

Attendance and Ofsted

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Key areas for investigation in an inspection 1

Attendance evaluated as part of behaviour and safety judgement taking into account:

- Overall and persistent absence and attendance rates for different groups, including the identification of differences between them
- How the school's data on attendance compares with national figures, taking both published and current attendance into account
- Whether attendance is in the lowest 10% of schools nationally (93.72% in 2012-13)
- Levels of punctuality over time

Key areas for investigation in an inspection 2

- Impact of the school's strategies to improve behaviour and attendance, including use of rewards and sanctions, effectiveness of work with parents and rigour in absence 'follow-up'.

(NB - Not acceptable to judge "poor" attendance as average on the basis that the school is working hard to improve it)

- Whether the percentage of pupils in each lesson is consistent with school's stated figures
- How pupils with absence due to long-term medical needs are supported

Key areas for investigation in an inspection 3

Management of attendance also evaluated as part of judgement on leadership, specifically:

- The rigour with which pupil absence is followed up, including appropriate checks when pupils cease attending

Grade descriptors

No reference to attendance in grade descriptors for good and outstanding but a criterion for judging behaviour and safety as inadequate is:

- “Attendance is consistently low for all pupils or groups of pupils and shows no or little sign of improvement”

Impact of poor attendance on inspection outcomes

- Poor attendance which is not being tackled robustly and beginning to show a trend of improvement will affect judgements for behaviour and safety and leadership and management and can “cap off” judgement of overall effectiveness
- Where poor attendance is a significant contributor to under-achievement of a group, negative impact on inspection outcomes will be greater

Indicators of good practice in managing attendance

- Clear allocation of responsibilities amongst staff
- Clear and specific policy on attendance, backed up by systematic procedures
- Rigorous tracking over time
- Careful analysis by group
- Use of individual and cohort targets
- Targeting of pupil premium funding (where appropriate)

Good practice indicators 2

- Robust systems for day to day management eg first day calling, third day follow up
- Prompt and regular communication with parents, including to celebrate improvement
- Use of rewards and sanctions
- Evidence from around the school (eg in displays) that good attendance has high profile
- Evidence of an awareness of the link between attainment and attendance amongst staff, pupils and parents