

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 020 8315 1250  
Direct F 020 8315 1279  
[Jane.Wotherspoon@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.Wotherspoon@ofsted.gov.uk)



25 March 2009

Ms Rose Ashton  
Headteacher  
Chalkhill Primary School  
Barnhill Road  
Wembley  
HA9 9YP

Dear Ms Ashton

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Chalkhill Primary School

Following my visit with Richard Barnard, Additional Inspector, to your school on 17 and 18 March 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third 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

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

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  
Her Majesty's Inspector



## Special measures: monitoring of Chalkhill Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 March 2009

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior staff, groups of pupils, the chair of governors, and the headteacher from the soft federation. Inspectors spoke by telephone with a representative from the local authority and spoke informally with staff and pupils during the course of their work.

### Context

The soft federation with a successful local primary school continues. There have been further staff changes since the last monitoring visit. Six teachers, including a new deputy headteacher and a new inclusion coordinator, and three teaching assistants have been appointed to replace staff who have left. The number of pupils leaving and joining the school during the term continues to be high.

### Achievement and standards

Standards remain low. The school's data show a mixed picture of attainment with around half to three-quarters of pupils working at the level expected for their age. The strongest area is mathematics and the weakest is writing. There are variations between year groups and between subjects, even in the same class. Data show that at least half of each class is making more progress than expected but, again, with variations between classes and between subjects. Despite the better progress, pupils still have much to catch up with because of the poor progress they made previously. Many of the pupils who received specific support from catch-up programmes have made good progress.

In the lessons seen, pupils generally made satisfactory progress. The school's focus on writing is giving pupils experience of writing in a range of styles. Pupils are learning to re-read and check their work to make improvements. Several used a thesaurus to find new words to vary the vocabulary and add interest to their writing. However, weaknesses in spelling and punctuation persist. The quality of handwriting and presentation is not consistent and pupils are not always given a good model to copy. Some are slow to write and need better incentives to commit more to paper. Younger pupils learning phonics are not always corrected when their pronunciation of sounds is inaccurate. The school has already noted gaps in pupils' learning in mathematics, particularly in multiplication and division among older pupils. At times, teachers cannot continue with the planned objective because they first need to reinforce the pupils' basic skills. Practical, hands-on activities in science are much enjoyed by pupils. The school's current focus has been successful in helping pupils to learn about fair testing and to record information from their experiments. Pupils'



work in science is much improved this term. Their skills in using computers are developing soundly as teachers make better use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning in other subjects.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science – satisfactory

### Personal development and well-being

As reported previously, pupils' positive attitudes support their learning in class, particularly when they are engaged in practical tasks. Self-assessment strategies are developing well. Pupils talk about 'success criteria' helping them to achieve objectives in lessons. They are generally attentive, especially when teachers use the interactive whiteboard during introductions to lessons, but find it harder to concentrate when teachers talk for too long. At such times they lose interest but this rarely escalates to poor behaviour. Generally, behaviour is good and there have been no exclusions this year. Pupils are friendly and polite to visitors, and supportive of each other. They say that any incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly. Attendance is still below average but has improved this term, both in comparison to last term and to the same period last year. There has been significant improvement in punctuality this term following the school's firm stance on lateness.

### Quality of provision

Teaching continues to improve. Although weaker aspects remain, they are not as widespread. Previous improvements in lesson planning and in the quality of the learning environment have been sustained. The school's focus on improving the accuracy of teachers' assessment is paying dividends in some classes. In the best examples, teachers use what they know about pupils' attainment and progress to plan modified tasks for pupils of different abilities. For example, pupils have visual prompts to help them structure their writing and word banks to help them in their choice of vocabulary. However, this is not consistent and some teachers continue to give all pupils the same worksheet without sufficiently adapting them to meet individual needs.

Many lessons start with a helpful recapitulation of previous learning, giving pupils a clear framework for what they will learn next. They end with a round-up of what has been learnt, giving teachers a good opportunity to assess which pupils need more help and which are ready to move on in their learning. Feedback to pupils while they were working was an effective strategy used in some of the better lessons, whereby teachers drew attention to good work, clarified misconceptions or reminded pupils of the key learning points. Not all teachers plan to work with a focus group during a lesson. They flit around checking pupils' work and ensuring that they are on task. They miss opportunities to show pupils how to improve their work. Consistency in the effectiveness of teaching assistants and their efficient deployment remains an



issue. Some teachers do not provide clear enough guidance about what the pupils are expected to learn or how they should be supported.

In most classes, the quality of teachers' marking has improved and there is a clear focus on what pupils need to do to make their work better. Staff have set targets for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils know their targets, often because they are listed at the front of their exercise books, but are not always certain how to achieve them. Staff have slightly different approaches to making pupils aware of their targets and to referring to them in lessons. Target setting is not sharp enough; targets are not derived directly from pupils' work so as to make them tailored to individual pupils. Teachers do not link their marking closely enough to pupils' targets to help them understand how to improve. Pockets of good practice should be spread to other areas.

