

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



21 May 2008

Mrs Sylvia Libson  
The Acting Headteacher  
Chalkhill Primary School  
Barnhill Road  
Wembley  
HA9 9YP

Dear Mrs Libson

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF CHALKHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Judith Dawson, Additional Inspector, to your school on 13 and 14 May 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in December 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

One newly qualified teacher may be appointed to the Foundation Stage, as agreed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report 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.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the School Improvement Services for Brent.

Yours sincerely

Jane Wotherspoon  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF CHALKHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 13 and 14 May 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, consultant headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the chair of governors, a representative from the local authority (LA), and groups of pupils. Inspectors spoke informally with staff and pupils during the course of the inspection.

### Context

Eight members of teaching and support staff have left the school since the inspection in December 2007 and one more is expected to leave at the end of this term. Four teachers have been appointed to the school on temporary contracts. The substantive headteacher resigned following a period of absence through illness. The consultant headteacher who was managing the school at the time of the inspection continues to work in the school for 2 days a week. The school has entered into a soft federation with a local primary school, whose headteacher has been the acting headteacher since January. Governors have recently appointed a substantive headteacher who will take up the post in September. The movement of pupils into and out of the school continues to be high.

### Achievement and standards

Standards continue to be well below expected levels at all ages. The school's own information shows that around half the pupils in each year group are meeting expectations for their age. Weaknesses in reading, writing and mathematics skills persist. Many pupils do not have an extended vocabulary and find it difficult to explain what they are doing. Pupils' phonic knowledge is weak and so this is a focus for intervention across the school. In mathematics, pupils often forget previous learning and find it hard to apply their mathematical skills. It is difficult for pupils to build on their skills because teachers' planning is not geared to the needs of different groups.

The school's data on pupils' progress show that too many are not making enough progress to catch up to expected levels. Pupils learning English as an additional language are not always given challenging work because they are too often included in groups of lower attaining pupils.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in December 2007:

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science – inadequate

## Personal development and well-being

Behaviour in classes and around the school is generally good. Restlessness in lessons occurs when pupils are not challenged by the work, or when teachers' introductions go on for too long. There were three fixed-term exclusions in the autumn term but none in the spring term. Pupils say they enjoy school and attendance figures are broadly average; they are higher than schools with similar characteristics. Pupils are generally polite, respectful to adults and enjoy good relationships with their friends. Pupils know that they should work hard but feel that they could be doing even better with more challenging work.

## Quality of provision

Despite some improvements in the practice of individual teachers, the quality of teaching remains inadequate overall. Pupils' behaviour is generally managed well, and adults and pupils enjoy good relationships in most lessons. Teachers do not plan well enough to meet the learning needs of different ability groups and to provide an appropriate level of challenge. Plans frequently describe the activities that pupils will undertake rather than identifying what pupils are expected to learn. Teachers do not readily adapt tasks if pupils do not respond as expected. At times, explanations are unclear so that pupils waste time while they are uncertain what to do. Teachers miss opportunities to demonstrate and model how pupils can improve their work and apply their skills. Weaknesses in the management of time and the organisation of lessons lead to a slow pace to the learning, especially where explanations are too long and pupils have too little time to practise new learning. The structure of the day with a long session between break and lunch impedes efficient use of time and encourages a leisurely pace. Additional adults are not always deployed efficiently, particularly during the introduction to the lesson. Equipment and resources are not fit for purpose where, for example, games activities are used to occupy pupils instead of enhancing their learning.

There is insufficient support for pupils at the various stages of learning English as an additional language. In lessons, teachers make few concessions to the needs of these pupils. There is insufficient focus on key vocabulary, on explaining terminology, or on providing visual props and prompts. Helpful displays and aids for learning, such as word walls, are not referred to consistently during lessons. However, talk partners are used regularly. This good strategy to encourage speaking and listening is especially helpful where partners share their mother tongue. It has also improved the level of pupils' participation since the inspection when they were described as too passive. Induction procedures for those joining the school during the year are clear, albeit relatively new, and include assessing pupils after they have settled. Support for groups of pupils withdrawn from class is satisfactory but activities do not link closely enough with class work. The school has been without a member of staff to lead this work for some time. As a result, this aspect of the school's work is not managed effectively or monitored sufficiently.

The school is also without a leader to manage the support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. A consultant from the LA, working three days a week in the school, has ensured that statutory reviews have taken place and that appropriate

referrals have been made where necessary. She has established additional programmes of support and has trained teaching assistants to provide that support. She has monitored its quality and analysed the progress of pupils. Areas for further improvement have been identified clearly. The quality of intervention programmes for English are at least satisfactory, but have met with mixed success because the right children were not always identified to participate. Support for pupils in class is not so systematic and, in some classes, too reliant on teaching assistants.

