

INSPECTION REPORT

**INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO SECTION 162A
OF THE EDUCATION ACT 2002**

REPORT REFERENCE NUMBER: SIS/162A/2006-7/04

Name of school:	Prospect School
DfES number: FOCUS number:	801/6027 603
Inspection team:	Lead Inspector: Dr Roy Long Supporting Inspector: Mrs Cecile Corfield Lay Inspector: Mr Mike Thomas
Dates of inspection:	15 – 18 January 2007

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Prospect School

Address of the school: Tramway Road, off Bath Road
BRISTOL BS4 3DS

Telephone number: 01179 772271

Fax number: 01179 713755

Proprietor: Prospect Education Trust

Name of Chief Executive Officer: Mr Richard Smith

Name of Senior Teacher: Mrs Lucy Sherrin

DfES number: 801/6027

FOCUS number: 603

Type of school: Independent school affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust

Age range of pupils and students: 11 to 17

Gender of pupils: Male and female

Total number on roll: (Full time) Boys: 15 Girls: 16
(Part time) Boys: 1 Girls: 1

Number of post-16 students: Boys: 1 Girls: 6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational need: None

Type of inspection: Section 162A of the Education Act 2002

Inspection Team: Lead Inspector: Dr Roy Long
Support Inspectors: Mrs Cecile Corfield
Mrs Eileen McAndrew
(one day only)
Lay Inspector: Mr Mike Thomas

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 January 2007

Date of issue of this report: 9 February 2007

Report reference number: SIS/162A/2006-7/04

PART A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 162(A) (1) (b) of the Education Act 2002. It follows the inspection framework laid down by the Service and the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) and agreed with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It was conducted by three independent professional inspectors who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations. The professional inspectors were accompanied by a trained lay inspector who looked at agreed aspects of the regulations. The lay inspector also evaluated both the Trustees' stewardship of resources and the ethos of the school and reported on these in an internal report to the FLT; his findings are summarised in Section C of this document, but this section is not a statutory part of the inspection process.

Information about the school:

Prospect is a small independent day school for boys and girls aged 11 to 17. It is situated in the Brislington district of Bristol and serves pupils and students from the Greater Bristol and south Gloucestershire area. It was originally established in 1995 as a tutorial centre in order to provide guidance and tuition for young people of compulsory school age who were otherwise being educated at home. It was registered as an independent school with the DfES in August 2003 and after being visited by an inspector from the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) it received its final registration on 4 April 2005.

At the time of the inspection the school had 31 young people on roll (15 boys and 16 girls), of whom seven (6 girls and 1 boy) were students in Year 12. In addition, two former students who left at the end of the academic year 2005-6 return once a week to study accounts. There are no pupils or students with statements of special educational need (SEN), but the particular needs of individual youngsters are recognised and catered for in appropriate ways. The school is intending to introduce a separate primary department on the same site in September 2007 for pupils in Key Stage 2, and is actively reviewing its post-16 provision.

Summary of main findings:

Over the years since it was originally established as a tutorial centre, Prospect has grown to be a successful school which provides its pupils and students with a stimulating and productive learning environment. It is a happy school, characterised by good relationships at all levels, and one in which pupils and students obviously feel confident and at ease. Consistently good teaching has enabled pupils to be successful in public examinations and to lay firm foundations for good learning habits after they have left school. Despite being a small school, Prospect provides its pupils and students with a good curriculum, a particular feature of which is its attention to developing good language skills. It is well led and enjoys the support of parents and families and of the Focus Learning Trust (FLT).

NOTE ON THE TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS REPORT

Throughout this report the word 'pupil' is used to describe young people in years 7 to 11. The word 'student' is used exclusively to describe those studying in Year 12 and beyond.

