

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



3 July 2007

Mr Simon Harris
The Headteacher
St Paul's Way Community School
Shelmerdine Close
London
E3 4AN

Dear Mr Harris

Ofsted Monitoring of Grade 3 Schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 26 June 2007, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Thank you also to governors and students who gave their time to talk with me.

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 June 2006, the school was asked to:

- Use a wider range of teaching and learning strategies to promote more effective student learning and engagement
- Further develop the monitoring of departmental performance to ensure consistency and drive improvement
- Use data more effectively to inform teaching and improvement planning.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievements. This visit has raised serious concerns about the standard of education provided by the school and I am recommending a return visit.

Since the inspection in 2006, standards at Key Stage 3 have declined; the progress students make between Years 7 and 9 is inadequate. Although many students make good progress overall between Key Stages 2 and 4, a significant number of students, particularly boys, make inadequate progress. Therefore, achievement overall is inadequate. Additionally, while the proportion of students who achieve 5 GCSE passes at grades A to C is above average, the proportion of students who gain 5 GCSE passes which include English and mathematics at grades A to C is well below average.

Satisfactory progress has been made in developing a wider range of teaching and learning styles. The appointment of two teacher mentors who provide support to teachers is helping to improve teachers' practice. The support of the local authority is also valued by subject leaders. In good lessons, there is pace and challenge. Students are expected to give extended answers and explain their reasoning and they rise to this challenge. However, there is not enough good teaching to accelerate students' progress and too much inadequate teaching remains. In some lessons students are passive learners and teachers are not rigorous about developing students' speaking and listening skills. Low-level disruption has an adverse impact on students' learning and teachers are not always adept at challenging this behaviour. Homework is not regularly set and poor use is made of homework diaries.

Some departments make use of assessment data to inform teaching; however this is not embedded and is used inconsistently across the school. Data is not used effectively to inform improvement planning in a sharp and precise way. For example, in English only the results of GCSE examinations informed the department's planning with respect to improving students' attainment in poetry. Similarly, poor examination results in science led to the identification of training needs for teachers, but the training has not yet taken place.

Insufficiently well-developed understanding of data has led to some middle and senior leaders using headline figures to judge progress as good, when further analysis shows that a significant number of students clearly make inadequate progress. Some teachers do not make sufficient use of students' prior attainment data and question its veracity; this has led to a lack of urgency in improving progress between Years 7 and 9. Analysis of data does not inform self-evaluation. Evaluation is reactive, for example, following poor performance in exams, rather than proactive in regularly identifying and addressing gaps in students' learning in some subjects. This leads to areas of weakness not being identified sharply, precisely and quickly enough to have a positive impact on students' progress. Progress on the use of data is inadequate.

Students are not all aware of the levels they are working at and what they need to do to improve. They report targets which relate to their attitudes, rather than specific steps in their learning which will help them improve.

Systems to regularly identify strengths and weaknesses in students' knowledge and understanding are in place in mathematics and science but are not fully developed. For example, in mathematics although gaps are identified in students' understanding, there is no systematic way to check whether they have been addressed. Students' progress in English has begun to be tracked, however this is at an early stage and is not regularly analysed with a view to identifying whole school trends. In addition, there is no strategically planned cycle of monitoring and evaluation at a whole-school level to which everyone is committed. For example, some form tutors opt out of being involved in the shadowing of classes in the 'focus fortnight'. Additionally, there is no systematic approach to checking how the information which is gained from this exercise is used at departmental and teacher level.

Not all subject leaders have an overview of the strengths and areas for development in students' knowledge, skills and understanding. Strategic focus is lacking in the monitoring of performance of departments. Progress on monitoring the performance of departments to ensure consistency and to drive improvement is inadequate.

In conclusion, the school has made inadequate progress in tackling two of the three areas of weakness identified in the last inspection. Some work has been done to improve teaching and learning and systems have been put in place to develop better monitoring of departmental performance. These developments are at an early stage and are not consistently implemented across the school. To make the rapid improvements needed to accelerate students' progress systems need to be consistent and precise and have the commitment of all staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Asyia Kazmi
Her Majesty's Inspector