

Prospect School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133581
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	328710
Inspection dates	25 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Judith Charlesworth

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School (total)	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ron Short
Headteacher	Marijke Miles
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2006
School address	Freeley Road Havant Hampshire PO9 4AQ
Telephone number	02392 485140
Fax number	02392 485145
Email address	school.office@prospect.hants.sch.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector visited five lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and a group of students. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including: the school improvement plan, information on students' progress, individual education plans, lesson planning, policies, minutes of various meetings and 20 parental questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- how well the school helps students with additional needs to make progress
- the effectiveness of recent changes to the provision in Key Stage 4
- how well the school assesses and tracks students' attainment and uses the information to support their progress.

Information about the school

Prospect School provides for boys aged 11–16 who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. An increasing number have additional learning difficulties and disabilities, such as autistic spectrum disorder and moderate learning difficulties. Most have poor literacy skills, speech and language difficulties and have experienced challenging social circumstances. The majority of students entering Year 7 are admitted from similar primary provision. Students admitted at other times have often been out of mainstream school for some time and have a record of poor school attendance and exclusion which has had a negative impact on their learning and progress. A few students are admitted to the school when they have completed a custodial sentence. Currently, all students are White British in origin. Eighteen months ago, the school was renamed and moved into new, purpose-built premises. Students travel to school from a very wide area within Hampshire.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Prospect School is a good school. Students make good progress and achieve well, even though standards for many remain low for their age. Parents are very pleased with Prospect and the positive effect it has on their sons. The school's core work of supporting and improving students' behaviour and personal development is outstanding. Each individual's needs are carefully considered, and support and school work are tailored to meet them. This ensures that all have equal opportunities for success in school and for a better, more productive future. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are good. Quality is enhanced by outstanding external partnerships with a wide range of schools, colleges and other providers which, for example, support the staff's professional development and students' understanding of work and further education. The staff know each student very well and have assessment information on each individual in all subjects. Students make good progress as a result. However, this is not formalised and secured by a robust system in which academic targets are set for each student, and progress towards them systematically tracked so that a clear picture of each individual's and whole-school performance can be achieved.

Students' behaviour, attendance and self-esteem improve from a very low base. For most, these reach at least satisfactory levels, but attendance for a minority of students is unsatisfactory. Almost always, though, students quickly start to enjoy school and learning and are keen to attend. The new building has a considerable impact on the calm working atmosphere and students' improved behaviour. Students say they enjoy the new facilities and the way that they 'aren't cooped up' and get 'lots of fresh air' as they move from class to class.

There have been marked improvements since the last inspection. The leaders and managers have high aspirations for the school, and have set a clear path for improvement based on accurate and honest self-evaluation. As a result:

- the school's partnerships and influence in the community have strengthened
- increased resources now provide extra support and services for students
- staff at all levels have improved their skills
- the provision to support students' personal development and academic success has improved
- the new premises provide much improved facilities.

This history of improvement, together with the school's increasingly robust practices, show that the capacity for further sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' academic progress by:
 - setting clear academic targets for each student
 - deriving these targets from regular assessment information
 - supporting students to understand, work towards and achieve their targets
 - tracking students' progress towards the targets, and making adjustments if necessary
 - identifying additional support, services or more challenging work that might be needed to assure students' progress.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

Students achieve well and enjoy learning. Most enter the school with low attainment but, as they settle, attend more regularly and behave more appropriately, so their progress improves. Students throughout the school work hard, concentrate and learn well in lessons. Sometimes, this is outstanding. Students are keen to finish tasks, and say that they appreciate the personal support they receive and the way work is tailored to meet their needs. Students say clearly that they are doing much better in Prospect than they did in their mainstream schools, that they enjoy it and that they do not want to leave. The majority of students make good progress, although their attainment remains low in comparison to expectations for their age. This is the case for most students with additional learning difficulties and disabilities. Students make good progress in reading and literacy, which supports learning in all subjects. Some students make outstanding progress and, for example, move from a position of poor attendance, low attainment and very challenging behaviour prior to attending Prospect, to taking several GCSE examinations. A few students make only satisfactory progress. This is generally linked to patchy attendance.

Students' moral and social development is good, and underpins their academic progress. They generally behave very well in lessons and at break time. However, the nature of students' needs means that there are occasions when challenging behaviour flares up. The positive steps taken to support these students have resulted in a decrease in the frequency of these occasions, and a notable reduction in violent incidents and exclusions. The attendance of most individuals shows steady improvement, and a recent analysis indicates an increasing number with 100% attendance. However, attendance for a number of students is low. These students tend to be those with mental health difficulties, or those who were admitted late in their school lives with a history of school refusal. The school continues to make strenuous efforts to improve attendance.

Students feel safe in school and turn to adults when in need. They say there is little bullying, and any that occurs is always dealt with quickly. The students know and understand the school's reward, sanctions and complaints systems, and think they are fair. For example, they approve of the way that bullies lose merit points to those they have bullied. The students understand how to choose a healthy lifestyle and particularly enjoy physical and sporting activities. They make a good contribution to school life through the school council and Prospect's ethos of respect for students' views. The curriculum helps them make a strong contribution to the local community. Students' improving personal and academic skills and knowledge about the world of work prepare them adequately for future well-being.