What the school does well:

- it has succeeded in producing a teaching and learning environment in which the enjoyment of education is valued highly and promoted with enthusiasm;
- its quality of teaching is very good;
- its pupils and students respond well and are effective learners;
- it actively encourages pupils and students to develop mature attitudes and they understand the high expectations of them; their behaviour is exemplary;
- it shows a high level of care for its pupils;
- its staff provide good role models; and,
- it makes very good use of its limited facilities.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

The school meets all the regulatory requirements for continuing registration.

What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002

The school complies with the requirements of the DDA (2002)

Next steps:

Although not a requirement, the school might like to consider the following suggestions as it seeks to develop its provision:

- continue to monitor and develop its provision for personal, social and health education together with its support programme for children with special educational needs, including those who are significantly able;
- provide administrative support for the senior teacher, who has extensive teaching commitments; and,
- continue to develop the ways in which it maps how awareness of cultural diversity in Britain and abroad is taught.

Distribution of this report

This report is being sent to the chief education officer (CEO) and senior teacher of the school. The CEO is asked to ensure that copies are made available to parents of all pupils and students. In addition, it is being sent to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills through the Independent Schools Registration Team of the DfES, to the Trustees of the FLT and to its Regional Trustee, to members of the SIS team, and to the members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate in OFSTED charged with monitoring how the SIS conducts its inspections. The FLT has established a website upon which this, and other similar inspection reports, will be placed. Details can be found at the end of the report.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

1 The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

Although it is a small school, Prospect nevertheless offers its pupils a curriculum which meets all the requirements of the current regulations, and delivers it effectively. It offers a range of subjects which cater to the intellectual, physical and spiritual needs of its pupils and students.

As an independent school, Prospect is not required to conform to the National Curriculum (NC), but it does follow it closely. There is a carefully thought out and succinct statement of the school's curriculum policy which is summarised in both the prospectus and the handbook and which is available to parents and others on request. The policy has several interesting and thought-provoking features, including an emphasis on both the importance of language as a tool for learning, and on education as a foundation for lifelong learning. The policy also includes a description of how it can be translated into action. The document is supplemented by good schemes of work which teachers use to help their own medium and short-term planning.

All pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 have a broad and balanced education which provides for all of the areas of experience described in the current regulations for independent schools. Pupils are prepared for public examinations. They are entered for national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 and usually take the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) during Year 11. Latin has recently been introduced for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, and this has been received enthusiastically by them. Strong links are forged in the classroom between English, French and Latin, as part of the curriculum commitment to developing a good awareness of language. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) has also been introduced during the present academic year, and a well thought out programme of study, based on materials provided by the FLT, is being developed. However, the time allocation is at present inadequate. Apart from the pupils in Year 7, who have an additional 50 minute period, PSHE is delivered in a session of tutor time which only lasts for 20 minutes a week. Although a good start has been made on mapping where PSHE related topics occur in other subjects, the amount of specific time allocated to the subject needs to be reviewed and increased. Time allocations for other subjects in the curriculum are generally appropriate.

There are no pupils or students in the school with statements of SEN, but the strengths and weaknesses of all pupils and students are well known to the staff and, where appropriate, additional support is given. The Individual Education Plans (IEP) written for pupils who are so identified, are of good quality. The targets set are related to the assessed needs of each child and are clear, precise and manageable.

Careers guidance, which pupils and students indicated they found very valuable, is given in both Key Stage 4 and in Year 12. There is a week of organised work experience in Year 10. Pupils and students reported that they supplemented this by making their own arrangements for work during school holidays. Commitment to a positive work ethic is a strong feature of the school.

There is a good curriculum available to the students in Year 12. This is a vocationally orientated set of subjects which includes accounts, Bible Study, BTEC business studies, current affairs, English, typing, and physical education (PE). Following initiatives by the

FLT, the school is actively considering ways in which it can broaden its post-16 provision, and it already offers facilities for two former students of Year 13 age to return once a week to study accounts.

