

Volume one

**A qualitative exploration of the use and implementation of
the ATTEND Framework within schools.**

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degree of Applied Educational and Child Psychology
Doctorate**

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Abstract

The prevalence and recent increase in absenteeism is widely discussed in the literature. The ATTEND Framework (Tobias, 2021) is a tool that has been developed to support with identifying barriers to attendance that links with recommended strategies to support. This thesis investigates the usefulness of the ATTEND Framework from the perspectives of those that have completed it. Adopting a multiple case study design, the parents and school staff across three case studies were included in this research. Through the use of qualitative methods, semi-structured interviews were used to gain an understanding of the experiences of each individual both during and after the completion of the framework. Each case study adopted a slightly different approach to completion and each reported varying degrees of success. The findings of this research indicate that the ATTEND Framework is a useful tool for identifying barriers to attendance and developing suitable strategies to support. However, the need for this to be underpinned by good relationships and a collaborative approach is highlighted as being essential for its success. In addition, early use of the framework was also highlighted as a factor for the success of its implementation.

Dedication

Dad,

You left before I could finish this chapter, but your strength and belief always remained.

This one is for you

-X-

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List of Acronyms

BPS	British Psychological Society
CYP	Children and Young People
DfE	Department for Education
EBSNA	Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance
EP	Educational Psychologist
EEF	Education Endowment Foundation
LA	Local Authority
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SEMH	Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist

Chapter 1: Introduction and overview

1.1 Background to Research

This research has been conducted to explore the usefulness of the ATTEND Framework (Tobias, 2021) for supporting children and young people (CYP) who are experiencing barriers to attendance. The ATTEND Framework is a resource which was created within the EPS at Brighton and Hove's local authority (LA) to support with identifying barriers to attendance. The resource consists of three questionnaires, each to be completed by the parent or carer, a member of school staff and the child or young person. This offers a structured conversational approach to triangulate information between school, parents/carers and the child or young person. The resource also contains a card sort activity to support gaining pupil views and a timeline to support with identifying precipitating factors that may have contributed to the difficulty (Tobias, 2021). Once information has been gathered, the framework provides links to specific interventions to support with the identified difficulties and provides a plan-do-review approach to supporting with attendance. This framework is recommended for use when attendance drops below 90%. However, it can be used earlier to support with identifying difficulties and implementing strategies at the earliest opportunity.

Previously, terms such as 'school refusal' have been used when discussing attendance difficulties, with the narrative being within-child focused (Kearney, 2001). More recently, it has been acknowledged that this viewpoint carries with it negative connotations and insinuates that there is a choice behaviour surrounding attendance difficulties (Rae, 2020). Terms that factor in an emotional element underpinning attendance difficulties, such as emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA) are now more widely used within the literature (Rae, 2020). Whilst acknowledging that there is often an emotional element underpinning attendance difficulties these terms are thought to still place a within child focus to non-attendance and can carry an element of blame (Not Fine in School, 2024). In addition, it is widely

acknowledged that there is a wide array of factors that feed into attendance difficulties not all of which are emotionally based (GOV.UK, 2022a). For the purpose of this research, the term barriers to attendance will be referred to when discussing attendance difficulties, acknowledging that the difficulties experienced by CYP are complex and multifaceted (Heyne et al., 2014). The use of this term also recognises the complexity of the issue and encompasses the different factors which underpin and perpetuate difficulties around attendance (OFSTED, 2022).

The literature highlights the importance of school attendance for educational and life outcomes. Data around attendance shows that pupils with lower absence rates had higher rates of attainment at the end of key stages one and two (GOV.UK, 2022b). Research has found that poor educational outcomes are linked to poor employment rates and mental health difficulties in adulthood (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, reports have shown that absence rates have significantly increased. Data reports that persistent absences (missing more than 10% of possible sessions) have increased from 10.9% to 21.2% between 2019 and 2023 (Department for Education (DfE), 2020; DfE, 2023).

My interest in attendance difficulties has developed through numerous pieces of work I have completed whilst in my role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) within an LA, noting the increase of CYP experiencing these difficulties and the need for schools to develop tools and interventions to support with this at an early stage. At the point of involvement from the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) it is common that the difficulties have been apparent for a while and that they are at the point of either very low attendance or complete disengagement from school (Sawyer & Collingwood, 2023). The literature around attendance difficulties highlights that early identification and intervention is crucial for supporting CYP's engagement in school (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). Being able to provide schools with tools they can use to support at the earliest opportunity and encouraging schools to factor in pupil and parent voice is essential for successful intervention. The updates in the statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2024b) supports the importance of identifying and treating the root cause of attendance difficulties.

This document states the importance of this for removing barriers and stresses that work is done at the earliest opportunity and completed in collaboration with families.

Within the LA where this piece of research was conducted, there has been a focus on attendance and supporting schools to identify emerging needs and how to manage these difficulties effectively. Support around this has included training around barriers to attendance, with a focus on the ATTEND Framework, and providing supporting documents such as a graduated response and a good practice guide for schools. This guide includes links to statutory guidance and resources to support schools with identifying supportive factors for CYP (Derby City, 2024a). In addition, I have supported my own son who experienced barriers to attendance and recognised the need for resources to support with identifying the difficulty and suitable strategies to support.

At the time of conducting this study, there was no published research into the effectiveness of the ATTEND Framework as a tool for supporting with removing barriers to attendance. Currently, the ATTEND Framework provides guidance and strategies which can generally be accessed across different LAs. The LA in which this research was conducted aims to develop supporting guidance which is specific to them and the resources they have available. With attendance difficulties being an increasing concern and the call for support from Educational Psychologists (EPs) to work with CYP who are having difficulties attending school, the need for evidenced based interventions is essential.

The purpose of this research was to gain an insight into the usefulness of the ATTEND Framework, the ease of completion and the impact it had on attendance.

The aim of the study was to answer the following research questions:

1. How did the participants find the process of completing the framework?
2. What were the similarities and differences in the reported difficulties around attendance?

3. What support was put into place following the completion of the framework and what was the impact of this support?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter aims to cover a historical background of compulsory schooling and how this looks in the present day, where there is often a more punitive approach taken when responding to absenteeism (Costello, 2022). This is followed by an exploration of the differing terms used to describe attendance difficulties and how these have evolved over time to encompass the emotional element that often underpins them (Rae, 2020). Terms such as emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA) have been used to acknowledge the emotional element to attendance difficulties (Pellegrini, 2007). However, there is still some disagreement around this in the literature, suggesting that these terms place a within child focus around the difficulties (Not Fine in School, 2024). It has also been acknowledged that there are different aspects that impact on attendance, not all of which are emotionally based (GOV.UK, 2022a). To encompass the wide range of factors that can impact on attendance and the complex interplay of these factors, this research project will refer to the term barriers to attendance.

An exploration of the increase in reported absence rates is discussed and possible reasons for this including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (DfE, 2020; DfE, 2023). Persistent absence is discussed in detail along with the differing views regarding the impact this has on educational outcomes and well-being (Square Peg, 2025). The complex and heterogeneous nature of attendance difficulties is highlighted, and the impact of wider contextual factors discussed (Heyne et al., 2014). The need for interventions to be highly individualised and the importance of co-producing action plans alongside CYP and their family is considered (Lissack & Boyle, 2022).

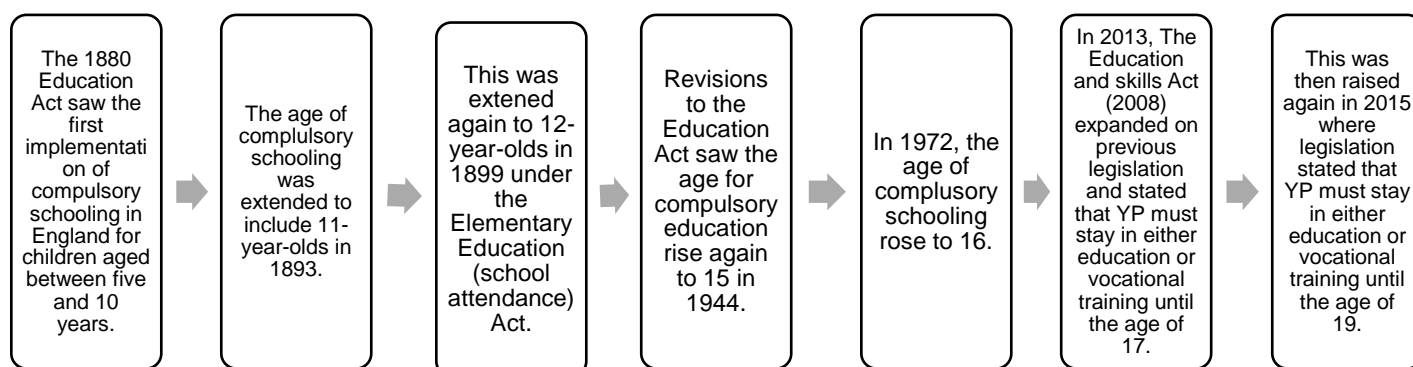
The conflicting views around the impact on poor attendance are reviewed. Research suggests that despite government policies indicating the significant link between absenteeism and anti-social behaviour, this is not as straightforward as we are led to believe (Sheppard, 2011). There is an exploration around the factors that act as barriers to attendance within the three categories predisposing, precipitating and maintaining. The co-occurrence of these factors is discussed, and the importance of an individualised approach considered (Heyne et al., 2014). The literature around strategies to support with attendance at both an individual and systemic level is reviewed, and the importance of a combined approach is discussed (Elliott & Place, 2019).

Psychological theories that underpin interventions for supporting with attendance are explored along with the role of EPs (Fallon et al., 2010). The background and the contents of the ATTEND Framework is then discussed (Tobias, 2021). This chapter then concludes with a discussion around the rationale for the research with a consideration of the intended impact of this study for removing barriers to attendance.

2.1 History of compulsory school attendance moving to the current political and social context.

The implementation of compulsory schooling was first introduced in the 1880 Education Act, stating all children aged between five and 10 must be accessing education. The age of compulsory schooling increased over subsequent years and now states that CYP must stay in either education or vocational training up until 19 years of age (UK Parliament, 2020). See figure1 for a timeline outlining the key dates for compulsory schooling in the UK.

Figure 1 Timeline outlining key dates for compulsory schooling in the UK



Note. Adapted from *UK Parliament, Key dates*, (UK Parliament, 2020)

A recognition of the importance of education and the rise in the number of reported absences led to an introduction of an escalating penalty-based process through the 2002 Education Act (GOV.UK, 2002). This allowed local authorities (LA) to prosecute parents if their child or young person was not attending school (Tobias, 2018). Prior to this, there were inconsistencies across LAs regarding the prosecution process for non-attenders (Berg et al., 2012). This system is currently still in place with the latest guidance, which was introduced in August 2024, stating that fines can be issued up to £160 per parent for unauthorised absences (GOV.UK, 2024b). In some cases, parents may be taken to court with fines of up to £2,500 and threats of a three-month prison sentence (GOV.UK, 2011). Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE, 2024a) is the latest updated statutory document aimed at improving attendance and offering support and guidance to schools and LAs. This replaced the old guidance on attendance (DfE, 2022) and introduced the national framework for penalty notices to ensure that there was consistency across LAs. During individual school visits, Ofsted (2023) will assess whether the school are applying these consistently and fairly across the setting. However, the DfE (2024a) does state that schools should be a place of support, recognising the wider familial difficulties that are likely to be occurring, and state that punitive measures should not be the first port of call.

Research around the impact of legal sanctions have reported that there is no evidence they improve school attendance (Sheppard, 2011). In addition, research has reported that the use of legal sanctions often has a negative impact, increasing absenteeism further with the biggest impact appearing to be on the most vulnerable groups (Weathers et al., 2021). A survey conducted by Square Peg and Not Fine in School (Costello, 2022) reported that parents felt fines and threats of prosecution had a negative impact on the relationship between home and school and made collaborative working more difficult. The Children's Commissioner (2024) conducted a report investigating the vulnerabilities of CYP who left the education system, reporting that 13,000 left to be electively home educated in 2023. 80% of these CYP had either experienced persistent or severe absence the previous school year and many of them had reported to receive fines. The possible reasons for this are suggested to be that parents felt that they had no other option other than to remove their child or young person from school to avoid the possibility of fines or prosecution (Slifi, 2024). Furthermore, programmes such as The Troubled Families Programme (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2016) highlights that poor school attendance is often linked to other areas of disadvantage. In these cases, punitive approaches such as issuing fines are likely to increase disadvantage and result in no positive impact on attendance (Not Fine in School, 2020).

Ofsted's latest Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted, 2023) came into force in September 2019 and places a focus on attendance and punctuality. As part of inspections, Ofsted will analyse absence rates across different groups. They will assess to see if there is a clear understanding behind the reasons for absences and that schools have clear policies and strategies that are applied consistently and fairly. In addition, the statutory document Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE, 2024a) sets out expectations on schools to acknowledge the importance of positive relationships with families and creating a school culture where all CYP feel they can and want to be in school. This document also links to the summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, 2024b) which defines the roles of parents, schools, governing bodies and LAs when supporting with attendance. This includes the recommendation for all schools to appoint a member of the senior

leadership team (SLT) as a senior attendance champion and for schools to use a graduated response with a focus on early identification.

School attendance has been acknowledged as being essential for aiding social mobility (Macleod et al., 2015) and issuing fines for poor attendance has been shown to have limited impact on those with the poorest attendance (Weathers et al., 2021). Punitive approaches have been reported to have a negative impact on home-school relationships (Costello, 2022). These methods of issuing fines for poor attendance are also thought to increase the chances of CYP being electively home educated, resulting in a reduction of access to quality first teaching (The Children's Commissioner, 2024). Knowing that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be absent from school means that these approaches are likely to increase disadvantage further (Not Fine in School, 2020). This highlights the need for looking deeper into barriers to attendance and the factors that underpin them, supporting families to make positive changes.

2.2 Defining terms

The varying terms to describe barriers to attendance and how these have changed over the years makes reviewing the literature in this area challenging. Not Fine in School (2024) discusses the negative impact this lack of agreed definition has when ensuring that CYP get adequate support, expressing that it results in misunderstanding the difficulties around attendance. Literature around attendance difficulties states the importance of understanding the functions of behaviour to allow for adequate support to be put into place (Kearney & Silverman, 1990). Pellegrini (2007) discussed how the terms used to define attendance difficulties is often reflective of the agencies involved, and whether there is a medical or educational focus. Terms such as school refusal and school avoidance are thought to carry negative connotations and places the difficulty within child, insinuating that there is an element of choice linked to this behaviour (Kearney, 2001). In addition, terms such as truancy do not factor in reasons besides those of delinquency or disinterest

of education (Skedgell & Kearney, 2018). It is also believed that these outdated terms do not differentiate between truancy and absence resulting from emotional difficulties (Heyne et al., 2019). Heyne et al. (2019) proposed the three main ways of defining attendance difficulties as truancy, school refusal and school withdrawal. Proposing a possible fourth, Heyne et al. (2019) state that school exclusion is a school absence caused by implementing disciplinary measures due to them being unable or unwilling to meet the child or young person's needs.

More recently, terms such as EBSNA, which factor in an emotional element often underpinning attendance difficulties are more commonly used (Rae, 2020). EBSNA can be a useful term when considering barriers to attendance as it supports schools to acknowledge that the difficulties may be emotionally based rather than a choice behaviour (GOV.UK, 2023a). However, the complexity of attendance difficulties means that there may be many underlying causes, some of which may not be emotionally based (GOV.UK, 2022a). Conversely, Not Fine in School (2024) discusses how terms such as EBSNA places a within child focus on attendance difficulties, suggesting that the term barriers to attendance better encompasses the complexities of the difficulty. Melvin et al. (2019) discuss the complexity of attendance difficulties and the factors that can have an impact including illness, anxiety, learning difficulties, home factors and transport difficulties. As the ATTEND Framework aims to support with identifying all factors impacting on attendance, I will refer to the term barriers to attendance, acknowledging the complexities and reflecting the multifaceted nature underpinning attendance difficulties.

Within the literature and the government data, attendance is categorised into thresholds to identify when absences require further investigation and support. There has been a measure of persistent absence in place since 2005. At this time, persistent absence was classed as missing more than 20% of all possible school sessions. This was reduced to 15% in 2011 and again to 10% in 2015 where it currently remains (DfE, 2016). Severe absence was then introduced as a measure of

attendance in 2023 and applied to CYP that were attending less than 50% of all possible sessions (Selfridge, 2025). The ATTEND Framework is recommended for use when attendance drops below 90% and into the persistently absent threshold. The latest data from the DfE (2025) reported that the greatest gains in outcomes are seen when attendance is increased above the 90% threshold even when confounding factors, such as special educational needs (SEND), are accounted for. However, whilst having a measure of attendance is important this only provides a small amount of information and does not tell us the frequency of the absence, for example this could be missing regular sessions every week or having a week off due to illness (Miller, 2023). In addition, the increase in persistent absence rates from primary to secondary school (GOV.UK, 2025) indicates that interventions at an earlier age may help identify children who are at risk of attendance dropping once they transition to secondary school. Identifying attendance difficulties through a threshold system in isolation does not allow for identification of the different factors that are acting as barriers to attendance, highlighting the need for further investigation and an individualised approach (The Centre for Social Justice, 2023). Having a threshold is helpful as it can support with the identification of need and highlights individual patterns of attendance. However, using a range of measures and not the threshold alone supports with identifying needs at the earliest opportunity.

2.3 The impact of poor attendance

Research stresses the importance of school attendance for enabling educational achievement (GOV.UK, 2022b). The DfE (2016) highlighted the link between lower attainment outcomes at GCSE and school absences. Earlier research found that poor school outcomes are linked with an increased risk of experiencing employment difficulties and poor mental health in adulthood (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). The Square Peg Foundation (Square Peg, 2025) challenges this view and stresses that life outside the classroom is just as important as attending school, stating that CYP do not need 100% attendance to be successful. They argue that promoting the view that school attendance is essential for positive life outcomes is driving CYP to become unwell and unable to engage in learning.

Research into attendance difficulties has suggested that the link between this and poor outcomes is not as straightforward as originally thought. Sheppard (2011) discusses the number of precursors to attendance difficulties that are linked to anti-social behaviour. A longitudinal study that looked at a sample of 411 males and followed these from the ages of eight to the age of forty found that attendance difficulties were not an independent factor in anti-social behaviour (Farrington, 2000). This highlights the complexity surrounding the topic of attendance and the need for an individualised approach which focuses on identifying the barriers preventing CYP from accessing the learning environment.

2.4 Factors that impact on attendance

The complex and heterogeneous nature surrounding barriers to attendance has been discussed and the needs for identifying all factors has been highlighted (Heyne et al, 2019). The literature reporting on the factors that impact on attendance categorise them into the following three areas:

- predisposing, underlying factors that make CYP more at risk of non-attendance
- precipitating, sudden or significant events that may trigger attendance difficulties
- maintaining factors, circumstances that result in the problem becoming prolonged and embedded (Ingul et al., 2019).

Typically, a child or young person experiencing difficulties with attendance will have a combination of these factors, all of which need to be identified and understood to be able to put in the correct support (Clisshold, 2018). Thambirajah et al. (2008) make reference to a 'Vicious Cycle of School Refusal' to explain how difficulties attending school are maintained (Figure 2). This highlights how the initial factors that impact on attendance can then lead to these feelings of social isolation and falling behind academically, feeding into this cycle of poor school attendance.

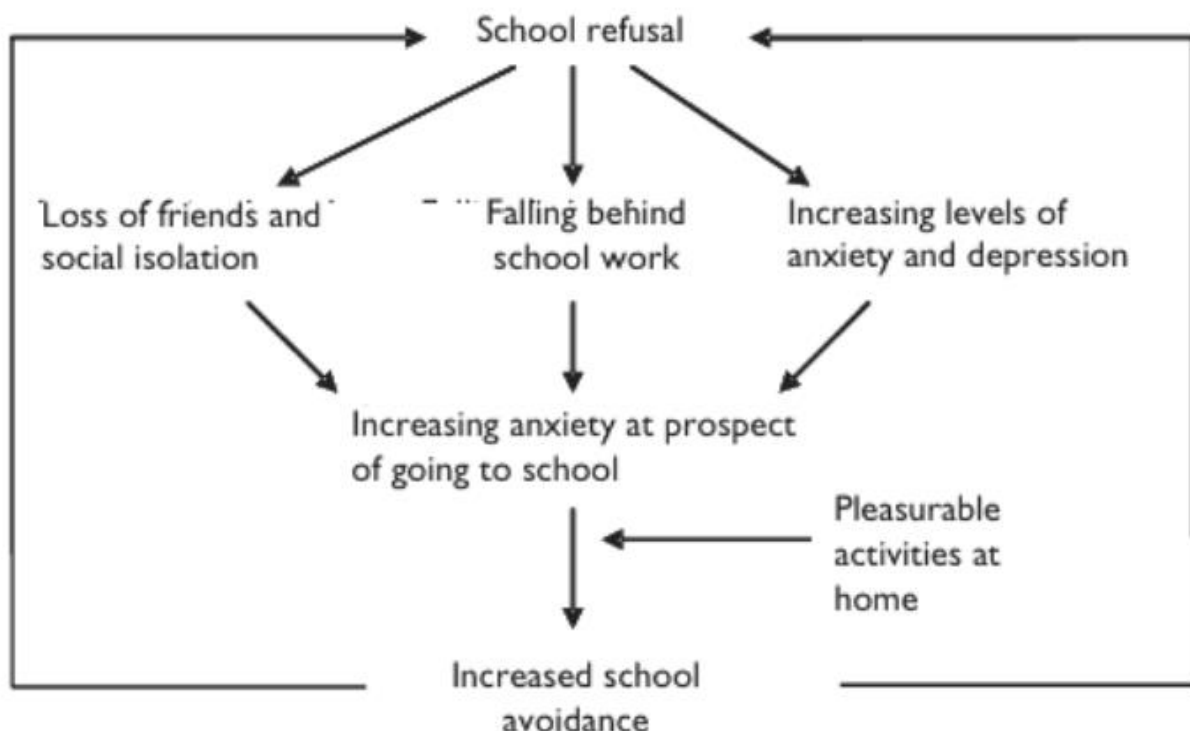


Figure 2 *The Vicious Cycle of School Refusal* (Thambirajah et al., 2008, pp.32).

Previous research into attendance difficulties have divided risk factors into those involving the individual, the family, the school and peers (Ingul et al., 2019). However, it is important to recognise the complex interplay of factors which can act as barriers to attendance, for instance difficulties with peer relationships can result in high levels of anxiety (Barchia and Bussey, 2011). This highlights the importance of a triangulation approach to collecting information and determining the barriers to attendance (Heyne, 2022). The different factors that may act as a barrier to attendance are now discussed.

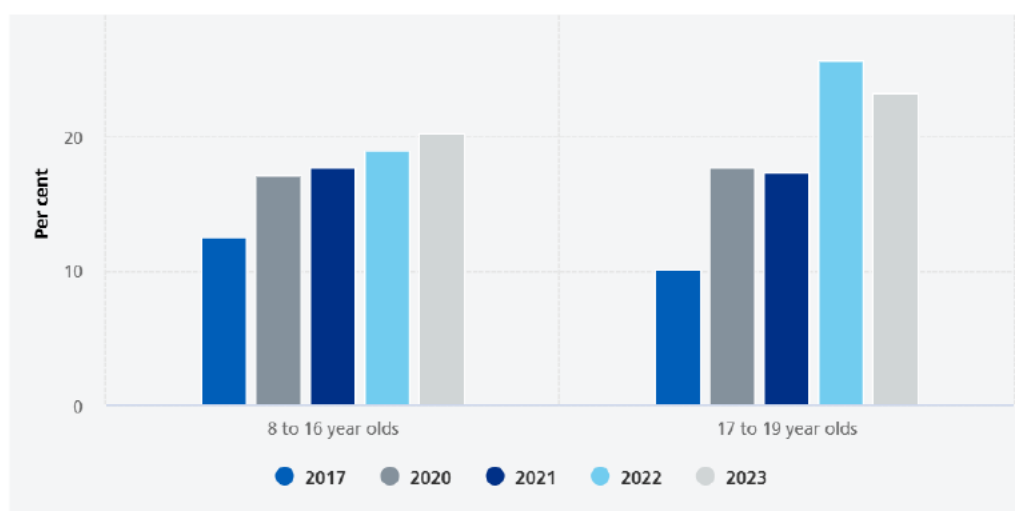
2.4.1 Predisposing factors

Predisposing factors refer to the underlying risk factors that have been found to increase the likelihood of attendance difficulties (Clisshold, 2018). This next section explores the impact of mental health needs, SEND, neurodiversity and low socio-economic status and how these have previously been identified as potential barriers to attendance. Having knowledge of these risk factors is essential for identifying CYP who are at risk of poor attendance and allows for early intervention of support strategies (Kearney et al., 2023).

It has been reported that CYP with mental health disorders are twice as likely to be absent from school (NHS, 2021). However, it is important to note that one does not necessarily cause the other, they can exist alongside and exacerbate each other (Heyne et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic has seen an increase in CYP suffering with mental health difficulties (Jeffery et al., 2021) and a decline in mental health for those with pre-existing conditions (Sonuga-Barke & Fearon, 2021). The NHS (2023) reported an increase in mental health disorders between 2017 and 2023

(Figure 2). Square Peg and Not Fine in School (Costello, 2022) ran a survey for parents focusing on attendance and received 1,960 responses. They reported that 94% of respondents felt that school had a negative impact on their child's mental health and well-being. This was reportedly increased by the lack of understanding in this area and the refusal to authorise absences for CYP experiencing mental health difficulties.

Figure 3 Percentage of CYP with probable mental disorders (NHS, 2023)



Statistics around absence rates show that CYP with SEND are more likely to be persistently absent from school. Government statistics (GOV.UK, 2024) show that pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and those with recognised SEND are disproportionately more likely to be absent from school (table 1). A report into school readiness commissioned by Child of the North and the Centre for Young Lives (Powell et al., 2024) reported that children who appear not school ready at the point of school entry are at risk of disengaging from education and are 2.5 times as likely to be persistently absent from school. Children are believed to be 'school

ready' when they are cognitively, emotionally and socially able to manage the demands of the school environment (Public Health England, 2015).

Table 1 *Absence by pupil characteristics for EHC plans, SEN support and No SEN Support in England for the academic year 2023-2024*

	EHC plans	SEN Support	No SEN
Overall absence rate	12.6%	10.2%	6.3%
Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	35.5%	30.1%	16.8%
Percentage of severely absent pupils (50% or more missed)	6.8%	4.4%	1.3%

Note. Adapted from *Pupil absence in schools in England, Academic Year 2023/24*, by GOV.UK, 2023b

Munkhaugen et al (2017) reported links between poor attendance and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) due to factors including social anxiety, sensory processing differences and managing change. Higgin (2022) conducted some research identifying autistic pupil's perspectives around the secondary school environment. Although this was a small-scale piece of research, consisting of 10 participants, common themes were identified including fixed constraints and sensory processing differences including noise, lighting and uniform. Additional research found that autistic children felt being electively home educated had a positive impact on their mental health as it provided a flexible and personalized environment that is better at meeting their needs (Paulauskaite et al., 2022).

Research has reported that CYP from disadvantaged backgrounds are at higher risk of poor attendance (Klein et al., 2020). The DfE (2024a) reported that persistent absence rates were at 11.1% for pupils who are eligible for free school meals

compared to 5.8% for pupils who were not. Families that have had their own negative experience of education and who hold negative views of school have been identified as being at risk of poor attendance (Finning et al., 2020). Sosu et al. (2021) conducted a literature review to explore the possible reasons for this link. Referring to Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) they identified the complex interplay of factors for CYP from disadvantaged backgrounds. They highlighted that the lack of resources, the impact of the home environment and the views and previous educational experiences of their families all acted as barriers to attendance. The investment model was also discussed and highlighted that disadvantage can restrict access to good nutrition, healthcare, adequate housing and all things that support the well-being of CYP and their families and can impact on school attendance (Shaw & Shelleby, 2014). Sosu et al. (2021) also made reference to Bordieu's (1977) 'cultural capital' theory suggesting that schools are based on middle-class ideals which can result in CYP from disadvantaged backgrounds feeling isolated from their peers, resulting in disengagement from education.

2.4.2 Precipitating factors

A consideration is now made towards the precipitating factors that have been reported to have an impact on attendance. Precipitating factors refer to aspects that may have triggered the attendance difficulty (Ingul et al., 2019). Not all precipitating factors can be planned for, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. However, key changes such as the transition into secondary school and the onset of menstruation are both factors that have been referenced in the literature as impacting on attendance, both of which can be pre-empted.

Reports into attendance rates in the UK have highlighted a significant increase in school absences since the Covid-19 pandemic (GOV.UK, 2023b; table 2). A universal precipitating factor impacting on attendance reported in the literature was the impact of lockdown on CYP with SEND and anxiety. Participants in one study shared that they found it difficult to return to school following lockdown as being at

home allowed them to avoid the aspects of school they found challenging (McDonald et al., 2022). Adams (2023) also discusses the possibility of a cultural shift in families and parents wanting to keep their children at home, potentially due to their own anxieties around school. The biggest impact of COVID-19 on attendance rates is reported to be within already disadvantaged families, increasing this disadvantage further (Pickett & Taylor-Robinson, 2021).

Research into the impact of COVID-19 on attendance difficulties reports that CYP found returning to school after the pandemic difficult for a variety of reasons including adapting to different school routines and the need to catch up academically (Gersch et al., 2021). A recent report by Ofsted (2024) discussed the changes in how education looks for some CYP since the pandemic. This report highlighted that a significant number of CYP are currently engaging in a form of education that differs from traditional schooling. This includes part-time timetables, online learning and some schools allowing for a 'flexi-schooling' approach where the child or young person is home educated for part of the week and attends school for the remainder of the time.

Table 2 A comparison between pre and post COVID overall and persistent absence rates

Academic year	Overall Absence rates	Persistent Absence rates (missed more than 10% of possible sessions)
2018/19	4.7%	10.9%
2023/24	7.1%	20.0%

Note. Adapted from GOV.UK. (2023b). *Pupil absence in schools in England, Academic Year 2023/24*.

The literature highlights sudden changes that are often associated with poor attendance. These include key developmental changes, often between the ages of

11 and 13 years, and transitions, particularly the transition from primary to secondary school (Chu et al., 2019). A comparison between the persistent absence rates in secondary and primary schools is reported in the literature, with 17.2% of primary pupils compared to 28.3% of secondary pupils being persistently absent during the academic year 2022/2023 (Burtonshaw & Dorrell, 2023).

Higgins (2022) explored the experiences of secondary school pupils and possible reasons for the increase in absence rates. Some of the aspects of school the CYP found difficult included the strict uniform rules, sharing that this resulted in them feeling that schools did not value or celebrate individuality or difference. The change in environment from primary to secondary school was also reported as a difficulty, with pupils sharing that the size of the school was much bigger and noisier. Additionally, Baker and Bishop (2015) reported that the CYP in their study found the increase in the rigidity of the school rules and protocols difficult to adhere to, leaving them feeling alienated and anxious. Research into the response to attendance difficulties in adolescence reported that it was more likely to be underpinned by depressive symptoms and that CYP were typically less responsive to interventions at this age, resulting in the attendance difficulty becoming embedded (Heyne, 2022). Pupils with ASD can find this transition particularly challenging for a variety of reasons, including the increased social interaction required and the social and emotional demands this places on them (Dillon & Underwood, 2012).

An increase in research around menstruation has highlighted the impact this can have on attendance. A survey carried out by the Public Health Service (2023) highlighted that over half (54%) of secondary school girls have taken time off school due to painful periods. The challenge of managing menstruation in school has also been highlighted to increase the risk of low school attendance (Plan International UK, 2018). With reports stating that not offering adequate support and making necessary accommodations around menstruation is increasing the risk of academic disadvantage (Thomas & Melendez-Torres, 2024). This is even more problematic for pupils from low-socioeconomic status who are more likely to experience period poverty (Briggs, 2020). In addition, research into menstruation in autistic females

indicates that they may experience heightened menstruation symptoms and sensory sensitivities, resulting in them finding it difficult to manage this during the school day (Steward et al., 2018).

In addition to these common precipitating factors, individuals may also experience life events on an individual basis that impact on their attendance. These could include bereavement, a change in family dynamics, loss of parental income and money worries at home. This again highlights the need for knowing CYP and families and having good foundational relationships, so they feel able to share these difficulties with school (Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), 2022).

2.4.3 Maintaining factors

The final factors to be discussed are the maintaining factors, the things that keep attendance difficulties embedded. The factors that perpetuate attendance difficulties are often different to the factors that initially triggered the problem (Thambirajah et al., 2008). The cycle of anxiety is considered and how this can keep attendance difficulties feeling stuck (Mkrtchian et al., 2017). The negative impact punitive approaches to attendance difficulties alongside failing to understand the root cause of the problem is also considered (Not Fine in School, 2020).

Maintaining factors that can result in attendance difficulties becoming embedded are discussed in the literature. Maintaining factors are the things that leave the situation feeling stuck and the barriers to attendance becoming embedded (Cunningham et al., 2022). Feeling socially isolated, falling behind with schoolwork and generalised anxiety are commonly reported difficulties that occur due to school absence and lead to the maintenance of attendance difficulties (Thambirajah et al., 2008). Research suggests that avoiding a situation which makes a person feel anxious relieves the anxiety temporally but increases it in the long term, resulting in higher anxiety around the situation and an increase in avoidance (Mkrtchian et al., 2017).

Baker and Bishop (2015) interviewed secondary aged pupils who were having difficulties with attendance to gain an understanding of the factors that perpetuate these difficulties. They reported the negative impact punitive measures had on them as this increased the anxiety they felt around school and made them more unwilling to attend. Havik et al. (2015) found that the style of classroom management and level of support they felt they were receiving from the teacher impacted on attendance. Peer relationships and the feeling of being excluded or bullied were also cited factors for barriers to attendance (Havik et al., 2015).

Finning et al. (2020) conducted a study looking at the perceptions of secondary school staff around risk factors for attendance difficulties. The beliefs of the school staff influenced the interventions the CYP were given. The staff in this study believed that the school environment had less of an impact on attendance difficulties and tended to attribute the problem to individual, family and peer factors. Malcolm et al (2003) reported that teachers were more likely to attribute attendance difficulties to individual and home factors and parents were more likely to attribute them to school-based factors. This has been further highlighted in more recent research by Chian et al. (2024) who interviewed both school staff and pupils regarding their experiences and found a disparity into perceived barriers to attendance. The school attributed difficulties to systemic barriers and uncooperative parents where the pupils said it was a lack of inclusivity and a sense of belonging that made attending school difficult. By taking this view, schools are overlooking their role around attendance difficulties which may result in a lack of agency, keeping the attendance difficulties stuck (Pellegrini, 2007).

The different types of factors that are identified in the literature have been discussed and the complex interplay between them has been considered (Barchia & Bussey, 2011). Gaining an understanding into all factors acting as a barrier to attendance is crucial for implementing the correct support (Heyne, 2022). Gaining an insight into predisposing factors is valuable for preventative work. It also allows schools to identify individuals that may develop difficulties in the future and put in support at the

earliest opportunity (Kearney et al., 2023). For instance, completing sensory audits for CYP with sensory processing differences or running social skills groups for CYP who struggle with social situations can act as preventative interventions for possible barriers to attendance. Understanding precipitating factors is also important for preventative work such as transitions as it allows additional support to be put into place for those who may need it. The impact of adult perceptions behind attendance difficulties has been highlighted and the disparity between school and home has been discussed in the literature (Finning et al., 2020). This lack of joined up working and understanding of difficulties can often result in the breakdown in relationships between home and school, something reported to be a key factor for supporting with attendance (Devenney, 2021).

2.5 Common interventions to support with attendance difficulties

The literature highlights common interventions that are used when supporting with attendance. Interventions have historically focused on reacting to poor attendance and implementing strategies on an individual level (Kelly, 2010). Kearney and Graczyk's (2014) work aimed to shift the focus away from reacting to attendance difficulties, focusing more on preventative measures. Advocating for a multitiered approach for identifying systems of support, Kearney and Graczyk (2014) stress that placing a larger focus on whole school approaches, at a tier one level, reduces the need for individual intervention. Approaches in tier two offers a more individualised programme of support where tier three builds on tier two for the most complex cases of absenteeism (figure 4). Research into using this system to support with attendance has found that schools that implement this approach with greater fidelity had lower rates of attendance difficulties (Freeman et al., 2016).

Figure 4 A multi-tiered system of support model for school attendance and school absenteeism

Tier 1	Tier 2 (Emerging difficulties)	Tier 3 (severe absenteeism)
intervention-universal approaches School based mental health programmes Parental involvement strategies Whole school attendance policies that focus on early intervention Whole school training on barriers to attendance Whole school transition initiatives	Targeted intervention ATTEND Framework Psychological interventions Reasonable adjustments	Extension on tier 2 Alternative provision Parent/families support strategies Support from external professionals

Note. Adapted from Kearney, C. A., & Graczyk, P. (2014). A Response to Intervention Model to Promote School Attendance and Decrease School Absenteeism. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 43(1), 1–25.

2.5.1 Individual support

The importance of identifying CYP who are struggling with attendance at the earliest opportunity is highlighted in the literature (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). Having awareness of the early signs that attendance difficulties are emerging is essential to allow for early support to be put into place (Cunningham et al., 2022). Often these signs are initially evident at home or on the way to school and could include things such as complaining of feeling unwell, appearing teary on the way to school and having difficulties with peer relationships (Ingul et al., 2019). Working with parents and creating a space where they feel they can raise these concerns early on is essential for facilitating early intervention (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). In addition, working with parents to educate them around what early signs of attendance difficulties look like is also important to allow them to recognise that their child or young person is starting to struggle (Kearney et al., 2023).

Under the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015), schools are required to make necessary adaptations to learning environments to support access to learning. Research into successful interventions to support with attendance difficulties has

highlighted the importance of gaining pupil voice, identifying this as the key to successful intervention (O'Hagan et al., 2022). In a study looking at parent views on successful intervention, it was shared that CYP needed to be listened to and felt included in the decisions made around their education (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). In previous studies, CYP have voiced that they valued having the opportunity to play an active role in developing their support plan (O'Hagan et al., 2022). Due to the multi-faceted nature of attendance difficulties, an individualised approach to support is essential for success (Corcoran et al., 2022). To allow for this, it is essential that the functions of the behaviour are investigated, often referred to as the push and pull factors in the literature (Nuttall & Woods, 2013). Gaining pupil voice supports with developing a shared understanding around the barriers to school attendance whilst providing them with a sense of control around the situation (Corcoran et al., 2022). To ensure successful intervention, it is essential that the voice of the child or young person is listened to and acted on as this will also support with the development of the relationship between the child and young person and the adults in school (O'Hagan et al., 2022).

The importance of regular contact between home and school has also been highlighted as a supportive factor for attendance difficulties (McDonald et al., 2022). This contact should be approached from a place of understanding and empathy to support with developing good home-school relationships (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). This has been shown to provide consistency regarding interventions and highlights to the child or young person that all adults are working together (Corcoran et al., 2022). Good home-school communication also supports with the early identification of needs (Finning et al., 2020). Parents in one study spoke about the positive impact of lockdown, sharing that this highlighted the importance of good home school communication (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). Research conducted around parental views of attendance difficulties reported that the development of home-school relationships is often hindered due to inconsistencies in support and parents feeling an element of blame from the school (Sawyer & Collingwood, 2023).

Elliott and Place (2019) conducted a review around interventions for barriers to attendance and found the greatest evidence for the use of clinical type interventions such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT typically draws upon a combination of psychoeducation, relaxation training, social skills support, graduated exposure and cognitive restructuring (Hofmann & Asmundson, 2017). Heyne and Sauter (2012) stress that the standard CBT manuals typically used for supporting with anxiety may not be suitable to support with the complex nature of attendance difficulties. Research into the use of CBT as a standalone intervention to support with barriers to attendance shows a high dropout rate following its use (Beidas et al., 2010). It is also important to note that if the CBT intervention is being delivered in the home environment and when the child or young person is not currently attending school, the reduction in anxiety may be in part related to the environment (Elliott & Place, 2019). Research has found that the complex and multi-faceted nature of barriers to attendance means that CBT may not be the most effective way of supporting CYP and using them in isolation may not address all contributing factors (Heyne et al., 2014).

Kearney & Graczyk (2014) suggest that an effective method for supporting with removing barriers to attendance is using a response to intervention (RTI) process. This is the same process schools would use when supporting with learning or behaviour difficulties in school. The process incorporates a planning phase to decide which interventions are going to be implemented followed by an assessment of progress. If insufficient progress is identified, more intense support can be implemented. For instance, an initial intervention could be a soft start followed by regular check-ins from a safe and trusted adult. If the child or young person is still having difficulties with attendance, then school might want to offer something more intense such as direct therapeutic input or referrals to external agencies. Using this model allows for early identification of difficulties along with regular monitoring of progress. Unlike other areas the complexity of barriers to attendance is likely to involve multiagency working with different referral processes which can make this approach challenging (Elliott & Place, 2019).

The importance of good pupil staff relationships for providing a sense of safety is also discussed in the literature (Cunningham et al., 2022). Participants in one study reported that building a trusted relationship with a key adult supported reintegration after a period of absence (O'Hagan et al., 2022). Research has identified key strategies to support with developing these relationships, such as engaging in everyday activities like shared jobs with a key adult (Corcoran et al., 2022) and home visits or meet and greets (Finning et al., 2020). The importance of gaining pupil voice around difficulties is also highlighted with a trusting relationship underpinning this (O'Hagan et al., 2022). The importance of adults in school maintaining agreements and implementing all agreed strategies was also discussed as an important factor for supporting with building trusted relationships (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). It has been highlighted that when CYP previously shared their difficulties, and they had not felt listened to, it led to reluctance in further participation with professionals (Kellett, 2010).

Working collaboratively with CYP and their families was reported to be essential to identifying barriers to attendance and possible strategies (Corcoran et al., 2022). Ensuring that pupils are given an opportunity to share what they are finding difficult and including them in decisions regarding their education is essential for gaining buy-in from them (O'Hagan et al., 2022). Pupils in the Chian et al. (2024) study expressed the importance and value of tailoring their educational experiences around their individual preferences and strengths as this gave them more of a purpose to attend.

2.5.2 Whole school approaches

The multi-tiered system of support (Kearney et al., 2019, figure 4) highlights the need for a whole school approach for prevention and support around barriers to attendance. If this first tier of support is fully embedded within a school, then it will reduce the need for more direct work for complex cases of absenteeism. The early identification of attendance difficulties and the early implementation of support has been highlighted

as being essential for preventing complete disengagement from school (Heyne et al., 2019). A whole school supportive ethos towards supporting key areas that underpin barriers to attendance are thought to reduce the number of CYP who require specialist support in this area (Kearney et al., 2019). Research suggests that this is an area that needs reevaluating since the COVID-19 pandemic. Suggestions have been made around schools and education policies shifting their focus away from academia and taking a more holistic approach to education (Lissack & Boyle, 2022).

A systematic literature review was conducted by Boaler and Bond (2023) who looked at whole school-based approaches and interventions in relation to removing barriers to attendance. The five main themes they identified for providing successful interventions for attendance difficulties were having a coherent whole school approach, responsive systems, positive ethos, positive relationships and collaboration with families. Another study reported that parents stressed the need for schools to 're-evaluate their priorities and place the well-being of the CYP above attendance figures (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). The need for a whole school focus on building resilience and developing self-esteem is also highlighted as being essential for supporting with attendance (Finning et al., 2020). Parents in another study called for a review of policies and procedures in school around attendance stressing the need for them to reflect an individualised approach (Lissack & Boyle, 2022).

Increasing family engagement and positive relationships has also been reported as being a supportive factor for the early identification and implementation of support (EEF, 2022). Boaler et al (2024) reported that families feeling heard and experiencing positive communication with schools has a positive impact on supporting with removing barriers to attendance at an early opportunity. Ensuring that there is consistency across schools and LAs is also key to providing adequate support (Boaler et al., 2024).

Difficulties with school attendance has been reported to be associated with how safe and supported CYP feel within the school environment (Jackson et al., 2022). Whole

school interventions and approaches should be used to support with the development of the key areas resilience, belongingness, emotional literacy skills and secure attachments (Belson et al., 2018). Approaches such as PACE, which stands for playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy supports the use of these qualities when working with CYP. This way of interacting with CYP supports with co-regulation and helps them to feel understood (Golding & Hughes, 2012). Embedding restorative approaches into whole school practices has also been found to support with reducing conflict in cases where there have been experiences of bullying or relationship breakdowns (Zakszeski & Rutherford, 2021), both of which have been found to be barriers to attendance (Finning et al., 2020). A poor sense of belonging is linked with high levels of anxiety (Shochet et al., 2011) and with reduced motivation and achievement in school (Anderman & Freeman, 2004). This can then impact on the ability of child or young person to attend school and poor attendance has been found to have an impact on the perceived sense of belonging (McKenzie, 2017). Having a whole school ethos which is underpinned by a relational approach is believed to be an effective way of supporting CYP to develop a sense of belonging (Lancashire Educational Psychology Service, 2025). Finding ways to develop a continued sense of belonging for CYP who are not attending school is crucial for ensuring that they still feel a part of the school community this will support with re-engagement (Lissack & Boyle, 2022).

CYP with SEND have been shown to be disproportionately absent from school (GOV.UK, 2024). This has been reported to be due to pupils with SEND being unable to manage the school environment and accommodations not being made, resulting in an increase in anxiety (Higgin, 2022). An importance of schools having a good understanding of SEND needs and the role these play in barriers to attendance was highlighted by McDonald et al (2022). In addition, supporting CYP to understand their own diagnosis was also viewed as being a supportive factor for reducing anxiety (O'Hagan et al., 2022). Programmes such as Autistic and ok (Ambitious about Autism, 2022) aim to support the development of a whole school community that supports autistic CYP to feel understood and accepted.

2.5.3 Barriers to support

The literature highlights some of the common barriers to supporting with attendance difficulties, including the pressures schools face around attendance and the complexity of the issue meaning that it is often time and resource heavy. Participants in one study (Finning et al., 2017) discussed the extensive time and resources it can take to support with attendance difficulties, with school staff reporting that they fear wasting this on unsuccessful cases.

