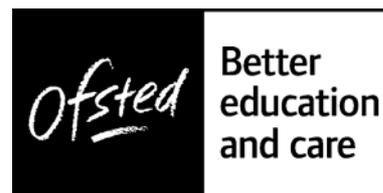


Prospects Learning Services Ltd
132-138 High Street
Bromley
Kent
BR1 1EZ

T 020 8313 7760
F 020 8464 3393

Ofsted helpline
08456 404045



3 October 2005

Mrs S King
Winterbourne Infant & Nursery School
Winterbourne Road
Thornton Heath
Surrey
CR7 7QT

Dear Mrs King

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF WINTERBOURNE INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with David Marshall, Additional Inspector, to your school on 13 and 14 September 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in July 2004.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the deputy headteacher and other senior staff, the vice-chair of governors and a representative from the LEA. 18 lessons or parts of lessons, an assembly and two registration sessions were inspected. The observations of lessons took place in Years 1 and 2 because the pupils in the nursery and reception classes had not started attending school on the date of the inspection.

Context

The headteacher resigned at the end of August and her duties have been carried out on a temporary basis by the deputy headteacher. An interim headteacher has been

appointed to start in mid September. Seven new teachers joined the school at the start of this term to replace the same number who left at the end of the last academic year. Among the new teachers are the co-ordinators for mathematics and for the pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Four of the new teachers are newly qualified. The year leaders for Year 1 and Year 2 were previously responsible for leading the reception year and Year 1 respectively, and the co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage is acting as year group leader for the reception year. The governing body has one new member but remains below strength.

Achievement and standards

Standards at the school are rising slowly from a low base. The validated results of the 2005 end-of-key-stage tests show limited improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's analysis of attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage indicates that the pupils' progress is improving; however, the overall progress made by the pupils remains slow and too few pupils achieve the higher levels by the end of Year 2. The relative progress made by different ethnic groups is uneven and the boys' performance is markedly below that of the girls' overall.

In lessons standards were at or below those expected for the pupils' ages and they made inadequate progress due to weaknesses in the teaching. The more able pupils, in particular, were not sufficiently challenged or supported in achieving as much as they could have.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in July 2004:

- raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics – inadequate progress.

Personal development and well-being

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good overall. They were satisfactory in six lessons; good in eight and inadequate in four. This is an improvement since the last visit. The pupils became restless only where the teaching was inadequate and on occasions the pupils behaved well in spite of weaknesses in the teaching. In most lessons the pupils worked well together and showed pleasure in the success of their peers. They played sensibly at break and lunch times and their behaviour in assembly was good.

Attendance, at an average of just over 90% during the last half of the summer term, has improved slightly over that reported at the last monitoring inspection. However, the school recognises that both authorised and unauthorised absences remain too high and that patterns in attendance are not being properly analysed in order to inform the actions to improve it. In part this is due to difficulties with recording attendance and the school expects the imminent installation of a computer-based information system to improve the situation.

Quality of provision

The quality of the teaching was similar to that seen during the last monitoring inspection and remains inadequate overall. It was satisfactory or better in 12 lessons, 3 of which were good. It was inadequate in 6 lessons, a relatively high proportion of which were in Year 1. There is too little good or better teaching.

The weaker lessons were characterised by planning which did not take account of the pupils' varying needs or of how to assess their learning. The lesson objectives were rarely shared with the pupils. Instructions for tasks were sometimes unclear and too much time was wasted while the pupils' activities were organised. In a number of lessons the tasks were ill-conceived; for example, where the pupils were asked to read, as a whole class, from an oversized book which some of them couldn't see and which the teacher went through too fast. There were also instances where the teacher worked effectively with a small group of pupils while the rest of the class made little or no progress. The teachers' classroom assessment practice does not ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment make at least satisfactory progress.

In the more effective lessons the teachers adopted a range of strategies to ensure that the pupils were involved from the outset; in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, for example, individual pupils came to the front of the class for a counting activity and other pupils were encouraged to comment on, and extend, the answers given. Good use was made of resources to support learning in these lessons and, on a limited number of occasions, activities were provided at different levels to challenge all of the pupils appropriately. Only one lesson was seen where the pupils were asked to evaluate their own work; it was an effective strategy and the pupils responded well.

