

Our impact on whole-school attendance

SHS has a positive impact on children's attendance at school.

This impact is greater than that achieved by a comparator group of schools with similar characteristics that do not receive SHS support.

The results also suggest that the impact of SHS goes beyond the individual children that practitioners work with and contributes to whole-school improvements in attendance.

This analysis was undertaken by Cordis Bright in June 2019 working in partnership with SHS.

Methodology 1

SHS provided to Cordis Bright the names of schools that have been supported via an SHS practitioner since 2008. n=114. This included:

- Schools where an SHS practitioner continues to provide support and those where SHS is no longer involved.
- Schools that have part-time and full-time SHS practitioners.

Cordis Bright used the Department for Education (DfE) [school benchmarking tool](#) to 'match' each SHS school to a comparator:

- The comparator school was similar in terms of turnover, number of pupils, school phase, urban/rural, proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals, with a special educational need, and with English as an additional language.

Methodology 2

Cordis Bright collated school-wide [absence data](#) from the DfE for seven points in time:

- Baseline: absence rate of the school for the closest academic year that the SHS practitioner started.
- Historical: absence rate of the school for the three previous years.
- Impact: absence rate of the school for the three subsequent years.

The equivalent data was collated for each comparator school.

Cordis Bright then compared the performance of SHS schools with comparator schools, using a 'difference-in-difference' approach.

Sample size

This resulted in a total sample of SHS schools of 37. Plus 37 matched comparator schools.

Reasons for schools being excluded from the analysis were:

- No comparator school available.
- A full-set of absence data for all seven years not available.

Though a small sample, we believe that this analysis is sufficiently robust to provide a good indicator of the impact that can be attributed to SHS.

What trends we are hoping to see?

In the period prior to SHS involvement (and equivalent point in time for the comparator), absence rates for SHS schools and comparator schools should be the same or very similar and follow similar trendlines.

Once SHS has become involved, absence rates for SHS schools and comparator schools should diverge. Specifically, absence rates in SHS schools should fall more substantially than the comparator group.

Ideally this gap would be sustained over time.

This would demonstrate that SHS is having a noticeable and positive difference on absence, compared to those schools without SHS involvement.

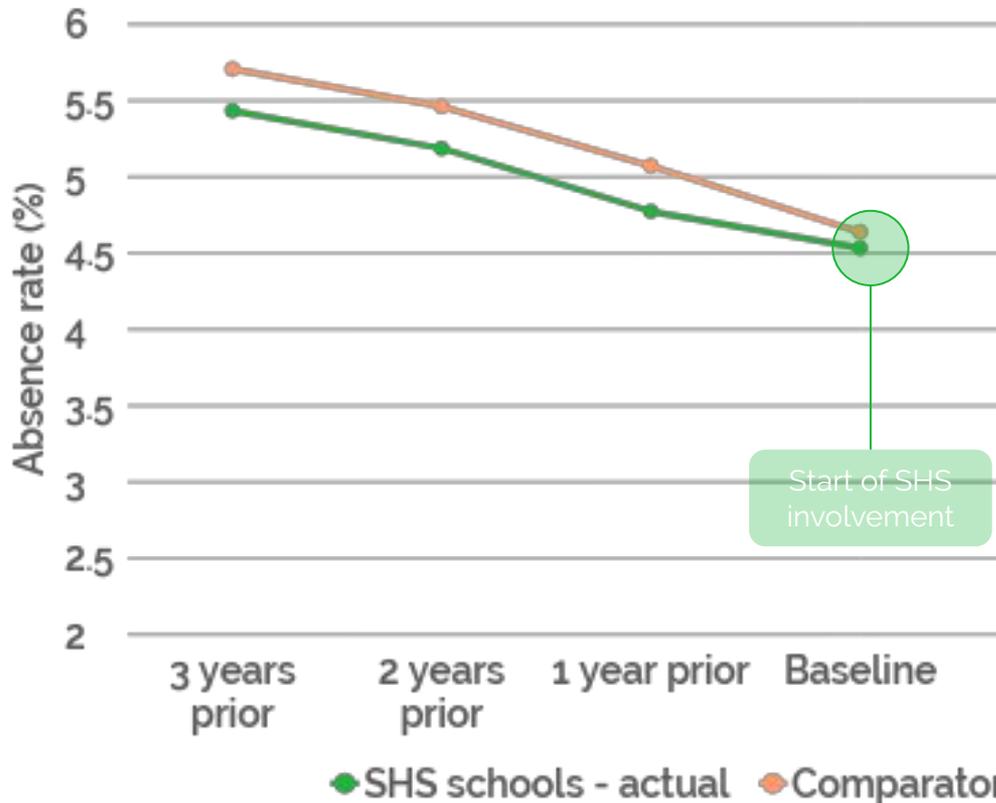
What scale of change we are hoping to see?

