

Prospects Learning Services  
Prospects Services LTD  
19 Elmfield Road  
Bromley  
Kent  
BR1 1LT

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Direct T 020 8315 1250  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) Direct F 020 8315 1279



04 July 2008

Mrs Nicola Aboud and Mrs Rhona Barnfield  
The Head of School and the Executive Headteacher  
Thomas Knyvett College  
Stanwell Road  
Ashford  
TW15 3DU

Dear Mrs Aboud and Mrs Barnfield

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your college on 27 June 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff, students, member of the Interim Executive Board and staff from the Howard of Effingham School (your partner federation school) who spoke to me during the day.

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 on 20 and 21 November 2007, the college was asked to:

- Increase the proportion of good teaching and ensure that students make consistently good progress in lessons so that achievement is improved at a faster rate.
- Ensure that all students achieve as well as they can, particularly in Key Stage 4, and so raise standards.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the college is making good progress in addressing both these issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

The college's monitoring, validated by external consultants, shows that the proportion of good teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This has resulted from the more effective use of performance data and rigorous monitoring that gives both support and challenge. Where weaknesses have been identified, support and training has been provided which has enabled staff to improve their teaching. Good use has been made of the expertise of staff from the Howard to accomplish this, including for individual mentoring. In a few cases where

teaching has not improved, the college has taken robust action. The college has analysed carefully the findings from observations and scrutiny of students' work. It has used this information to provide appropriate whole-college training. As a result, teachers now make the objectives of lessons clearer to students and use a wider range of teaching strategies, including more opportunities for discussion. Students recognise this and as one group agreed, 'Lessons are more enjoyable. Teachers are more willing to let us do different things'. The improvements are most notable in science where most of the staff have been at the college for less than one year. Students speak enthusiastically about the increased resources, better teaching and many more opportunities to do practical work in science. The quality of marking varies too much. There is good practice in English and geography, for example. However, in some other classes teachers do not give enough guidance on how students can improve further. In mathematics, opportunities are missed to identify why a student is making errors. In view of these inconsistencies, the college is devising a new marking policy. The college is seeking to improve further and has identified other aspects, for example, effective questioning techniques, that can be strengthened to improve teaching further.

The college has strengthened considerably the tracking of students' attainment. This indicates that the percentage of students gaining five or more higher GCSE grades is predicted to rise by 11 percentage points in the 2008 examinations. Its analysis for students' progress shows that there is still a legacy of underachievement, particularly in science, and that some students will not have done as well as they should. However, the gap between the students' attainment and the national average has decreased significantly. Students' expectations of what they can achieve has been raised. Their increased positive attitude is demonstrated by the 5% improvement in attendance for Year 11 this year compared to last. The college's tracking suggests that the projected results for the current Year 10, including for science, will show an even more significant improvement.

There are a number of factors contributing to this rising trend. Assessment data is used well to identify underperformance followed by a range of support strategies. These include booster and revision classes both before and after college and during holiday times. Senior managers monitor effectively, making sure that subject departments are vigilant in ensuring that students complete coursework on time. This has helped to improve results in several subjects. Some students have been taken by bus to the Howard, a specialist science college, for extra tuition in science and this helped to get them back on track. More vocational courses have been offered this year to students in Year 10. Take up for these has been good. The students say that this is one of the reasons that they find lessons more interesting. They also say behaviour has improved in the last year and that bad behaviour is not tolerated. This is one of the reasons that they are now making better progress in lessons. It is clear that their pride in Thomas Knyvett College is being restored.

One of the main reasons that the college is moving forward securely is the strength and drive of the senior leadership team. Expectations have been raised and the staff and students are responding positively. Another is the high quality of collaborative work and practical help given by the Howard.

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

Yours sincerely

Barry Jones  
Additional Inspector