Teaching assistants gave good support. They were usually taken account of in the teachers' plans although in a minority of lessons the teaching assistants were unclear as to what their role was and used their initiative to support the pupils.

The systems for collecting assessment data, tracking the pupils' performance and setting targets in mathematics and English are sound overall. In Years 1 and 2, however, insufficient use is made of the information available to support planning. Some useful analysis of the pupils' performance takes place by the co-ordinator for assessment but this does not systematically inform developments in provision.

There is a sound overall curriculum plan for the school although in Key Stage 1 there are inconsistencies in how this is applied in each class giving the potential for an imbalance in curriculum coverage. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and planning is based on the appropriate learning goals.

The school's internal and external accommodation is inadequate. There is too little space for outdoor play; this restricts timetabling, hinders communication between members of staff and limits the scope for physical education (PE) activities. Movement between buildings is too slow; some lessons seen on this inspection started ten minutes late. A number of classrooms are too small to allow for a full range of activities.

Support and guidance for the pupils is satisfactory overall. The staff work hard to safeguard the pupils' welfare and the pupils say they feel happy to be at school. The pupils are supported in taking part in a full range of activities although some pupils did not have proper clothing for PE lessons. There are good examples around the school of the pupils' cultural heritage being celebrated and the pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities where they are given the opportunity to do so.

Provision for the pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The quality of the pupils' individual education plans is good and learning targets are particular to each pupil and are appropriately reviewed. Support in lessons varied in relation to how well planned the tasks were. Support for the pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator has already identified her priorities for improvement.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in July 2004:

- improve the provision of education in the reception classes – not inspected on this visit
- improve the pupils' achievement by raising the overall quality of teaching through Years 1 and 2 – inadequate progress.

Leadership and management

The school's strategic development faces a challenge following the resignation of the headteacher and a number of other key staff. At the time of this inspection there was inadequate leadership and management capacity to drive the school forward. However, the timely appointment of an interim headteacher offers the potential for improvement in the near future. The deputy headteacher has undertaken appropriate day-to-day management of the school, ensuring that morale amongst staff is positive and that new staff have begun their induction.

The evaluation, by the school, of progress towards the action-plan targets is inconsistent and is not underpinning school improvement. The monitoring of lessons has not taken place since mid-way through the summer term. Although the evaluation document provided to inspectors gives an analysis of the pupils' results in the most recent end-of-key-stage tests, insufficient use is made of measurable data to check the progress being made in all the areas requiring improvement. The records of senior leadership meetings indicate what has taken place but not the impact of the actions identified in past meetings, nor do they explicitly relate to the overall goals in the school's action plan. Some sensible steps have been taken to focus the actions to improve teaching and learning through the re-drafting of elements of the action plan. The school has wisely identified milestones to measure developments and has begun to outline the actions intended to secure improvement.

The mechanisms for holding managers at all levels to account are unclear although job descriptions do identify appropriate areas of responsibility. Performance management is not consistently carried out. The majority of the middle managers are new to their roles and the school recognises the requirement for appropriate

support to ensure that duties are effectively carried out. A measure of training has begun to take place for the year leaders and the co-ordinator of mathematics. Responsibility for the co-ordination of each of the foundation subjects has not been allotted and this is a matter of concern.

The governors have been suitably involved in the appointment of the interim headteacher and in initial planning for a substantive replacement. They have a greater understanding of the information required to measure changes but are not yet collecting a wide enough range of evidence to enable them to hold the school to account and act as critical friends.

The school recognises the crucial importance of supporting the large number of new, and in some cases newly qualified, teachers properly. A sound induction programme is underway with support from the LEA.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in July 2004:

- improve the focus of leadership to ensure there is a clear impact on whole-school improvement – inadequate progress.

External support

The LEA made a good range of support available to the school throughout the last term. LEA staff are collaborating effectively with the school to facilitate the transition in overall leadership and to support the work of middle managers. The LEA monitors the school effectively and its support work is well co-ordinated.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – inadequate.

Priorities for further improvement

- Secure the leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, senior leadership team and middle managers.
- Improve the proportion of teaching which is good or better.
- Improve the achievement of the pupils in mathematics and English so that a greater proportion is on target to attain higher levels by the end of Year 2.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Croydon.

Yours sincerely

Steve Long
H M Inspector