Over the course of a full academic year and given the target group of children with which SHS works, SHS would expect a full-time practitioner to contribute to a reduction in school-wide absence rates of -0.25%.

Therefore, in order to demonstrate impact, SHS schools would need to show better improvements in absence rates following SHS involvement, ideally of at least -0.25%.

Further information about calculations are provided in the appendix.

Comparator schools are similar to SHS schools



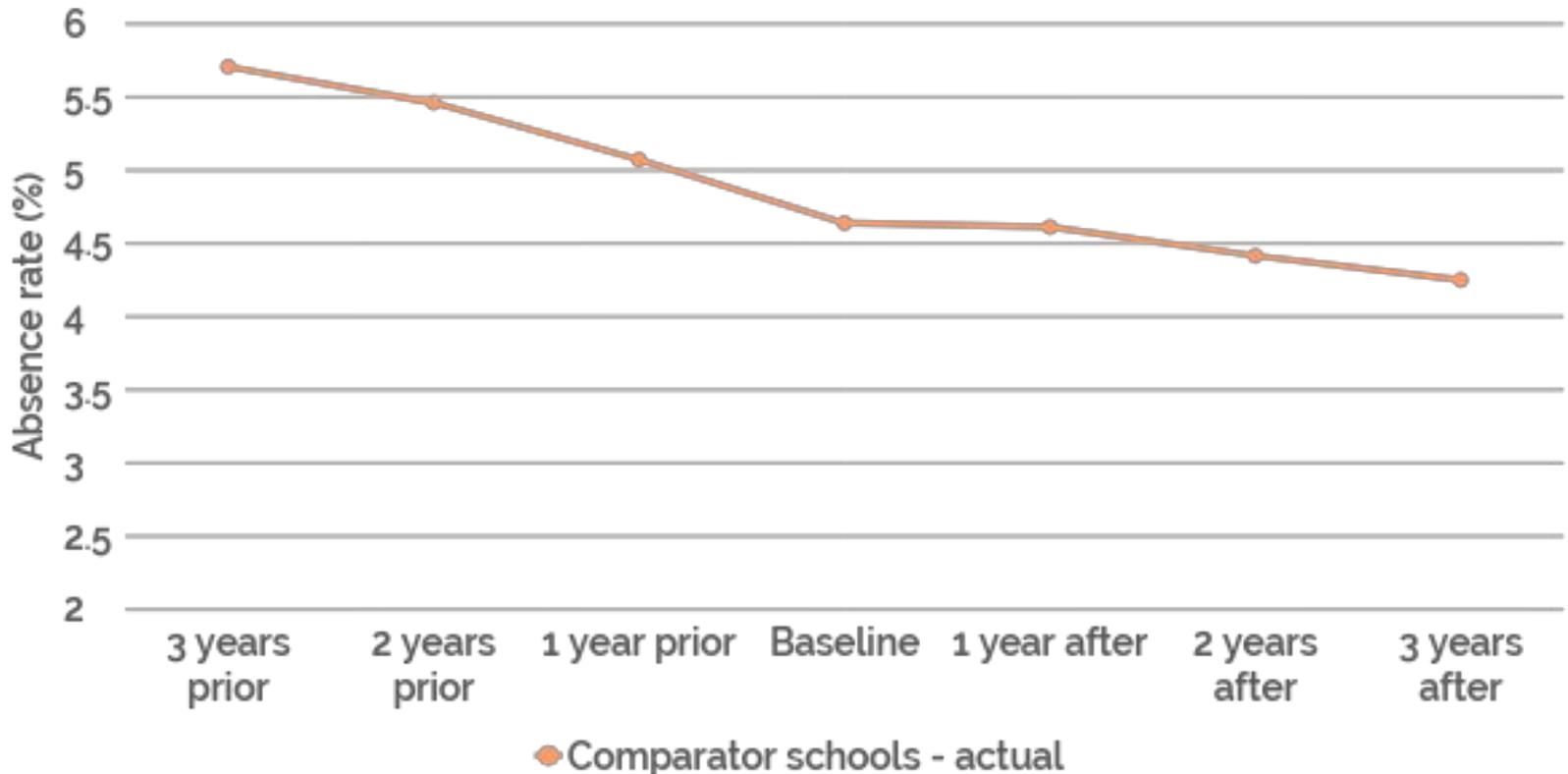
At baseline, attendance rates of the SHS schools and comparator schools were very similar, i.e. 4.53265% and 4.63906% respectively.

