

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
Paul.Scott@ofsted.gov.uk



12 May 2009

Ms Ani Magill
Executive Headteacher
Epsom and Ewell High School
Ruxley Lane
West Ewell
Epsom
KT19 9JW

Dear Ms Magill

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Epsom and Ewell High School

Following my visit with Lily Evans and David Scott, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 28 and 29 April 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to agreement from HMI.

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 the Interim Executive Board and the Strategic Director for Services for Families for Surrey.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Epsom and Ewell High School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 28 and 29 April 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work; scrutinised documents; and met with the executive headteacher, groups and individual members of staff, groups of pupils, the chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and a representative of the local authority.

Context

There have been significant staff changes in the school since the last inspection. The senior leadership team is now led by an executive headteacher and two associate headteachers have joined this team. A new substantive headteacher has been appointed and is expected to take up post in June 2009. Other key appointments have been made, with a number of staff leaving the school. An IEB is now operating in place of the previous governing body.

Achievement and standards

Overall, standards observed in lessons are below those expected nationally. A great deal of work has been done to optimise outcomes, particularly for Year 11 and Year 13 students, with interventions and strategies that have engaged and motivated these students. Progress made by students is satisfactory but has not yet compensated for prior underachievement. Students are more aware of their increasingly challenging targets but do not yet have sufficient guidance to work independently towards short-term goals. The local authority and other supporting consultants have assisted in moderating teacher assessments of students' work. This is helping the school to monitor progress but is at an early stage. Progress of students in English is better but remains inconsistent.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that students make at least satisfactory progress across the school, particularly in English – satisfactory

Personal development and well-being

Students generally have positive attitudes towards learning and often expressed their appreciation for the changes that have happened over the last term. Behaviour is now much better. Students are courteous and the school has a friendly and calm atmosphere. Students and parents report that the school has less disruption in lessons, that more learning takes place and that teachers listen, care and help. Attendance has improved from the time of the inspection and is now 90% in the main school.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the attendance and behaviour of a significant minority of students – good

Quality of provision

Monitoring of teaching and learning by the senior leadership team and heads of department is now extensive. Relationships with students and staff are very positive. Students are aware of and express their appreciation for the improvements that have been made in lessons. Although students now have higher expectations of lessons, too many lessons are still satisfactory or inadequate. The school acknowledge that their plans for lessons need to take into account: assessment for learning strategies; differentiation for all abilities, including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; variety of learning opportunities; context for learning; and pace. The good lessons observed planned well for these factors and the practice matched the plans. Good questioning techniques and appropriate environments were also key features of these lessons, with high expectations of students. The provision for students with hearing impairment has been consistently good. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved considerably, with students now receiving better support. Marking is inconsistent with little evidence of diagnostic feedback to students. Students are, however, more aware of their target grades and current performance. There are clear plans to develop the curriculum to meet the needs of students.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of all teaching and learning and ensure that students know how to improve their work – good

Leadership and management

The school's senior leaders have a clear improvement plan that is being implemented effectively. They are effective in reducing the inconsistencies that remain at all levels of leadership and management. The strength of the executive headteacher clearly is ensuring that the students are central to the school's strategy for improvement and that weaknesses are being tackled effectively with high-quality support. The capacity for sustained improvement within the school is growing. Tracking of students' academic progress is underdeveloped and is not analytical enough. Systems of accountability are developing but impact on outcomes is not yet sufficient. The middle leaders report that communication is now good and previous barriers between the middle leaders and senior leaders are breaking down. The IEB monitors the school's work well and is increasingly effective at holding the school to account. The local authority assists in monitoring with regular and productive visits to the school.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of leadership and managers at all levels – good

- put in place effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school – good

External support

The school has received good support from the local authority. The amendments required to improve the local authority's statement of action have been made. The plan is clear and focused, with a challenging time scale. Decisive action was taken in strengthening the senior leadership team early in the process as well as in providing a wide range of appropriate consultant support for departments and the IEB.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure the tracking systems are robust and are used effectively to support learning in the classroom.
- Eliminate inadequate teaching and ensure more lessons are good or better by developing assessment for learning strategies.
- Ensure that all groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are effectively supported and so make more progress.