

Document Name	Cornfields School Attendance Report September 2019 – July 2020
Date Document Produced	August 2020
Document Requester	Mary McKeeman
Purpose of Document	To scrutinise attendance levels at Cornfields School for academic year 2019/20
Document Author	EJ Analytical Services
Comments	Data sourced from the school attendance registers, and whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, data may be subject to change.

Background

Cornfields School first opened for pupils on the 23rd April 2019. Many of the students who attend Cornfields School have very complex educational and pastoral needs. It is also quite common for students to have dis-engaged with and failed to regularly attend educational establishments prior to arrival at Cornfields. Owing to the complexities of the behavioural and educational needs of the pupils on roll at Cornfields, as well as the comparatively small number of pupils on roll versus other schools, it would be inadvisable to compare Cornfields' attendance rates to those of the national school averages. It would neither be an appropriate nor fair comparison. Even comparing Cornfields to itself year on year will be skewed by the small population of the school. Possibly, once a full academic year has passed with a full complement of students, year on year comparisons could be made, however these should be treated with caution. This is owing to each child having complex needs which could affect attendance rates, combined with each child accounting for a large percentage of the total attendance rate.

Despite these challenges, the school aims to ensure it can achieve the highest level of attendance for each student. The school's attendance policy (available through the school website) states the school aims to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence

Given the small population and the various reasons why a child on roll at Cornfields School may not be able to attend school, the school is required to be innovative and persistent in its approach to improving attendance rates and encouraging frequently absent pupils to attend the school. For example, home visits are conducted on occasions where a child has unexpectedly failed to attend school. Partner agencies have also been involved in providing activities/engagement with pupils where appropriate, so even if the pupil cannot be at school they are in receipt of educational/emotional support.

This report has been produced to give an overview of attendance for the academic year 2019/20.

COVID-19 Impact on Attendance

On 18th March 2020, the UK Government declared that schools in England would be closed to the majority of pupils, with effect from the end of the day on Friday 20th March 2020, in response to the effort to reduce the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). However, schools were also advised that they should remain open for the children of keyworker households, as well as for vulnerable pupils. As a result, Cornfields has remained open for its pupils to attend (with an effort to maintain distancing and hygiene efforts at the school for those in attendance).

In the latter part of May 2020 the Prime Minister confirmed that schools, colleges and nurseries across England were on track to reopen on 1st June. Primary schools would take back children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 classes. Secondary schools would also be offering face to face contact for Year 10 and Year 12 students from 15th June onwards, to help prepare for exams the following year.

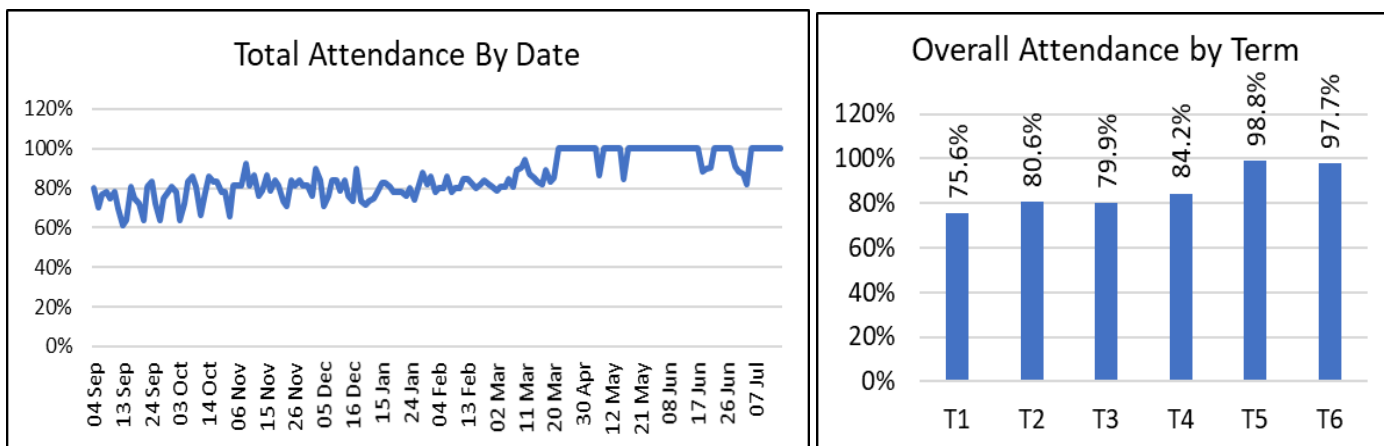
Cornfields School remained open for vulnerable children and children of keyworkers since lockdown started, however COVID-19 understandably had an impact on attendance levels at the school. Parents/carers may have chosen to remove their child from school whilst community transmission of COVID-19 was occurring. The catchment area for pupils attending Cornfields is very wide compared to standard stream schools, and some parents/carers may not have been able to make the journey under COVID restrictions.