Absence rates for SHS schools and comparator schools also experienced similar trends historically.

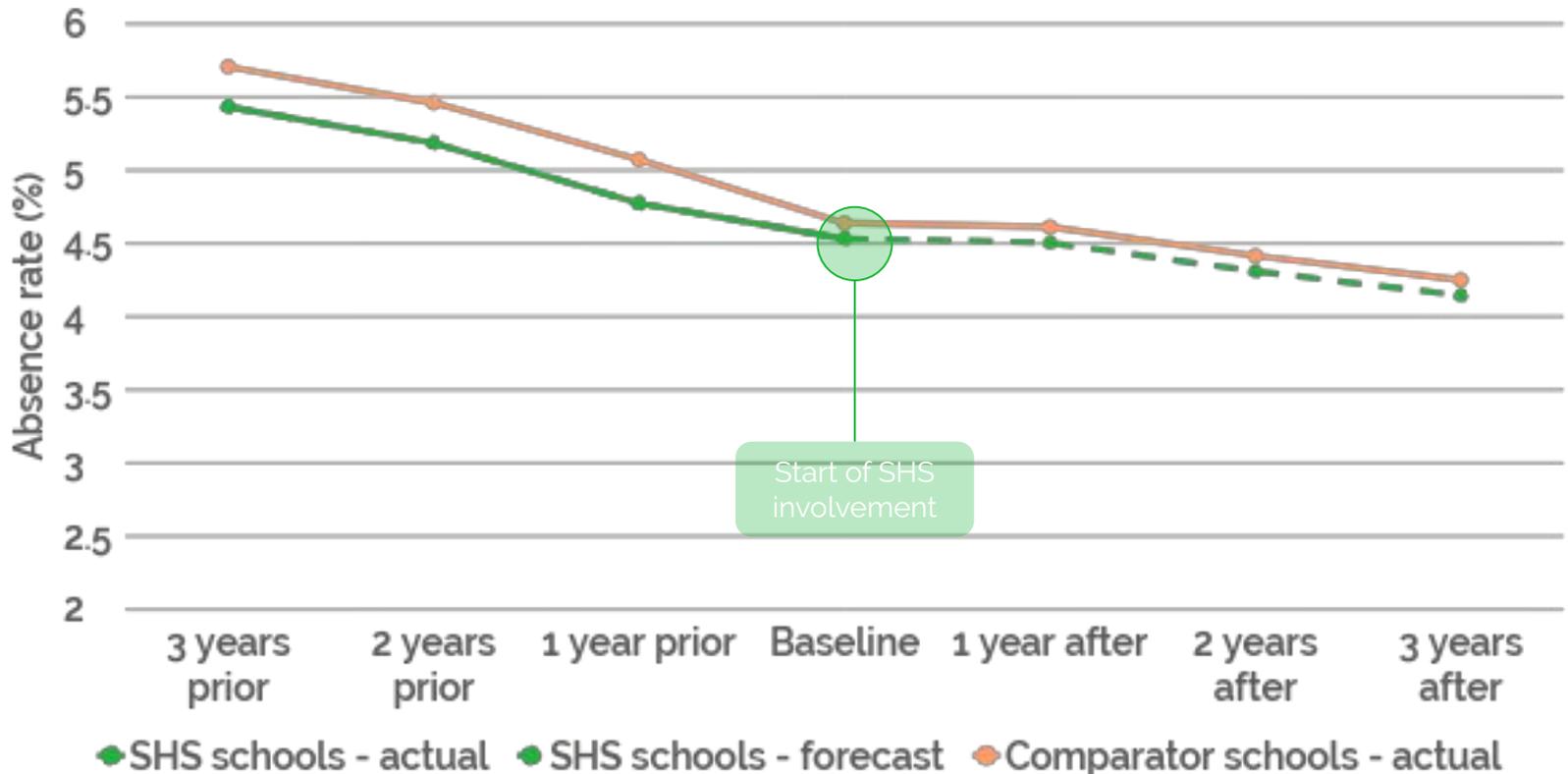
Use of the DfE benchmarking tool means that the two groups are similar based on other characteristics, e.g. size.

Note: DfE data is provided to 5 decimal points. This has been retained for this analysis.

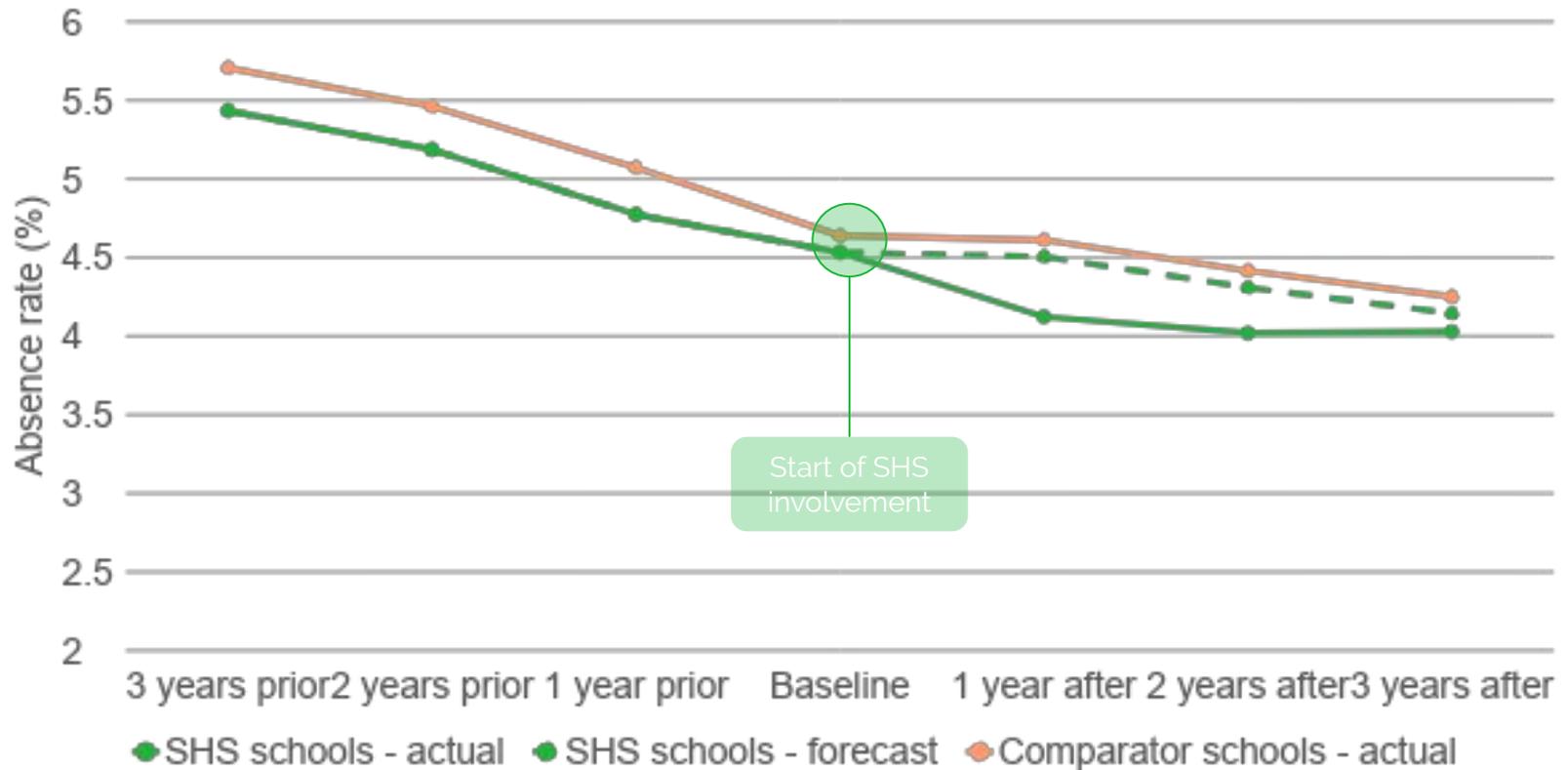
Performance of comparator schools



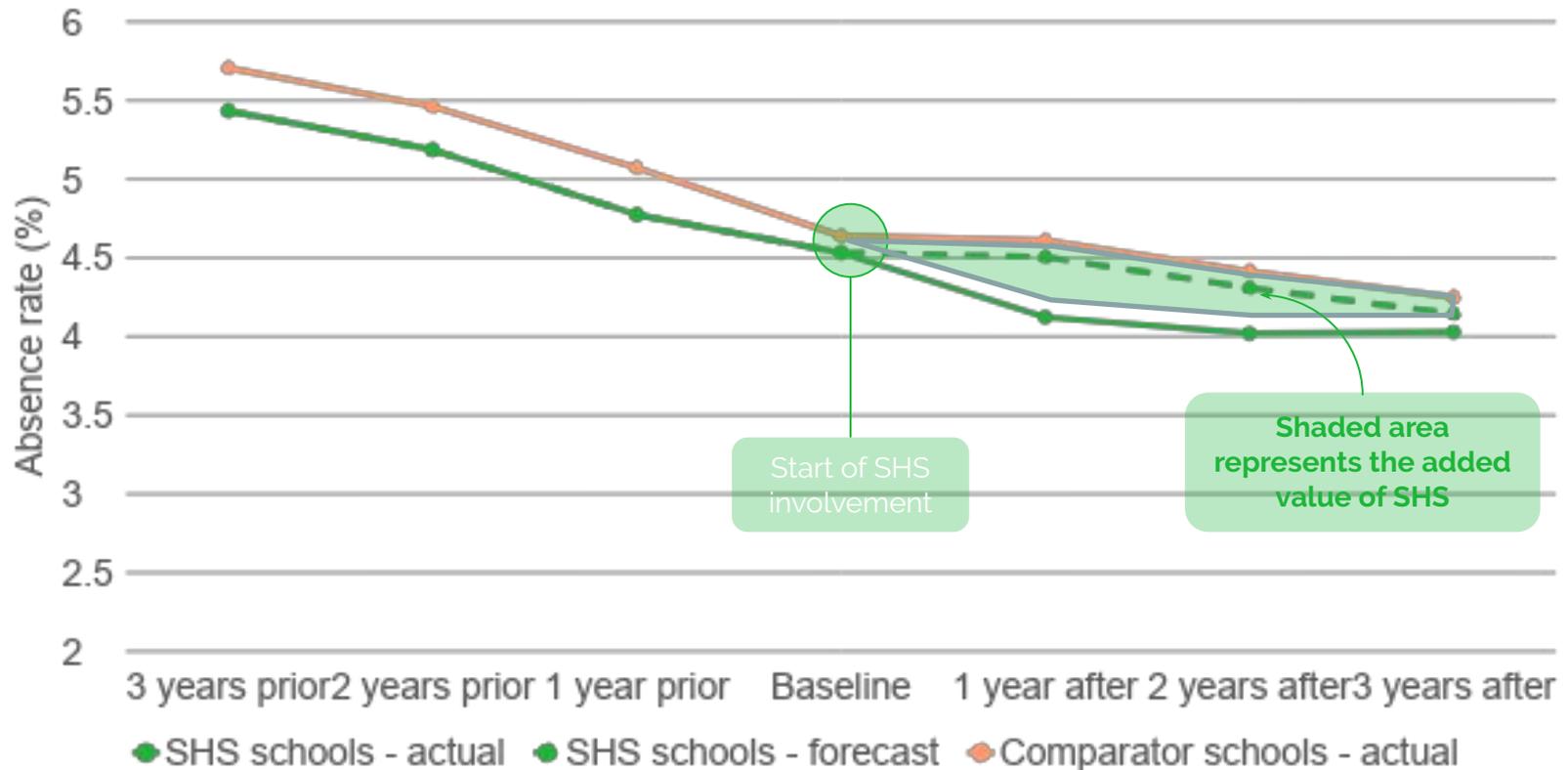
How SHS schools should perform if they mirror comparator schools



Actual performance of SHS schools



The added value of SHS to school attendance



Improvements achieved by SHS after 1 year

One year following SHS involvement, on average SHS school absence rates declined from 4.53265% to 4.12334%. This is -0.40931% from baseline and -0.38234% from forecast.

