

## **Appendix 5 – Attendance Case Study 6**

### **Primary School (LA Maintained)**

In July 2015 concerns were raised regarding the low attendance levels and high number of persistent absentees at this Primary School following a Data Meeting between the school and the Attendance Service.

A Note of Visit towards the end of the 2014/2015 academic year caused several concerns to the Head of Service and a subsequent discussion was held within the service between the Attendance Officer (AO) and the Head of Service (HoS). Regular meetings had been avoided by the school over the 2014/2015 school year and put off due to various reasons given by the school. Concerns were raised included:

- No clear processes for children whose attendance was a concern
- Letters to parents refusing Leave of Absences were sent, but no follow up or action taken when children returned to the school from such events
- No clear meetings with SMT
- No regular analysis of data

Following this meeting the HoS visited the school to discuss the concerns raised by the AO. The AO visited the school post this meeting and several new strategies were discussed and processes, which although available but not in place, were set out with the intention to implement in the new academic year.

At the end of 2014/2015 academic year the overall attendance at the school was 5.2% (National Average 3.9%) and persistent absentee at 85% was 7.9% (National Average 2.8%).

From the onset of the new term, the new strategies, such as inviting parents to the school as soon as attendance became an issue, rather than writing to the family first, has had a profound effect on both overall absence and persistent absentee rates at the school. The school have implemented new weekly meetings to discuss vulnerable children. This meeting is recorded and actions listed and personnel are held accountable for undertaking the assigned actions. Half Termly meetings with the Deputy Headteacher and Office Manager are held with the AO and any cases requiring intervention are also identified.

Overall the attendance at the school has improved and is currently 4.1% (National 4.0%) and persistent absenteeism is spectacularly improved. Currently for those on 85% and below it stands at 0.8% (National 1.9%). DfE guidelines currently state that any child with an absence of 10% is a persistent absentee, however for comparison, I have used 15%. The school have clearly shown that with clear defined processes and procedures implemented in a consistent manner attendance can be improved significantly.

In addition, a recent OfSTED report, which evaluated the school as providing a good quality of education, commented on improved quality of attendance processes and outcomes.

**Mini Case Study on the impact of persistent absenteeism at 85% and below following the change in DfE legislation to 90% from September 2015.**

A data analysis was undertaken with all schools to which the Attendance Service has access. The data collated was the number of persistent absentees, including leavers, at the end of the Spring Term 2015 and repeated at the end of the Spring Term 2016. The rationale for undertaking this task was to ascertain if targeting children under the new DfE guidelines had a positive or negative effect on children's attendance in our schools.

The analysis was undertaken on 47 primary schools, 46 maintained and 1 academy. Overall the data collated showed that the majority of schools, 36 in total (77%), showed a reduction in the number of children with attendance below 85% and an improvement in the overall attendance at the schools.

The data analysis also highlighted the schools where the proportion of children with an attendance of 85% and below had increased. This allowed for further in-depth analysis, discussion and strategies to be suggested to the schools.

Whilst the analysis has shown a positive effect on the overall attendance of children at the schools in the analysis, a repeat of the comparison will be taken at the end of the 2017 Spring Term to see if the trend continues.