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Mrs E C Lutzeier  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Lutzeier

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 30 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 the school has made steady progress in further improving rates of attendance that have remained consistently above national figures for the past three years. Authorised and unauthorised absences remain consistently below national figures.
- There is good capacity to meet the attendance target of 95% for 2006/7.
- The school links attendance data to pupil attainment and achievement very well. Pupils and their parents are in no doubt about the negative impact of missing school.

## Quality of teaching and learning

- The quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils with higher rates of attendance. However, pupils who are absent most frequently identify difficulties in getting the support and help they need to catch up work missed in some subjects, sometimes due to a lack of confidence in seeking help.
- Pupils are not aware of the new 'return after absence' form that identifies missed work that needs to be completed to deadlines set by teachers.

## Quality of curriculum

- The quality of the curriculum is good. Modern foreign languages are rightly taught in the target language, but some students with low rates of attendance identify difficulties in understanding the content of lessons.
- Flexible curriculum pathways at Key Stage 4 are promoting engagement in learning and improving attendance.

## Leadership and management

- Leadership and management of attendance for learning are good.
- Policies and procedures are unambiguous, as are the roles and responsibilities of staff at all levels.
- The school gathers and interrogates data very well. It is very alert to patterns in the attendance of individual pupils, follows through rigorously and takes a clear and consistent stance on non-attendance.
- Effective partnerships with parents and a range of key agencies and services result in well targeted preventative work, early intervention and improvements in the attendance of identified pupils.

## Inclusion

- Provision for inclusion is good overall.
- The school is very responsive to the needs of poor attenders and those at risk of non-attendance.
- At Key Stage 3, pupils with rates of attendance below 80%, achieve above the county average for this group. Nevertheless, a small number struggle to catch up work missed.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensure the recently implemented 'return after absence form' is backed by clear procedures for its use.

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