Both of these figures are:

- Substantially more than the -0.25% predicted by the original model.
- Substantially more than the average reduction in the comparison group of -0.02697% over the same period.
- More than reductions experienced in two out of the three years previously, i.e. prior to SHS involvement, i.e. -0.24774% between 'year 3 prior' and 'year 2 prior', and -0.24173% between 'year 1 prior' and 'baseline'. It is in-line with the average reduction for SHS schools between 'year 2 prior' and 'year 1 prior' of -0.41187%.

Improvements achieved by SHS in subsequent years

After two years of SHS involvement, average SHS school absence rates were 4.01911%, i.e. -0.29029% from the forecast.

After three years of SHS involvement, average SHS school absence rates were 4.02825%, i.e. -0.11612% from the forecast.

This demonstrates that schools that work with SHS experience, on average, faster reductions in absence rates than they would on their own.

The scale of improvements also suggest that the benefits of SHS may extend beyond the individual children supported by an SHS practitioner into whole-school improvements in attendance.

Improvements achieved by SHS after 3 years

From year 3, SHS schools experience a slowing-down and possible reversal of some gains.

This is likely to be a result of some schools no longer having an SHS practitioners.

It may, therefore, suggest that it is difficult for schools to sustain reductions in absence rates without an SHS practitioner.

Conclusion

SHS has a positive impact on children's attendance at school.

This impact is greater than that achieved by a comparator group of schools with similar characteristics that do not receive SHS support.

The results also suggest that the impact of SHS goes beyond the individual children that practitioners work with and contributes to whole-school improvements in attendance.

These findings are reinforced in additional analysis using a larger group of schools (n=52) but over a shorter period of time (3 years). Further information is available on request

Appendices

About SHS

SHS

We get disadvantaged children back into school, ready to learn - to give them a future and to protect those who are vulnerable at home.

Practitioner Service

SHS practitioners, based in schools, work in partnership with schools and families to resolve family issues and to encourage parental engagement in school life and children's education.

Troubled Families services

Highly trained team of workers to a cluster of schools, delivering high intensity support to families identified as on the edge of social care involvement and needing extra support.

About Cordis Bright

Cordis Bright is a research, evaluation and consultancy firm specializing in children's services, adults social care, criminal justice and the NHS.

Further information is available at www.cordisbright.co.uk.

Cordis Bright's Managing Director is a trustee of SHS.

Calculating the scale of change expected from SHS support

Over the course of a full academic year, SHS would expect a full-time SHS practitioner to contribute to a reduction in school-wide absence rates of -0.25%.

This has been estimated as follows: 1. A typical primary school has 200 pupils. 2. A typical overall attendance rate for a school that SHS works with is 95%. 3. On average in a year, SHS works with 25 pupils in a school. 4. The average attendance of pupils who SHS works with at the start of their involvement is 85%. 5. Over the course of a year, an SHS practitioner could improve the attendance rate of their cohort by about 5%. 6. A 5% improvement in the 25 pupils that SHS works with over the course of a year would result in overall school attendance rate increasing from 95% to 95.25% (everything else being equal).

Data tables

Indicator	Group	-3 years	-2 years	-1 year	Baseline	+ 1 year	+ 2 years	+ 3 years
Actual average absence rate (%)	SHS schools - actual	5.43399	5.18625	4.77438	4.53265	4.12334	4.01911	4.02825
	Comparator schools	5.70759	5.46158	5.07266	4.63906	4.61210	4.41581	4.25079
Change from previous	SHS schools		-0.24774	-0.41187	-0.24173	-0.40931	-0.10424	0.00915
	Comparator schools		-0.24600	-0.38892	-0.43360	-0.02697	-0.19629	-0.16502
Forecast	SHS schools - forecast					4.50568	4.30940	4.14438
Difference	Actual performance compared to forecast for SHS schools					-0.38234	-0.29029	-0.11612

Contact SHS

If you'd like to know how School-Home Support could help your whole-school attendance, please contact us at enquiries@shs.org.uk