

Markethill High School**Ref No: 521-0083**

A strategy combining curricular adjustments supported by high aspirations and expectations, a clerical officer taking the lead, effective analysis of survey and attendance data, close working with the education welfare officer and well-informed reward and intervention strategies.

Context:

Markethill High School is a co-educational 11-16 controlled school on the edge of Markethill town. There are 498 pupils enrolled in the school; approximately 20% of pupils are entitled to free school meals and 26% are on the SEN register.

Although overall attendance was 94% in 2012-13, a data analysis showed a dip in attendance of pupils in year 10 and year 11 when compared to those in years 8, 9 and 12. Therefore, it was agreed that improving attendance would become a priority in the school development plan (SDP).

Intervention:

An attendance policy has been in place since September 2013 and all stakeholders are reminded annually of its pertinence. Attendance is not only a priority in the SDP but is also embedded in the pastoral system. The approach to improving attendance is reflective and dynamic; with pupils, families, staff and outside agencies working together. Attendance is not viewed simply as a statistic, but as a key aspect of pastoral care policies which are effectively child-centred. Curricular adjustments for year 11 pupils, as well as analysis of pupil attitudes, have impacted positively on attendance rates across the school. There is a range of reward systems for good attendance.

The average attendance improved from 94% in 2012-13 to 96.45% in 2015-16. Promotion of positive behaviour strategies, together with high expectations and increased aspirations of pupils in key stage 4 is expected to further improve and sustain attendance rates and pupil achievement. The attainment data for pupils entitled to free school meals, looked after children and pupils on the special educational needs register aligns positively to whole school attendance.

In response to identified need, a local community health and well-being forum has been established which is led by Markethill High School. In addition, administrative adjustments have been made for SIMS and the Pass survey data is being aligned to attendance.

A member of the school's clerical staff works closely with a senior teacher to monitor pupil attendance at individual, class, year group and whole school levels. Form teachers and year heads have clearly defined roles in relation to attendance and intervene as set out in the policy. Attendance is reviewed regularly by the senior pastoral team on a case by case basis. The senior teacher liaises with year heads, the educational welfare officer and parents where a pupil's attendance gives cause for concern or trends are emerging to suggest that a pupil is at risk of low attendance. All staff take ownership for their role in sustaining and improving further the attendance rates and the senior leadership of the school regularly affirms and celebrates good staff work in this respect.

When a pupil's attendance falls below 85% the school works effectively with a very wide range of external support services to assist the pupil and their family in any way possible. Frequent contact with the very skilled EWO leads to good working relationships and the prompt and appropriate management of cases.

Impact:

The attendance rate is now higher than it has been historically and behaviour is very good across school with a significantly decreased incidence of poor behaviour. The number of cases referred to the EWO is greatly reduced and there have been no parental prosecutions in the last 3 years by the educational welfare service.

The outcomes at GCSE continue to improve, especially for the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more grades A*-C, including GCSE English and maths, which now stands at 67.7%.

The school has adopted a flexible approach to enabling pupils to return to school following absence. Provision is adapted to the individual needs of each pupil and time and thought is given to the nature of the support needed, either in-house through the pastoral team and school counsellor, or with external support.