

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 020 8313 7760  
Direct F 020 8464 3393



4 October 2007

Mrs Fiona Wyeth  
The Headteacher  
Overton Church of England Primary School  
Court Drove  
Overton  
Basingstoke  
RG25 3ES

Dear Mrs Wyeth

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave me when I inspected your school on 27 September 2007, for the time you allowed for our telephone discussion and for the information which you made available before and during my visit. Please also convey a particular thanks to the staff, pupils and governor I spoke to as their views were particularly interesting and have been taken into account.

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 February 2007, the school was asked to improve the following areas.

- Raise achievement in English and mathematics.
- Ensure the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good enough to enable all children to achieve well.
- Improve the use of assessment to set challenging and personal targets with pupils.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

There has been a significant turnover of staff since the last inspection and nine out of twelve teachers are new. There is a new acting deputy headteacher and a new administrator in the school's office and the staffing structure has also undergone a radical review. There has been a good induction process for new staff and this has contributed to staff developing a productive and good team spirit in a very short space of time. As a result there is now a shared sense of responsibility amongst staff to improve the progress made by all pupils throughout the school.

The local authority (LA) and school improvement partner have provided the school and governing body with good support. This together with a strong new leadership team and a committed staff, who are open to change, is helping to bring about satisfactory and increasingly good levels of progress. As a result pupils' achievements in English and mathematics are improving, particularly at Key Stage 1. However, until very recently the rate of progress at Key Stage 2 was still too variable; this was largely due to some inadequate teaching in the past and inconsistencies in the application of agreed school policies and practice. Consequently older pupils have been left with significant gaps in their learning. Staff are currently working hard to remedy this situation although the progress for some year groups is better than in others. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making better overall progress in mathematics than they are in English. The school recognises that there is a need to adopt and embed a systematic and rigorous teaching of phonics, but staff still require training and support to enable this to be successfully implemented. The unvalidated national test results for Year 6 pupils show that they have achieved better in English than in mathematics and that more pupils gained the expected Level 4 than in the previous year. As a result, the school met its target for the number of pupils expected to achieve a level 4 or better in English and only narrowly missed meeting the target for mathematics. There is a closer working partnership between teachers working in Years 2 and 3 and this has helped improve transition arrangement for pupils. Teachers in these year groups have attended moderation courses and have spent time in each other's classrooms learning from each other. The school is also in the process of reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it is more relevant and purposeful to the needs and interests of pupils. There is a good cross-curricular map that identifies links between subjects and provides helpful guidance for staff about the skills pupils are expected to learn. However, pupils are not making sufficient use of information and communication technology during lessons to support their learning across the curriculum.

The school is making good use of assessment systems to track and monitor the progress pupils make in foundation subjects. Assessment is now used more effectively to set pupils challenging targets. Although pupils know they have targets for English and mathematics they do not always understand what their targets mean. The quality of marking has improved, but is still too variable across the school. Where marking is good, it is closely linked to the targets in pupils' books or the intended learning outcomes of lessons.

There has been effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by the LA and the headteacher, as well as the new and much improved senior management team. Although the progress made by learners is discussed with teachers, formal lesson observations do not all include a sharp enough focus on the progress made by different groups of learners or standards. This is reducing the impact of monitoring activities in helping to accelerate the pace of progress. The use of peer observations has helped staff to share and disseminate good practice as well as engage in professional dialogue about what good teaching looks like. Teachers have benefited from training about how to use talk and assessment to support learning although these areas require further development. Teaching is at least satisfactory with pockets of good practice and no inadequate lessons were observed. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, but need to take more account of the different

ways in which pupils learn. Most daily planning includes key vocabulary and learning objectives; however, when these are not highlighted sufficiently at the beginning of lessons pupils struggle to understand what is expected of them and do not use the correct terminology to talk about subject specific work. Where good teaching was observed, pupils were provided with appropriate practical activities to support their learning in mathematics and opportunities to apply their new knowledge of grammar in literacy. On the whole teachers have good subject knowledge; however, they do not always demonstrate an equally good awareness of the different ways in which pupils learn. Nevertheless, teachers' expectation of what pupils can achieve has increased significantly and they are all taking more responsibility for the learning of different ability groups during lessons.

Pupils have noticed the improvement in the quality of teaching; they like the fact that teachers are approachable and have a gentle sense of humour. This helps them to feel more confident at trying out new things and asking for help. However, they find it unhelpful if a teacher repeats an explanation word for word instead of using a different way of helping pupils to understand. Pupils also find it unhelpful to be given too much information in one go because some of them struggle to retain too much information at once. They welcome the introduction of 'next steps' as a way of helping them to improve their work and appreciate being given time to think during lessons as well as time to complete their work.

Governors are developing a better understanding of their role and responsibilities and are now providing the school with better challenge and support. The school community is now working effectively in partnership and this is helping the school to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Gehane Gordelier".

Gehane Gordelier  
Her Majesty's Inspector