

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

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

Direct T 020 8315 1250
Direct F 020 8315 1279
Carmen.Rodney@ofsted.gov.uk



30 June 2007

Mr Alex Williamson
The Headteacher
Rutlish School
Watery Lane
Merton Park
London
SW20 9AD

Dear Mr Williamson

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 19 June 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please convey my thanks to members of the school council, senior staff, the school improvement partner and the chair of governors for taking the time to talk to me about the developments since the last inspection.

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 13 and 14 June 2007, the school was asked to improve further the quality of monitoring to improve student achievement at Key Stage 4; the proportion of lessons that are interesting, exciting and encourage active learning and develop a more flexible, engaging curriculum at Key Stage 4 that meets all learners' needs.

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

At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with the national average and the progress of students while good at the end of Year 9 was satisfactory at the end of Year 11. The 2007 results show that although standards were sustained in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in English, mathematics and science with marked improvement in English, they did not improve significantly in the GCSE examinations and students' achievement was not better than in the previous year. Students did not achieve the challenging targets and progress from Key Stage 2 to 4, although satisfactory, did not meet expectations based on their starting points. Current assessment data based on the GCSE mock exams and modular exams in

mathematics and science, as well as external moderation and validation of subjects such as English and art indicate better outcomes for Year 11 students. If targets are achieved, results are likely to be above the national average.

The school is very well led. Following the last inspection, a new headteacher was appointed in September 2007. Under his leadership and management, he has inspired staff by clearly communicating his vision of high achievement for all students. Within a very short time, he has dealt effectively with the small number of unsatisfactory lessons, thereby raising the profile of teaching and enabled the school to make significant improvements by radically changing the mundane day-to-day routines. For example, he has established new and robust assessment systems and set out clear guidelines on the quality of teaching and learning that must be implemented in order to raise achievement and standards beyond satisfactory. He has inspired staff and won their loyalty, consequently, middle managers and all staff understand the criteria for developing a successful school. Accountability has therefore improved as a result of restructuring the senior leadership team. Regular meetings between middle and senior managers have been instituted and in turn, teachers within their respective departments are now reporting directly to middle managers. This has led to all staff having a clear sense of direction and commitment to increasing the capacity of the school to drive improvement.

There has been an unrelenting focus on the use of assessment information. Well thought out assessment systems are being embedded and teachers now routinely use baseline data and other assessment information to track students' progress and take remedial action if they are failing to reach their predicated target grade. There are effective intervention strategies, such as Saturday school and after school sessions and the use of individual action plans which often involve pastoral staff working with subject teachers to support students at risk of underachieving. Inspection evidence shows, that assessment information is used daily to plan lessons; it is also an integral part of lessons as teachers use target grades and levels to stretch students. Students regularly take part in self-and peer assessment. They confirm that teachers now use assessment to focus on the targets they should achieve; consequently, they are more aware of their strengths and what they must do to improve their work.

Since the last inspection, the senior team has over-hauled and replaced most strategies teachers previously used for teaching in order to accelerate learning. A new culture of regular and stringent observations has been introduced. Clear guidelines setting out expectations of teaching with emphasis on learning are now in place. Teachers now use a wide range of teaching and learning styles. For instance, students say that there is now, 'less bookwork, which has been replaced by practical demonstrations to accommodate learning which is easier, because work is tailored to individual needs and personal targets'. Teachers have received extensive training and where required coaching, to ensure that more teaching is good or better. Learning is now more active and creative because teachers are prepared to experiment with new ideas and have an increasing understanding of the impact of different learning styles on achievement. The inspection evidence confirms that increasingly information and communication technology is used extensively and there is more interactive group work and independent learning.

A more flexible curriculum, tailored to the needs of all students has been introduced and will be fully implemented in September 2008. The current Year 9 students have the opportunity to choose from more curriculum pathways. They say that they are pleased with the courses offered. A start has been made to introduce vocational courses such as a new ICT diploma, BTEC PE course and expressive arts. It is now possible for more able students to take some GCSE examinations early, such as mathematics and begin the AO-level course in Year 11. Additional provision for gifted and talented students in Key Stage 4 now includes visits to established places of learning in order to raise aspirations. Similar provision to raise the aspirations of all students is being explored with potential sponsors to ensure equality of opportunity. The school realises that there is still more to do to extend the curriculum further. Currently, consortium links are being investigated to expand the curriculum further and introduce a sixth form.

The school has worked very well in partnership with the local authority on all areas for improvement. Good quality support provided through training, consultancy and reviews has enabled the school to move forward quickly.

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

Yours sincerely

C P Rodney

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector