

Section 7 – Attendance and Behaviour

Attendance and behaviour are transformational where pupils move from dysregulation, distress or reduced access to increasingly successful participation in school and learning. Cleaswell's relational, therapeutic and regulation-informed approach identifies what behaviour and absence communicate and changes the environment, adult response and personalised support rather than lowering expectations. Across 2025/26 this translated into substantial measurable change: recorded incidents reduced from 844 in autumn to 488 in summer — a reduction of around 42% — while restrictive physical interventions reduced from 106 to 49, around 54%. At the same time, attendance remained above the national state-funded special-school comparator throughout the year and persistent absence reduced below the comparator by summer. For individual pupils, this means more time safely in education, less reliance on restrictive intervention, improved regulation, stronger relationships and increasingly sustained access to teaching, therapy and school life.

What is going well: Evidence to support this judgement

Strategic Leadership of Attendance and Behaviour

Leaders know pupils and families well and understand that changes in attendance, behaviour or readiness to learn can have very different causes for different pupils. Attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, therapy, EHCP, family and contextual information are therefore considered together so that a pupil affected by communication, sensory regulation, medical or mental-health need, disadvantage or social-care involvement receives support matched to the actual barrier rather than a lowered expectation. This keeps safety, inclusion, attendance and access to learning closely connected.

Leaders establish consistently high expectations for attendance, behaviour and attitudes, expressed through the Cleaswell Code - Ready, Respectful, Safe - and reinforced through attendance and behaviour policies, predictable routines, relational and restorative practice and individual Consistent Approach Plans. Expectations apply across classrooms, transitions, social times, community learning and off-site provision, while reasonable adjustments ensure they are accessible and proportionate to developmental and communication need. The school's behaviour arrangements also establish a mobile-phone-free environment by default throughout the school day in line with statutory guidance from September 2026. Where access to a phone or relevant smart device is required because of disability, medical monitoring or another individually assessed need, or for a clearly defined Post-16 purpose, this is treated as a specific reasonable adjustment or agreed exception with clear parameters for use.

Leaders deliberately shape every aspect of provision to create strong positive 'pulls' into school. Responsive pathways, meaningful learning, integrated therapy, bespoke environments, personalised provision and emotionally safe relationships help pupils feel known, safe and motivated to attend; independent SIP evaluation confirms relational safety, belonging and the school's ability to enable highly complex learners to access education as established strengths.

Leaders maintain an accurate, continually updated picture of what is working and where improvement is needed. Weekly attendance and behaviour analysis, DfE/VYED information, PBS Cloud/IPBS, CPOMS, 'the grid', EWO Targeted Support meetings, pupil/family voice and case sampling identify patterns across individuals, pathways and vulnerable groups and enable leaders to anticipate risk, intervene early and amend support. The Attendance and Behaviour Implementation Plan and Year 4 Horizon evaluation link identified barriers to actions, responsible leaders, intended impact and review.

This strategic approach has translated into measurable improvement rather than isolated initiatives. During 2025/26 recorded incidents reduced from 844 in autumn to 632 in spring and 488 in summer, while restrictive physical interventions reduced from 106 to 65 to 49. Because these are raw term counts rather than like-for-like rates, leaders do not use them in isolation; they triangulate the trends with case review, learning observations, therapy evidence and safeguarding information before judging impact, supporting the evaluation that relational, therapeutic and preventative approaches are increasingly effective.

Staff expertise is deliberately developed so expectations are implemented consistently rather than depending on individual practitioners. ECT and teacher induction, NAPPI/PBS, relational and trauma-informed professional learning, NEN professional development courses, therapy coaching, modelling and refresher work establish shared practice from appointment onwards; experienced colleagues model this for newer staff. Attendance guidance and EWO/leadership support also equip staff to have supportive but appropriately challenging conversations with pupils and families when attendance needs to improve.