Research has found that early identification and implementation of support becomes more difficult as they move into secondary school (Cunningham et al., 2022). There is less face to face time with parents and less opportunity for incidental conversation, this can make developing relationships and identifying struggles difficult (Finning et al., 2017). In addition, the processes involved in implementing strategies in secondary schools are much more in-depth and attainment data may make teaching staff more reluctant to allow time away from core subjects for targeted interventions (Finning et al., 2017). A lack of understanding around the causes of poor attendance will also impact on the support offered to CYP and their families. The literature reports that secondary schools tend to overlook the school-based factors and place a greater emphasis on home, this is likely to act as a barrier to offering the most effective support (Finning et al., 2017).

The push on attendance data and the pressures of this triggering an OFSTED inspection has been reported in the literature (Cunningham et al., 2022). This can often result in staff feeling that they need to get the child or young person back in full time and can result in them feeling that it is too much too soon, this can lead to burn out and an increase in non-attendance (Spectrum Gaming, 2024). The process of removing barriers to attendance is often not linear and requires regular reviews and small amendments being made to plans where necessary (Heyne et al., 2014).

2.6 Frameworks currently used to support with attendance.

In response to the statutory document, Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE, 2024a), LAs have created various documents to advise and support schools around attendance difficulties. Documents such as good practice guides have been developed which contains information and guidance on how to support pupils who are experiencing barriers to attendance (Lancashire Educational Psychology Service, 2025). Graduated response documents have also been created across some LAs to support with attendance and the steps schools should follow (Devon County Council, 2025). One City Centre LA has developed a health needs panel that involves a range of professionals from both education and health who review individual cases, making recommendations for next steps (Derby, 2024b).

There are several Frameworks currently used across LAs to guide practitioners who are supporting with removing barriers to attendance. The SPIRAL Framework is an action planning tool that was developed using the results from a study around parental perspectives into attendance difficulties (Sawyer & Collingwood, 2023). The aim of this framework is that it is used in a non-prescriptive way to guide professionals when developing a support plan for CYP who are struggling to attend school. The WARMTH approach is another framework that has been developed based on existing literature around successful interventions to support with attendance. This offers core principles that schools should embed within their ethos to promote engagement and learning (Smith et al., 2024). These frameworks both aim to support professionals at an individual and systemic level and incorporates the idea that physiological and psychological needs must be met before considering the higher order tasks (Maslow, 1943).

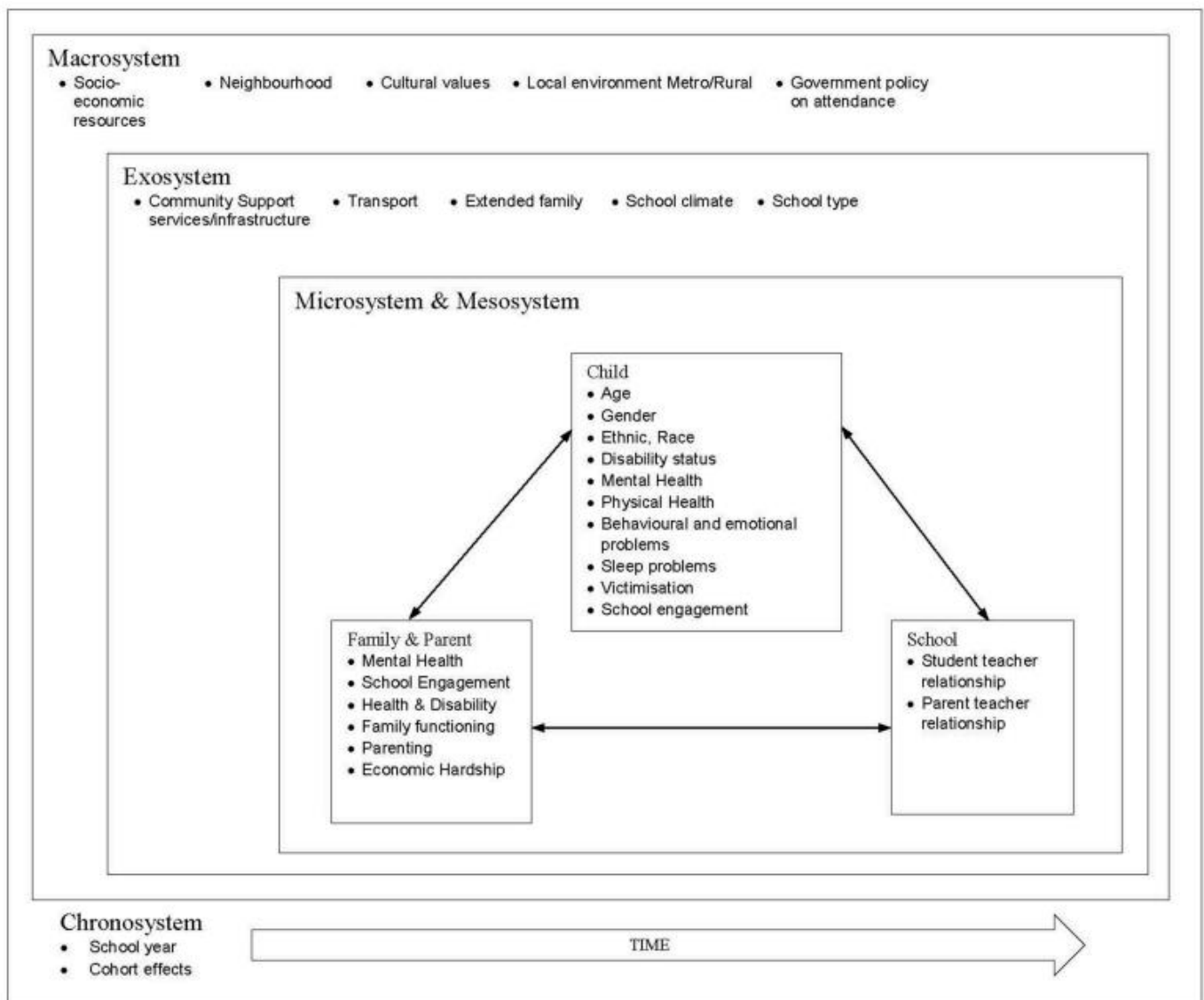
Whilst the SPIRAL and WARMTH frameworks both offer guidance around how they can support with attendance at both an individual and systemic level, the ATTEND Framework (see section 2.8) offers a more in-depth individualised approach to

understanding the barriers to attendance and can be used as part of the whole school approaches to supporting with attendance difficulties. Embedding these types of approaches in schools to support with the basic physiological and psychological needs will in turn reduce the number of complex cases and the need for these more individualised interventions (Kearney et al., 2019).

2.7 Psychological theory

The Kids and Teens at School (KiTeS) Framework (Melvin et al., 2019) uses Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model (2005) to support researchers in gaining an understanding of the complex interplay of factors that impact on attendance (figure 5). According to this model, the child or young person is placed at the centre of a hierarchy of different systems. The closest system to the child or young person is the microsystem, which consists of those closest to them such as their immediate family, school, peers and is where proximal processes occur. The next system is the mesosystem and focuses on the interaction between the individuals situated in the child or young person's microsystem. The next level is the exosystem which places a focus on the settings that are not directly experienced by the child or young person, such as the parents' workplace or health services. The final two levels are the macrosystem and the chronosystem. The macrosystem includes the wider cultural norms and beliefs, including socio economic status. The chronosystem is the influence of the timing of significant events.

Figure 5 The KiTeS bioecological systems framework for school attendance and absence (Melvin et al., 2019)



In terms of supporting with attendance difficulties, Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model (2005) supports by first thinking about the child or young person as an individual and the personal factors which are impacting on their attendance. Working at the microsystem level, allows for a consideration around the individuals that are closest to them, their immediate family, friends and the adults that support them in school. The mesosystem considers the communication and relationships between those individuals within the child or young person's microsystem. Research into

supportive factors for attendance difficulties have reported that having positive relationships and good communication between home and school is key (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). The exosystem considers the external services available to the child or young person and their family, for example travel difficulties may be a potential barrier to attendance for some and difficulties accessing external support such as mental health services. Within the macrosystem are the cultural norms and beliefs. Some cultures do not place value on formal education, or it could potentially be that the child or young person struggles to envision where schooling fits within their future goals and aspirations (Massey et al., 2008). Thinking about the timing of specific events, risk factors are likely to appear different across different age groups, for instance separation anxiety is more likely to be present during the younger years. Research has also highlighted that CYP who were reported to be not school ready at the point of entry are more likely to develop school attendance difficulties (Powell et al., 2024).

The unique interactions between the individual and their immediate environment shapes their development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Previous research into barriers to attendance have identified the broad range of factors that can have an impact (Elliott & Place, 2019). The complex interaction between them requires a multifactorial approach in order to gain an understanding of the problem (Melvin et al., 2019). It is not enough to focus solely on the CYP and their difficulties, the environment also needs to be considered and adapted where necessary (Lyon & Cotler, 2009).

2.8 Attend Framework

Tobias (2018) conducted a piece of research which explored the perspectives of family coaches working with CYP experiencing barriers to attendance. The aim of the study was to gain an understanding of the factors which helped and hindered CYP's attendance. Tobias identified that school attendance difficulties were typically impacted on by several interacting factors which all needed addressing. These factors include difficulties at home and difficulties managing the school environment.

Tobias highlighted that to address these, professionals first needed to identify all the different factors which were impacting on that child or young person.

Tobias then went on to develop the ATTEND Framework (Tobias, 2021) a tool to support with identifying the different factors that may be impacting on a child or young person's attendance. The ATTEND Framework consists of three questionnaires to be completed by a member of school staff who knows the child or young person, the parent or carer, and the child or young person. The questionnaires are the key component of the framework and are essential as the questions link directly to the given strategies in the guidance booklet. In addition to the questionnaires there is also a card sort activity that can be completed with the child or young person if this is felt appropriate to support with gaining their views. There is also a timeline to support with identifying key events that may have triggered the difficulty. The card sort and timeline are optional elements of the framework and it is encouraged for schools to use this resource in a flexible way to suit the child or young person and their family (see appendices 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 for examples of the questionnaires, card sort activity and timeline). The aim of this tool is to triangulate evidence and to build a picture of what the main difficulties are and what support the child or young person would benefit from. The recommendation is that this tool is used when attendance drops below 90%. Once all information is collated, an action planning meeting should be held to coproduce a support plan. This support plan is individualised based on the specific needs of the child or young person. The action meeting should be completed alongside school staff, parents and the child or young person where this is appropriate. Regular reviews of the action plan are recommended to ensure it is having its intended impact and to allow for any necessary changes. The framework was developed to be used by schools and has often already been completed before EP involvement or is recommended for use by EPs during casework.

2.9 The role of the Educational Psychologist

The role of the EP is to support schools through facilitating and implementing psychologically informed approaches (Boaler et al., 2024). The complexities around barriers to attendance highlights the need for successful multi-agency working (Solomon, 2019) and research states that interventions are most successful when a collaborative approach is used (Chu et al., 2019). It is argued that EPs are in a unique position to be able to support with removing barriers to attendance through the use of psychologically informed and contextually responsive approaches (Fallon et al., 2010). However, it is commonly reported that EP involvement typically comes at the later stages of attendance difficulties when the problem has become embedded (Browne, 2018).

The importance of early intervention has been discussed (Finning et al., 2020). Therefore, EP involvement might be the most beneficial at a systemic level and as a preventative measure, for instance delivering training around how SEND needs impact on attendance (McDonald et al., 2022). Research has highlighted the importance of relationships between home and school (Lissack & Boyle, 2022) but also that punitive approaches often adopted by schools can lead to these relationships breaking down (Costello, 2022). EPs can be a valuable support during these times by acting as an impartial advisor between home and school and supporting the repairing of these relationships (McDonald et al., 2022). This is supported by Miller (1996) who discusses the role of the EP in working with parents and schools by developing a temporary overlapping system.

2.10 Rationale for research

The DfE (2024a) states that school should provide a supportive environment, viewing non-attendance as an indicator of wider familial difficulties. There is also encouragement for schools to implement a graduated response with the focus being

on early identification and collaborative working with families. The complex interplay of factors that impact on attendance has been discussed, along with the need to have a good understanding of suitable support (Melvin et al., 2019). In addition, the value of having a tool that aims to triangulate information to build a clear picture of these factors is identified in the literature (Elliott & Place, 2019).

The ATTEND Framework is a tool that was produced to enable schools to capture a clear picture of the barriers to attendance experienced by an individual (Tobias, 2021). Whilst the ATTEND Framework is widely used within practice there is currently no published research base for this. This small-scale qualitative research aims to gain an insight into the usefulness of this tool, the ease of completion and the impact it had on attendance.

The current study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How did the participants find the process of completing the framework?
2. What were the similarities and differences in the reported difficulties around attendance?
3. What support was put into place following the completion of the framework and what was the impact of this support?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This qualitative study aimed to explore the usefulness and the impact of the framework from the perspective of the school staff, parents and CYP. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews and analysed through inductive thematic analysis with the aim of answering the research questions shown in table 3. The purpose of this chapter is to position the research within the relevant philosophical framework and to identify the epistemological, ontological and methodological stance that has guided this study. The research methodology is discussed including the recruitment process, participant demographics, data collection and analysis. Ethical considerations are discussed and addressed in line with current ethical guidance.

Table 3 Research Questions

RQ1	How did the participants find the process of completing the framework?
RQ2	What were the similarities and differences in the reported difficulties around attendance?
RQ3	What support was put into place following the completion of the framework and what was the impact of this support?

3.2 Research Philosophy

A researcher's paradigm refers to the perceptions and ideas that underpin their philosophical viewpoint (Blaikie, 2007). A researcher's paradigm determines how they view the phenomena that they intend to study and directly influences the research methods they adopt (Donmoyer, 2008). The paradigm adopted by a researcher provides a framework that contains a set of assumptions that inform how the research process will be conducted (Patton, 1990). There are two main paradigms that underpin research in the social sciences, positivism and interpretivism. Researchers that adopt a positivist approach to research believe that where possible, it should replicate research conducted within the natural sciences (Marsh, 2006). Positivist paradigms aim to investigate the causes, functions and consequences of social phenomena from a subjective viewpoint (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). When taking a positivist approach, the researcher will not be connected to the objects of the research (Blaxter et al., 2010).

In contrast to positivism, an interpretivist viewpoint holds the belief that approaches similar to those used in the natural sciences are unsuitable for researching the complexities of the social world (Cohen et al., 2018). Researchers who hold this view believe that interpretations are rooted in culture and history and aims to understand the subjective world that is human behaviour (Blaxter et al., 2010). Research methods underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm aim to fully understand the phenomena by understanding the individuals from within (Cohen et al., 2018).

The paradigm that a researcher adopts directly influences their actions and affects each aspect of the research process (Lincoln, 1990). When making sense of their chosen paradigm, the researcher will make sense of their ontological assumptions which will give rise to the epistemological stance and methodological implications. This then directly impacts the choices made regarding the data collection and

interpretation of findings (Cohen et al., 2018). Recognising that each participant's experience would be unique, this study aims to seek the individual perspectives of the participants and does not seek to produce generalisable results. Acknowledging that the researcher brings their own views and assumptions which is influenced by their own experiences is also considered (Willig, 2013).

The ontological viewpoint of a researcher concerns itself with the beliefs about the nature of reality and how we come to know it (Willig, 2013). There are two main ontological viewpoints that are adopted within social science research, realism and idealism (Blaikie, 2007). An ontology rooted in realism and underpinned by a positivist paradigm believes that there is an independent external reality that can be studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Conversely, idealism is underpinned by the belief that reality is dependent on the mind of the individual and is often adopted by research that is underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm (Sparkes, 1989). Idealists believe that there are multiple realities that individuals shape and construct based on their experiences (Blaikie, 2007). Under an Idealist ontology, researchers believe that no data can be free from interpretation and so there cannot be a reality that exists independently (Noonan, 2008). This study adopts an idealist viewpoint and recognises the multiple realities that may exist around the participants' experiences, acknowledging the subjective element during the data collection process (Willig, 2013).

A researcher's epistemological stance concerns itself with the nature of knowledge, what we can know about reality and how we can come to know it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). There are two major opposing epistemological positions in social science research, objectivism and subjectivism. An objective ideology links with a positivist research paradigm and supports the view that data collected provides us with an objective truth about the world (Blaikie, 2007). Whilst objectivism seeks to find a causal explanation to gain knowledge, subjectivism is underpinned by the notion of understanding an individual's experience (Blaxter et al., 2010). Subjectivism acknowledges that knowledge is informed by the researcher's perceptions of the

participants and their own individual experiences that then influence the inferences made from the data (Willig, 2013). Constructionism is commonly associated within the interpretivist paradigm and takes a subjective viewpoint (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A constructionist viewpoint takes the stance that individuals make sense of their own world through their own experiences and from this they create their own reality (Schwartz & Yanow, 2012). This study is underpinned by a constructivist viewpoint, believing that reality is constructed by an individual through their experiences and therefore cannot be generalised across populations (Kim, 2001).

When conducting research, the two main research strategies adopted are either induction or deduction. An inductive research strategy involves the researcher collecting evidence around a phenomenon and then drawing conclusions from the data (Blaikie, 2007). Inductive reasoning involves making inferences, therefore all knowledge derived from inductive research strategies is purely speculative (Fox, 2008). Unlike inductive reasoning where claims are derived from observations, deductive reasoning aims to make claims from broad observations, starting with a theory or hypothesis with the aim of either supporting or rejecting this claim (Blaikie, 2007). This study adopted an inductive research strategy that gathered the experiences of the participants and drew conclusions from them.

When conducting research, one of two main approaches is typically adopted. A quantitative approach to collecting data is closely associated with a positivist research paradigm and aims to collect data that is measurable and quantifiable (Marsh, 2006). Within this research approach, a theory or hypothesis is tested with the aim of either supporting or rejecting the claim (Park et al., 2020). Within quantitative research, generalisability is sought (Ali, 2024). Conversely, research underpinned by a qualitative methodology offers a broad approach to studying social phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Typically underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm, the methods adopted when conducting qualitative research will take an interactive and humanistic approach and views the social world in a holistic manner (Baxter & Jack, 2008). When conducting qualitative research, the researcher's

individual experiences and knowledge play a significant role (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). The complex and heterogeneous nature of attendance difficulties lends itself well to a qualitative research design, where the individual experiences of each participant can be investigated and explored fully.

This study sits within an interpretivist paradigm, acknowledging that knowledge and truth are based on an individual's perceptions and experiences (Gane, 2006). The participants in this study all had their own individual experiences of completing the ATTEND Framework and it is open to their own interpretation. This interpretation may not be generalisable to the whole population, but it is true to the individuals within this study (Willig, 2013).

By adopting an idealist ontology, this study recognises that there can be more than one reality that has been constructed based on the individuals' experience (Blaikie, 2007). The epistemological underpinning of this study adopts a constructionist viewpoint, recognising that reality is constructed by the individual (Schwartz Shea & Yanow, 2012) and acknowledging the subjective viewpoint adopted during data analysis (Kim, 2001). The qualitative methods adopted aimed to explore the complex nature of barriers to attendance in more detail and the participants' individual experiences of completing the ATTEND Framework (Tobias, 2021). Using an inductive research strategy allows for conclusions to be drawn from the data (Blaikie, 2007). Through the use of inductive thematic analysis, this research aims to gain a rich and detailed account of the data. Therefore, it seeks to theorise the socio-cultural context of barriers to attendance whilst considering the accounts of the individuals (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.3 Research Design

The aim of this research is to investigate the experiences of individuals who have completed the ATTEND Framework to support with removing barriers to attendance.

The ATTEND Framework (Tobias, 2021) offers a triangulation approach to collecting information around attendance difficulties by gaining information from school staff, parents and CYP. The aim of this research was to collect the views of each of these to gain a full perspective of each area of the intervention. The process of completing the Framework was first investigated in research question one to assess the accessibility and ease of completion. Acknowledging the triangulation approach the framework takes, the second research question explores the similarities and differences in difficulties reported by participants. Finally, to assess the impact of the framework, research question three focuses on the support that was put into place following the completion and the impact this had on attendance. The CYP from each case opted out of the research and therefore only the member of school staff and the parent from each of three cases were interviewed. This study utilised qualitative methods in the form of semi-structured interviews to gain an insight into the process of completing the ATTEND Framework and the impact this had on attendance. Participants were recruited across one LA and through non-probability purposive sampling. The data were analysed through inductive thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke's method (2006).

For the purpose of this research, a multiple case study design was adopted. A case study design is described as being an intensive study around a group or object with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding around a phenomenon (Gustafsson, 2017). When considering whether to adopt a single or multiple case study design, the context of the research needs considering (Yin, 2017). Researching across multiple cases allows for a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences of a phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008). A multiple case study design also allows for data to be analysed within and across cases (Yin, 2017). Whilst some researchers believe that a single case study design is better for gaining a more focused and detailed account of the data (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991), others state that a multiple case study design is more reliable as the findings come from multiple places (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The aim of this study was to investigate the use of the ATTEND Framework from different perspectives. Underpinned by a constructionist viewpoint, this allows for each individual to share their reality and experience of the process (Kim, 2001). Using a multiple case study design, allows for an investigation into how the framework supports on an individual basis as well as across different cases. Additionally, it allows for an investigation across different settings and the similarities and differences between how the Framework was implemented.

Semi-structured interviews were used as they are believed to be a preferred method of data collection when the aim is to gain a unique perspective of a phenomenon rather than a generalised understanding (McGrath et al., 2019). This method of data collection supports the constructivist paradigm that underpins this study and recognises that each individual will have their own experiences and perceptions of the process (Kim, 2001). The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for an opportunity to gather a rich account of the data by providing opportunities for more in depth discussion (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.3.2 Participant recruitment process

Due to time scales of the research and the specific focus around barriers to attendance, non-probability purposive sampling was used to recruit participants for the study. Purposive sampling is most effective when the researcher is focusing on individuals who have the required knowledge around the subject (Tongco, 2007). This method of recruitment meant that three case studies could be identified to give a full picture of the process from all those involved. Participants included three cases where the ATTEND Framework had been used. Interviews were conducted with the member of school staff and the parent that had completed the questionnaire from the ATTEND Framework. For the purpose of this study, the aim was to include all individuals that had completed the framework to share their experiences in order to establish the usefulness of the entire process. All of the CYP were invited to take part in the study. The CYP from case studies two and three made the decision not to

participate. The parent from case study one felt that he would find speaking with me too difficult and did not want to cause him any distress.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989) clearly states the importance of ensuring CYP have a voice. Lundy's (2007) model supports this and provides four distinct but related elements as a way of conceptualising a child or young person's right to participation. The four elements Lundy distinguishes between are space, voice, audience and influence. Whilst the literature does not dispute the importance of CYP's rights to participation, the right for them to withhold their views is also discussed. CYP can often find sharing their experiences difficult, particularly when they have previously shared but observed no positive impact (Kellett, 2010). Whilst the importance of pupil voice is supported within the literature, Kennan et al (2018) highlights that Lundy's model does not consider the implications of discussing emotional content.

Participants were recruited through one LA and selected based on meeting the criteria that they had completed the process of the ATTEND Framework. Two of the case studies were recruited through a training workshop around barriers to attendance. During this training the research was shared with attendees and an opportunity for further discussion was given. The third case study was referred through a specialist teacher that worked in the LA who had previous involvement with the child.

The first point of contact was with the school staff where the research was discussed in more detail and an overview of the study was shared. (see Appendix 1 for the research information sheet). As the school staff already had a relationship with the parent, they then approached them to gain consent to be contacted. Once consent was gained from the parent, contact was made to discuss the research in more depth and to gain full informed consent for both themselves and their child or young person (see Appendix 9 and 10 for the information sheets provided to parents and CYP).