These are the grades for students' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	3
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	4
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

The quality of the school's work

Good teaching and learning are underpinned by outstanding relationships between staff and students. This is characterised by students' sensible behaviour, concentration and their willingness to ask questions and request help in teaching sessions. When appropriate, for example in art lessons, students and staff talk together companionably about a range of issues while the students continue with their practical work. This creates an excellent atmosphere for learning. Support staff are usually very effective and contribute skilfully to teaching and learning. Occasionally, they need more direction to ensure they have maximum impact. The staff know individual students very well. They set work that closely matches students' needs, but this practice is not secured by sharp academic targets for improvement. Students' skills on entry are accurately assessed, and the school keeps assessment data for each student in every subject. A recently adopted commercial system enables progress to be tracked and compared with national data for similar groups of students. However, the students' individual academic targets for improvement are not always clear enough. As a result, the tracking of progress towards these targets does not consistently provide the teachers with sufficient detail

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

to ensure they identify all instances of underachievement.

The curriculum is good and closely reflects students' needs. The school has numerous partnerships with colleges, schools and external providers that support the curriculum very effectively. The curriculum appropriately emphasises literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology which, together with a good work-related programme, effectively support students' future well-being. Personal development is given high priority in order to help students become re-engaged with learning. The 'personal development learning' curriculum is taught through a number of subjects, such as citizenship. Previous disengagement and poor attendance at Key Stage 4 has led to some very good curriculum developments designed to improve provision. As a result, students' behaviour, attendance and inclination to learn are much improved. This is reflected in the take-up of GCSE courses, and predicted and achieved grades. Work to provide a curriculum to suit the specific needs of students with moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder is currently underway.

The support, guidance and care given to students are outstanding. Parents value the close links they have with the school, and the support they and their sons receive when difficulties arise. Pastoral care is very strong and the school works hard to develop students' self-esteem and help them stay safe and healthy. Vulnerable students are carefully monitored. Students are closely supported when leaving or joining the school, and are given very good guidance for the next steps in their educational lives. The school does its utmost to provide consistency for the students in all that it does, and help them make better life and educational choices. It is clear what skills students need to make a success of their future. Strategies to improve behaviour and attendance have been successful, and staff strive to improve these further. The new appointment of an 'intensive support tutor' (a youth worker) and the work of the home-school link worker and multi-disciplinary rapid response team have also done much towards improving and supporting parents and students' lives and futures.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	3
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leaders and governors of the school are strongly committed to continuous improvement for individual students and the school as a whole. They have set out and communicated a clear vision and programme for improvement and secured the support of all concerned with the school. For example, parents, students and stakeholders' views are regularly sought to contribute towards this. Governors provide effective support and constructive challenge because they are well informed. They also ensure that they meet their statutory duties and that safeguarding

procedures are effective. Self-evaluation is rigorous and honest. Staff and governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and the clear plans for improvement. Resources are well deployed to achieve the most positive outcomes for students, for example in providing speech and language therapy services. The school's external partnerships are outstanding and mutually beneficial. For example, strong links with partnership schools and the local authority have supported the staff's professional development in many subjects. The impact of this is seen in improved student attainment and progress. Prospect School has just taken out a service level agreement with the local Community Improvement Partnership, having been accredited by the local authority, to provide outreach behaviour support in local mainstream schools. This has shown early indications of success.

The school's work is focused successfully on providing students with equal opportunities for a better future. It does this by tailoring work and support to meet individuals' needs. The school recognises that improved target setting for academic achievement will enhance its work further. Students are very accepting of one another's widely differing needs. The senior leaders know that the school population does not represent the multicultural society found in other parts of Britain and they are proactive in promoting students' cultural development, widening their horizons and promoting anti-discriminatory practices. The school does much to help students contribute to the community, for example by looking after the environment and making the most of community facilities and events. As such, this is a school that is a successful community within itself and works hard to be at the heart of its local community. However, the school is not yet developing a sufficient understanding of national and global communities for the students.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost half the parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaires, which represents a good return. Their views confirm those derived from the school's own parental questionnaires, and those of the inspector. Almost all parents are completely satisfied with all aspects of the school's work and the positive effect it has on their sons. One parent wrote 'This is the first school that my son is happy to go to and he is also happy when I meet him from the minibus, which was unheard of

before.' Another said 'Since being at Prospect school my son has changed greatly, and for the better.' Parents indicated that they are particularly pleased with the information they receive about their sons' progress, the fact that the school takes account of parents' suggestions and concerns and helps them to support learning at home, and that the school keeps their sons safe.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its students' needs. In 2007–8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its students well. In 2007–8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its students. In 2007–8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its students. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007–8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



10 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Prospect School, Havant, PO9 4AQ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed talking to you, sitting in on your lessons and listening to your interesting views on the school and some of the developments you would like to see. Why don't you use the school council to explore some of these ideas further?

I came to the school to see how it was working and how well you are doing, and I was very pleased with what I found. I agree with the staff and your parents and carers; Prospect is a good school.

The school makes a great difference to your behaviour and attitude to school and learning. This sets you up very well for a more positive future. The school provides you with good quality education and outstanding care, support and guidance. The staff have high expectations of you and lay down clear guidelines for you to follow. The atmosphere in the school was brilliant when I visited – relaxed, happy and productive. You clearly enjoy school. The staff work hard to keep you safe and healthy, and you are given a very interesting range of things to do in school and at the end of the day. The school's use of community facilities and its partnerships with other schools and colleges help towards this too. Teaching is good, and you learn well. No wonder you make good progress and achieve well.

The school is well led and managed. The staff are very keen to do their best for you and are always evaluating their work to see how to develop it further. I have asked the school to set you clear academic targets and to track how well each of you is doing so they can offer you more help if necessary. This will help you achieve even more. I am asking you to do something too, although I know that most of you do this already. This is to attend school as regularly as possible. The more you attend, the more you will achieve.

I wish you all the very best for your futures.

Yours faithfully

Judith Charlesworth
Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.