely from 2023/24.

Full finance reports are on the forward plan for Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reducing Inequalities

It is important for the Council's strategic aims that the children and young people of Walsall are able to access the right provision to meet their needs in order to achieve the appropriate qualifications, progressing to employment and / or training and to make a positive contribution within in the future.

The services and actions in this report ensure access to suitable, high quality school places that are attractive to parents and young people, which meet their needs and ensure quality provision that improves educational outcomes.

4. Decide

The Committee may decide to note the current OFSTED position.

The Committee may decide to request further information as pertains to proposed changes to School Improvement Grant.

The Committee may decide to request further information, or assurance, in respect of the Schools Causing Concern process.

5. Respond

Any recommendations made by the Committee will be responded to by the appropriate service area.

School outcomes will be monitored through the Schools Causing Concern Group.

6. Review

The actions and outcomes within this report are under constant monitoring and assessment via the Capital Board and Schools Causing Concern Group. They are also externally reviewed via HMI termly meetings and Annual Conversation.

Author

Sharon Kelly
Director Access and Inclusion
✉ Sharon.Kelly@walsall.gov.uk