3.3.3 Participants' Demographics

The three cases in this study included one male primary aged child in year six and two female secondary aged children in year groups eight and 10. All children were from different schools within the same LA (City X). The mothers of all three children were interviewed along with one class teacher who was also the Assistant Headteacher in the primary school, an Attendance and Family Support Officer and School Welfare Officer in two secondary schools. All participants were White British. The demographics of the participants are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4 Demographic of participants

Case	Gender	Age	Year Group	Key adults job role	School setting	Name	Parents' name	School staff name
1	Male	11	6	Class Teacher and Deputy Headteacher	Mainstream primary School	Jack (CH1)	Jane (P1)	James (T1)
2	Female	15	10	Attendance and family support officer	Mainstream secondary school	Emily (CH2)	Evelyn (P2)	Ellie (T2)
3	Female	13	8	School welfare officer	Mainstream secondary school	Lauren (CH3)	Lisa (P3)	Lily (T3)

3.4 Ethical considerations

Key ethical considerations were made and approval for the study was gained from the Ethics Research Committee at the University of Birmingham (please see

Appendix 8 for proof of ethical approval). The study followed the guidelines set out by the British Psychological Code of Human Research Ethics and ensured that standards around voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were adhered to at all times. (British Psychological Society (BPS), 2021).

3.4.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent ensures that participants have been informed of and have fully understood the facts that are likely to influence their decision to take part in the research (Cohen et al., 2018). Initially, consent was obtained from the school staff who then gained consent from the parents to be contacted with more information. Information sheets were provided to give an initial overview of the study along with contact information for the researcher (Appendix 6). No information regarding the family was shared with the researcher until the school staff had gained consent from them to do so. Parents were contacted through their preferred method of either a phone call or an email. This gave them a chance to ask any additional questions and to arrange a time for data collection. The parents and the CYP were both offered an initial visit prior to collecting the data to ensure they felt comfortable with the process. All of the parents shared that they were happy for data collection to take place on the initial visit.

Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and the expected benefits, the methods to be used and that they were going to be recorded during the interview. Participants were informed that all personal information would be kept confidential, and no identifying characteristics would be used in the write up of the study. Pseudonyms were used in place of any names. It was reiterated that involvement in the study was on a voluntary basis and participants were reminded of the timescales and process should they wish to withdraw from the study. Participants were provided with this information verbally alongside an information sheet (Appendix 6 and 9). Participants were given a chance to ask any questions and clarify any points before agreeing to participate in the study.

It was acknowledged that ethical challenges may become apparent during the course of the research (MacFarlane, 2010). In such incidences, participants were informed that information would be shared with the relevant professionals and that the safeguarding procedures within the setting, where the research was being conducted, would be adhered to.

A consideration was made whether to attempt to gain the voices of the CYP within the research. CYP are considered to be a vulnerable group as they may not fully understand the meaning of consent and may be susceptible to pressure (Thomas, 2017). This is particularly the case for CYP experiencing barriers to attendance and where there are other underlying needs. However, the importance of giving them a chance to have a voice as the people who are directly experiencing the difficulties was considered to be essential to the research. The value of the ATTEND Framework is that it provides triangulation of information which feeds into intervention. The aim of this study was to reflect this approach. Consideration was made around working with CYP during this research to ensure they were able to give full consent and understood what was being asked of them. Initial consent was gained from parents before attempting to gain consent from the child or young person. Information sheets for the CYP were given to parents to share (see Appendix 10 for the pupil information sheet). Within the first case study, consent was not gained from the parent for the child's involvement. This child was a selective talker and it was felt that the process would be too stressful for him. Within case studies two and three, consent was gained from parents for the CYP's involvement however the CYP both opted not to participate. Whilst the importance of ensuring CYP have a voice is acknowledged in the literature (Lundy, 2007), this can be difficult for CYP when the content is emotive and still very recent (Kellett, 2010). Consequently, no data was collected from CYP during this research.

3.4.2 Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to investigate the process and usefulness of the ATTEND Framework from the perspectives of those who have completed it. Semi-structured interviews were used to gain the perspective from each participant around their individual experience. Using semi-structured interviews adds structure to the process whilst allowing for the researcher to explore topics in greater depth (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). All interviews were audio recorded on a dictaphone to allow for accuracy in the data collection. Semi-structured interview schedules provided a guide which addressed the research objective. These included the main, open-ended questions and follow up probe questions to be referred to when needed (See Appendix 11, 12 and 13 for interview schedules).

The research consisted of three cases. Each including the member of staff that had completed the framework and the parent of the child or young person. The questions in the interview schedules all had the same focus but were adjusted to the participants. For example, in the parent's interview schedule one question asked, "what were the main things stopping your child from attending which came out in the questionnaire?" and in the members of staff's schedule the question was adapted to "what were the main things stopping the child from attending which came out in the questionnaire?". Keeping the focus of the questions the same allowed for consistency between participants. The aim was to keep the method of data collection the same with the CYP as using different approaches had been reported to possibly reduce their position as being active agents within the research (Kirk, 2006). However, the importance of methods being fit for purpose is also highlighted (British Educational Research Association (BERA), 2018). To ensure this, the questions asked were developed to ensure accessibility to all participants involved in the study (See Appendix 13 for the CYP interview schedules).

A pilot study was carried out prior to the data collection phase to assess the effectiveness of the interview schedule and make any necessary changes. Pilot

studies are reported to play an important role in research as it enables the researcher to check that the methods are appropriate and accessible to the participants (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). The parent was interviewed first and then the teacher the following week. No changes were made to the interview schedules upon completion of the pilot studies and so the data collected during this phase was included in the final project.

After consent was gained, each participant was contacted to secure a date for the interview. For each case study, the parent was interviewed first and then the teacher. Due to availability of participants, the time between interviews varied. In case study one, which was also the pilot study, the parent and teacher were interviewed one week apart. In case study two, participants were interviewed one day apart. In case study three, the parent was interviewed in the July, and the teacher was interviewed in the August, three weeks apart. However, this was during the holidays when the child was not in school. All teachers were interviewed in the school setting. Parents were given a choice of whether they would like to be interviewed at school or at home. The parent from case study one was interviewed in the school setting and parents from case studies two and three were both interviewed at home.

3.4.3 Data Analysis

All interviews were recorded on a dictaphone and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The researcher transcribing the data is thought to support with familiarisation and acts as a starting point for data analysis (Widodo, 2014). The data collected from the interviews was analysed through inductive thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke's method (2006). This method of data analysis involves identifying, analysing, interpreting key patterns within the data and creating themes. This method provides a flexible approach to data analysis. Unlike other methods of data analysis such as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and grounded theory that are both theoretically bounded, inductive thematic analysis allows themes to arise from the data, meaning they are participant driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This fits within the interpretivist paradigm that underpins this study and acknowledges that knowledge and truth are dependent of an individual's perceptions and experiences (Gane, 2006).

When completing the data analysis for this study, initial codes were generated within each data set where short phrases that captured the participants views were highlighted and copied into a separated document. These phrases were then grouped into codes before refining the themes. I then analysed themes both within case studies and across participant groups (see appendix 14 for an example of the process of the analysis).

In thematic analysis, data can be identified at both a semantic and latent level. Analysing data at a semantic level offers a descriptive account, where a latent level of data analysis aims to go beyond this and looks at the underlying ideas and assumptions. This latent level of data analysis involves a level of interpretation from the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For the purpose of this study, data were analysed at the latent level in order to examine the underlying ideas and assumptions of the participants (Burr, 2006). The process followed during data analysis is set out in table 5.

Table 5 *Six phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)*

Phase	Action
1. Familiarisation of data	The data was transcribed verbatim. During this phase, initial ideas for possible codes were recorded.
2. Generating initial codes	Short phrases that best capture what the participants were saying were highlighted within the transcripts and copied over into a separate document. Each participant was highlighted in a different colour.
3. Searching for themes	These short phrases were then grouped into codes, broader topics of interest.

	The themes were derived from these codes.
4. Reviewing themes	All themes were checked to ensure they related back to the original transcripts. Each theme was reviewed against the original transcript to check the meaning within the context of the conversation.
5. Defining themes	The themes were then defined and named to ensure that they reflect the importance and full meaning. Themes were reviewed in peer supervision to support with his step.
6. Producing a report	A final write up of the report was completed which demonstrates a concise, coherent and logical account of the data. This included key quotations from participants that demonstrated the key points.

3.5 Quality Assurance

Unlike quantitative research which places an emphasis on both external and internal validity and reliability, qualitative research tends to focus on the internal validity within the data (Winter, 2000). The internal validity of research focuses on the authenticity of the data which is reported through the eyes of the participants (Cohen et al., 2018). Whilst emotions and individual perspectives are viewed as undesirable biases that confound quantitative research, these same elements are viewed as essential in qualitative studies (Leung, 2015). Possible threats to the validity of this research and steps to addressing these are outlined in table 6.

Table 6 *Possible threats to validity of the study and steps taken to address them*

Possible threat	Steps taken
Methods used fail to elicit the participants' experiences of completing the ATTEND Framework and the impact this had on attendance.	All questions were discussed with thesis supervisor prior to interviewing. Interview questions were piloted to ensure the questions were interpreted correctly and they elicited the intended response.
Research effect influences the data collection process.	All questions were checked prior to interviews to ensure they were not leading and, were clear and neutral. All questions and additional prompts were kept the same to support with the consistency of questions asked across the participants.
Response bias influencing participants' responses.	Prior to the interviews, an emphasis was placed on the participants giving honest and accurate responses. Efforts to make participants feel at ease were made such as reiterating the right to withdraw and confidentiality statements.
Being unable to generalise the findings.	This study does not claim to be able to generalise the findings to other populations. The aim of this study was to generalise the finding to the theoretical perspectives identified during the review of the literature around attendance difficulties.
Poor recording of the data and analysis procedures.	To ensure the accuracy and transparency, all interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

3.5.1 Positionality and reflexivity

A researcher's positionality considers how their beliefs, values and interactions with participants shape the research (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2018). Due to the interpretive nature of qualitative research, reflexivity is essential for creating awareness of how the researcher has affected the process (Sibbald et al., 2025). Positionality involves actively engaging in reflexivity to allow the researcher to locate themselves in relation to the phenomenon that is being studied as this will impact on their underlying philosophical assumptions (Folkes, 2022). Some researchers believe that awareness of self is essential for limiting preconceptions and reducing researcher bias (Finlay, 2002). In comparison, some researchers believe that you cannot rule out researcher bias but that acknowledging it is important for the process and can even strengthen the research (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Considering the role researcher bias plays throughout the process of conducting research, a consideration around my own themes and perceptions was essential. As a TEP within a LA I have supported with different cases around barriers to attendance and used a variety of resources, including the ATTEND Framework. My perception from a professional perspective is that barriers to attendance is a complex issue which is likely to take a non-linear process. Each CYP will have faced different difficulties and will have had different experiences in terms of support given. As a mother to a young person who has experienced barriers to attendance, I perceive that this experience has likely been difficult for the parents and there is possibly a lot of uncertainty around the future. Being a reflexive researcher, I acknowledged that my previous experiences and the values I hold are likely to impact on the decisions I made and the interpretations I drew from the data. To ameliorate some of this bias, I shared the themes derived from the data within supervision to allow for discussion and to gain the perspectives of others.

This chapter set out the approach, design and methods used to conduct this research. To support with investigating individual experiences of completing the

ATTEND Framework, a qualitative approach rooted within an interpretivist paradigm was adopted. A multiple case study design was utilised to support with the aim of making the data more reliable and allowing for a comparison within and across case studies (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Semi-structured interviews were adopted to provide structure to the conversation whilst allowing for the opportunity for more in-depth discussion around certain topics (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). To allow for a flexible approach to data analysis, inductive thematic analysis was used (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

The aim of this chapter is to outline the themes that arose from the interviews and to discuss the relevance of these within the context of the existing literature.

Pseudonyms are used throughout the chapter to support with anonymity. Names of the focus CYP and the associated adults are shown in table 7.

Table 7 *The focus CYP and associated adults*

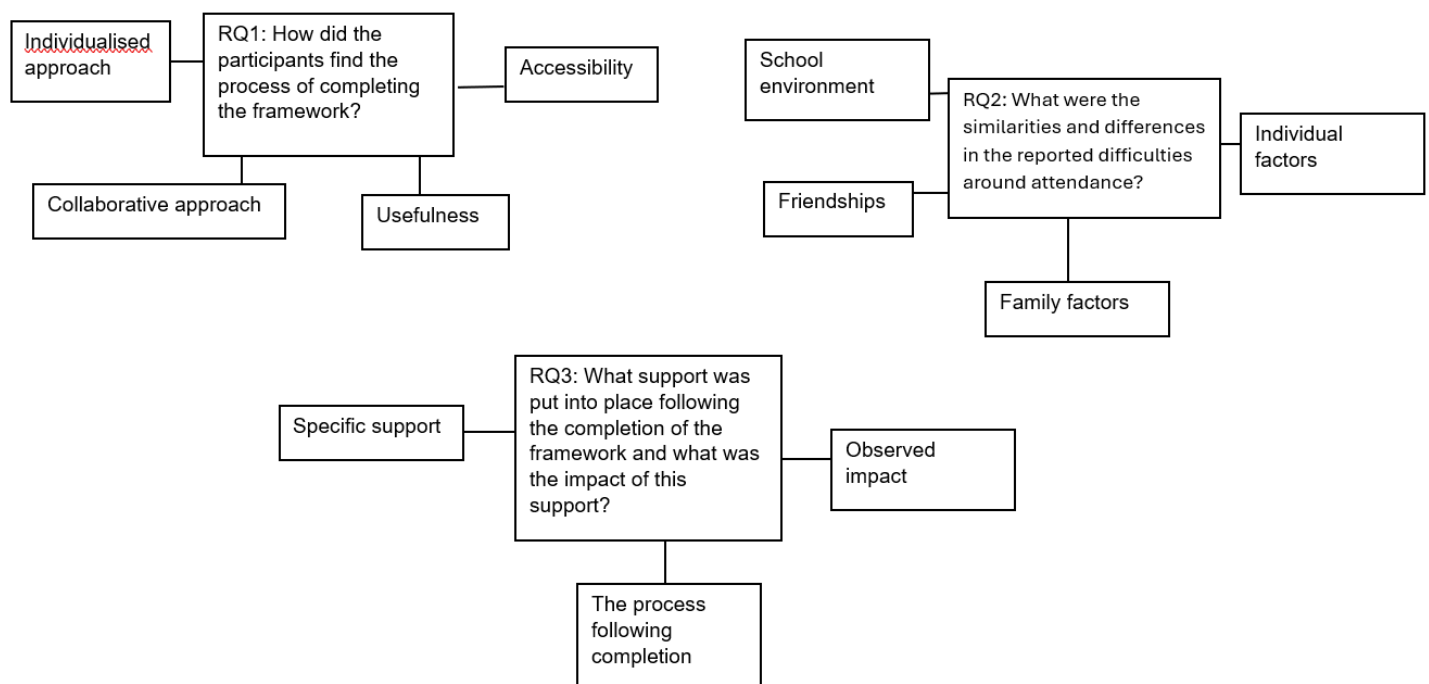
Case	Gender	Age	Year Group	Key adults' job role	School setting	Name	Parents name	School staff name
1	Male	11	6	Class Teacher and Deputy Headteacher	Mainstream primary School	Jack (CH1)	Jane (P1)	James (T1)
2	Female	15	10	Attendance and family support officer	Mainstream secondary school	Emily (CH2)	Evelyn (P2)	Ellie (T2)
3	Female	13	8	School welfare officer	Mainstream secondary school	Lauren (CH3)	Lisa (P3)	Lily (T3)

The themes arose from interviews conducted with the parents of the CYP and the school staff who had completed the ATTEND Framework. The aim of the research was to interview all individuals who had completed the process of the ATTEND Framework across three case studies. Consent to speak with the CYP was attempted to be gained through the parents but was not obtained for the following reasons. When speaking with Jane (P1), she felt that Jack (CH1) would not feel comfortable speaking with me and did not want to put him in this position. Jack (CH1) is a selective talker, and it was agreed that as the interview would not directly

benefit him then it was not in his best interest for him to engage. Emily (CH2) and Lauren (CH3) were both asked by their parents to take part in the study and they both made the decision not to participate.

Thematic analysis identified 11 themes across the three research questions (see figure 6 for a summary of these themes). These themes arose from the questions asked during the semi-structured interviews. Participants were asked to share their experiences around completing the ATTEND Framework and to share the impact of this on the attendance of the CYP. Participants were asked to share any similarities and differences between the reported barriers to attendance.

Figure 21 *Research questions and themes*



4.1 Research question 1: How did the participants find the process of completing the framework?

The aim of this research question was to explore the practical application of completing the ATTEND Framework. The themes identified and discussed included the individualised and collaborative approach participants highlighted when completing the intervention, the usefulness of the intervention and how accessible it was for the participants.

4.1.1 Collaborative approach

Four of the participants spoke about using a collaborative approach when completing the framework. All of the school staff, across the three case studies, spoke about the process being collaborative, however Lisa (P3) a parent, highlighted a lack of collaboration.

James (T1) spoke around collaboration and felt it was useful having everyone complete the questionnaires separately before bringing them together, sharing that:

it was interesting to join the three up and say, well, actually you didn't say this to us, but it's revealed that to Mum, so it was helpful having the parents do these surveys while in his more of natural environment.

Similarly to James, Lily (T3) a school welfare officer spoke about collaborating with parents during the completion of the questionnaire, stating that they “invite parents and student and we'll go over each thing individually, it's more personal and you get more information if you're talking to the person”.

The three members of school staff shared the ways in which they collaborated with others. Ellie (T2) spoke about collaborating with others in school depending on what was highlighted after the completion of the framework, sharing that they “allocated

actions within the school and highlighted actions for different departments, subject teachers, heads of year and the well-being hub for counselling support”.

James (T1) supported this view and spoke about the value of gaining the opinions of members of staff that work closely with the child, sharing that “I thought that having the opportunity to work with other colleagues in the classroom to see what their opinion is of how they cope with these different areas was valuable”. James (T1) also shared the value of regular and early communication with parents, which in this case prompted the implementation of the framework and stated that “mum had raised concerns about how difficult it was, every night he was feeling sick, he was feeling anxious, he was not sleeping very well”. Jane (P1) reflected this view and spoke about the framework being completed even before Jack’s (CH1), attendance had dropped, expressing that “It wasn’t that he wasn’t coming into school, it was getting him to school and being in school, but it wasn’t that he wasn’t coming to school if that makes sense?”

In contrast, other parents’ views beyond Jane’s (P1), reflected a less collaborative approach. When discussing working collaboratively, Evelyn (P2) spoke about completing the parent questionnaire at home independently then sending it into school, sharing that she could see positives and negatives for this approach:

I think it's good in one respect because you can come home, you can think about it but also there is, I suppose propensity to leave it and go is it really important? You know, so I think going through it with somebody you get the information there and then.

Furthermore, Lisa (P3) indicated a lack of collaboration with school and when asked what happened after completing the questionnaire she shared that “I kind of feel like nothing, I don't really know, so we've filled these forms in and yeah, I don't know, I don't feel like we got any feedback from it”.

4.1.2 Individualised approach

All of the staff that were interviewed spoke about the individualised approach to completing the framework. None of the parents spoke about this.

James (T1) shared his experience of gathering the views of Jack (CH1), who is a selective talker. James (T1) spoke about the value of the card sort activity, sharing that:

I think that was quite a good hook for him to come in because he saw straight away that this is not just somebody sat with a sheet of paper, it was a bit more, I could sort of reveal things to him, and he wasn't having to communicate verbally.

Additionally, Ellie (T2) spoke about adapting the ways in which they gather information from Emily (CH2) and Evelyn (P2). Ellie (T2) felt they would feel more comfortable completing the questionnaires alone, sharing that she “emailed the form and I said please be very honest because otherwise you won't get that support, and I want you to get that support”. Furthermore, Lily (T3) shared that the way they gathered the information would be different depending on the member of staff completing the process. Sharing the way she would complete the framework, Lily (T3) stated that “I would invite parents and student, and we'll go over each thing individually, it's more personal and you get more information if you're talking to the person”. Lily (T3) shared the process they used to ensure the families completed the questionnaire:

you could send the paperwork home but then you've got the issue of it not coming back or you're not seeing what they're writing, so I would have a laminated copy of all the questions and pass them to the parents and I would write the answers in.

4.1.3 Accessibility

All of the school staff spoke about how easy the framework was to complete in terms of the time it takes and the accessibility of the content of the questionnaire. However, there were conflicting views around this topic as James (T1) felt it was easy, whereas Lily (T3) and Ellie (T2) shared a contrasting view around the ease of completing the intervention. Lisa (P3) spoke about the accessibility of the framework for her daughter, Lauren (CH3). No other parents discussed this topic.

James (T1) and Lily (T3) spoke specifically about the time it took to complete the questionnaire with James (T1) sharing that “I think that all the questions you know you could kind of go with your gut reaction, so there was nothing too challenging or taking up too much workload time”. In contrast, Lily (T3) shared that she felt “it is time consuming to do it the exact way I would do it, so perhaps other people might shorten the actual process”. Similarly, Ellie (T2) shared this same view that whilst they felt the framework was useful, it was not easy to complete and expressed that “I wouldn’t say it was easy, it helped us as we were struggling with the family, the parent”.

Lisa (P3) spoke about the accessibility of the pupil questionnaire for her daughter Lauren (P3) sharing that she struggles to articulate her difficulties and that she found the process difficult to engage with. When speaking about the school asking Lauren (CH3) to complete her questionnaire, Lisa (P3) shared that “they probably would have done, but it's just, she just doesn’t want to”.

All of the members of school staff spoke about completing the parent and pupil questionnaires with the families and the children or young person. All three staff members spoke about the content of the questions. Lily (T3) shared that “some of them are a bit awkward” and Ellie (T2) acknowledged the sensitive content within the questionnaire, sharing that some of the questions were not things they would normally ask. For example, question F1 on the professional questionnaire asks if

there are any 'parental mental or physical health needs' (Appendix 1). This question revealed that "as a family, they struggle with mental health, so Dad struggles with mental health and as a school we weren't aware of that before". Furthermore, Lily (T3) also spoke about the difficulty in getting families to be honest when answering the questions sharing that "it depends on who they're talking to as well and they may tell you what they think you want to hear".

On a contrasting note, James (T1) spoke about the appropriateness of the questions for the child sharing that "the questions for the children are child friendly as well".

Lily (T3) and Lisa (P3) both spoke about the difficulties of answering questions on behalf of the child as they both felt that they did not always know the answers. This was particularly apparent in case study three as Lauren (CH3) did not engage in the completion of the pupil questionnaire and so it was difficult to gain her views, with Lisa (P3) expressing that:

some of it was hard because she didn't want to engage in the form, it was hard for us to kind of answer those questions on behalf of her, from what we knew, because she's not very open with how she's feeling and what's bothering her.

Lily (T3) added to this point and spoke about certain questions being difficult to answer, sharing that "Like the schoolwork and teachers, parents wouldn't necessarily know any of these answers, If the rules are too strict and things like that and I don't think a lot of parents would know about fitting in".