The quality of teaching and assessment

In whole, or in part, thirty lessons were observed during the inspection, of which the vast majority were judged to be good or better. A significant majority of teaching is very good. Teachers are well informed, enthusiastic and committed. They successfully convey this enthusiasm to the pupils. Lessons are carefully planned and clearly identify what the pupils are expected to learn. Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson. This is followed up by checking what the pupils have learnt at the end. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents state that teaching is good and pupils make good progress.

Teachers know the pupils very well and use this information wisely to plan activities which the pupils will do in the lesson. This enables pupils to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills. Whole class teaching is balanced by productive group work, and this encourages the pupils to share their ideas and work collaboratively. Pupils report that teachers help them to learn and they explain things clearly. Learning support teaching is very good and after careful assessment, activities are clearly matched to the pupils' needs. This enables them to make good progress.

Teachers set a good pace to lessons, which start and finish promptly. The school day runs smoothly. Pupils know what they will be doing next and get themselves organised. Staff set high expectations for both work and behaviour and pupils respond by working hard and behaving very sensibly. There is a friendly, relaxed, yet purposeful working atmosphere in lessons. Teachers are good models of courtesy, treating pupils with respect, and this is reciprocated. A particularly strong feature of teaching is the use of challenging questions to promote the pupils' analytical thinking and to enable them to rethink their initial reactions.

In an English lesson with Year 10, which included two Year 9 pupils who had been advanced one year for teaching purposes, a lesson on First World War poetry dealt with Wilfred Owen's poem '*Disabled*'. The 50 minute lesson proceeded at a brisk pace and pupils were challenged from the moment that they entered the classroom. The teacher's delivery was lively and pupils participated in a number of different activities, including an analysis of the poem which produced some penetrating insights into its meaning. Pupils responded very effectively to the challenges that they were set and there was an obvious enjoyment of the lesson. The analytical work in small groups showed a good understanding on the part of the pupils of how they could work together positively.

A science lesson in Year 11 proved that chemistry can be fun! The teacher taught a very informative lesson on the industrial production of hydrochloric acid. By a skilful blending of personal anecdote and the use of a series of apparently disconnected artefacts (which included a very unlikely looking pottery pigeon), he was able to illustrate in a very imaginative way what the chemical formula actually meant. Pupils joined in the spirit of the lesson and in a recapitulation exercise towards the end showed that they had clearly grasped the process.

Similarly, a carefully planned and presented typing lesson in Year 8 produced a good response from the pupils. This lesson, taught by a volunteer from the Brethren community

with no professional teaching qualification, but with obvious expertise in the subject, kept the pupils working hard and gave them opportunities to further develop their skills. The pace of the lesson was very good and included a wide range of activities, and it was characterised by good relationships and an excellent working atmosphere.

Pupils are currently set targets for literacy and numeracy together with one personal target. They know their targets, record them in their books, share them with their parents and review them regularly with their teachers. The targets help pupils to begin to judge their own work. Pupils work well together in pairs and small groups and they enjoy the opportunity to discuss their tasks with their classmates. Pupils respond readily to the challenges set. They have the confidence to ask questions if they do not understand and they show perseverance in their work. Evidence in books indicates that marking is constructive and shows pupils how they may improve their work. Homework is used effectively from Year 7 to extend the pupils' learning.

There is conscientious and effective assessment of pupils' and students' learning. There is a wide range of assessment procedures including cognitive analysis tests for each year group, end of unit tests and national assessment test levels to give an accurate picture of each individual's progress. This information is analysed as pupils move through year groups so that progress over time is monitored. It is shared with parents at regular intervals through consultation evenings and detailed informative reports. The pupils in Key Stage 4 are thoroughly prepared for national examinations in Year 11. GCSE results are analysed at the end of each year and, if necessary, taken into account when planning for the following year.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Prospect is owned and maintained by the Brethren, a Christian faith community with distinctive beliefs. It aims to educate its young people so that they can play a full part in the community when they leave school. The school is *'committed to a way of life which at all times is governed in every detail by the Holy Bible, and it is expected that all aspects of the life of the school will be in accord with this.'* The school has well thought out and clearly articulated statements about how it intends to provide for pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, and these are summed up in a brief, but succinct, policy statement. The school is very successful in promoting pupils' and students' development in these areas.

