

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

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 020 8313 7760
Direct F 020 8464 3393



5 June 2007

Ms Caroline Welch
The Headteacher
Fernhill Primary School
Neville Duke Road
Fox Lane, Farnborough
GU14 9BY

Dear Ms Welch,

Ofsted Monitoring of Schools with Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 21 May 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I was grateful for the opportunity to meet your school improvement partner, and a representative from the local authority.

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.

As a result of the inspection in September 2006, the school was asked to improve self-evaluation, extend the skills of subject managers, and to use assessment information to ensure pupils are challenged and aware of the next steps in their learning. Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing these issues and in raising the pupils' achievements.

The school has made good progress in addressing this issue of more rigorous self-evaluation. Assessment information is now gathered systematically and presented in very accessible ways. Colour coded charts identify clearly whether or not pupils are on track to meet their predicted targets. The information is used to refine the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) and to determine individual targets for teachers. Teachers' progress towards their targets is evaluated by closely monitoring half-termly assessments, scrutinising pupils' work and by observing lessons. The school now has a good idea of its strengths and weaknesses. All staff are involved in self-review. Teachers produce an individual report each term that outlines progress so far and indicates where further improvement is needed.

Governors, with effective support from the local authority, are contributing to whole-school evaluation by asking pertinent questions in line with their role in holding the school to account. Parents are encouraged to comment on the school's work through questionnaires and consultation evenings. There is now a collective and individual sense of accountability and common purpose. Self-evaluation procedures, although not yet fully embedded, are already leading to improved standards and achievement.

Satisfactory progress has been made in extending subject managers' skills. The subject managers for English and mathematics have a clear idea of their roles. They have been well supported by consultants from the local authority. A thorough audit of provision identified areas for improvement, such as the need to ensure all pupils are suitably challenged. Recent monitoring of lessons, confirmed by observations during the visit, show that teachers are now setting work at different levels to meet the varying needs of pupils. All classrooms have prompts for learning in English and mathematics. Subject managers have sampled pupils' work and fed back their comments to colleagues. The mathematics manager has recently started to work effectively alongside teachers. However, the monitoring of lessons has so far been carried out by the headteacher and consultants. Subject managers need to be more involved in this in order to become better informed about day-to-day practice and, in turn, share successful methods with colleagues.

Good progress has been made in improving the use of assessment information. The comprehensive tracking information is used well to target those pupils who are underachieving. Teachers identify gaps in pupils' learning, draw up whole-class and individual targets, and tailor work accordingly. During the monitoring visit, teaching assistants provided skilled support and pupils were suitably challenged and making good progress in lessons. Teachers made clear at the beginning of the lessons what different pupils were expected to learn. Pupils are gaining a good understanding of the next steps in their individual learning because teachers explain them in child-friendly language and display them prominently as targets on the walls or on pupils' desks. The impact of these strategies is evident from the improving levels of achievement. Pupils are making good progress in the Foundation Stage. They enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities and more children than in previous years are on course to achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception year. The school's assessment data show that pupils in Year 6 have been more successful in building on their prior attainment, with many making very good progress since the beginning of the year. The school has rightly identified the need to sharpen the focus on the achievement of more able pupils to ensure that they reach their potential.

The local authority's action plan provides a clear summary of how the issues are being addressed. It includes specific success criteria and a time-frame for improvement, and fits closely with the school's action planning. Consultants from the local authority, together with the school improvement partner have worked successfully in tandem with the school in the drive for improvement. A positive ethos for learning has been established and provides a good basis from which to move the school forward.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton
Additional Inspector