Governance and external challenge provide strong assurance that leaders' evaluation is accurate and that action has impact. Attendance and safeguarding link governors scrutinise patterns, vulnerable pupils and intervention; EWO, SIP and multi-agency partners test leaders' decisions and next steps. Partnership with the local authority, health, social care, safeguarding partners and the NCASP Safer in Education Group brings emerging intelligence back into school and supports swift refinement as pupils' circumstances and needs change.

Attendance

Attendance is consistently strong in the context of Cleaswell Hill's complex all-age SEND cohort and enables pupils to benefit from regular access to teaching, therapy, relationships and familiar routines. Whole-school attendance was 89.6% in autumn, 90.1% in spring and 89.7% in summer 2025/26, remaining above the latest published DfE state-funded special-school comparator used by leaders (87.1%) throughout the year. Persistent absence reduced from 35.0% to 34.1% to 33.1%, below the corresponding published DfE special-school comparator of 35.8% by summer.

Leaders analyse attendance beyond the whole-school headline and act on variation rather than allowing stronger overall outcomes to mask weaker groups or individuals. Pupil Premium attendance improved from 87.0% in autumn to 87.9% in summer, while FSM attendance improved from 87.1% to 88.0% and remained above the 85.1% national special-school FSM comparator; pupils known to social care, those with medical or mental-health needs, young carers where identified, and other vulnerable pupils are scrutinised individually. Severe absence remains a small but important cohort and is reviewed case by case rather than treated as a percentage alone.

Early identification and prompt follow-up are embedded. Pupils falling below the school's 94% monitoring threshold are reviewed before absence becomes entrenched; registers are completed twice daily and unexplained absence receives first-day contact, with welfare/home-visit escalation where required. Attendance plans, trusted-adult support, therapeutic input, EWO involvement and wider multi-agency support are matched to the underlying barrier and reviewed to establish whether they are improving attendance rather than simply recording activity.

Attendance practice is family-centred, supportive and appropriately challenging. Leaders and staff explain the importance of high attendance clearly, use DfE expectations and days-lost learning information where appropriate, and work with families to agree practical actions rather than defaulting to punitive responses. Positive attendance is also promoted to pupils through

belonging, welcome, engaging curriculum and enrichment, pupil work on why school matters and celebration of improved and sustained attendance as well as 100% attendance.

Pupils missing, or at risk of missing, education remain visible through regular EWO review, safeguarding oversight and monthly CME processes. For pupils whose physical or mental ill-health, complex SEND or changing placement needs significantly restrict attendance, school works with families, the local authority, health and other agencies to maintain education, review suitability and increase access as soon as safely practicable; reduced timetables and alternative provision are subject to additional controls set out in the inclusive approaches below.

Leaders do not regard attendance above the national special-school comparator as an endpoint. Weekly review and increasingly precise intervention records identify starting point, barrier, action, impact and next step, allowing strategies to be intensified, adapted or withdrawn according to evidence and sustaining a focus on persistent and severe absence, group gaps and punctuality. Leaders also maintain a concise, quality-assured reconciliation between current school information and the annual special-school IDSR. Summer 2026 SIP review identified that the published IDSR did not fully reflect the school's validated in-year persistent-absence trajectory; leaders therefore maintain immediately accessible termly trends, vulnerable-pupil case evidence and contextual analysis so that any lag in published national information can be explained transparently alongside, rather than instead of, the national evidence. Punctuality is monitored alongside attendance and addressed promptly where patterns emerge, ensuring pupils maximise their time in education.

Behaviour, Including Bullying

Behaviour is consistently strong and the school's relational culture is highly conducive to learning. Relationships between pupils and adults are characterised by kindness, empathy, respect and predictability, enabling pupils to feel safe, known and valued and to participate confidently in school life; 88% of parents reported that their child feels safe in school in March 2026, while governor and SIP evaluation confirm calm, positive relationships as an established feature of provision.

High expectations are taught and reinforced consistently across all aspects of the school day. The Cleaswell Code, explicit modelling, predictable routines, positive recognition and Consistent Approach Plans communicate expectations in accessible ways; staff use fair, clearly understood and proportionate consequences where needed. Relational practice is not permissive: staff make reasonable adjustments for SEND, communication and regulation while maintaining clear boundaries and preventing low-level or higher-level disruption from reducing pupils' or others' access to learning.

Staff understand behaviour as communication and respond swiftly and skilfully to changing need. Relational, restorative, trauma-informed and neuroinclusive practice is strengthened by Positive Behaviour Support and integrated therapy; One Page Profiles, Consistent Approach Plans, quick-read summaries, risk assessments and SaLT/OT-informed strategies identify antecedents and likely communication, sensory and emotional-regulation needs. Review after incidents leads to changes in environment, adult response and individual support, with incidents reducing from 844 to 632 to 488 across 2025/26 and restrictive interventions from 106 to 65 to 49. Importantly, this improvement is evident across all three pathways rather than being driven by one cohort: recorded incidents reduced from 575 to 397 in Engagement, from 197 to 74 in Core and from 71 to 17 in Extended between autumn and summer. This provides strong evidence of the typicality of increasingly preventative, regulation-informed practice across the school.

Pupils develop self-discipline, emotional regulation and positive relationships from their individual developmental starting points. Through modelling, shared emotional language, co-regulation, therapeutic strategies and restorative practice, pupils increasingly recognise and communicate needs, use strategies, recover after difficulty, repair relationships and return to learning with progressively less adult support. Where developmentally appropriate they resolve conflict and show consideration for others, with older pupils expected to model respectful behaviour across school and community contexts.

Bullying, prejudice, unlawful discrimination, harassment including sexual harassment, victimisation, physical or sexual violence, derogatory language and child-on-child abuse are not tolerated. Leaders recognise that bullying may relate to actual or perceived difference, including race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, SEND, care/adoption status or caring responsibilities. Because some pupils may not recognise or verbally disclose concerns, staff remain alert to changes in behaviour, presentation and communication and use Total Communication, AAC, observation, pupil voice, family knowledge, CPOMS and safeguarding information to provide accessible routes for reporting; affected pupils receive support and patterns are analysed to prevent recurrence.

Formal sanctions, suspension, permanent exclusion and off-site direction are not used as substitutes for meeting need. Where they are necessary, leaders ensure decisions are proportionate, senior-led and informed by the pupil's SEND and wider barriers, with careful planning for reintegration and continued access to appropriate support. The September 2026 IDSR provides additional external corroboration of this inclusive approach: no permanent exclusions are recorded across the published periods from 2022/23 to spring 2024/25, and by spring 2024/25 no pupils had received two or more suspensions during that term.

Leaders know strengths and remaining variation precisely rather than relying on perception. PBS Cloud/IPBS, CPOMS, incident and RPI analysis, Consistent Approach Plan review, therapy evidence, learning walks, pupil/family voice, governor monitoring and external SIP evaluation are triangulated by pupil, pathway and vulnerability. Where behaviour remains a barrier, leaders work with families, the local authority and specialist agencies and amend support promptly until there is demonstrable improvement.

Attitudes to Learning

Integrated therapeutic practice is a distinctive strength in securing the physical, sensory, cognitive and emotional readiness many pupils need before they can learn successfully. OT- and SaLT-informed sensory and regulation programmes, predictable routines, environmental adaptation and carefully structured adult interaction enable pupils to transition into lessons and activities more successfully, settle quickly and sustain purposeful attention for longer from their individual starting points.

Regulation-informed practice anticipates and reduces disruption before it becomes a barrier to learning. Staff recognise individual sensory, communication and emotional triggers and use co-regulation, reduced environmental demand and therapeutic strategies proactively; the strong in-year reduction in incidents and restrictive intervention, alongside learning observations and PBS analysis, supports leaders' evaluation that learning environments are increasingly calm and pupils spend more time meaningfully engaged.

Pupils are explicitly taught the developmentally appropriate foundations of effective study and independent learning. Staff help pupils understand routines, organise themselves, communicate when they need support, tolerate increasing challenge, persist when learning is difficult and

recover from setbacks; carefully faded prompting and therapy/PLIM evidence show growing resilience, independence and ability to return to learning with less adult direction.

Communication-focused therapy strengthens motivation, self-confidence and collaboration. Language for Behaviour and Emotion, Language for Thinking, Total Communication, Chatterbox, Narrative Therapy, Lego Therapy, Oracy and personalised SaLT-led approaches help pupils understand emotions, express ideas and needs, reason with others and work more successfully with peers and adults; the 'Shhh' approach provides inclusive and enabling classroom environments by reducing unnecessary verbal load so pupils have greater space to attend, process and participate.

Pupils show increasingly positive commitment to learning and take pride in their achievements because barriers to demonstrating competence are removed rather than accepted. External QA identifies pupils with profound and complex needs accessing meaningful learning through highly personalised practice, while work/response scrutiny, Earwig/PLIM progress, reduced prompting, pupil voice and celebration of achievement show growing participation, confidence and ownership of success over time.

Inclusive Approaches to Attendance and Behaviour

Inclusive approaches are consistently strong because reasonable adjustments maintain, rather than reduce, ambition. Staff have the expertise and confidence to adapt attendance and behaviour practice for communication, sensory, physical, emotional and regulation needs while sustaining high expectations; NAPPI/PBS, relational and trauma-informed learning, NEN/Fusion development, therapy coaching, risk assessment and Consistent Approach Plans create predictable practice across pathways.

Targeted intervention is timely, well chosen and continually evaluated. Attendance, behaviour, PBS/IPBS, therapy, EHCP/PLIM, family and safeguarding evidence identify the underlying barrier; leaders then adapt sensory programmes, regulation strategies, adult approaches, timetables, environments and multi-agency support and review whether pupils are attending, regulating and engaging more successfully. Integrated OT/SaLT and trauma-informed practice are especially effective in moving support from reactive management towards prevention and sustained access to education.

Families and external professionals are genuine partners in securing suitable support for pupils with EHCPs. Attendance arrangements and personalised behaviour support are developed with families and, where appropriate, the local authority, EWO, health, social care and other specialists; this strengthens consistency between home and school and helps barriers to be addressed earlier. The developing Family Partner role is intended to strengthen this support further for the most vulnerable families.

Part-time timetables are used only exceptionally and are purposeful and tightly controlled rather than used to reduce pupils' entitlement to education. The PTTT Management Tool, half-termly/regular senior review and close work with families, the local authority and relevant professionals ensure arrangements are short term, have defined end points and clear reintegration plans, with increasing time in school wherever safe and practicable; governor and SIP scrutiny confirm that reduced timetables are actively reviewed with a view to increasing on-site attendance.

Restrictive physical intervention is a last resort within a culture centred on prevention, regulation and de-escalation. Every incident is analysed for antecedents, necessity, proportionality and



learning, and findings are used to refine risk assessments, therapeutic strategies, Consistent Approach Plans and staff practice. Restrictive interventions reduced from 106 in autumn 2025 to 65 in spring and 49 in summer 2026, providing demonstrable evidence that increasingly preventative approaches are reducing the need for force.

Where alternative provision is used, leaders retain full responsibility for attendance, safeguarding, suitability and progress. Summer 2026 scrutiny identified one pupil in short-term alternative provision; the placement was under direct leadership review. Attendance is checked daily and analysed over time, absence prompts swift action, and changing need leads to review of provision or placement and careful reintegration planning where return to school is appropriate.

Open, respectful and harmonious relationships underpin the whole approach. Adults know pupils exceptionally well, pupils are supported to communicate needs and concerns in their most effective mode, and support is intensified or adapted without stigma when barriers increase. This combination of belonging, expertise, high expectations and demonstrable adjustment enables pupils with the greatest barriers to attend, regulate, behave positively and participate in learning increasingly successfully over time.

Supporting Documentation	Quality Assurance Activities
- Attendance & Behaviour Implementation Plan 2025/26, Year 4 Horizon evaluation and Year 5 priorities - Attendance Strategy/Policy and Behaviour/Positive Behaviour Policy, including the Cleaswell Code – Ready, Respectful, Safe - Attendance dashboards and analysis – DfE/VYED, whole-school, pathway/cohort, PP, persistent/severe absence and punctuality - EWO Targeted Support records, attendance intervention plans and family-contact evidence - CME monitoring, PTTT Management Tool, reintegration plans and alternative-provision records - PBS Cloud/IPBS, behaviour incident and RPI analysis, Consistent Approach Plans, quick-read summaries, risk assessments and relevant CPOMS records - Integrated Therapy evidence – OT/SaLT assessments, sensory/regulation plans, communication programmes and therapy impact evidence - Attendance, reintegration and behaviour case studies, including pupils facing the greatest barriers - Pupil/family voice and Parent View, including safety, belonging and confidence in school - Governor Attendance and Behaviour Monitoring Reports and SIP Report 2025/26.	- Weekly leadership review of attendance and behaviour, including individual pupils, vulnerable cohorts and emerging patterns - Regular EWO Targeted Support meetings to challenge analysis, priorities, interventions and impact - Termly/in-year trend analysis of attendance, persistent/severe absence, disadvantage, pathways, social-care vulnerability and medical/mental-health barriers - PBS/IPBS and RPI scrutiny, including antecedent analysis, post-incident reflection and review of CAPs/risk assessments - Learning walks and observations evaluating relational practice, regulation, routines, engagement, behaviour and attitudes to learning - Pupil and family voice/case sampling, adapted to pupils' communication needs, to test lived experience of safety, belonging, bullying and support - Multi-disciplinary case review involving therapy, EWO, health, social care, local authority and other professionals for complex pupils - Governor link monitoring and FGB scrutiny of attendance trends, behaviour/RPI, vulnerable pupils, PTTTs, CME and alternative provision - External SIP quality assurance, including joint scrutiny with an experienced education professional with wide-ranging cross-school

	quality-assurance experience, testing leaders' evaluation and validating typicality and impact.
Next Steps (Including targets taken from 5-year plan)	
Sustain and deepen the precision of attendance strategy, using individual, cohort and external attendance intelligence to identify barriers early and evaluate which pastoral, therapeutic, curriculum and family-based approaches have the greatest impact. Further develop the Family Partner role and multi-agency working so pupils with the most significant barriers attend more regularly and sustain engagement over time. Further strengthen and evidence the impact of relational and therapeutic practice on behaviour, regulation and learning. Maintain consistent implementation of the Cleaswell Code, restorative and relational approaches and integrated therapy across all pathways, while sharpening evaluation of their impact on incidents, restrictive intervention, pupil regulation, engagement, staff confidence and wellbeing. Refine the use of attendance and behaviour evidence to demonstrate sustained impact with greater precision, including persistent and severe absence, vulnerable cohorts, part-time timetables, behaviour incidents and restrictive intervention. Triangulate quantitative trends with pupil/family voice, case studies, therapy evidence and external QA so leaders can demonstrate clearly which strategies work, for whom and over time. Sustain a consistently ambitious, inclusive culture in which pupils feel safe, belong and are increasingly able to regulate and participate successfully. Continue to develop staff expertise, inclusive environments and shared relational expectations so that strong practice is consistently visible across every pathway and pupils increasingly demonstrate independence, positive relationships and readiness to learn.	