Through Bible Study lessons, citizenship and PSHE, pupils and students develop an understanding of the distinction between right and wrong, and of moral attitudes and behaviour that are appropriate. This is reinforced throughout the life of the school, where all pupils are expected to behave sensibly and act responsibly. A recently introduced house point system is very popular and has been successful in motivating the pupils. Year 12 students are given specific duties, such as supervising pupils on the school bus. They have their own separate classroom and social area which they are responsible for looking after.

There is a good citizenship programme which helps pupils and students to understand the workings of local, national and international institutions, and to develop their awareness of the diversity to be found in contemporary society. This is reinforced by contributions from

other subjects, including, for Year 12 students, a weekly lesson in current affairs. This is taught by a member of the supporting community and uses materials supplied by the FLT. A feature of the Year 12 programme is a visit to the Houses of Parliament and the Cabinet War Rooms, and recently there was a very successful and much enjoyed visit to Cadbury World in Birmingham! There are other visits to places of interest outside the school, and during the past twelve months different year groups have visited such diverse places as Wookey Hole, Caerleon, and Bristol Water at Blagdon. A group from Years 7 and 8 took part in an art workshop at the city museum in Bristol.

Music, both organised and impromptu, is a distinctive feature of the school. From time to time there are organised concerts in which music plays a central part, and pupils practise hard to make these a success. However, informal music sessions are a regular feature of the daily life of the school. During breaks and lunchtimes groups of pupils gather together in the recreation room to make music with piano and guitars. Pupils and students display verve, enthusiasm and talent during these sessions.

Adults in the school, whether teachers, trustees, or volunteers, provide pupils and students with good role models. They actively encourage them to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence. As a result of this, pupils are notably poised, confident and friendly, and work well together. The school is a very happy institution.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3 The welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The school makes effective use of the appropriate policies and procedures provided by FLT to minimise health and safety risks to pupils, including on out-of-school visits. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, all pupils state that they feel safe in school and that the school deals effectively with those who misbehave. A trustee and the senior teacher are designated to monitor all child protection procedures. The buildings, including all classrooms, are checked frequently for any risks. The school has an appropriate First Aid policy and always has at least one qualified First Aider on site whilst the pupils are present.

The behaviour and anti-bullying policies are reinforced successfully through the school's ethos and Bible Study lessons. PSHE plays an important part in the school's provision for behaviour management. As a result, the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are exemplary throughout the school.

In the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils state that they know who to turn to if they have any concerns about their academic work or personal problems. The behaviour policy specifies the range of rewards for good work and effort, and sanctions are detailed for unacceptable behaviour. It clearly states that parents will be informed whenever necessary. The school records any incidents of misbehaviour and logs carefully the procedures and outcomes to address matters. .

The school meets fire safety regulations. It carries out and records twice yearly fire drills, although, on occasion, the period between fire drills is too long. Thorough fire risk assessments are undertaken and recorded conscientiously.

The admission and attendance registers conform to regulations. The school fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 by having a statement indicating how it can improve access to the physical environment over the next three years.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school is a registered charitable trust which is affiliated nationally to the FLT and which accepts the conditions and responsibilities that this brings. There are seven trustees.

There are two full-time and 12 part-time teachers, of whom four, who teach students in Year 12, are lecturers in a local college. All of the teachers are appropriately qualified in the subjects that they teach and most have had wide experience. The senior teacher has a full teaching programme, as well as carrying out the responsibilities which go with her position. The school should investigate ways in which some of her tasks can be delegated. This will be particularly important as the school plans to expand to provide primary education. In addition to the professionally qualified teachers, members of the Brethren community also visit the school to teach Bible Study, current affairs, and typing. The quality of their contribution varies considerably and the FLT needs to consider ways in which it can help them to become better classroom practitioners.

