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Mr A Burns
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Burns

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Attendance for Learning in Secondary Schools

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 11 October 2006 to look at your work in promoting attendance.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions, but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation and brief observations of three part lessons.

The overall effectiveness of your work in promoting attendance was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

- Students whose attendance is a cause for concern attain at least average standards and make good progress overall. This reflects all students' good achievement over recent years across the school, as indicated by the school's performance data.
- The school makes a good and effective link between attendance and attainment. Teachers and senior leaders use data in a robust way. This ensures that suitable targets are set for students and their progress towards meeting these challenging targets is monitored closely.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning, reflecting the quality of relationships between students and staff. There is a good range of strategies to ensure that students at risk of becoming disengaged with

school are identified quickly and their personal development and well-being is catered for effectively.

Quality of teaching and learning

- In relation to attendance, in the two part lessons observed the quality of teaching and learning was good because it engaged students' interest. Teachers were keen to include them in tasks and discussions.

Quality of curriculum

- The curriculum is good with regard to attendance. The school has made some alternative provision for students to help encourage them to improve their attendance and engagement with education. The school hopes to extend this successful strategy for more students next year.
- The school's performing arts specialist status has a positive impact on improving attendance because students enjoy dance, drama and music. They also access and appreciate the provision for clubs.

Leadership and management of attendance

- Leadership and management are good. At a senior leadership level, there is a demonstrable enthusiasm and determination to address attendance issues. There has been a significant drive to analyse the root causes of non-attendance and to bring about greater accuracy in the recording of absence. Consequently, systems now in place are robust and allow senior staff to interrogate data and to implement suitable strategies. These are increasingly leading to successful outcomes, such as the reduction in the rate of unauthorised absences. The school recognises the need to bring together a range of measures, including quantifiable evidence, to demonstrate the success of strategies in improving overall attendance levels.
- Systems to monitor attendance are well considered and clearly understood by staff. A recently introduced initiative to reward high rates of attendance is promising. Early signs indicate that it is making a positive impact on raising students' levels of motivation and their aspirations.

Inclusion

- Provision is good. Each student interviewed was able to identify a member of staff who they feel genuinely cares about them and is there to support them when in need.
- Students who have been non-attenders have received good support to help them reintegrate, coupled with suitable challenge to sustain improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- to refine the school's evaluation of its strategies to improve attendance to include quantifiable measures of success.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop your attendance work in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc LA