Lily (T3) and Lisa (P3) both spoke about the timeline and the value of this for identifying key points and possible triggers. When asked if they have completed the timeline Lisa (P3) shared "Yeah, actually, because there's things that we had kind of forgotten about that happened in school and it broke it down for us, we'd forgotten

about things, certain events that had happened". Lily (T3) also expressed how useful they found this aspect of the framework stating that "we have the timeline which I think is the most important piece of the ATTEND Framework, I would have them both in together to do this and its really beneficial, never get rid of that".

4.1.4 Usefulness

All of the school staff and Lisa (P3) spoke about the usefulness of the ATTEND Framework. Whilst the school staff identified positives regarding how the information gained was helpful, Lisa (P3) spoke around her feelings that she did not see the intended impact of the intervention. Lily (T3) also discussed some aspects of the framework she felt were not particularly helpful to the process, for example having only the staff questionnaire linking directly to the strategies.

James (T1) spoke around the impact of the framework sharing that "it just kind of gradually revealed the reason why he wasn't coming in". Ellie (T2) added to this point sharing that "It just gave a bit more guidance on how to proceed". In addition, James (T1) spoke about the recommended strategies that are in the framework sharing that "it provides us with some options then we just pick the ones that are there, that would work with him".

James (T1) spoke directly about the questions that were asked, stating that "I thought the questions are relevant, it seems relevant to what we're doing". Furthermore, Lily (T3) shared that whilst they felt the process was time consuming, completing all the parts are useful for building a picture around the main difficulties, sharing that "It is long and it's time consuming, but it's also helpful, I think each part is beneficial to the process". In contrast, there were points made by Lily (T3) and Lisa (P3) who both spoke about aspects which were not useful. Lily (T3) spoke about how only the staff questionnaire links directly to strategies in the guidance and how

this may indicate that the results from the school staff are viewed as being more important, expressing that:

they have got all the boxes and everything for the professionals, we don't have anything like that on the parents or the young persons, so when it comes to collating all the information, you're only really focusing on that.

Lisa's (P3) feedback on the usefulness was more around her experiences as a whole and that it was just another bit of paperwork, sharing that "I can't really remember the questionnaire; I feel like I filled in that many things".

4.1.5 Discussion in relation to research question 1: How did the participants find the process of completing the framework?

When discussing collaborative working, the school staff in the study spoke about this positively and shared the value of working with different professionals in school. In contrast, one parent spoke about collaborative working and felt that this did not happen. Lisa (P3) shared her perspective that whilst she had completed the framework, how this information was used and intended next steps were not made clear to her. Evelyn (P2) also spoke about working collaboratively during the completion of the framework and felt that there were positives and negatives to this approach. Expressing that she felt having time and space to consider the responses may result in more meaningful answers, however she acknowledged there was a chance that it would not be completed.

Research around supporting barriers to attendance states the importance of working collaboratively with families to identify factors and strategies to support (Corcoran et al., 2022). The school staff in this study discussed collaborative working with others in school and the value of gaining the views of others to ensure a clear picture of the

difficulties is gained. School staff also discussed the importance of ensuring that the relevant professionals were on board with the strategies that were being implemented. This supports existing literature that highlights how working in this collaborative way is more likely to result in successful intervention (Chu et al., 2019).

Research around successful collaborative working highlights the importance of relationships (Cunningham et al., 2022) and how a lack of collaboration between home and school can result in the breakdown of trust (Corcoran et al., 2022). Participants in this study highlighted the sensitivity of some of the questions such as those around substance misuse (Appendix 1) and the literature highlights the needs for trusting relationships between home and school to ensure that families feel able to share (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). Lily (T3) spoke about the direct links from the questionnaire to the strategies in the guidance and how these were only in the school staff copy. Lily (T3) felt that it may result in the CYP and the families' voices not being taken into account and important aspects being overlooked. The importance of gaining 'buy in' from the CYP and their family is highlighted as being an essential factor in a successful intervention. To gain this buy in, families and CYP need to feel listened to (O'Hagan et al., 2022). This highlights the importance of ensuring that information is collected from all individuals and used to inform the action planning process.

Lisa (P3) reported that she did not feel there was enough communication between home and school, and they felt that the ATTEND Framework was just another piece of paperwork they had to complete. Jane (P1) had a different experience where communication between home and school was early and consistent. Regular contact between home and school is highlighted as a supportive factor within the literature (McDonald et al., 2022). The importance of early intervention and ensuring regular contact between home and school is also discussed in the literature (McDonald et al., 2022; Finning et al., 2020). James (T1) was the only participant to discuss that they had regular contact with home which allowed them to identify signs that Jack (CH1) was finding it difficult to attend before his attendance dropped. This allowed for early implementation of the framework and for strategies to be put into place. Lisa

(P3) shared that they felt it was just another form they had completed, and it did not stand out to her as anything different. This highlights a lack of home-school collaboration and indicates that the parents' views were not being taken into account. Guidance around supporting with attendance clearly states the need for schools to work in partnership when identifying barriers to attendance and implementing suitable strategies (DfE, 2024a).

One of the reported difficulties when completing the framework was around answering questions about the CYP and that the adults would not necessarily know the answers. This highlights the importance of gaining pupil voice for ensuring a clear picture of difficulties is gained (O'Hagan et al., 2022). The difficulty in collecting pupil voice is also evident, demonstrating the need for ensuring the child or young person has a trusting relationship with the person collecting this information and that different tools, such as card sort activities, are used (Corcoran et al., 2022). The questionnaire and the card sort activities offer a less direct approach to gathering information which can be useful when CYP find discussing an emotive topic difficult (Kennan et al., 2018).

The use of an individualised approach for gathering information around the difficulties and the value of the framework for allowing flexibility was discussed by participants. The literature acknowledges the complex nature regarding barriers to attendance (Heyne et al., 2014) and how approaches to identifying needs should work around the CYP and their families (Elliott & Place, 2019). School staff in this study shared the different ways in which information was collected, such as emailing the forms and using the card sort activity. Conversely, having a framework which is open to be used in adaptive ways may mean that valuable parts are not completed. For instance, Lily (T3) and Lisa (P3) both spoke about the value of completing the timeline but also acknowledged that due to time constraints this part will often be left out in favor of the teacher questionnaire as these link directly to strategies. Previous studies have highlighted time constraints as a difficulty when supporting attendance difficulties (Finning et al., 2017). Cutting corners as a result of these time constraints may result in missing valuable information such as trigger points and pupil voice.

In this study, there were contrasting views around the time it takes to complete the framework, with James (T1) expressing that he felt it was not a time-consuming task, whereas Lily (T3) felt it was. Ellie (T2) added to this with her view that whilst it was useful, it was not an easy task to complete. This reflects what has been reported in previous studies around interventions being easier to implement in a primary school setting (Finning et al., 2017). This reflects the current data that highlights the number of CYP that are currently experiencing attendance difficulties being higher in secondary schools (Burtonshaw & Dorrell, 2023).

4.2 Research question 2: what were the similarities and differences in the reported difficulties around attendance?

The aim of research question two was to explore the similarities and differences of the difficulties reported across the participants. The themes school environment, friendships, family factors and individual factors were identified. The differences reported between home and school are explored along with how the completion of the framework supported with developing a shared understanding, highlighting difficulties they were not previously aware of.

4.2.1 School environment

Participants within case studies one and three spoke directly about factors within the school environment that the CYP were finding difficult. Whilst James (T1) shared factors relating to learning and the classroom such as transition, Jane (P1) spoke more around the difficulties relating to personal care. Lisa (P3) shared specific concerns around a difficult relationship with a teacher, where Lily (T3) was very general with her response.

There were similarities and differences identified by James (T1) and Jane (P1) regarding the difficulties Jack (CH1) was experiencing in school. Both shared that whilst Jack (CH1) was attending school, it was entering the classroom environment and not engaging in lessons that he was finding difficult. James (T1) shared that:

he was often refusing to come into the classroom, so he was just sitting in the corridor, really quiet, really shut down, people were having to go out and try to figure out what it was that was making him upset.

James (T1) then went on to discuss the school factors that Jack (CH1) was experiencing, sharing that “we figured out initially that it was the transition into a new year group”. James added to this and spoke about the content of the lessons that Jack (CH1) was finding difficult, expressing that “it revealed that he had this kind of fear of writing and often he wouldn’t pick up a pen, wouldn’t pick up a pencil” and also highlighted specific lessons that were a barrier for him, sharing that “There are other things in school which I think we’ve all identified, like P.E, music, drama, anything that causes a lot of noise in the hall he can’t cope”. Additionally, Jane (P1) spoke about Jack’s (CH1) difficulties with using the toilet at school and shared that this was not something they had previously been aware of, stating that “he’ll only sit down to have a wee, but he doesn’t like how the toilet seats feel against his skin in school”

Lisa (P3) spoke about Lauren’s (CH3) difficulties sharing that it started with a difficult relationship with one of her teachers, expressing that “it really wasn’t very clear but there was an ongoing issue with a teacher that she didn’t like, and they wouldn’t move her out of that class”. Lily (T3) also discussed Lauren’s (CH3) difficulties but was more generalised with her view, sharing that it was “just the school in general, the whole environment, she just didn’t want to go”

4.2.2 Friendships

The impact of friendship was spoken about by five participants. James (T1) spoke around the impact of a loss of a friend and how this impacted on Jack's attendance. Similarly, Evelyn (P2) and Ellie (T2) both spoke about the impact friendships have had on Emily's attendance. In addition, there was also an element of reflection around friendships from Evelyn (P2) questioning whether this was a difficulty she hadn't considered. There was also a development of a shared understanding regarding difficulties with bullying within case study two. Lily (T3) spoke about Lauren's (CH3) friendships being important to her, whilst Lisa (P3) shared that she found it difficult to answer questions around this.

James (T1) spoke about Jack's (CH1) friendship group and the impact of this on attendance, sharing that "one of his friends had left at that point so that person that he had that connection with wasn't there, so he was having to build new relationships with other pupils"

Similarly, Evelyn (P2) and Ellie (T2) both shared the impact friendships had on Emily's (CH2) attendance, with Evelyn (P2) sharing that "she's had struggles with friends being weird, I think with girls it's so different anyway, but she had friends sort of fall out with her for no reason". Comparatively, Ellie (T2) spoke about friendships as a supportive factor and shared that Emily (CH2) would struggle when her friends were not in school, expressing that "she has a very tight circle of friends, so if they're not there or one's not there, then she's not there". Evelyn (P2) also spoke about the questions around friendships and how the completion of the framework allowed for an opportunity to think more into this as being something Emily (CH2) possibly does struggle with, something she has not considered before. Reflecting on this point, Evelyn (P2) shared that "I was reading about friendships, and I thought, does she? I mean, she has got friends, but some of them are very casual". Ellie (T2) added to this and spoke about some difficulties with friendships being reported by both Evelyn (P2) and Emily (CH2) and that they both had different views around this. Whilst

Evelyn (P2) felt that there were elements of bullying, Emily (CH2) reported that it was not bullying but more difficulties navigating friendships. Speaking around this, Ellie (T2) reported that “parents thought that she was being bullied and that's why she'd got the eating disorder, but then she put that it was some friendship things, not bullying”

Similarly to Ellie (T2), Lily (T3) shared that although Lauren (CH3) was not attending school, friendships were still a supportive factor and possible strategy for re-engagement, sharing that “she comes as far as the school gate after school because she goes with her friends”. Lisa (P3) spoke around friendships and how this question was difficult for them to answer on the questionnaire, sharing that “she had never given us any inclination that she is being bullied or if she had lost any good friends or anything”

4.2.3 Family Factors

Family factors were spoken about in case study two by both Evelyn (P2) and Ellie (T2). No other participants highlighted family factors as being a known barrier to attendance. Ellie (T2) shared that they were made aware of family factors through the completion of the framework, and this allowed for intervention to be put into place. Evelyn (P2) spoke about how this gave them an understanding of the impact these factors were having on Emily (CH3) which they were previously not aware of.

Evelyn (P2) spoke about Emily (CH2) highlighting her worries around financial hardship in the home. Whilst Evelyn (P2) acknowledged that this was a current difficulty for the family she was not aware that this was a particular concern for Emily, sharing that:

so, one of the areas was about do we worry about money and money is at the moment, it is a worry, So I did put that on my form. Apparently Emily put on

her form that we struggle or there's worry about money and I think that is a narrative, I think that worried me.

Ellie (T2) also spoke about this and expressed that this was something they weren't aware of as a school, sharing that she "called mum and said that, you know, both you and your daughter have ticked this, is everything OK? Is there anything we can do or signpost for?". Ellie (T2) also shared that the completion of the questionnaire brought to their attention other difficulties within the home around parental mental health, sharing that "as a family, they struggle with mental health, Dad struggles with mental health and school weren't aware of that before, we didn't know Dad wasn't working".

4.2.4 Individual Factors

Individual factors were discussed by five of the participants. Lily (T3) was the only participant not to attribute Lauren's (CH3) barriers to attendance to individual factors, sharing that she felt it was the school environment that was making it difficult for her to attend. Anxiety as a factor was discussed by three of the participants with two participants acknowledging how this cycle of anxiety perpetuated the difficulties. The impact of Emily's (CH2) disordered eating was spoken about by both Evelyn (P2) and Ellie (T2). Lisa (P3) shared that Lauren (CH3) had difficulties with clothing and also acknowledged that the process of completing the framework allowed for an opportunity for reflection around other individual factors that may be a barrier to attendance for her daughter Lauren (CH3).

James (T1) shared how Jack's (CH1) behaviours were displaying in school and acknowledged his anxiety around entering the classroom, sharing that "he was finding it difficult to come back into the classroom because of the learning that happened before, we identified this sort of doom loop that he was going through". In contrast, Jane (P1) spoke in more depth around Jack's (CH1) anxiety sharing that "the majority of the anxiety was focused on one teacher in particular". James (T1)

expressed that this was not something they were aware of as a school and that using the framework allowed for this to be identified, expressing that “it sort of revealed that at school he's very guarded”.

Evelyn (P2) spoke about Emily's (CH2) anxiety around attending school, sharing that it was “her anxiety around actually getting into school, I think the anxiety sort of manifested itself and she found it even harder to get into school because she didn't want to get out of bed”. Additionally, Evelyn (P2) spoke about the difficulties showing at an early age and shared that “even at nursery she use to cry if I left her, there was a lot of anxiety, separation anxiety and there is still anxiety there to do with her feeling safe”.

When discussing individual factors, Jane (P1) spoke about Jack (CH1) using the toilet and that this difficulty was not something either Jane (P1) or school staff were previously aware of, sharing that “toileting, so I didn't realise, obviously we know that he has issues toileting, but he wasn't going for a wee at all at school and I didn't know that”.

Ellie (T2) shared that whilst they were aware Emily (CH2) had difficulties with eating, the completion of the questionnaire allowed them to identify factors in school she was finding difficult that were associated with this including “drama and anything physical she was struggling with, self-image, P.E was a barrier, so we have taken it out”. Evelyn (P2) also spoke about Emily's (CH2) difficulties with eating and how this is impacting on her attendance, sharing that “she's not eating properly; she has disorganised eating”.

When discussing Lauren (CH3), Lily (T3) focused on the school environment as being the main difficulty, but Lisa (P3) spoke about individual factors that were previously highlighted to the school, sharing that “we highlighted the school uniform, so she hated school trousers, didn't want to wear a skirt, she wanted to wear

leggings but no, she wasn't allowed to wear leggings". Lisa (P3) also shared that the process of completing the framework gave them an opportunity to reflect on things Lauren (CH3) found difficult at home and acknowledged that this could be a barrier to attendance, sharing that "But then she does sometimes have worries about other things, like at home, if things kind of change".

4.2.5 Discussion in relation to research question 2: what were the similarities and differences in the reported difficulties around attendance?

Whilst there was already an awareness that Jack (CH1) was finding the school environment difficult, using the framework allowed the adults supporting him to identify the key factors in school that were acting as a barrier for him. The school identified that Jack (CH1) was finding the school environment difficult as he was displaying behaviours such as appearing withdrawn, and parents reported that he was showing signs of anxiety in the evenings and mornings before school. These early signs of school-based anxiety are highlighted as being the crucial time for investigating the reasons for these difficulties and implementing strategies to support (Ingul et al., 2019). The school were then able to make some small but critical changes to support him at an early opportunity. This supports the guidance set out in the table of responsibilities for schools around placing a focus on early intervention (DfE, 2024b). The success of the ATTEND Framework for Jack (CH1) is likely to be due to the early implementation of support which is reported to be the key to successfully re-engaging CYP in learning (Heyne et al., 2019). Highlighting the triggers such as the transition into a new year group will allow for preparing Jack for future transitions which is highlighted in the literature as being a key point that CYP find difficult (Chu et al., 2019).

The non-confrontational approach of the questionnaire and having Jack (CH1) complete this at home with his Mum, allowed for his views to be collected and gained a better insight into the factors that he was finding difficult in school. This supports

previous studies that have used similar approaches and found that this is a useful strategy for gaining the voice of CYP (Corcoran et al., 2022).

In contrast, Lisa (P3) and Lily (T3) both spoke about the difficulties in gaining Lauren's (CH3) voice. Lauren (CH3) had previously expressed elements of the school environment that she was finding difficult, such as a certain teacher and elements of the school uniform. No changes were implemented to address these whilst Lauren (CH3) was still in school and this likely resulted in her feeling that her views were not valued. The importance of gaining the voice of CYP is clearly stated in legislation (UNICEF, 1989). However, research shows that CYP are less likely to engage with professionals if they have previously felt that they have not been listened to (Kellett, 2010). Research has also found that CYP are likely to find it difficult to share when there is emotional content (Kennan et al., 2018). This is likely why Lauren (CH3) found it difficult to engage with the ATTEND Framework. Lily (T3) spoke about the difficulties that they identified through completing the framework and shared that it appeared to be the school environment in general and did not identify any specifics, highlighting the need for some more in-depth investigation around Lauren's (CH3) difficulties. The difficulty engaging with this process signifies that there needs to be more time spent repairing the relationship between Lauren (CH1) and school staff and time spent gaining her trust to enable her to share her views.

The importance of friendships was highlighted and the process of completing the ATTEND Framework allowed Evelyn (P2) to think more in depth around Emily's (CH2) friendship group. There was also a discussion around how this process supported with developing a shared understanding around friendships as Evelyn (P2) believed there may be some issues with bullying whereas Ellie (T2) shared that her understanding was it was not bullying but more just a difficulty navigating friendships and conflict. This supports existing literature that states the importance of gaining the voices of all key people to ensure that there is a shared understanding (Heyne et al., 2019). In this case, having this shared understanding allows for interventions, such as a social skills group, to be implemented.

Furthermore, Evelyn (P2) and Ellie (T2) both spoke about the money worries that came up when they completed the ATTEND Framework with Evelyn (P2) sharing that she was not aware that this was a worry factor for Emily (CH2). There was also a discussion around parental mental health and Emily's (CH2) dad being out of work which was something that the school were not aware of. These topics can be difficult for families to discuss with school and are sometimes things that parents do not always feel is something they can share. Having good home-school relationships is essential for ensuring parents feel they can speak to school about difficulties (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). Research exploring links between disadvantage and low attendance found that a difficult home environment is shown to increase the risk of attendance difficulties (Sosu et al., 2021). This supports the literature that highlights the need to implement strategies across all areas (Elliott & Place, 2019).

Family factors were only discussed by two participants, both from case study two. Literature has highlighted the emphasis that is often placed on family factors when there is an attendance difficulty with parents reporting they often feel blamed (Sawyer & Collingwood, 2023). These results conflict with previous studies that reported school staff identified home factors as the biggest barrier to attendance (Malcolm et al., 2003).

Anxiety was a factor that came up across two of the cases and three of the participants as a barrier to attendance. Evelyn (P2) shared that this anxiety appeared at an early age and Jane (P1) shared that this was apparent at home before they saw it in school. Whilst anxiety was already recognised prior to completing the ATTEND Framework, the process of this allowed them to gain more in-depth information around what was underpinning the anxiety. The complex nature of attendance difficulties means that whilst the behaviour can look the same, the factors underpinning the difficulties are often different and need looking at on an individual basis (Clisshold, 2018). In addition, completion of the framework allowed for other factors, that the adults were not previously aware of, to be identified. Examples of this are Jane (P1) sharing that they were not previously aware that Jack (CH1) would not use the toilet in school and Ellie (T2) sharing that whilst they knew Emily (CH2)

had difficulties with her eating, and in turn the impact, they were not aware of the impact this had on other areas such as wanting to engage in PE lessons.

These findings link with ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and highlight the importance of gaining good knowledge and understanding of the systems around a child or young person and the interactions between them. The themes represent the components of CYPs microsystems in the form of their family and friends and the mesosystem which represents the relationships and interactions between these which will have a direct impact on the child or young person. This reflects the complexity of the interactions between systems and the need for a highly individualised support plan (Melvin et al., 2019). For example, for Emily (CH2) her money worries at home due to her dad being unable to work were impacting on her anxiety and ability to attend school. This is not something families would necessarily share with school or identify as being a trigger for attendance difficulties but highlights how the systems interact and impact on each other.

4.3 Research question 3: What support was put into place following the completion of the framework and what was the impact of this support?

This research question aimed to identify the support that was implemented following the completion of the framework and the impact this support had on attendance. The process following completion was discussed by all participants. The observed impact was also discussed by all participants who highlighted varying degrees of success. Links were made between the process of completion and success of the framework, for instance where there were good examples of home-school working, better outcomes were reported. All participants discussed individual strategies that were implemented except for Lisa (P3) who felt that there was no support put into place following the completion of the framework. Participants discussed adaptations that were made within school to support with attendance such as alternative lessons and providing additional resources.

4.3.1 The process following completion

All participants discussed the process following the completion of the framework. All the school staff spoke about the planned review meetings with James (T1) speaking specifically around how the information gathered during the process was used to put together a support plan. Jane (P1) was aware of and involved in the process of the planning meeting. Similarly, Ellie (T2) and Lily (T3) both spoke about the process after completion. In contrast, Evelyn (P2) and Lisa (P3) both shared that they were unsure of what was happening next.

James (T1) spoke about the process they followed after completing the framework, sharing that they “identified some targets, some next steps, we looked at different strategies that would help”. James (T1) spoke around how the ATTEND Framework supported with long-term planning and shared that:

he's on an IEP, so that's reviewed regularly and a lot of what is on his IEP has come from the action plan, so we can see what's working well, there are certain things that we just kept consistent throughout.

Jane (P1) spoke about sharing the process with Jack (CH1) and expressed that “I very openly talk to him about having conversations with people like yourself and other people that we are, you know, trying to help him, he knows that people are trying to help him”

Ellie (T2) shared that informal contact with parents had been maintained following the completion of the framework expressing that “we have regular emails from the parent every morning updating myself and the deputy head of year”. In addition to the informal contact, they plan on holding a review meeting and to inform this meeting they have asked for an update from all adults in school that work with Emily (CH2), sharing that “we've done an e-mail last week to all staff to find out how we're

getting on, what have they noticed, we don't know what's happening in the classroom". When asked about the planned next steps, Evelyn (P2) shared that she was not aware of what this would be, expressing that "I suppose I'm not sure what will happen now, I mean, I'm hoping that the plan we have in place now will then take her into September and next year, but yeah, I don't know".

