TOP MARKS!

Read the article. Seven sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-I the one which fits each gap (1-7). There is one extra sentence you don't need to use.

A No, we're not going to do it like that anymore.

B The teacher must and has to be in control.

C There were actually many occasions when I thought I'd never succeed in changing the school.

D I wanted them to feel they were part of what was going to happen.

E I have a great time while I'm here, and I know it's teaching me loads of things I need.

F They can choose from sports, aerobics, photography, pottery, drama, dance classes.

G Today, the main problem she faces is a waiting list of parents who are desperate to get their children into the school.

H The students thought they could get away with anything.

I Why is the school so bad?

Elaine Atkins, head teacher of Abbot Hill School in Manchester, has turned one of the worst schools in the country into one of the best. Ellie Dawson finds out how she did it.

Three years ago, Abbot Hill School had a dreadful reputation. Teachers didn't want to work there. Parents didn't want to send their children there. The pupils - as seen by the number of children who regularly played truant from school — clearly didn't want to go there. It was a failing school, and a school failing the community. Then Elaine Atkins was appointed head teacher. 1_____ So how has she achieved the impossible? 'It actually wasn't that difficult,' says Elaine with her usual modesty. 'The school was in such a bad state that no one — not the parents, not the students, not the teachers - valued anything about it. That made it much easier for an outsider to come in and say, " 2_____ We're going to do it differently." And I did have a lot of help too.'

One of the first things Elaine did was call a meeting of all the students, staff and parents. 'Not all of them came, of course, but it was actually very well attended. That's when I realised I had a chance. They hadn't given up completely.' She told them some of the things which she wanted to change and put some key issues to the vote. 3_____ I said: "If I introduce a school uniform, will you support me?" The vast majority said they would.' Elaine believes in things like school uniforms. 'It's all about creating an environment where there's discipline and a sense of pride. When I took over, Abbot Hill was out of control. Children were being bullied, and no one stopped the bullies. 4_____ A uniform is a symbol that there are limits and that we're all part of the same community.' Elaine is convinced that discipline is central to students' learning. 'How can they learn anything if there's chaos in the classroom? 5_____ We've managed to bring that back to Abbot Hill, and it's clearly working. Students are now leaving the school with the qualifications they need. That never happened before. Of course, some students

still get in trouble. Children always will. But they know what the rules are, and they know they'll be enforced. There's much less bullying now.'

It's not all about punishment and discipline, though. Elaine has also introduced a large number of after-class activities. 'Everyone used to go home after the last lesson. Now, there are a huge number of things which the students can choose from. None of them are compulsory, so the students don't feel they're being forced to do them. 6_____ You name it — we offer it! We also have regular school trips, which are educational and a lot of fun. Some parents come on them too, and that's a great way for us all to get to know one another better. I've always believed that the better you know someone, the easier it is to work together.'

I wondered what the students thought of their head teacher and the things which she'd done. Sharon Tucker, 16, who I met outside the school gates, summed up the mood of all the students: 'I used to hate coming to this school. I dreaded it every single morning. Now, I look forward to coming. 7_____ Mrs Atkins has changed all our lives. We owe her a lot.'