

Crumlin Integrated College**Ref No: 325 0149**

An holistic approach leading to significant improvement in a post-primary school which had been in the Formal Intervention process.

Context:

The 2010 Inspection report on Crumlin Integrated College (a controlled, integrated, co-educational, non-selective 11-16 school) evaluated the overall provision as unsatisfactory. Inspectors identified generally poor standards in public examinations and serious shortcomings in the quality of pastoral care including poor behaviour management and lack of progression in the development of the pupils' personal and social skills. At the time, average attendance was 89%, with particularly poor average attendance in years 10 and 11 (84.3% and 85.5% respectively). Around 15% of the pupils came from families of service personnel and enrolment was declining over the longer term.

Intervention:

In response, school leaders introduced an attendance strategy, a linked positive behaviour policy and identified the raising of standards as inter-linked priorities embedded in the school development plan, which was ratified by the student council. One senior school leader took responsibility for driving improvement forward.

The significantly effective elements of the school's successful approach to improving attendance rates and raising standards are:

- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the form teachers, the senior leader, the governors and the student council.
- SIMS monitoring reports, which set trigger points make gaps in attendance visible.
- Rapidly escalating text messages and letters sent to parents of pupils when attendance reaches trigger points.
- Absence reasons supplied by parents, in a standard form in the school diary, and absence notes followed up promptly by form teachers. For example, in 2015 'unauthorised' absence notes were rapidly reduced from 400 to 70.
- Including individual attendance in an assessment tracker for each pupil.
- Ensuring through teaching approaches, both in form classes and through a monthly focus on attendance school assemblies, that pupils are familiar with the importance of good attendance and the link with attainment.
- Attendance Workshops for parents and for pupils, using student welfare officers and active learning methods such as quizzes, to raise awareness of the importance of the attendance and the consequences of absence.
- Prioritising the targeting of year 12 pupils and parents: previously it has been believed that year 12 pupils would be 'out' of the school system before court action could occur.

- Input to careers education (CEIAG) by local employers, and particularly the Tesco Community Champion, stressing the importance of punctuality and attendance and reinforcing these messages through the CEIAG personal statement.
- Close weekly liaison with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) which results in a fast-track provision of social and other services appropriate to meet the needs of individual family cases.
- Displaying high attendance figures, and pupil photographs, by form groups around the school, in the school news-sheet and website.
- Rewarding good attendance by prizes, form class attendance shield and trips to local activity centres.
- A firmer approach to penalties adopted by the local magistrate in recent years has raised the profile of the importance of good attendance in the wider community and local press.

In order to keep tactics refreshed, the school adopts different active learning methods, year on year, with the annual attendance workshop maintaining pupils and parental awareness. A rigorous annual evaluation and a review of the Service Level Agreement with the Education Welfare Service ensure that strategies remain effective.

Impact:

The senior leader identifies the development of a '*culture*' for good attendance between pupils and teachers, and the form teachers in particular, which is characterised by an acute awareness of the importance of attendance and its link to attainment: *If you don't attend, you can't attain*. As a consequence, through a series of follow-up inspections (the school's overall provision was evaluated as 'Good' in 2014), inspectors reported that:

The serious shortcomings identified originally in the quality of pastoral care in 2010 have been addressed fully and have resulted in a purposeful, positive and pupil-centred ethos which is described by the pupils as a significant strength of the school.

The figures below demonstrate the links between attendance, detention, suspension and attainment:

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
% Attendance	87.9	89.1	90.6	91.6
% Any 5 GCSE grades A*-C	52	61	67	78
% Any 5 including English & maths	30	25	50	57
Detention	507	288	155	33
Suspension	33	11	9	(fewer than 5)

The ETI reported further that:

The pupils have been enabled to take more responsibility for their learning; there are significant improvements in their readiness to learn as evidenced by major reductions in detentions and suspensions and in improved rates of attendance.

With respect to the children from services personnel, good attendance is the norm and some authorised absences are permitted due to family circumstances.

The school summarises the most important components as: parental awareness; leadership by one senior leader; a culture for high attendance and swift action by the EWO. They identify, going forward, the need for: better KS2-KS3 transition to nip bad habits in the bud; Area Learning Community-wide action to create a school-based welfare service and continued support from local magistrates.