

Prospects Learning Services Ltd
Prospects House
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
Andrew.Harrett@ofsted.gov.uk



17 December 2008

Mr Martin Lester
Acting Headteacher
Botley Primary School
Elms Road
Botley
Oxford
OX2 9JZ

Dear Mr Lester

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 December 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 school council, the chair and vice-chair of governors, and the representative of the local authority for meeting with me during the inspection.

There have been some significant personnel changes since the inspection in May 2008. The headteacher left the school in August 2008. The school is currently run by a Leading Practitioner Headteacher from the Oxfordshire Primary Strategy team. A permanent headteacher has been appointed who will start in January 2009. A new position of deputy headteacher was created and an appointment made, starting in September 2008.

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 8 and 9 May 2008, the school was asked to:

- ensure that teachers consistently challenge pupils, particularly the more able, to achieve as well as they can
- raise standards and achievement in mathematics
- develop the roles of middle managers so that they are all able to take a lead in driving up standards and achievement.

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 and in raising the pupils' achievement.

In recent years, standards have declined in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, although they have remained average and the pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards have similarly declined by the end of Year 6 in recent years. They fell further in mathematics and science in the national tests in 2008, but rose in English. Current data provided by the school show that the decline in achievement has been arrested and there are signs of emerging improvements in achievement across the school in English and mathematics. Progress in raising achievement is satisfactory.

Changes to the senior leadership team have resulted in a widening of the third key issue to include all leadership and management. Progress in improving leadership and management is good. There is a new leadership and management structure, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The key reason for the improvement in achievement is a greater focus on monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, improving assessment and tracking pupils' progress. The deputy headteacher has oversight of assessment and achievement in the school and is driving forward progress well. New procedures provide increasingly accurate assessment data. Linked to more challenging targets, this is raising expectations and improving planning for individuals and classes. Intervention for those who need it is swifter and more effective. Within this structure, middle leaders are increasingly taking responsibility for monitoring the quality of provision across the school. The school has improved communication with parents, holding successful meetings to explain approaches to raising achievement in English and mathematics. The governing body is taking a more strategic approach and focusing on the areas for improvement in their challenge and support.

The school has concentrated on improving the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. The best lessons are now more clearly structured, with a range of appropriate activities. Pupils appreciate the increasing opportunities for getting involved in their learning and report that lessons are now more challenging. They find that this increases their enjoyment. They are well supported when they need help and are regularly encouraged to work independently. The quality of marking in exercise books is inconsistent, however, and does not always help pupils to understand how they might improve their work. Although the quality of teaching and learning has improved and there are examples of good practice, it remains predominantly satisfactory. There is more challenge for all pupils, not just the more able, but the school has yet to analyse fully the impact of the improvements on particular groups of pupils.

The local authority provides the school with good support. Its statement of action is fit for purpose, and it has modified its support to fit the school's changing circumstances. There has been less external support since September because the acting headteacher is a member of the local authority's school improvement team. He has focused on developing the capacity of leadership within the school. However, the change in leadership in January will require a shift in the way that future support is targeted.

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

Yours faithfully

Andrew Harrett
H M Inspector