Provision in the Foundation Stage continues to be satisfactory. Here, there is a busy learning environment offering a variety of activities and supportive interventions from staff. Children are encouraged to become independent and to make choices about their learning. Planning is satisfactory. It is clear what is expected to be learnt from adult-led tasks but not so clear what children should learn from the play they initiate themselves. Activities reflect all areas of learning well. The children are proud of their 'learning journeys' which are a lovely record of their experiences. However, there is some unevenness in the coverage of areas of learning. The records are descriptive rather than sharp about children's learning.

Since the inspection, the deputy headteacher has devised a new system for tracking pupils' progress which is easy to read and simplifies analysis of the information. Colour coding highlights quickly and easily where pupils are not making as much progress as they should and where they are behind expectations for their age. Challenging targets have been set for each pupil based on them making accelerated progress. This is a potentially good system that supports the half-termly meetings with each member of staff at which pupils' progress is discussed. This raises teachers' accountability for the outcomes of the pupils they teach. However, it is not yet having the desired impact of ensuring that teachers provide work that is pitched at the right level. All pupils have broad curricular targets used in class as well as personal targets that are shared with their parents. A programme of training to help teachers improve the accuracy of their assessments has been set up. Although not yet consistent, the quality and usefulness of teacher's marking has improved recently with clearer guidance to pupils on how to improve.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in December 2007:

- Ensure that teachers use assessment to plan work in lessons that is pitched at the right level for all pupils – inadequate
- Provide the pupils with challenging targets that will help them understand the next steps in their learning – satisfactory

### Leadership and management

The acting headteacher provides dynamic and energetic leadership. She is well supported by the consultant headteacher from the LA. Together they are driving forward improvements. They have adopted a systematic, rigorous and consistent approach to tackling weaknesses in teaching through a programme of monitoring and support. Excellent links with local schools, including the soft federation arrangements, are providing staff with opportunities to observe good teaching and to receive support to improve their practice. However, the potential for sustained

improvement is dependent on the skills of teachers to adopt the advice provided and to embed this in their practice. It is also dependent on making high quality appointments to the senior leadership team. The role of the deputy is developing well and the mathematics leader feels empowered to carry out her role. However, as yet, the senior leadership team lacks depth because of a number of key vacancies. Nonetheless, a potentially good management structure has been devised against which appointments will be made for September. Clear, precise job descriptions for these roles include a strong focus on improving teaching and learning.

The school's action plan addresses the issues from inspection and actions are appropriate and achievable. It has a strong focus on improving provision to raise standards with good planning for external support and training for staff. Criteria by which to measure impact focus well on outcomes for pupils but a relative weakness is a lack of sharpness in procedures for monitoring the impact of the actions. A regular programme of lesson observations has identified common weaknesses in teaching that are being tackled through general whole-school training. There is scope, now, to tailor the monitoring to the needs of individual teachers, to target their improvement, and to link this with the information on the progress made by the pupils in their class.

Governors are developing their roles and, with support and training from the local authority and acting headteacher, strengthening their skills to deal effectively with personnel issues. The acting headteacher and governors are very clear about the challenges facing the school and the steps required to make improvements.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in December 2007:

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and monitoring so that the most important priorities are focussed on eliminating weak teaching and underachievement – satisfactory

### External support

The LA statement of action meets requirements. The date of July 2009 for removal of special measures is realistic given the number of new appointments required at a senior level. The action plan has clear timescales with an appropriate sense of urgency. Actions are generally clear and relevant with quantifiable targets by which to measure the impact of actions, including strategies for improving the quality of teaching, and the progress of the school. Methods for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the action are too general with the danger of some overlap between those responsible for taking action and those monitoring the impact of it. The plan does not include enough specific detail on who is monitoring what and when, and how progress will be evaluated.

The LA provides a high level of support. It funds a large amount of additional consultant time, including the consultant headteacher, and is also funding the federation. The positive impact of actions can be seen best in the management of the support for pupils with learning difficulties, the developing roles of the deputy headteacher and the mathematics subject leader, and support for the governors.

Regular informal contact with the acting headteacher enables the LA to respond to emerging needs. The impact of the high level of consultant support to improve the quality of teaching and learning is yet to be seen.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that teachers provide appropriate support in class for pupils who speak English as an additional language
- Target the monitoring of teaching to focus on specific issues for individual teachers and to follow up the progress made by their pupils