Questions to ask around school attendance

Figures

* What are our persistent absence figures?
* How does our attendance compare with the national and local figures?
* What patterns or trends are emerging from comparing weekly, half-termly, termly, and annual absence data?

Groups of pupils

* Is absence (and persistent absence) more widespread within certain groups of pupils?
* Are there any groups or cohorts of pupils that are over or underrepresented in any of the absence bands?
* Are the figures skewed by a small number of pupils?
* Is there a particular age group/year/class that has a significantly lower attendance rate than the others?
* How does our absence data for pupils eligible for FSM and pupils with SEND compare to local and national averages?
* Which groups of pupils should we be particularly concerned about and what can we do to improve their attendance?

Your school's approach

* How are we monitoring pupils’ attendance to identify patterns and any concerns?
* Are we making use of the DfE's view your education data tool to access near real time data to interpret trends?
* How much of our absence is authorised?
* What are we doing to promote attendance?
* What impact are these strategies having?
* If poor attendance is a problem, what strategies have we put in place to address this?
* Is our school improvement plan (SIP) clear about what we're doing to improve school attendance?
* Do all staff receive appropriate training to support good attendance?
* Are we committing the right resources to tackling absence?

Support for pupils and parents/carers

* How are we supporting:
* Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent?
* Persistently absent pupils?
* Severely absent pupils?
* Cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers?
* Do all pupils feel welcome and supported at school?
* Are parents and carers aware of the school attendance policy?
* Do they understand what is expected of parents/carers and pupils?
* How are staff supported to consistently communicate the importance of attendance to parents/carers and pupils?
* Do we consider pupils' and parents/carers' views when we set our attendance policy?

Ask these questions if you're:

A link governor for attendance performing a monitoring visit

Part of a committee or monitoring pair responsible for attendance

Any governor, if you're at a full governing board meeting discussing attendance