

Mind-reading system nips truancy in the bud

PROBLEMS with attendance, low self-esteem and underachievement at schools in Wakefield are being tackled with a tool that helps read children's thoughts.

Schools across the district are using the PASS (Pupils Attitudes to Self and School) system to assess pupils' attitudes to education and find out why they become disenchanted with it.

Pupils log on to answer a range of questions on an electronic questionnaire relating to motivation, liking for school and teachers, attitudes towards school work, the curriculum, educational aspirations and absence for which they are given a score.

Schools then receive detailed reports based on the information collected.

Majid Khoshkhoo is an educational psychologist working in Wakefield.

He said: "Putting in place such measures enables schools to take action in advance of negative attitudes translating into behavioural problems. It means they can intervene in cases of groups or individuals deemed to be 'at risk'."

Several schools in Wakefield are using the PASS questionnaire as a tool to support all children to keep them interested in school life, as the information collected can also be used to make the curriculum more engaging.

Glen Williams is chairman of W3 Insights, which has developed the system during the past 10 years.

He said: "It gives schools access to information they thought was impossible to get, helping to increase attainment, raise aspirations and improve attendance.

"Society benefits too in the long run because it helps integrate disaffected youngsters back



FEWER EMPTY SEATS:
Headteachers are using a new tool to tackle problems like poor attendance. w1123b541

into school and Independent research shows children who feel integrated are much less likely to commit criminal acts, take drugs or gamble."

Jean Moyser, deputy headteacher at Flanshaw J&I School, which is one of the schools where PASS is being used, said: "It is proving extremely useful in pointing out areas of the curriculum that we could be looking to improve and also in identifying the children most in need of support from our learning mentor."