Whilst Lisa (P3) shared that she was not aware of a planned review meeting and whilst they did have an initial meeting in school without Lauren (CH3) present, there was no reference made to the ATTEND Framework directly. Lisa (P3) shared that this meeting was "set up to discuss changes going forward and that's where they agreed the online lessons at home". Lily (T3) spoke about the process that this would normally follow but shared that Lauren (CH3) was finding it difficult to engage. Lily (T3) shared her views around this and that she felt listening to the voice of the CYP was important, expressing that:

it's important because I think that the young person should be there knowing what's being said about them, what we can do for them and for them to have a voice. Prior to the meeting, I'll say if you've got any questions put them on a piece of paper and bring them, so that your voice is still heard, even though it's through me.

4.3.2 Specific Support

The specific strategies that were implemented as a result of completing the ATTEND Framework were discussed by all the participants. Only Lisa (P3) shared that she felt there was no support put into place where Lily (T3) shared a contrasting view around suggestions they made to support Lauren (CH3) back into school. This highlights the lack of joined up working between home and school within case study three. Adaptations to the learning environment were discussed which included alternative

lessons and additional resources. Additionally, in case study three, a discussion around signposting for external support was had by participants.

James (T1) shared in class resources they were now providing as a result of completing the framework and expressed that “having a laptop there made it much easier, so once we got the laptop set up that was then an incentive for him to come into class and then we had this is what you do now, this is what we're doing next, this is what we do last, like a little timetable that's completed for him”. Jane (P1) shared that she felt the completion of the ATTEND Framework and the action planning meeting that followed allowed a chance to discuss new strategies but also provided an opportunity to discuss what is currently working well, sharing that:

I said the visual timetable has been really helpful and I'm hoping that that will get carried on, and it's understanding the importance of things like he has a 100 square and if he does something good he colours that in, when we spoke when we were filling in the forms that popped up quite a bit.

Similarly, Evelyn (P2) shared that since the completion of the framework, Emily (CH2) had been given an early lunchtime pass to help her avoid the busy corridor, sharing that “she's now got a pass to go into lunch a bit earlier”.

James (T1) spoke about them recognising that additional provision in school was needed for Jack (CH1) around his social and emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH) and shared that “it just kind of made us realise that we do need some proper provision for him just to support that SEMH need, so he now accesses nurture twice a week”. Ellie (T2) also discussed making amendments to the timetable for Emily (CH2), sharing that “PE and drama is not in the timetable at the moment and then the flexibility is there if she needs to sign out, she signs out on an I code not a part time timetable”.

Ellie (T2) spoke about the questionnaire highlighting that the family were experiencing money worries and that she made contact with Evelyn (P2) to see if they would accept a referral for support, sharing that she:

called mum and said that, you know, both you and your daughter have ticked this, is everything OK? is there anything we can do or signpost for? would you like help with food? Because I can arrange a referral, and she said yes.

Evelyn (P2) also highlighted this point, sharing that “Food For Thought have been in touch with me regarding help with food if we need it, so that's a change that's been put in”.

In contrast, Lisa (P3) shared that she did not feel that any specific support was implemented following the completion of the framework, and when asked about what support was put into place shared “I know it was brought up in conversation when we was at the meeting with everybody at the end of year seven, but I don't remember anything coming out of filling out these forms”

Conversely, Lily (T3) spoke about the strategies they recommended for Lauren (CH3) as she was not attending school at all at the point the framework was completed, sharing that:

I suggested lots of things, even if it's just sitting in the car looking at the gate, you know, just real baby steps to get to the point of standing outside the gate, to actually get through the gate, to get to the pathway, to get to the zebra crossing.

4.3.3 Observed Impact

The observed impact was discussed across each case with varying degrees of success reported following the completion of the ATTEND Framework. James (T1) and Jane (P1) both shared that there was a positive impact on Jack's (CH1) attendance. Ellie (T2) reported that there was an initial positive impact that then dropped but attributed this to additional pressures from mock exams, reflecting the complexity around barriers to attendance and how it is often not a linear process (Heyne et al, 2014). In contrast, Lisa (P3) spoke about how they observed no impact following the completion of the ATTEND Framework and that Lauren was currently not attending school.

James (T1) spoke about the positive impact completing the ATTEND Framework had on Jack's (CH1) attendance, sharing that:

it was important to try and figure out what it was that was driving this anxiety and what we could put in place and, you know, having said that, since we have put things in place, things did change quite quickly.

Jane (P1) supported this, sharing that "we have seen a massive boost in his confidence recently, I think teachers are starting to learn to approach it in a different way because of these meetings". When asked about the direct impact on Jack's (P1) attendance, James (T1) shared that "his attendance, yeah, it's definitely improved since we've put these measures in place". Whilst acknowledging the improvement in Jack's (CH1) attendance, James (T1) does acknowledge that there are still difficulties there and recognised the importance of continued monitoring, expressing that "mum still talks of having sleepless nights and the anxiety so that hasn't gone away but actually getting into school, that barrier seems to have been lifted quite a bit".

Ellie (T2) spoke about how initially they observed an improvement, sharing that “It did at the start, she appeared more cheerful and started eating in school”. Ellie (T2) then went on to share that this has not lasted and attributed this to some additional pressures and when asked about Emily’s (CH2) attendance currently shared that:

we seem to be dipping a little after the mocks and after the CAMHS meeting, we need to have a review meeting so that is something that we're planning for next week with Mum and student because we can't wait six weeks.

In contrast, Lisa (P3) shared that she did not feel there was any observed impact on Lauren’s (CH3) attendance after the completion of the framework and that she was unable to return to school after the holidays, sharing that “the Easter holiday came and that was like another two-week break, and then that's when we were not be able to get her back”.

4.3.4 Discussion in relation to question 3: What support was put into place following the completion of the framework and what was the impact of this support?

Varying degrees of success for supporting attendance were observed across the case studies. Each of the case studies followed a slightly different process after completion, with varying levels of home-school collaboration, and observed different outcomes. In case study one, Jane (P1) demonstrated a good understanding of the process and the strategies that were implemented as a result of completing the framework. Jane (P1) reported a positive impact on Jack’s (CH1) attendance following the completion of the framework. In contrast, Lisa (P3) shared that she was not aware of any support that came from the framework and reported no impact on Lauren’s (CH3) attendance, sharing that she was currently not attending school. Evelyn (P2) showed a greater awareness of the strategies that had been

implemented, however was still unsure of the action planning process. Following the completion of the framework, Emily (CH2) showed an initial increase in attendance which later dropped. This supports existing literature on the importance of collaborative working with families to support barriers to attendance (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). The differences observed across case studies are now highlighted and discussed in relation to the impact after completion.

There was discussion across case studies around what happened after the ATTEND Framework had been completed, with Evelyn (P2) and Lisa (P3) sharing that they were unsure of what the next steps would be. In contrast, Jane (P1) was involved with the planning process and had a good awareness of the interventions that were being implemented. Co-producing action plans with families has been highlighted in studies as being essential for ensuring that buy-in is gained to support with successful interventions (O'Hagen et al., 2022). In addition, this inconsistent approach to support has been identified as having a negative impact on the ability to develop trusting relationships with families (Sawyer & Collingwood, 2023).

For Jack (CH1), the process following completion appeared more collaborative and Jane (P1) appeared to have a good understanding of the strategies and support that had been put into place. James (T1) and Jane (P1) both reported a positive impact of this support on Jack's (CH1) attendance. James (T1) and Jane (P1) spoke about resources used specifically in the primary classroom that were implemented as a result of completing the framework, sharing how the process allowed for them to think more in depth around Jack's (CH1) difficulties and put in place adaptations. Making adaptations to support learning is a key factor in government legislation (DfE, 2015). In addition, these in school adaptations reflect the early intervention approach adopted which is highlighted in the literature as being a significant supportive factor when removing barriers to attendance (Lissack & Boyle, 2022).

In contrast, Lisa (P3) shared that she was unsure of how the framework was used to support her daughter Lauren (CH3) and she felt that she received no feedback from

it. Lisa (P3) reported no observed impact on Lauren's (CH3) attendance after completing the framework with the only reported outcome from the meeting in school being access to online learning from home. Whilst Lisa (P3) felt no specific support was implemented to help Lauren (CH3) get back into school, Lily (T3) spoke around her suggestions of a graduated exposure approach. This contrast in opinion around the process after completion highlights a need for better joined up working between home and school, supporting existing literature on the importance of this for supporting with removing barriers to attendance (DfE, 2024).

James (T1) discussed the impact of the framework for highlighting the need for focusing on Jack's (CH1) SEMH provision. They recognised the importance of ensuring this was made a priority, something that previous studies have reported often does not happen in schools (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). Allowing for flexibility around timetables was also discussed by Ellie (T2) as a strategy and the usefulness of the framework for identifying parts of the school day Emily (CH2) was finding difficult. This supports evidence for an individualised approach when working to remove barriers to attendance (Cunningham et al., 2022).

Ellie (T2) and Evelyn (P2) both discussed the money worries that were reported in the parent questionnaire and the pupil questionnaire. This was something that the school were not previously aware of and something that Jane (P1) did not know was a worry for Emily (CH2). Gathering this information allowed Evelyn (P2) to reflect on some of the language she felt she had used regarding money and the unknown impact this had. It also resulted in the school making a referral to external support in this area. This highlights the value of this process for developing a shared understanding around difficulties and allows for clear interventions to be put into place (Corcoran et al., 2022).

James (T1) and Jane (P1) both discuss how although things are better, they acknowledge that it is not perfect and highlight the importance of having open and regular communication. This is reflective of the literature and the importance of

ensuring that good communication pathways between home and school are regular and parents feel that they can share their ongoing difficulties (Corcoran et al., 2022). The complex nature of attendance difficulties and how this is not a linear process is also evident in previous studies (Heyne et al., 2014) and something that was highlighted by Ellie (T2) who spoke about there being an initial improvement that then dipped due to factors such as CAMHS involvement. This supports the current literature on attendance difficulties and the importance of informal contact with parents and ensuring they feel that they can approach the school at any point (McDonald et al., 2022; Finning et al., 2020). The importance of regular review meetings is also highlighted, where the action plan is looked at and amended accordingly. Ellie (T2) spoke about bringing forward the planned review meeting as they had recognised that things were starting to become difficult. This adaptive approach to using the framework reflects the research around the multifaceted nature of attendance difficulties (Heyne et al., 2014).

In contrast, Lisa (P3) shared that they felt nothing came from completing the questionnaire and shared they had received no feedback from it. Lisa (P3) shared that Lauren (CH3) did not return to school after the completion of the framework, however this was completed when she was already at a very low point of engagement with school. Lauren (CH3) found engaging with the framework difficult and Lisa (P3) reported that the initial concerns regarding difficulties with the teacher and the school uniform were not taken into account. This reflects the literature on pupil voice that states the likelihood of this being withheld when they have previously felt not listened to (Kellett, 2010). This supports existing literature that states to ensure strategies are successful, gaining buy-in from parents and CYP is an essential part of the process (O'Hagan et al., 2022). The starting point of gaining this buy-in and being able to gain the voices of families and CYP is rooted in the relationships they have with the school (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). In contrast, Lily (T3) shared that they suggested strategies based on a graduated exposure approach. The difference in views indicates that communication between home and school was not sufficient and resulted in Lisa (P3) feeling a lack of support from the school. This links to previous literature that highlights the differing explanations often given for absenteeism from parents and school staff (Finning et al., 2020). Lack of

engagement from Lauren (CH3) resulted in difficulties in identifying barriers to inform intervention. By not working in a collaborative way, school were not able to gain this buy-in from Lauren (CH3), resulting in no observed impact on attendance (O'Hagan et al., 2022). The development of relationships should be a priority when working to remove barriers to attendance, listening to and acting on the views of families and CYP plays a key role in this.

4.4 Final discussion looking across case studies

This study looked at three different cases which utilised the ATTEND Framework to support attendance difficulties, all of which reported varying degrees of success. In the first case, they had observed an improvement in Jack's (CH1) engagement in school with Jane (P1) reporting that he was finding coming into school much easier. Both James (T1) and Jane (P1) reported that the framework helped them identify key factors of the school environment that allowed them to implement strategies to support. Jane (P1) shared that she had a good understanding of the process which she was involved with. This case was within a primary school and the ATTEND Framework was implemented before Jack (CH1) reached the threshold for persistent non attendance at 90%. Jack (CH1) found it difficult to get into school and was reluctant to enter the classroom. In contrast, the other two cases were centered around secondary aged pupils where attendance was considerably lower at the point of intervention with the participants reporting less success. Emily's (CH2) attendance increased slightly before reducing again and there was no observed positive impact for Lauren (CH3). In both case studies, parents reported that they were unsure of the process following completion. In case study three, Lisa (P3) shared that the ATTEND Framework was completed when her daughter, Lauren (CH3), was already not attending school.

This reflects findings in existing literature that discuss the differences between primary and secondary schools and how early identification and implementing strategies is more difficult within a secondary school setting (Finning et al., 2017).

This is believed to be due to the number of adults CYP encounter during a school day that makes it difficult to be consistent with strategies and more challenging to build meaningful relationships (Cunningham et al., 2022). Parental contact with school staff often reduces in secondary school compared to primary, whereas primary school there are more opportunities for casual conversations with parents during drop-off that doesn't happen at secondary school (Finning et al., 2017). Not only do these regular and informal conversations support with parents voicing their worries or concerns at an earlier opportunity, it is also valuable for supporting with the development of home-school relationships (Cunningham et al., 2022).

The ATTEND Framework is recommended for use when attendance drops below 90%, the threshold used for identifying persistent absence (DfE, 2025). Whilst having a threshold for identifying when there are difficulties with attendance this does not support an early intervention approach, the importance of which has been highlighted within previous studies (Finning et al., 2020). For Jack (CH1) the framework was used at an earlier point in comparison to Emily (CH2) and Lauren (CH3). Jack (CH1) was attending school but found it difficult getting into school and would not always enter the classroom. Jane (P1) was able to share these concerns with the school at an early opportunity and support was put into place. The ATTEND Framework was successful for Jack (CH1), likely because of the support being implemented at an early opportunity. The interventions implemented for Emily (CH2) and Lauren (CH3) were implemented when attendance had dropped significantly and proved less successful in these cases. This highlights a need for using a range of methods to identify when CYP need additional support.

The importance of pupil voice was evident within the study as Jack (CH1) and Emily (CH2) were both able to share difficulties that the adults were not previously aware of. This is something that is supported in existing literature that highlights the importance of gaining pupil voice (O'Hagen et al., 2022). Lisa (P3) spoke about previously highlighting difficulties to the school regarding school-based issues, a teacher and uniform, and shared that they felt they were not being listened to. Literature highlights that CYP may be reluctant to share their views if they have

previously felt like they haven't been considered (Kellett, 2010). This is potentially the reason for Lauren (CH3) not engaging well in the ATTEND Framework and also not wanting to participate in this research.

The value of positive home-school relationships and good communication was highlighted amongst the participants in this study. James (T1) shared how he valued having regular communication with Jack's (CH1) parents as this allowed them to recognise his difficulties early and supported an early intervention approach. This is highlighted in the literature with findings stating that good home-school communication supports with the early identification of needs (Finning et al., 2020). In addition, the importance of pupil voice was also highlighted with the use of the framework supporting CYP to share their difficulties. Jane (P1) shared that during the completion of the framework, Jack (CH1) expressed that he was having difficulties using the toilets at school, a factor they were previously unaware of. This reflects previous findings of the importance of gaining pupil voice to ensure a clear picture of the difficulties is gained (O'Hagen et al., 2022). In contrast, Lisa (P3) shared that she did not see the value of completing the framework as she was not aware of how it was used and that she felt previous concerns they had raised were not acknowledged. This is likely to have impacted on the relationship in this case, as the literature states that inconsistencies around support often have a negative impact on home-school relationships (Sawyer & Collingwood, 2023). At the time of completing the framework, Lauren (CH3) was not attending school, making it difficult for them to implement the recommended strategies.

Chapter 5: Implications, Limitations, Strengths and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, the implications of the findings are examined regarding the use of the ATTEND Framework to support with removing barriers to attendance. There is a particular focus on the role of the EP and how they are best placed in supporting schools to use this tool effectively. Following this, a consideration is made around the implications for schools regarding the use of frameworks for supporting with attendance. The strengths and limitations of the study are considered before drawing final conclusions from the research.

5.2 Implications of the Research

There were some key differences between the implementation and the outcomes across the three case studies. In case study one, Jack's (CH1) difficulties were identified early and before his attendance had become a concern. This early identification of difficulties and implementation of support has been highlighted in the literature as being a key factor in successfully supporting with attendance (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). James (T1) shared that there was regular conversation with Jane (P1) who first highlighted the difficulties Jack (CH1) was having. These conversations prompted the early implementation of the ATTEND Framework and associated strategies. This reflects previous research that highlights the importance of regular conversations with parents for aiding early identification of difficulties and creating a safe space where parents feel able to share (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). Jack (CH1) attends a primary school setting which previous studies have highlighted is easier for building and maintaining home-school relationships as there are more opportunities for incidental conversation (Finning et al., 2017). In addition, it has also been

highlighted that interventions are easier to implement in primary school settings as they do not have to follow the same processes as secondary schools (Finning et al., 2017).

In contrast, Lauren (CH3) experienced no positive impact after using the ATTEND Framework. There were difficulties engaging Lauren (CH3) in the completion of the framework. This is likely due to a breakdown in the relationship between home and school, a factor which is highlighted in the literature as being essential for supporting with barriers to attendance (Sawyer & Collingwood, 2023). At the time of completing the ATTEND Framework, Lauren (CH3) was already not attending school. Lisa (P3) shared that she spoke with the school, highlighting that Lauren (CH3) was having difficulties and they felt the school did not listen. This reflects the existing literature that states the importance of early intervention alongside good home-school relationships for supporting attendance and engagement in intervention (Lissack & Boyle, 2022).

5.2.1 Implications for EPs

At the point of EP involvement, difficulties with attendance are often embedded and attendance already very low (Browne, 2018). The literature highlights the difficulties in seeking support from external professionals. Participants in previous studies have highlighted the lengthy waiting lists and how this acts as a barrier to accessing the right support (Cunningham et al., 2022). Within case study three, the framework was completed when Lauren (CH3) was already not attending. No impact on attendance was observed after the completion of the framework in this case. These findings support existing research and highlight the importance of identifying barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity (Finning et al., 2020).

The most useful way EPs can support schools to implement the ATTEND Framework (Tobias, 2021), which draws on psychological theories such as Bronfenbrenner (2005), successfully is through systemic work such as training and supporting

schools to develop their understanding of barriers to attendance. Previous studies have suggested that training around attendance is too general as it needs a more individualised approach (Cunningham et al., 2022). Supporting schools to develop their skills and resources in different methods for identifying barriers to attendance and providing them with a bank of strategies they can use would aid early intervention. Reframing thinking around attendance difficulties by supporting a shift in the language that is used can help school to adapt their approaches, moving away from the punitive approach traditionally seen when dealing with attendance (Costello, 2022). Through training opportunities, EPs will have the opportunity to share resources, such as the ATTEND Framework, to support with information gathering.

Whilst it has been acknowledged that at the point of EP involvement the difficulties are likely to be embedded (Browne, 2018), EPs can use the opportunity to model good practice. The findings from this study highlighted inconsistencies regarding the implementation of the ATTEND Framework with the most successful case (Jack, CH1) demonstrating a clear and consistent approach to completion. During casework, EP input will be useful for demonstrating the information gathering step, triangulation of data and setting of clear targets with an associated action plan that is regularly reviewed. This can support schools to use this approach across other cases.

In addition, supporting schools to develop and maintain relationships with families is essential for early identification and engagement with resources such as the ATTEND Framework (EEF, 2022). As EPs get involved at the point where the difficulties are embedded, it is possible that at this point home-school relationships have become difficult (Devenney, 2021). In which case, EPs working with CYP who are already experiencing severe absences from school may find that work needs doing before any interventions can be successfully completed. For instance, in case study three, Lisa (P3) spoke about concerns being raised at an earlier point, but they felt they were not listened to. This likely resulted in a breakdown in the relationship between home and school and a loss of trust, resulting in a lack of engagement from Lauren (CH3). This needs consideration when working with families and whether

EPs need to act as a source of support to repair the relationship between home and school before any attendance work can be successful.

5.2.3 Implications for schools

The need for collaboration and regular communication with families was highlighted as being a supportive factor within the three case studies in this research and supports previous literature in this area (Lissack & Boyle, 2022). For Jack (CH1), where there was reported success in using the ATTEND Framework there was also reported regular contact. Laura (P3) highlighted the absence of contact and that they were not aware what practical implications the framework had and what future steps were going to be. These findings suggest inconsistencies across schools with how this information is shared. Schools need to be aware of the importance and take accountability for ensuring regular and positive communication with parents to support with developing and maintaining home-school relationships. Prioritising relationships with families can support early identification of difficulties and implementation of support strategies (Finning et al., 2020). Regular and informal conversations with staff have been found to support this but are believed to be more difficult in secondary school settings. This is due to there being less teacher and parent contact (Finning et al., 2017). A consideration of how schools, particularly secondary schools, can support this more explicitly should be made. This could be done through coffee mornings, regular open evenings or drop-in sessions for parents.

Whilst the current recommendation is to complete the ATTEND Framework when attendance drops below 90% (Tobias, 2021), this research found that completing it earlier resulted in positive outcomes. In case study one, the framework was completed before his attendance dropped below the 90% threshold. However, engagement in school was low. Schools need to be aware of this when implementing any framework or strategy to support with attendance, shifting their focus away from data and thinking more around engagement in learning.

5.3 Strengths and Limitations of the Research

Yardley's (2000) criteria were adopted to assess the validity of this qualitative research and to support with identifying the strengths and limitations of the study. Yardley suggests that these recommended principles should be adopted in a flexible way. The principles proposed by Yardley are sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence and impact and importance.

Sensitivity to context refers to having a good understanding of previous research in this area and that the approaches used are grounded in the philosophical approach adopted. Previous studies around barriers to attendance such as Corcoran et al (2022) and Cunningham et al (2022) adopted qualitative methods with the aim of gaining a detailed understanding of the participant's experiences. Additionally, previous studies such as that conducted by McDonald et al (2022) used qualitative surveys followed by interviews with the survey data guiding the interview process. The qualitative approach this study took reflected the methods adopted by previous researchers and allowed for a more in-depth discussion around the participants' individual experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, as the ATTEND Framework is not a prescriptive intervention, there will likely be differences in the way it is used. In addition, the backgrounds of the CYP included in the study were different. Barriers to attendance are renowned for their complexity and the process of supporting them often requires a flexible approach (Heyne et al., 2014). For these reasons, quantitative methods, that would likely measure the impact of the ATTEND

Framework through attendance data, would not give a clear indication of the process and how useful it was for the participants. Additionally, it may not accurately measure the success of the intervention. For example in case study one where the attendance was not low but the success of the intervention was high, this impact would not have been evident through the use of quantitative methods.

The philosophical underpinning was also reflected within the methodology and data analysis adopted. With an interpretivist paradigm adopted, this study recognised and reported on each participant's individual experience through the use of semi-structured interviews and were individually analysed first as case studies. As reflected in the literature around interpretivism, this research methodology acknowledged that there may be more than one reality constructed by the participants, even within each case study (Blaikie, 2007). Analysing the data both within case studies and across participant groups allowed for a deeper and multilayered understanding of the topic and helped to identify weaknesses within the process of completing the framework. For example, the theme collaborative approach was discussed by all members of the school staff and only one parent, with the parent sharing a lack of joined up working. This finding indicated a need for better communication between home and school around the process of the framework.