As at the time of writing, schools are instructed to fully reopen for the start of academic year 2020/21, albeit whilst still adhering to COVID policies in terms of distancing, etc. Pupils and staff will also be subject to isolation guidance should they develop symptoms or live with someone who contracts COVID. Where symptoms are present, people are encouraged to take a COVID test, which could confirm a diagnosis and start the track and trace process. Track and trace processes may also result in absences from the school, should a pupil/member of staff have been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID.

Attendance Overview

Attendance remains relatively stable at Cornfields, despite the comparatively small register size and pupils leaving and joining part way through the academic year. A total of 40 pupils have been on the school register at any point during 2019/20. The school remains small owing to the complexity of behavioural and educational needs of registered pupils. Two pupils were added to the school roll during term six.

During academic year 2019/20 the highest attendance rate was seen for term five. Term one demonstrated the lowest attendance rate for the year (though this would have been skewed by the lower volume of pupils on roll at the time). Terms five and six will be undoubtedly be skewed by the COVID-19 impact. Many pupils were coded as “Y – Unable to Attend Due to Exceptional Circumstances”. This is classed as an administrative code and is taken out of the calculation for the attendance rates. This code will continue to be used until such times as schools are able to be opened in a similar way to prior to COVID.



% Present	Term						Total
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	
Rowling	97.6%	81.0%	92.2%	98.6%	97.1%	100.0%	92.1%
Tolkien	87.4%	89.9%	81.5%	87.7%	100.0%	100.0%	88.7%
Morpurgo	65.7%	96.0%	79.8%	81.3%	97.3%	89.3%	81.8%
Blyton	66.7%	72.2%	84.8%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	81.1%
Orwell	61.9%	66.3%	67.0%	69.1%	100.0%	100.0%	70.8%
Total	75.6%	80.6%	79.9%	84.2%	98.8%	97.7%	82.8%

Overall attendance for academic year 2019/20 stood at 82.8%, with the highest attendance being achieved by the Rowling tutor group.

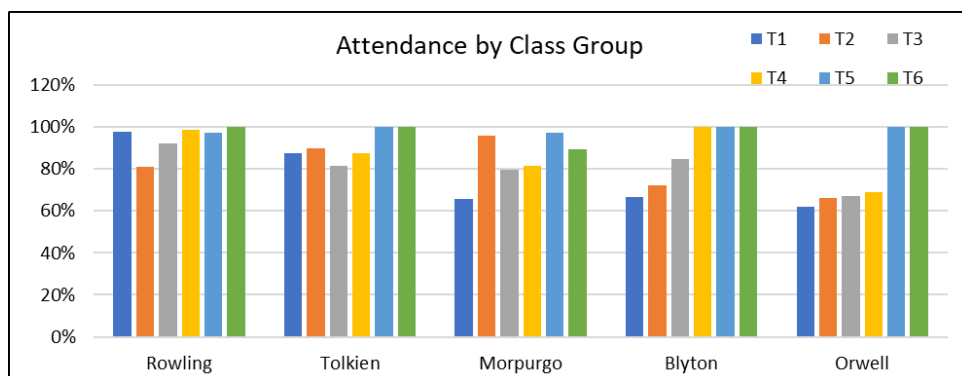
Attendance by Pupil

Several pupils have a 100% attendance rate for the academic year (albeit only one of those pupils was on roll at the start of the academic year). Two of the lowest attenders left Cornfields after term one. Two of the remaining poorest attenders have shown under 30% attendance rates. If these two pupils were omitted from the figures, overall attendance for the year would have risen from 82.8% to 87.5%.

Attendance by Class Group

Class size varies at Cornfields owing to the small register and complex cohorts of pupils. Please note that information in this section is based on the CURRENT class for each pupil (pupils can change class mid-academic year). Orwell had consistently shown the lowest rate of attendance across the first four terms of the academic year but has demonstrated similar rates to other classes during the most recent terms. Two of the lowest attending pupils are in the Orwell class group. Rates of attendance increased each term for Blyton to term four and remain stable for the last three terms.