The legacy of previous weaknesses in the Early Years Foundation Stage is still evident in planning and provision. Gaps in assessment, which were noted at the last monitoring visit, remain. New staff are still settling in and there is much to do to raise the quality of provision back to an acceptable level. Medium-term planning is closely aligned to the statutory framework. However, the planning for daily activities requires improvement. It is generally sharper in Reception and is carried out better in one of the classes. Children are engaging in some interesting and worthwhile activities, such as a visit from police officers and a visit to the local library. They dug the garden to plant seeds and made sandwiches from the cress they had planted and watched grow. Tasks that are led by adults have a clear focus but the continuous provision does not. Adults are not always clear what children should be learning through their play and some children spend too long with limited input either from adults or from other children. At times, interaction from adults lacks challenge. There are no clear systems to monitor what children choose from the range of activities to ensure that they have a balance across the areas of learning. There are too few incidental opportunities, both inside and outside, for writing and for mathematics. The leader of the provision has used assessment information to evaluate children's progress in areas of language and mathematical development. Not enough is done to evaluate other areas of learning to identify where further modifications to the provision are required.

The new leader for inclusion has made a good start. She is reviewing the provision for pupils with learning difficulties to ensure that it matches their needs and evaluating the impact of catch-up programmes. She is reassessing pupils and providing staff with strategies to use in the classroom where required. As a result, support for these pupils enables them to complete activities in class. However, her monitoring shows that too many of these pupils spend too long being supported by assistants and do not receive enough direct teaching from teachers. Individual education plans have improved under her guidance and include sharper targets. There is not a consistent approach to using the system she has devised for teaching assistants to feed back to teachers on what pupils have achieved in lessons. A review of the school's register of pupils' special educational needs has revealed that



some have been diagnosed incorrectly. Their difficulties relate to learning English as an additional language rather than to a specific learning difficulty. Management of the provision for these pupils has improved with the inclusion leader's appointment. Assessments of pupils' level of language acquisition ensure that staff are clearer about the level of support that pupils require. Most teachers are benefiting from the training provided by the local authority's consultant. Tasks are modified and there is an appropriate focus in most lessons on developing pupils' vocabulary. The inclusion leader has yet to analyse the rates of progress of pupils learning English as an additional language. She has plans to sharpen induction procedures by devising an induction booklet for pupils in their home language.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

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

### Leadership and management

The new senior leadership team is gelling together well to provide clear direction for improvement. It has made a good start to improving teaching and learning without the previous high level of support from teachers from the federation. The deputy headteacher is a good role model for teaching and assessment in the classroom; more staff need to work with her. That staff share an understanding of the school's priorities for improvement is exemplified in how well they reflect on, and are critical of, their own practice. They can identify for themselves how lessons can be improved. This is evidence of an important shift in the learning culture of the school.

The school's actions are having a positive impact on areas that need improvement. An example is the good range of measures to improve attendance and punctuality. Weaknesses in teaching are tackled rigorously and staff are given support to improve. Hence, the quality of teaching is more secure, which leads to pupils making better progress. Monitoring covers a broad range of activities and is carried out by a number of staff rather than being solely the responsibility of senior leaders. All staff have taken part in a scrutiny of pupils' work to evaluate the impact of teachers' marking, for example. Monitoring of the quality of teaching is not sufficiently focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Detailed tracking and careful monitoring of pupils' progress over time ensure that the school can identify any underachievement quickly in order to take appropriate action. The headteacher's evaluation of progress is accurate and reasonably sharp. It highlights clearly areas for further development but is not focused strongly enough on the impact of the school's actions on the outcomes for pupils.

The chair of governors provides strong leadership for the governing body. Governors are increasingly confident about asking questions that challenge the school because they receive reliable data and information on which to base their decisions.



Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve the effectiveness of leadership and monitoring so that the most important priorities are focused on eliminating weak teaching and underachievement – good

#### External support

A good level of support from the local authority is well targeted. Support for teachers to improve provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is having a good impact. In the Early Years Foundation Stage this has not yet reaped any benefit because of staff changes. The consultant headteacher is forging links with key members of the local community which are helping to improve pupils' attendance.

The soft federation has not provided support for teaching this term – an indication that the school is moving beyond external support for such improvements. The headteacher from the federation has focused her efforts on finance and buildings. The budget is now secure. Improvements to the accommodation, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are much needed. Having provided an appropriate level of support and guidance, the federation headteacher is gradually stepping back to allow the headteacher to take decisions. Such well-balanced support and mentoring is effective.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Embed procedures for assessment in the classroom and make pupils' targets more specific to their needs.

