

12 October 2006

Mr A Hinchliffe
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hinchliffe

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Attendance for Learning in
Secondary Schools

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during
my visit on 28 September 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, pupils, and representatives from the local authority; scrutiny of relevant
documentation; and observation of two parts of lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

- The school has sustained an attendance rate over a number of years
which compares very favourably with the local authority average. The
modest increase in absence in 2005/6 is mainly reflected the application
by the school of stricter rules for the registration of pupils arriving late.
- For the few pupils tracked on the inspection, levels of engagement and
achievement were at least satisfactory and in many cases good.

Quality of teaching and learning

- The school uses a good range of measures to emphasise to pupils and
parents the links between attendance and achievement.

- The pupils interviewed who had been supported by the “TOPS” facility within the school spoke particularly positively about the help they had received.
- However, most reported variations between members of staff across the school in terms of support when returning to lessons after a period of absence.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the few lessons seen on this visit were satisfactory.

Quality of curriculum

- The quality of the curriculum in supporting attendance is good.
- The school has substantially expanded the range of activities offered at Key Stage 4 and this has enabled more customised packages to be put together to meet pupils’ individual needs.

Leadership and management of attendance

- Leadership and management in relation to attendance are outstanding.
- Attendance is an integral part of the school’s overall development planning and is given high priority within this.
- The school makes good use of its very detailed registration information to analyse patterns of attendance for both individual pupils and groups.
- Attendance is monitored regularly and planning and review for individual cases is detailed and rigorous.
- Appropriate use is made of rewards and sanctions, both for pupils and parents.
- Good steps are taken to invite the pupils’ and the parents views of all key aspects of school life.
- There is effective collaboration with other agencies and schools.

Inclusion

- The provision for inclusion in relation to attendance issues is good.
- All the pupils interviewed said that there was at least one member of staff who took a particular interest in their well-being and progress.
- All said similarly that there was at least one person who they could approach with confidence about any problems.
- There are a number of sources of individual support for pupils with problems.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- establishing a more consistent approach amongst teaching staff to the support of pupils returning to class after a period of absence.

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

J.N. Cordwell
Her Majesty's Inspector

cc LA