The impact of COVID means that all classes are demonstrating similar levels of attendance for terms five and six, owing to many pupils being excluded from attendance rates after being coded as “Y – Unable to Attend Due to Exceptional Circumstances”. Thirty-four pupils received this code at some point during term six, highlighting the difficulty in getting students to attend school during the pandemic.



Breakdown of Attendance Codes

Usually for these reports a breakdown of marks would be shown that would exclude all administrative codes. For this version of the report, all codes are included, apart from marks relating to pupils not on the register, and full or partial school closures. This is to show the high proportion of marks that taken by the Y code in the last two terms of the year as a result of the COVID impact. Around three quarters of marks were for students who were unable to attend for exceptional reasons during terms five and six. This is compared to no marks for the first three terms.

% Mark	Term						Total
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	
Present in school	60.6%	68.1%	69.2%	70.6%	24.7%	24.0%	48.6%
Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	75.0%	75.5%	33.1%
Leave of absence authorised by the school	17.7%	11.6%	11.8%	8.3%	0.0%	0.5%	7.2%
Off-Site educational activity	10.2%	7.7%	8.2%	8.8%	0.0%	0.0%	4.9%
Absent from school without authorisation	2.8%	3.7%	3.6%	3.9%	0.0%	0.1%	2.0%
Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	0.7%	2.3%	2.4%	2.1%	0.3%	0.0%	1.1%
Educational visit or trip	2.6%	4.8%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Dual Registered - at another educational establishment	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Arrived in school after registration closed	0.3%	0.8%	1.2%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Medical or dental appointments	0.3%	0.8%	1.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Work experience	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Excluded but no alternative provision made	1.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Holiday authorised by the school	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Late arrival before the register has closed	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Unauthorised absences were nil or very near to nil for the most recent two terms, owing to the COVID related changes. The proportion of total marks taken by unauthorised absences was at its highest-level during term four. Twelve pupils have received unauthorised absence marks during the year, four of whom were from Orwell class. Most of the unauthorised absences were attributed to one pupil. Term four saw a decreased volume of unauthorised absences and a smaller number of pupils receiving these marks, versus term three. Term five saw no unauthorised absent marks, and term six only saw two such marks, both relating to the same pupil.

Late Marks

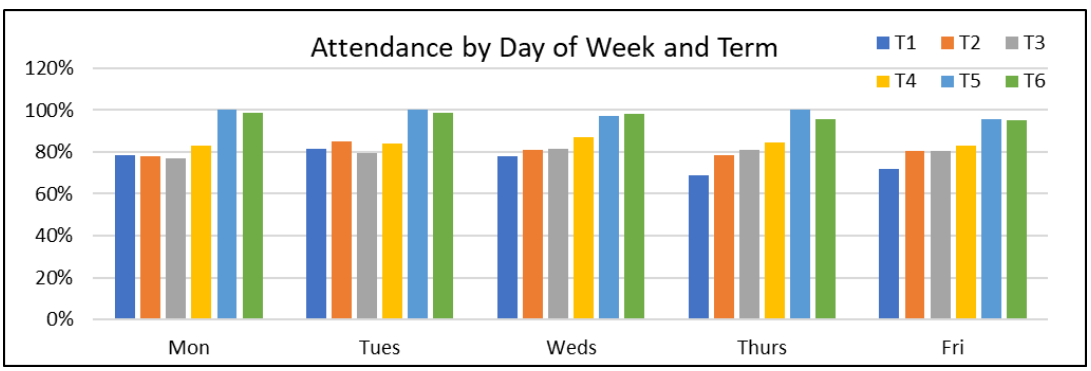
Lateness is counted as an attendance when it occurs before the register has closed, and an absence if it occurs after the register has closed. Cornfields strives to limit all late arrivals to school, as they risk attendance rates and could potentially delay the start of lessons or disrupt lessons that have already started. When pupils are late to Cornfields, they generally arrive after the register has closed and lower the possible attendance rates for the school. The only late marks in terms three and four were contributed by one pupil at the school. No late marks were received for the last two terms of the year, likely owing to the COVID changes to school attendance.