All the trustees, teachers and volunteers have been checked in the appropriate way with the Criminal Records Bureau.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The present premises and accommodation are suitable for purpose and meet all of the requirements for registration.

Since it was first established as a tutorial centre in 1995, Prospect School has occupied the same site, which is next to the Brethren meeting hall. The location itself is not entirely suitable, since pupils and students have to make a circuitous journey each day by school bus, and this can be impeded by adverse traffic conditions. However, the school makes allowance for this by starting rather later in the morning than most other schools affiliated to the FLT. Plans are in hand to move the school at some time, and an active search is underway for new premises.

The school provides satisfactory teaching accommodation in several demountable classrooms and a main building. In most classrooms displays of pupils' work and posters improve the learning environment and signal to pupils the importance of the subject. There is a useful reference library area which is suitable for independent study. The school has a number of appropriate arrangements to lessen the impact of not having a hall for PE. Good use is made of two local leisure centres for indoor and outdoor sporting activities. A workshop is suitably situated and resourced for the study of resistant materials. One mobile classroom has multiple uses, providing for typing studies, geography and for pupils

to have extra learning support. Pupils in Year 12 have their own classroom and share a recreation room with the rest of the pupils. Here pupils can play table tennis and table football. During lesson times the recreation room is used for music. This is sensible so as not to disturb other lessons.

The toilet and washing facilities are only just adequate for the number of pupils on roll. There is little cloakroom space for pupils' outdoor wear and bags in some areas of the school. Facilities for staff are appropriate. A small office is adjacent to the main entrance.

There is a small hard surfaced area outside with some seating. In clement weather, pupils can use the grassed area within the school site.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and others

Information is provided to parents and interested parties by way of a school prospectus, a handbook, a monthly newsletter, summary term reports, full annual reports, and annual teacher/parent and trustee/parent meetings. Teachers also have the opportunity to send daily comments to parents through the diaries with which all pupils and students are issued. The current prospectus and handbook are exhaustive and fully meet the requirements of the current regulations.

The reports which parents receive are of good quality. The summary reports indicate pupils' and students' attainment in each subject. Further comments cover achievement, effort, and behaviour and help parents keep track of progress during the term. The annual reports cover the same areas more fully and are very thorough. Further refinements to these reports are planned for this year to include projected grades for each subject.

All information sought during the inspection was readily located and kept in good order. The admission and attendance registers are kept in accordance with the regulations.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

7. The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school has adopted the complaints policy of the FLT and its accompanying procedures. These fully meet the requirements for registration. There have been no recent complaints.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

This section is not a requirement of the Education Act 2002. The Lay Inspector evaluated both the school ethos and the Trustees' stewardship of resources and produced an internal report for the Focus Learning Trust, which is summarised below.

The school is governed by a board of trustees, of whom there are six at the moment. A replacement seventh trustee is shortly to be appointed. The board meets regularly; minutes are kept and are duly signed and distributed. Each trustee is allocated a specific area, or areas, of responsibility. Those interviewed during the inspection were knowledgeable and diligent in carrying out their duties.

The CEO leads the school with calm and competent authority, and he is ably and enthusiastically supported by the senior teacher. The senior teacher has made a very significant contribution to the prosperity and well being of the school. There is a very good working relationship between them and this leads to a very effective system of management. The school's organisation and management are characterised by diligence and thoroughness throughout. The CEO and the senior teacher are assisted by other trustees, senior members of staff, and a number of volunteers from the community, all of whom make important contributions to the life of the school.

All FLT procedures and guidelines have been, or are being, adopted and put into practice.

Can the organisation and management be improved?

There are two areas for improvement which the Trustees are asked to consider:

- the Trustees should arrange that more time is available to the senior teacher for her administrative duties; and,*
- formal weekly, or fortnightly, meetings of the Management Team to make decisions on current issues should be introduced. Decisions made should be minuted and communicated quickly to all parties concerned, and progress reviewed at the next meeting.*