It is also essential to acknowledge my position as a researcher, as Yardley (2000) states that an awareness of the context between the researcher and the participants is crucial in qualitative research. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allows

for additional prompts or questions throughout and having a shared understanding of the topic can influence these. Conversely when interviewing participants, aiming to remain neutral may result in unnatural interactions. The literature highlights researcher bias in qualitative studies, stating that whilst it cannot be completely ruled out acknowledging the impact is essential for limiting pre-conceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2022). My own experiences around barriers to attendance, both as a parent and a professional, not only led to my interest in the topic but also meant I had a preconception around how the parents may be feeling within the situation. Additionally, as a TEP my involvement when working around barriers to attendance was typically when the difficulties were embedded and things felt quite stuck. Through the use of supervision, I was able to acknowledge these biases and how they may have impacted on my thought process. All questions and themes were discussed in supervision to support with the process and the aim of reducing bias.

The next principles Yardley (2000) refers to are commitment, rigour, transparency and coherence. These points correspond to the thoroughness in the data collection, analysis and reporting across the study. The commitment to the process was demonstrated through the process of transcribing and immersing myself in the data through reading and re-reading the transcripts. The rigour of the data refers to the completeness of the data and adequacy of the sample (Yardley, 2000). Having three case studies with varying degrees of success allowed for an investigation around the differences between cases and a discussion around the possible reasons for these.

It is important to acknowledge the small sample size adopted during this research with the conclusions being drawn upon tentatively. The lack of voice from the CYP is a key limitation of the study. Future research could aim to use alternative methods, such as qualitative questionnaires, to collect the views of the CYP as this would give a useful insight into their experiences of the process. In addition, adopting a mixed method approach may have given greater insight into the impact of the framework, for instance including attendance data over time or including an analysis of the completed questionnaires.

The impact and the importance of a study is the final point discussed by Yardley (2000) as an important factor when assessing the validity of qualitative research. At the time of completing this study there was no published research on the ATTEND Framework and attendance is currently a key focus within government guidance (DfE, 2024b). As an EP, the recommendations we make and the tools we use in practice should be evidenced based (Boaler et al., 2024). Therefore, this study makes a valuable contribution to research around this tool. This study highlighted the importance of the framework being underpinned by collaborative practice and good home-school relationships, a factor highlighted in previous studies such as those conducted by Lissack and Boyle (2022) and Corcoran et al (2022). Additionally, this study supports the use of the framework as an early intervention tool, another supportive factor for successful intervention highlighted in the literature (Finning et al., 2020).

5.4 Implications for Future Research

This thesis looked at the use and the implementation of the ATTEND Framework for identifying and supporting barriers to attendance. Looking across three cases, all of which had varying degrees of success, the process and the impact of the framework were examined. The implications for future research are now discussed.

Initially, this thesis aimed to capture the views of all individuals that were part of the process for completing the ATTEND Framework. This was to gain a full understanding of the process from all different perspectives. However, pupil participation was not possible. Jack (CH1) is a selective talker and Jane (P1) felt that speaking to me would cause him too much stress. Emily (CH2) and Lauren (CH3) both chose not to participate. BPS (2021) guidance clearly states the importance of gaining consent from participants and respecting their wishes. Time constraints meant developing a rapport with the CYP over a period of time was not possible. For Emily (CH2) and Lauren (CH3) who were still experiencing difficulties around attending school, it was possible that they felt overwhelmed by input from various professionals. Lisa (P3) reported that Lauren's (CH3) engagement with professionals was generally very low. As this was a new resource introduced to schools in the LA over the last two years, there was very little historical use. Future research into the use of the ATTEND Framework should aim to gain the views of the CYP to assess how they felt it supported with their voice being heard. Time would possibly need to be spent developing a trusting relationship before engaging them in data collection.

Whilst the ATTEND Framework is designed to be used in a non-prescriptive way, this may lead to valuable parts being left out. The card sort and the timeline were highlighted as being parts of the process that helped them to understand the barriers to attendance. In this study, not all the resources were used in each case. This does not give a clear picture of all the aspects of the ATTEND Framework. A point for future research would be to investigate the impact of all the aspects of the framework. Additionally, a comparative study that looks at cases where they solely used the

questionnaires compared to ones that incorporated the additional resources would be useful.

One of the difficulties was that the framework, having only been used in the LA for two years, may not have had the opportunity to see the full impact. CYP experiencing barriers to attendance has been highlighted as being complex and is often not a linear process (Heyne et al., 2014). Conducting a study over a period of time would help identify the true impact of the framework on attendance.

The transition into secondary school has been identified as a significant precipitating factor of attendance difficulties (Chu et al., 2019). This study supported previous findings around the importance of early identification and intervention for supporting with barriers to attendance (Finning et al., 2020). Future research could focus on the use of the ATTEND Framework for supporting during this transition period as an early intervention tool. Completing it for CYP who are believed to be at risk of experiencing barriers to attendance prior to the transition into secondary school.

5.5 Conclusion

Each of the cases was unique in terms of the difficulties the CYP were experiencing, the time that the ATTEND Framework was completed and the process that happened following the completion. Therefore, direct comparisons are difficult. Acknowledging the complex nature of barriers to attendance highlights that research into this area is difficult to draw distinct comparisons from (Heyne et al., 2014). However, whilst the case studies were different with different degrees of success there were clear themes that became apparent.

Reported in the study was the value of developing a shared understanding through the triangulation approach. Previous studies have identified that there is often a disconnect between the perceived reasons for attendance difficulties, with school feeling it is a home issue and parents feeling that school is not doing enough to support (Malcolm et al., 2003). This was highlighted in case study two where Lisa (P3) spoke about the school issues of teacher and uniform and Lily (T3) wanted interventions to be centred around exposure to the school building. This process of developing a shared understanding supports with evoking empathy and allows them to see the bigger picture and how all factors interact to create barriers to attendance (Sosu et al., 2021). This way of working can support with repairing and developing relationships between home and school (O'Hagan et al., 2022). Whilst the ATTEND Framework is a useful tool for gathering information around the barriers to attendance, it is essential that it is underpinned by good relationships between the CYP, parents and school.

The need for the intervention to be completed at the earliest opportunity was highlighted as a significant factor in the success of the framework. The current recommendation is that the framework is completed when attendance drops below 90% (Tobias, 2021). However, as seen in case study one, when used before this point it can be successful for removing barriers to attendance before the difficulty becomes embedded.

As highlighted across the three case studies, the need for a collaborative approach is essential for the success of the intervention. Ensuring that families and CYP know the planned process and agree with all actions will support with developing trust and engagement with intervention (DfE, 2024).

The non-linear nature of attendance difficulties was highlighted within case study two as Emily (CH2) experienced a dip in her attendance due to the mock exams. Regular reviews of the plan are recommended to keep the support consistent and ensure that

it is still effective. These regular reviews will also support the development of home-school relationships and allows for regular sharing of information.

In conclusion, the ATTEND Framework is a useful tool for identifying barriers to attendance when it is underpinned by good home-school relationships, a thorough collaborative approach and when it is completed at an early opportunity. The complex and non-linear characteristics of barriers to attendance means that regular review meetings, where families and the CYP are included, are essential.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Parent questionnaire from the ATTEND Framework

What is stopping my child from going to school?

Worry

My child is worried about:

- ☐ open spaces
- ☐ feeling trapped
- ☐ crowds
- ☐ the school bus
- ☐ being bullied
- ☐ having a panic attack
- ☐ public transport
- ☐ getting into trouble
- ☐ getting sick/germs/viruses
- ☐ doing badly in lessons
- ☐ socialising with other people
- ☐ something else _____

My child is so afraid of school that they:

- ☐ sweat
- ☐ panic
- ☐ breath too fast
- ☐ run away
- ☐ cry
- ☐ get angry
- ☐ have a racing heart
- ☐ find it hard to sleep on school nights

Health and wellbeing

My child has:

- ☐ migraine headaches
- ☐ an eating disorder
- ☐ sight problems (including CVI)
- ☐ speech and language difficulties
- ☐ another condition not listed here _____
- ☐ IBS
- ☐ ADHD
- ☐ OCD
- ☐ autism
- ☐ dyspraxia
- ☐ dyslexia
- ☐ depression
- ☐ seizures
- ☐ severe period pains
- ☐ hearing problems
- ☐ anxiety/panic attacks
- ☐ physical disability

- ☐ My child feels like they are in the wrong gender body

Sensory overload

My child finds it hard to put up with:

- ☐ the fabric of school uniform
- ☐ being too close to others
- ☐ something else in the school environment _____
- ☐ smells
- ☐ noise
- ☐ moving between lessons
- ☐ bright lighting

Fitting in

- ☐ My child is being bullied
- ☐ My child recently lost a good friend
- ☐ My child has recently fallen out with someone
- ☐ My child is having problems involving social media or cyberbullying
- ☐ My child feels they don't fit in with others. They struggle at lunch and break times
- ☐ My child feels they don't fit in with others because they are a different religion or race
- ☐ My child feels they don't fit in with others because they are gay/lesbian or have a different gender identity
- ☐ My child has a bad reputation at school
- ☐ My child feels lonely and doesn't really have friends

School work and teachers

- ☐ My child finds the work too hard
- ☐ My child is having trouble with a certain teacher
- ☐ My child worries teachers will get angry with them
- ☐ My child is worried about doing PE or getting changed for PE
- ☐ easy
- ☐ My child doesn't trust the teachers
- ☐ My child finds school rules too strict
- ☐ My child is worried about exams

Changes

My child recently moved:

- ☐ schools
- ☐ from primary to secondary
- ☐ year group
- ☐ house
- ☐ to the UK

- ☐ English is not my child's first language and they are still learning it

Things at home

- ☐ I, or another parent or carer, has physical or mental health problems
- ☐ I worry a lot about the physical and mental health of my child
- ☐ It is not always safe at home because of fighting and arguments, drinking or drugs
- ☐ We have had a death in our family
- ☐ We have had stressful things to cope with at home (e.g. house fire, burglary, redundancy)
- ☐ We have had a big change in our family (e.g. new baby, new parent/carer, new step-siblings, divorce or separation)
- ☐ My child sometimes has to look after me, another parent/carer or brothers and sisters due to physical or mental health difficulties
- ☐ We worry a lot about having enough money
- ☐ There are lots of problems with where we live (e.g. damp, too crowded, we keep having to move, disagreements with neighbours or landlord)
- ☐ I find it hard to get my child to school in the mornings for practical reasons (e.g. other children with additional needs, transport issues, health problems)
- ☐ My child feels really worried about being away from me or another parent/carer – they find it distressing when we separate
- ☐ We don't feel school is that important in our family - we think there are other ways of learning things

Other things that stop my child getting back to school

- ☐ My child has access to comforts (e.g. computer, phone, play station or X-box, internet, TV, food, staying in bed or on the sofa, cigarettes, drugs)
- ☐ My child has a girlfriend/boyfriend off school
- ☐ My child is influenced by friends who are also off school
- ☐ Other people in our family are at home during the day
- ☐ My child works and earns money while they are out of school
- ☐ My child gets extra attention from, and time with, me or another parent/carer
- ☐ My child can completely control their environment at home (e.g. what they wear, who they see, when they go to bed or get up, what they eat, routines)
- ☐ I am worried my child might be: ☐ involved in gang activities ☐ influenced by a radical religious or nationalist group ☐ at risk of being sexually exploited by someone older than them
- ☐ My child does a lot of online gaming and has friends through it
- ☐ My child feels they are learning what they need to online or through friends or family
- ☐ My child feels that school is pointless and does not want to be part of 'the system'

Appendix 2: Professional questionnaire from the ATTEND Framework

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS: Put a tick or a cross next to every item.

If the answer is not known, seek this information out as it could be an unidentified contributing factor.

Use alongside the Student and Parent/Carer forms to broaden understanding of the underlying issues.

If ticking multiple factors, prioritise which are the most important by adding an asterisk.

Anxiety:

- ☐ **A1** Significant fear of an aspect of the school environment (e.g. open spaces, enclosed spaces, crowds, noise, social interaction, transport to school)
- ☐ **A2** Significant fear of something happening at school (e.g. social exclusion, bullying, getting sick, having a panic attack, failing academically)
- ☐ **A3** General school phobia characterised by a fear reaction (e.g. tears, sweating, fast breathing, racing heart, panic, angry outbursts, aggression, oppositional behaviours) when near to school, before school, discussing school. Insomnia on school nights

Health and wellbeing:

- ☐ **H1** Mental or physical health problem/condition that impacts on daily life (e.g. IBS, migraine, severe period pains, OCD, enuresis, depression, eating disorder, ASC, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, anxiety/panic attacks, hearing or visual impairment (including CVD), physical disability, language impairment, epilepsy, other)
- ☐ **H2** Gender dysmorphic

Sensory factors: (in particular for students on the Autistic Spectrum)

- ☐ **SE1** Intolerance to certain sensory input (e.g. fabric of school uniform, proximity to others, noise, lighting, smells, other)

Social factors:

- ☐ **SO1** Bullying/loss of class friend/isolated/falling out with another student
- ☐ **SO2** Problems involving social media or cyberbullying
- ☐ **SO3** *Bad reputation* at school
- ☐ **SO4** Feelings of social exclusion due to cultural/ethnic/gender/LGBTQ identity

Academic factors:

- ☐ **AC1** Learning difficulties/special educational needs
- ☐ **AC2** Finds work too hard/easy
- ☐ **AC3** Trouble with certain teacher
- ☐ **AC4** Mistrusts teachers/worries about interactions with teachers
- ☐ **AC5** Exam anxieties
- ☐ **AC6** PE/games difficulties
- ☐ **AC7** Finds school hierarchy/rules too strict/inflexible

Factors relating to change:

- ☐ **C1** Recent change of schools/move from primary to secondary/transitional year group
- ☐ **C2** Recent move to UK/English is an additional language

Family factors:

- ☐ **F1** Parental mental or physical health needs
- ☐ **F2** Significant parental anxiety about CYP's health
- ☐ **F3** Safeguarding concerns (e.g. domestic violence, alcohol/substance misuse in family)
- ☐ **F4** Loss/separation/bereavement
- ☐ **F5** Stressful or traumatic life events (e.g. house fire, burglary, redundancy, dispute with neighbours/landlords)
- ☐ **F6** Change in family structure e.g. new sibling, new blended family
- ☐ **F7** Young carer
- ☐ **F8** Money worries/debts/family living in poverty
- ☐ **F9** Inadequate housing
- ☐ **F10** Practical difficulties getting to school (e.g. other children with additional needs, transport issues, health problems)
- ☐ **F11** Significant distress separating from main attachment figure
- ☐ **F12** Cultural values which do not prioritise school-based education

Other factors:

- ☐ **O1** Liberal access to PC, phone, games console, internet, TV, food, lounging (bed/sofa/duvet), cigarettes, drugs
- ☐ **O2** Girlfriend/boyfriend out of school
- ☐ **O3** Same-age or older peers out of school
- ☐ **O4** Other family members at home during the day
- ☐ **O5** Work/earnings out of school
- ☐ **O6** Extra attention from, or time with, a parent
- ☐ **O7** Greater control over environment and routines at home
- ☐ **O8** Access to social online gaming
- ☐ **O9** Access to learning through other means (online/family member)
- ☐ **O10** Membership to a gang or radical group
- ☐ **O11** At risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- ☐ **O12** Low motivation – sees little point to school

Maintenance/secondary factors:

- ☐ **M1** How to explain absence to friends – social embarrassment
- ☐ **M2** Facing teachers
- ☐ **M3** Specific anxieties relating to returning to the school environment
- ☐ **M4** Inability to catch up with school work
- ☐ **M5** Secondary trigger event (such as a family separation or bereavement)
- ☐ **M6** Difficulty accessing professionals
- ☐ **M7** Disrupted sleep cycles (late nights, sleep during the day)
- ☐ **M8** Strained relationships/lack of trust between school/family/professionals

Any other contributing factors:

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Appendix 3: Pupil questionnaire from the ATTEND Framework

What is stopping me from going to school?

I am worried about:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> open spaces | <input type="checkbox"/> being bullied | <input type="checkbox"/> getting sick/germs/viruses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> feeling trapped | <input type="checkbox"/> having a panic attack | <input type="checkbox"/> doing badly in lessons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> crowds | <input type="checkbox"/> public transport | <input type="checkbox"/> socialising with other people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the school bus | <input type="checkbox"/> getting into trouble | <input type="checkbox"/> something else _____ |

I am so afraid of school that I:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> sweat | <input type="checkbox"/> breath too fast | <input type="checkbox"/> cry | <input type="checkbox"/> have a racing heart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> panic | <input type="checkbox"/> run away | <input type="checkbox"/> get angry | <input type="checkbox"/> find it hard to sleep on school nights |

My health and wellbeing

I have:

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> migraine headaches | <input type="checkbox"/> IBS | <input type="checkbox"/> dyspraxia | <input type="checkbox"/> severe period pains |
| <input type="checkbox"/> an eating disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> ADHD | <input type="checkbox"/> dyslexia | <input type="checkbox"/> hearing problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sight problems (including CVI) | <input type="checkbox"/> OCD | <input type="checkbox"/> depression | <input type="checkbox"/> anxiety/panic attacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> speech and language difficulties | <input type="checkbox"/> autism | <input type="checkbox"/> seizures | <input type="checkbox"/> physical disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> another condition not listed here _____ | | | |

- ☐ I feel like I am in the wrong gender body

Sensory overload

I find it hard to put up with:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> the fabric of school uniform | <input type="checkbox"/> smells | <input type="checkbox"/> moving between lessons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being too close to others | <input type="checkbox"/> noise | <input type="checkbox"/> bright lighting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> something else in the school environment _____ | | |

Fitting in

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am being bullied | <input type="checkbox"/> I have a bad reputation at school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I recently lost a good friend | <input type="checkbox"/> I feel lonely and I don't really have friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have recently fallen out with someone | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am having problems involving social media or cyberbullying | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel I don't fit in with others. Others don't understand me | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel I don't fit in with others because I am a different religion or race. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel I don't fit in with others because I am gay/lesbian or have a different gender identity | |

School work and teachers

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I find the work too hard | <input type="checkbox"/> I find the work too easy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am having trouble with a certain teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> I find school rules much too strict |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I worry teachers will get angry or lose patience with me | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't trust the teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am worried about doing PE or getting changed for PE | <input type="checkbox"/> I am really worried about exams |

Changes

I recently moved:

- ☐ schools ☐ from primary to secondary ☐ year group ☐ house ☐ to the UK

- ☐ English is not my first language and I am still learning it

Things at home

- ☐ I am worried that my parent or carer is not well
- ☐ My parent or carer worries a lot about me not being well
- ☐ It is not always safe at home because of fighting and arguments, drinking or drugs
- ☐ We have had a death in our family
- ☐ We have had stressful things to cope with at home (e.g. house fire, burglary, parent/carer lost their job)
- ☐ We have had a big change in our family (e.g. new baby, new parent, new step-sisters/brothers, parents separated)
- ☐ I have to look after my parent, carer or brothers and sisters because sometimes I am the only one who can
- ☐ We worry a lot about having enough money
- ☐ There are lots of problems with where we live (e.g. damp, too crowded, we keep having to move, disagreements with neighbours or landlord)
- ☐ My parent or carer finds it hard to get me to school in the mornings
- ☐ I feel really worried about being away from my parent or carer – I worry about them the whole time we are apart
- ☐ We don't feel school is that important in our family - we think there are other ways of learning things

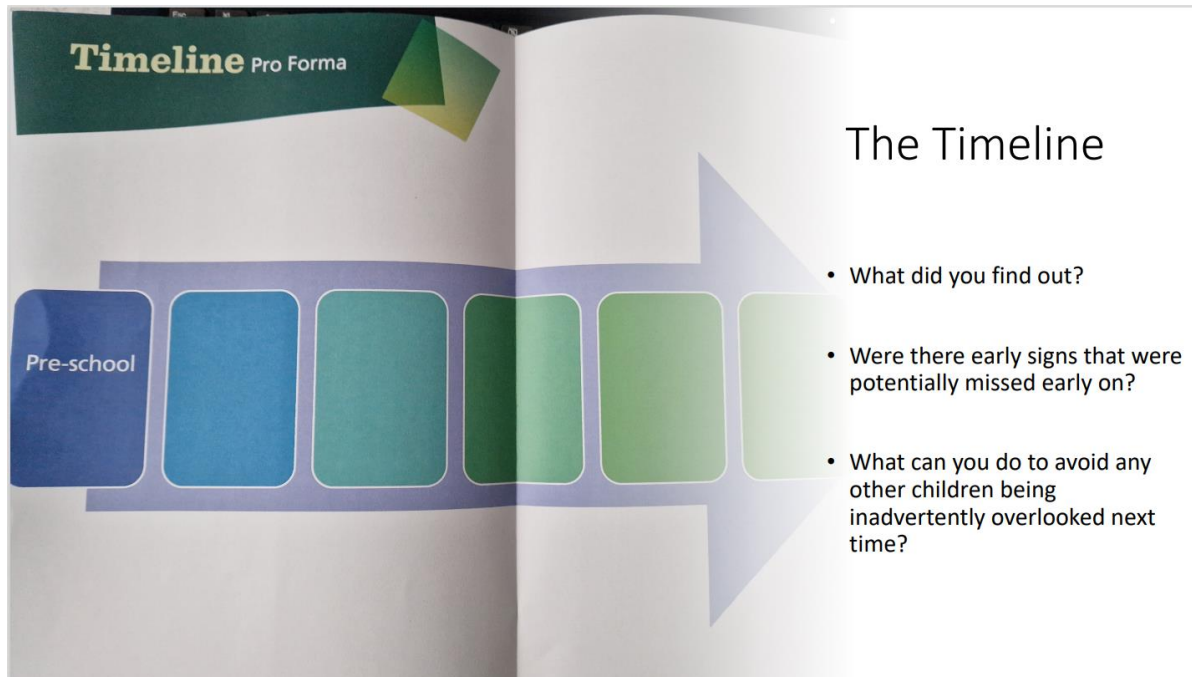
Do any of these other things stop me getting back to school?

- ☐ I have access to comforts (e.g. computer, phone, play station or X-box, internet, TV, food, staying in bed or on the sofa, cigarettes, drugs)
- ☐ I have a girlfriend/boyfriend off school
- ☐ I have friends who are also off school
- ☐ Other people in my family are at home during the day
- ☐ I work and earn money while I am out of school
- ☐ I get extra attention from, and time with, a parent or carer
- ☐ I can completely control my environment at home (e.g. what I wear, who I see, when I go to bed or get up, what I eat, routines)
- I am: ☐ involved in gang activities ☐ part of a radical religious or nationalist group
- ☐ in a relationship with someone much older than me
- ☐ I do a lot of online gaming and have friends through it
- ☐ I am learning what I need to online or through a friend or family member
- ☐ I feel that school is pointless or do not want to be part of 'the system'

Appendix 4: Card sort activity from the ATTEND Framework



Appendix 5: The timeline resource from the ATTEND Framework



Appendix 6: Information sheet provided to staff at the recruitment phase:



Research Project into the ATTEND Framework

I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist currently working with Derby City Educational Psychology Service. As part of the training in Applied Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Birmingham, I will be undertaking research into the use of the ATTEND Framework. The research will focus on the experiences of the parent, the child and the member of staff from the school who is most involved with supporting the child through the use of the Framework.

School attendance difficulties is a problem that incurs short- and long-term risks for the pupil, both in terms of academic attainment and life outcomes.

