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Mr G Parry  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Parry

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 31 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 from the school, the local authority and three groups of pupils; observations of parts of two lessons and scrutiny of relevant documentation.

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

Achievement and standards

- Achievement is good, as is the capacity for further improvement. Rates of attendance, already above national figures, continue to improve steadily; unauthorised absence has reduced dramatically; the attendance target of 94.2 for 2006/7 has already been exceeded; pupils make better than average progress as they move through the school, and results continue to rise.
- The school links attendance data to pupil achievement very well and relentlessly prioritises the systematic implementation of a comprehensive range of well focused, well considered and creative strategies and initiatives. Pupils and their parents are in no doubt as to the school's uncompromising stance on non-attendance and clear about the negative impact of missing school.

## Quality of teaching and learning

- The quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils with higher levels of attendance. Pupils interviewed who are absent more frequently identify some lessons where a too narrow range of strategies limits learning. In addition, some pupils at Key Stage 3 find difficulties getting the help they need to catch up work missed through absence.

## Quality of curriculum

- The quality of the curriculum is good for the groups of pupils interviewed.
- An extensive range of option choices and increased flexibility at Key Stage 4 engages poor attenders as does a good range of extra curricular provision.

## Leadership and management

- Leadership and management are good. The school's collection, analysis and use of data are impressive and effective in improving attendance.
- The school's attendance policy is exemplary and generally well implemented. Procedures are unambiguous, as are the roles and responsibilities of pupils, parents, teachers and governors. However, a few subject teachers do not follow up on pupils who are absent from lessons. This limits the school's ability to identify the rate of post registration truancy accurately.
- The school identifies and supports pupils who do not attend regularly very well and strategies for reintegration are sensitively managed.
- Effective work with parents and strong partnerships with key services and agencies result in well targeted preventative work, timely intervention and improvements in attendance for identified pupils.

## Inclusion

- Provision for inclusion is good. The school takes a very strong stance on good attendance from all. High levels of attendance are expected, encouraged, supported, and acknowledged very well.
- Strong structures for pastoral support, good communication systems and clear procedures for monitoring and reviewing the impact of action on individual pupils and their families, provide high quality care from which learning is maximised.

## Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensure all class teachers follow up absences from lessons
- strengthen support offered to pupils at Key Stage 3, who struggle to catch up work missed through 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

Rosemary Matthews  
Her Majesty's Inspector