Attendance by Day of Week and Session of the Day

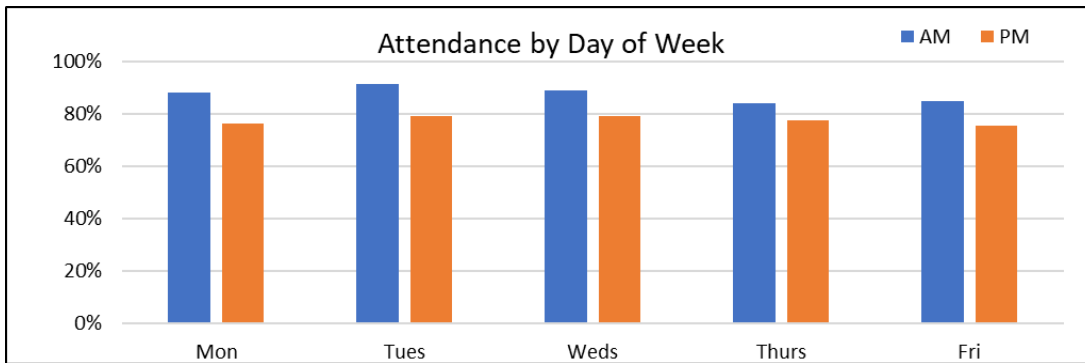
Attendance rates do not significantly differ for each day of the school week. Terms five and six are skewed by the small number of students attending the school in that attendance rates are higher, however there is still little variation between days of the week.

% Present	Term						Total
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	
Mon	78.2%	77.8%	77.1%	82.9%	100.0%	98.6%	82.6%
Tues	81.5%	85.0%	79.3%	84.0%	100.0%	98.7%	85.7%
Weds	78.0%	81.1%	81.5%	87.1%	97.1%	98.2%	84.3%
Thurs	69.1%	78.5%	80.8%	84.3%	100.0%	95.7%	81.0%
Fri	72.0%	80.7%	80.3%	82.8%	95.8%	94.9%	80.4%
Total	75.6%	80.6%	79.9%	84.2%	98.8%	97.7%	82.8%

Attendance per day varies from a minimum of 80.4% to a maximum of 85.7% for the six terms combined.



Attendance rates are consistently higher for morning sessions in comparison to afternoon sessions. Many leave of absences authorised by the school occur in the afternoon sessions, as well off-site educational activities and educational trips. These account for around 11% of marks in morning sessions compared to around 30% of marks in the afternoon sessions. Unauthorised absences as a percentage of marks are similar for morning and afternoon sessions.



% Mark	Term		
	AM	PM	Total
Mark Description			
Authorised Absence	8.4%	19.4%	13.7%
Leave of absence authorised by the school	5.5%	16.6%	10.8%
Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%
Medical or dental appointments	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%
Excluded but no alternative provision made	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Holiday authorised by the school	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Present	87.5%	77.5%	82.7%
Present in school	81.6%	64.0%	73.2%
Off-Site educational activity	4.9%	10.2%	7.4%
Educational visit or trip	0.6%	2.7%	1.6%
Work experience	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
Late arrival before the register has closed	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Unauthorised Absence	4.1%	3.1%	3.6%
Absent from school without authorisation	2.9%	3.1%	3.0%
Arrived in school after registration closed	1.2%	0.0%	0.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Attendance by Care Status

The school has had fourteen students who were either of a looked after (LAC), post adopted or under special guardianship order (SGO) status. The levels of attendance for these cohorts of students are higher than those of non-LAC or post adopted students. It is important to note, however that the percentage attendance rates will be skewed by the low volume of pupils in each cohort.

% Present	Term						Total
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	
LAC Status							
Neither LAC nor Post Adopted	66.1%	67.6%	71.7%	77.3%	100.0%	100.0%	75.3%
LAC	84.4%	94.6%	93.0%	92.8%	97.9%	91.7%	91.6%
Post Adopted	97.6%	96.8%	94.6%	100.0%	96.3%	100.0%	97.4%
SGO						100.0%	100.0%
Total	75.6%	80.6%	79.9%	84.2%	98.8%	97.7%	82.8%

Conclusions

The attendance at Cornfields during academic year was 82.8%. Attendance rates were lowest in term one.

For future years, attendance rates should not be compared to 2019/20 as the school years will not be a fair like-for-like comparison in light of the impact of COVID on schooling. As at the time of writing there are plans for a return to schools in England for the academic year 2020/21, however many parents and carers may choose to keep their children at home, given that community transmission is still possible. Schools are also required to adhere to guidelines to minimise transmission in terms of social distancing, sharing of resources, etc. This may mean it is not possible for all students to be on site all day, every day. The UK Government's Test and Trace service implemented at the end of May means that those who have had contact with someone who has recently tested positive for COVID will be advised to isolate. This will impact on both students and teachers should they receive this instruction. The school will need to clarify if it will use the attendance code "Y" for absences for this reason. Anyone with symptoms of COVID is encouraged to be tested for the virus and this will bring about the Test and Trace process. It is therefore uncertain as to how many students and even staff the school can expect to see attend during the next academic year.