The aims of the research are:

- To understand the usefulness of the ATTEND Framework for supporting with attendance difficulties
- To support with the development of an ATTEND Framework which is specific to Derby City

As part of the research, I am planning to complete interviews with school staff, parents/carers and children. I would like to obtain your views. The interview will involve a small-time commitment of approximately 60 minutes and the information gathered will be included in the write-up of the research. Your participation will be anonymised meaning no identifying features, such as your name or the name of the school, will be used. However, if any of the information shared during the course of the research puts you or others at risk of harm, I would be required to break confidentiality and to seek advice.

If you are willing to be involved or would like to find out more information before agreeing to participate, please contact me directly via email: [REDACTED]

You may also contact my supervisor Anita Soni if you have any further enquiries:

a.soni@bham.ac.uk

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information leaflet and for considering
your participation in the study.

Kind Regards,

Victoria Berrington (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Appendix 7: Parent consent form:



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Consent Form

Parent's name: _____

Child's name: _____

Parental Consent on behalf of the child:		
I have read and understood the project information sheet.	Yes	No
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	Yes	No
I agree for my child to take part in the project. This includes talking to Victoria Berrington (Trainee Educational Psychologist).	Yes	No
I agree that my child's voice will be recorded throughout the interview.	Yes	No
I understand that my child's participation is voluntary. I understand that I can withdraw my child from the study at any time. If, after the study, I want to withdraw my child's data, I have two weeks from the date of the interview to inform the researcher. I know that I do not have to give any reasons for withdrawing data.	Yes	No
I agree that the results of the study will be written in a report for the researcher's university thesis and may later be published in an academic journal. I understand that neither my child's name nor the name of their school will be included in these reports.	Yes	No
I agree for the data provide by my child to be stored securely by the researcher for up to ten years.	Yes	No

Parental consent for involvement		
I agree to take part in an interview with Victoria Berrington.	Yes	No

I agree that my voice will be recorded throughout the interview.	Yes	No
I understand that my child's participation is voluntary. I understand that I can withdraw my child from the study at any time. If, after the study, I want to withdraw my child's data, I have two weeks from the date of the interview to inform the researcher. I know that I do not have to give any reasons for withdrawing data.	Yes	No
I agree that the results of the study will be written in a report for the researcher's university thesis and may later be published in an academic journal. I understand that neither my child's name nor the name of their school will be included in these reports.	Yes	No
I agree for the data provide by my child to be stored securely by the researcher for up to ten years.	Yes	No

Parent's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete the consent form. Please get in touch with me if you have any questions or queries.

Yours Sincerely,

Victoria Berrington

Email:

Appendix 8: Ethical approval:



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Dear Anita Soni and Victoria Berrington

RE: A qualitative exploration of the use and implementation of the ATTEND Framework within primary schools.

Application for Ethical Review: ERN_1852-Apr2024

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project, which was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, I confirm that this study now has ethical approval.

Any adverse events occurring during the study should be promptly brought to the Committee's attention by the Principal Investigator and may necessitate further ethical review.

Please ensure that the relevant requirements within the University's Code of Practice for Research and the information and guidance provided on the University's ethics webpages (available at <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Links-and-Resources.aspx>) are adhered to.

Please be aware that whilst Health and Safety (H&S) issues may be considered during the ethical review process, you are still required to follow the University's guidance on H&S and to ensure that H&S risk assessments have been carried out as appropriate. For further information about this, please contact your School H&S representative or the University's H&S Unit at healthandsafety@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Kind regards,

The Co-Chairs of the Humanities and Social Sciences Committee

E-mail: ethics-queries@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Appendix 9: The information sheet provided to parents:



Parent Information Sheet

My name is Victoria Berrington, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist from the University of Birmingham, currently working with Derby City Educational Psychology Service.

I am conducting a piece of research into the use of the ATTEND Framework, part of which is the questionnaire completed by yourself and your child to support with your child's school attendance. I would like for you and your child to be involved. The research will focus on the experiences of the parent, the child and the member of staff from the school who is most involved with supporting the child of using the Framework.

Before you decide whether you would like to take part, please read this leaflet that gives information about why the research is being carried out and what will be involved if you and your child participate. If you are interested in taking part, I will arrange to come to see you both to talk more about the project and answer any questions that you may have.

What is the purpose of the study?

Research into successful strategies for supporting attendance difficulties is important so we know what helps to support children and families who are having difficulties attending school. The ATTEND Framework is a strategy which is increasingly being used within Derby schools and it is important that we assess how well it is working. This particular Framework was created in a different local authority and so some of the recommended interventions are not relevant to Derby City. Feedback from individuals who have used it and found it to be successful can support us in developing a Framework which can

Why have we been selected?

Your child is included in the group of pupils that the study will focus on. The pupils involved in the research will be girls and boys who have experienced attendance difficulties and who have been supported through the use of the ATTEND Framework.

Do we have to take part?

No. You and your child will only participate in the study if you both want to.

What will happen if I give permission for us to take part?

If you are interested in being involved in the research, I will arrange to come and see you both to talk about the project and answer any questions that you may have. If you choose to participate in this

research, you will be asked to sign a consent form on behalf of your child and yourself. Once you have given your consent and your child has agreed to be participate, we will arrange another time to meet so I can interview you individually.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The benefits of being involved are in the contribution of your views to of how the use of the Attend Framework supported with your child's attendance difficulties. This can help us understand what you found useful or if you think there is anything that could be improved. This is essential for supporting pupils who are at risk of developing attendance difficulties.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

There are minimal risks to yourself and your child. Should you have any concerns over the course of the research, you will be able to contact the researcher using the details provided.

If we change our minds, can we withdraw from the study?

Yes. If at any point during the study you or your child wish to withdraw, you can inform the researcher via email. Any information already collected would be destroyed. You do not have to give a reason for withdrawing. If after the interview you want to withdraw your child's responses or your own, you have two weeks from the interview date to inform the researcher of this via e-mail.

Will the information be kept confidential in this study?

Yes. The researcher complies with the Data Protection Act (1998) in terms of handling, processing and destroying all participants' data. All data collected will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored anonymously meaning no identifying features, such as your name or the name your child's school, will be used. Pseudonyms will be used to ensure anonymity. The data will be destroyed 10 years after the research is completed, having been stored securely over the interim. All data will be secured securely on a password protected computer. However, if you or your child shares information during the research that puts yourselves or others at risk of harm, I would be required to break confidentiality and seek advice.

What will happen with the results of the research study?

An information sheet with a summary of the key findings will be shared with you and the other participants. In addition, the results of the study will be written up as part of the researcher's thesis for the Doctorate in Applied Educational and Child Psychology. The study may also be written up as a journal article and submitted for publication to a relevant professional journal. The work may be presented at conferences. Your name, your child's name and all other research participants' details will remain anonymous at all times.

Who is organising the research?

The research is organised by the University of Birmingham and Derby City Educational Psychology Service.

Who should I contact if there is a problem?

If a problem were to arise, then the researcher (Victoria Berrington) or the researcher's supervisor (Anita Soni) can be contacted between 9-5pm Monday-Friday. Contact details can be found at the end of this information leaflet.

Who has reviewed the study?

This research project has been approved by the Humanities and Social Science Ethical Review Committee at the University of Birmingham.

What do I do next?

If you and your child are willing to participate in this study, please contact Victoria Berrington (the researcher) directly.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information leaflet and for considering
your participation in the study.

Victoria Berrington email: [REDACTED]

Anita Soni email: [REDACTED]

Appendix 10: Information sheet for pupils:

Pupil Information Sheet

Hello

My name is Victoria, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist. I am doing a project for my university course I would like you to be a part of.

What's it about?

The project wants to look at a resource called The ATTEND Framework which is used to find out why children are finding it difficult to go to school.

What will I do?

I would come and visit you at school so we could talk more about the project. If you decide that you would like to be involved, we can talk about how you found using the ATTEND framework and speak about some of the answers you gave.

We could use words or drawings - whichever you like - to help us think about this. I would record our conversation so I could listen to it later and think more about what you have said. The recording is kept safe so other people can't listen to it.

I would also talk to you Mum or Dad and someone from your school to find out how they found using the ATTEND Framework.

What will happen to the information - will people know what you've said?

I will be talking to some other children too. I will collect all of the information and use this to understand what did and did not work well when using the ATTEND Framework.

Your name will not be recorded, and you will be able to choose a different name which I can use in my work. This means that when anybody looks at what I've found out they won't know that you were involved in the research.

The only time I would need to share information about you is if you say or write something that I'm worried about, then I would need to ask for help.

What happens now?

If you would like to know more about the project, I will arrange a time to come and see you.

Thank you for reading this.

Victoria

Appendix 11: Semi structured interview schedules for parents:

Semi-structured Interview Schedule (parents)

- Welcome participant and introduce myself
- Go through key messages from Information sheet (e.g. voluntary participation, confidentiality, right to withdraw) – check understanding and give opportunity for questions

Opening comment

“So, the reason I have asked you to take part in this study is because you have used the ATTEND Framework to support your child’s attendance. I would first like to talk about how you found completing the framework then I would like to talk about the impact you think it has had on your child’s attendance.

Topic 1: How did you find completing the Framework?

Probes: Was it useful to have the questions as prompts? Was it easy to complete? Did you complete on your own or did a member of school staff complete it with you?

Topic 2: What were the main things stopping your child from attending which came out in the questionnaire?

Probes: Was there anything that came up in the questionnaire that you felt was a reason but you have never thought of it before? Was there anything that you felt was a reason which was not in the questionnaire? Any surprising differences between the highlighted reasons for attendance difficulties in your questionnaire, your child’s questionnaire and the school staffs?

Topic 3: Was there anything that made it harder for your child to return to school after a period of absence?

Probes: Were there any differences between the questionnaires for this? Were there any other reasons you felt were making it harder for your child to return to school which was not on the questionnaire?

Topic 4: Can you tell me about what happened after you had completed the questionnaire?

Probes: Was an action planning meeting held? How long after the completion of the questionnaires was the meeting held? Who attended the meeting? Do you think it would have been helpful to have anyone else attending. What actions were agreed on and how have these impacted on your child’s attendance?

Closing comments

Thank for agreeing to take part in the study. Reiterate messages of (right to withdraw – deadline and details of how, confidential and anonymity in write up) Inform of access to summary of findings through key contact. Give opportunity to ask any questions. Remind of my contact details.

Appendix 12: Semi structured interview schedules for school staff:

Semi-structured Interview Schedule (staff)

- Welcome participant and introduce myself
- Go through key messages from Information sheet (e.g. voluntary participation, confidentiality, right to withdraw) – check understanding and give opportunity for questions

Opening comment

“So, the reason I have asked you to take part in this study is because you have used the ATTEND Framework to support a child in your school with their attendance. I would first like to talk about how you found completing the framework then I would like to talk about the impact you think it has had on the child’s attendance.

Topic 1: How did you find completing the Framework?

Probes: Was it useful to have the questions as prompts? Was it easy to complete?

Topic 2: What were the main things stopping the child from attending which came out in the questionnaire?

Probes: Was there anything that came up in the questionnaire that you felt was a reason but you have never thought of it before? Was there anything that you felt was a reason which was not in the questionnaire? Any surprising differences between the highlighted reasons for attendance difficulties in your questionnaire, the child’s questionnaire and the parents?

Topic 3: What do you think were the main factors in making it difficult for the child to return to school?

Probes: Were there any surprising differences between the questionnaires for this? Were there any other reasons you felt were making it harder for the child to return to school which was not on the questionnaire?

Topic 4: Can you tell me about what happened after you had completed the questionnaire?

Probes: Was an action planning meeting held? How long after the completion of the questionnaires was the meeting held? Who attended the meeting? Do you think it would have been helpful to have anyone else attending? What actions were agreed on? Have the school managed to implement these actions successfully? If not what were the barriers to this? What has been the impact on the child’s attendance?

Closing comments

Thank for agreeing to take part in the study. Reiterate messages of (right to withdraw – deadline and details of how, confidential and anonymity in write up) Inform of access to summary of findings through key contact. Give opportunity to ask any questions. Remind of my contact details.

Appendix 13: Semi structured interview schedules for pupils:

Semi-structured Interview Schedule (pupils)

- Welcome participant and introduce myself
- We will begin with a rapport building activity before the interview
- Go through key messages from Information sheet (e.g. voluntary participation, confidentiality, right to withdraw) – check understanding and give opportunity for questions

Opening comment

“So, the reason I have asked you to take part in this study is because you have used the ATTEND Framework to help you attend school (reminder about the Framework, have a copy to show). I would first like to talk about how you found completing the framework then I would like to talk about how you think it as helped you go to school.

Topic 1: How did you find completing the Framework?

Probes: Was is useful to have the questions as prompts? Was it easy to complete? Who helped you complete the questionnaire? Did they use the card sort activity? (show as a reminder) Did they use the timeline? (show as a reminder) Which if these things did you found the most useful for explaining what you are finding difficult?

Topic 2: What were the main things stopping you from going to school?

Probes: Was there anything that came up in the questionnaire which felt did make it difficult for you to attend but it was something you had never though of before? Was there anything that you felt was a reason which was not in the questionnaire?

Topic 3: What made it difficult for you to go back to school after you had been off?

Probes: Was there anything on the questionnaire which you felt was a reason but had never thought it before? Was there any reasons that were not on the questionnaire?

Topic 4: Can you tell me about what happened after you had completed the questionnaire?

Probes: Was an action planning meeting held and were you involved. Who was at the meeting? Did you want anyone else there? Did anything change at school after this? If yes, did it help? If no, what would you like to change? How are you finding going to school now?

Closing comments

Thank for agreeing to take part in the study. Reiterate messages of (right to withdraw – deadline and details of how, confidential and anonymity in write up) Inform of access to summary of findings through key contact. Give opportunity to ask any questions. Remind of my contact details.

Appendix 14: Example of the process of data analysis both within case studies and across participant groups

Teacher 1

Parent 1

Parent 2

Teacher 2

Parent 3

Teacher 3

RQ1: How did the participants find the process of completing the framework?

Theme: Collaborative approach

Data analysis within case studies

Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3
<p>T1</p> <p>I thought that having the opportunity to work with other colleagues and the classroom as well and see what you know, what was your, what's your opinion of how, how they cope with these different areas?</p> <p>he was much more open and honest with Mum so it was interesting to join the three up and say, well, actually you didn't say this to us, but it's revealed that to Mum so that it's it was helpful having the parents do these surveys while in his more sort of natural environment.</p> <p>I went teaching assistant, so I would have worked with them. And then anybody who was working with JJ as well slightly so for example Kate who works with sort of pastoral leads. Maybe she's had to work with him from time to time, so we</p>	<p>T2 My colleague from the well-being team looked at this because we looked together as professionals.</p> <p>Highlighted actions for different departments in different colours, subject teachers and heads of year and the well-being hub and for counselling support.</p>	<p>T3</p> <p>For xxx it was a different because it was between two members of staff rather than just me I was just doing the home visit and doing what Mrs. Wright was requesting for me to do with grace rather than me doing it.</p> <p>Mrs. Xxxx that did the questionnaire, but I remember having the forms and going through the action plan and working through what strategies perhaps best for Xxx</p>

sat down together, and so what's your opinion on this?		
		P3 I don't feel like we got any feedback from it.

Data analysis across participant groups

School staff	Parent
<p>T1</p> <p>I thought that having the opportunity to work with other colleagues and the classroom as well and see what you know, what was your, what's your opinion of how, how they cope with these different areas?</p> <p>he was much more open and honest with Mum so it was interesting to join the three up and say, well, actually you didn't say this to us, but it's revealed that to Mum so that it's it was helpful having the parents do these surveys while in his more sort of natural environment.</p> <p>I went teaching assistant, so I would have worked with them. And then anybody who was working with JJ as well slightly so for example Kate who works with sort of pastoral leads. Maybe she's had to work with him from time to time, so we sat down together, and so what's your opinion on this?</p>	<p>P3</p> <p>So we've filled these forms in and Yeah, I don't know, I don't feel like we got any feedback from it.</p> <p>I know it was brought up in conversation when we was at the meeting with everybody at the end of year seven, but I don't remember anything coming out of filling out these forms.</p>
<p>T2</p> <p>My colleague from the well-being team looked at this because we looked together as professionals</p> <p>Highlighted actions for different departments in different colours, subject teachers and heads of year and the well-being hub and for counselling support.</p>	
<p>T3</p> <p>For xxx it was a different because it was between two members of staff rather than just me I was just doing the home visit and doing what Mrs. Wright was requesting for me to do with grace rather than me doing it.</p>	

RQ2: What were the similarities and differences in the reported difficulties around attendance?

Theme: Individual factors

Data analysis within case studies

Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3
<p>T1</p> <p>fear of coming into the classroom, he was often refusing to come into the classroom, so he was just sitting in the corridor. Really quiet, really shut down people were having to go out and try to figure out what it was that was that was making him upset</p> <p>anxiety so often he was really, really nervous about coming into school. It might have had an evening where he was just being sick a lot so that's, he wasn't able to function in the morning</p> <p>he was finding it difficult to come back into the classroom because of the learning that happened before, we identified this sort of doom loop that he was going through</p>	<p>T2</p> <p>drama and anything physical she was struggling with, self-image, P.E was a barrier, so we have taken it out</p> <p>student has an eating disorder that's being supported now through CAMHS and drama and anything physical it was the students struggling with</p> <p>And migraines and headaches. So when they have periods, it's really bad because obviously they're not eating normal diet</p>	<p>T3</p> <p>She was just worried about coming to school</p> <p>Just the whole coming to school gates, getting through the school gates.</p>
<p>P1</p> <p>the majority of the anxiety was focused on one teacher in particular</p> <p>toileting, so I didn't realise, obviously we know that he has issues toileting, but he wasn't going for a wee at all at school and I didn't know that</p> <p>Maths is causing a lot of anxiety at the moment</p>	<p>P2</p> <p>her anxiety around actually getting into school, I think the anxiety sort of manifested itself and she found it even harder to get into school because she didn't want to get out of bed</p> <p>even at nursery she use to cry if I left her, there was a lot of anxiety, separation anxiety and there is still anxiety there to do with her feeling safe</p>	<p>P3</p> <p>the crowds and panic attacks so most of her troubles are in school.</p> <p>we highlighted the school uniform, so she hated school trousers, didn't want to wear a skirt, she wanted to wear leggings but no, she wasn't allowed to wear leggings</p> <p>But then she does sometimes have worries about other things, like at</p>

	she's not eating properly; she has disorganised eating	home, if things kind of change
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Data analysis across participant groups

School staff	Parent
<p>T1</p> <p>fear of coming into the classroom, he was often refusing to come into the classroom, so he was just sitting in the corridor. Really quiet, really shut down people were having to go out and try to figure out what it was that was that was making him upset</p> <p>anxiety so often he was really, really nervous about coming into school. It might have had an evening where he was just being sick a lot so that's, he wasn't able to function in the morning</p> <p>he was finding it difficult to come back into the classroom because of the learning that happened before, we identified this sort of doom loop that he was going through</p>	<p>P1</p> <p>the majority of the anxiety was focused on one teacher in particular</p> <p>toileting, so I didn't realise, obviously we know that he has issues toileting, but he wasn't going for a wee at all at school and I didn't know that</p> <p>Maths is causing a lot of anxiety at the moment</p>
<p>T2</p> <p>drama and anything physical she was struggling with, self-image, P.E was a barrier, so we have taken it out</p> <p>student has an eating disorder that's being supported now through CAMHS and drama and anything physical it was the students struggling with</p> <p>And migraines and headaches. So when they have periods, it's really bad because obviously they're not eating normal diet</p>	<p>P2</p> <p>her anxiety around actually getting into school, I think the anxiety sort of manifested itself and she found it even harder to get into school because she didn't want to get out of bed</p> <p>even at nursery she use to cry if I left her, there was a lot of anxiety, separation anxiety and there is still anxiety there to do with her feeling safe</p> <p>she's not eating properly; she has disorganised eating</p>
<p>T3</p> <p>She was just worried about coming to school</p> <p>Just the whole coming to school gates, getting through the school gates.</p>	<p>P3</p> <p>the crowds and panic attacks so most of her troubles are in school.</p> <p>we highlighted the school uniform, so she hated school trousers, didn't want to wear a skirt, she wanted to wear leggings but no, she wasn't allowed to wear leggings</p> <p>But then she does sometimes have worries about other things, like at home, if things kind of change</p>

RQ3: What support was put into place following the completion of the framework and what was the impact of this support?

Theme: Process following completion

Data analysis within case studies

Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3
<p>T1</p> <p>identified some targets, some next steps, we looked at different strategies that would help</p> <p>he's on an IEP, so that's reviewed regularly and a lot of what is on his IEP has come from the action plan, so we can see what's working well, there are certain things that we just kept consistent throughout</p>	<p>T2</p> <p>we have regular emails from the parent every morning updating myself and the deputy head of year</p> <p>we've done an e-mail last week to all staff to find out how we're getting on, what have they noticed, we don't know what's happening in the classroom</p>	<p>T3</p> <p>it's important because I think that the young person should be there knowing what's being said about them, what we can do for them and for them to have a voice. Prior to the meeting, I'll say if you've got any questions put them on a piece of paper and bring them, so that your voice is still heard, even though it's through me.</p> <p>I Would have them both, have them both together</p> <p>I'd have these two forms with me so we would know and say these are the kind of strategies we think might help or benefit you.</p> <p>Is she willing to try them, are parents willing to try them if the young person's willing to give it a go and then we worked from there.</p>
<p>P1</p> <p>I very openly talk to him about having conversations with people like yourself and other people that we are, you know, trying to help him, he knows that people are trying to help him</p> <p>they were quite good in once we've had it all, just putting things straight into place and the meeting so it must have happened fairly quickly.</p>	<p>P2</p> <p>I suppose I'm not sure what will happened now, I mean, I'm hoping that the plan we have in place now will then take her into September and next year, but yeah, I don't know</p>	<p>P3</p> <p>set up to discuss changes going forward and that's where they agreed the online lessons at home</p>

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Data analysis across participant groups

School staff	Parent
<p>T1</p> <p>identified some targets, some next steps, we looked at different strategies that would help</p> <p>he's on an IEP, so that's reviewed regularly and a lot of what is on his IEP has come from the action plan, so we can see what's working well, there are certain things that we just kept consistent throughout</p>	<p>P1</p> <p>I very openly talk to him about having conversations with people like yourself and other people that we are, you know, trying to help him, he knows that people are trying to help him</p> <p>they were quite good in once we've had it all, just putting things straight into place and the meeting so it must have happened fairly quickly.</p>
<p>T2</p> <p>we have regular emails from the parent every morning updating myself and the deputy head of year</p> <p>we've done an e-mail last week to all staff to find out how we're getting on, what have they noticed, we don't know what's happening in the classroom</p>	<p>P2</p> <p>I suppose I'm not sure what will happened now, I mean, I'm hoping that the plan we have in place now will then take her into September and next year, but yeah, I don't know</p>
<p>T3</p> <p>it's important because I think that the young person should be there knowing what's being said about them, what we can do for them and for them to have a voice. Prior to the meeting, I'll say if you've got any questions put them on a piece of paper and bring them, so that your voice is still heard, even though it's through me.</p> <p>I Would have them both, have them both together</p> <p>I'd have these two forms with me so we would know and say these are the kind of strategies we think might help or benefit you. Is she willing to try them, are parents willing to try them if the young person's willing to give it a go and then we worked from there.</p>	<p>P3</p> <p>set up to discuss changes going forward and that's where they agreed the online lessons at home</p>

