

Oakwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125273
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	363989
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Angela Corbett HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Tuffield
Headteacher	Sue Child
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed one assembly, 31 lessons, each taught by a different teacher, conducted three learning walks and made nine short visits to lessons and tutorial sessions. Meetings were held with five groups of students in school, staff and members of the governing body including the Chair. Inspectors also spoke to parents and carers when they were collecting students from school and in one telephone conversation. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including policies, data and analyses, records of the school's monitoring, the governing body minutes and questionnaires completed by 40 staff, 146 students and 184 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress and attainment of students across the school, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching and whether it is accelerating students' progress sufficiently.
- The extent to which assessment has been strengthened to improve students' learning.
- The impact of the curriculum and the quality of support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in securing improvement across the school.

Information about the school

Oakwood School is larger than other secondary schools and gained specialist status for technology in July 2004. A few students come from minority ethnic groups, although this proportion is increasing. Very few students speak English as an additional language. A below average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average, with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties forming the most significant identified need. However, the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is below average. There is specialist support for three students with speech, language and communication needs. The school holds a number of awards including Investors in Careers and Investors in People. The school was given a 'notice to improve' at its previous inspection in May 2010.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

While many improvements have been made since the last inspection, the school's overall effectiveness remains inadequate. Students' behaviour is inadequate, as are the school's safeguarding procedures. Students do not feel safe in school and too many are not confident that the staff manage unacceptable behaviour or deal with their concerns over bullying effectively. In addition, a small minority do not enjoy coming to school. In other aspects of the school's work senior leaders and staff have successfully worked to make improvements. The quality of teaching and learning have improved so that students now make satisfactory progress. Attainment is now broadly average, although the proportion of students attaining the highest grades in examinations is lower than that found nationally. In summary, while some improvements have been made, other aspects of the school's work are inadequate, reflecting the inadequate capacity for sustained improvement.

Although an increasing proportion of teaching is good or better, it remains satisfactory overall because inconsistencies remain both in the quality of teaching and the use that teachers make of assessment. Teachers are now planning varied lessons which are clearly focused on what students will learn, although they do not always provide sufficient challenge for the most-able. Lessons tend to be teacher dominated with insufficient opportunities for students to work in pairs or small groups and develop independence, cooperation and resilience in their learning. Students' basic skills are developed satisfactorily across subjects, but links between subjects are not fully capitalised on to give purpose, relevance and consolidation of learning. While there has been a notable improvement in the quality of teachers' marking, some written comments do not make it clear precisely what a student needs to do to improve.

The good curriculum, which is reviewed and tailored to meet students' needs, is a major contributory factor in students' improving progress and, in many instances, enjoyment of school. Students make a satisfactory contribution to school life and the wider community, for example, when fund-raising for charity. Some take on responsibilities as librarians, prefects, mentors and school councillors so that students become involved in school decision making. Such opportunities significantly improve these students' attitudes to learning and school life but comparatively few students are involved. Consequently, the majority of students who shared their opinions with inspectors do not feel valued or respected, and feel that their views and ideas will be ignored, all of which diminish their enjoyment and engagement in school. Thus, the overall care, guidance and support

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students receive is inadequate as some pupils do not thrive in their learning, development or well being. However some aspects of it, for example, the support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and careers advice, are satisfactory.

Targets are now more challenging and are used effectively to raise attainment. This, together with improved systems for tracking students' progress and the good interventions for Year 11, has helped to counter underachievement. The appointment of the associate headteacher, clear roles for senior leaders and the development of the middle leaders have contributed to the improvements and many new systems in the school. In some aspects, these changes have been successful, for example, in improving attendance to above the national average. Senior leaders have sharply focused their efforts and self-evaluation on the four key issues from the last inspection and on the day-to-day running of the school. However, they have not been adequately strategic and effective in securing sufficient improvement in students' behaviour, social development, attitudes to learning and engagement with school. Although the school has introduced new ways to act on and accommodate the views of parents and carers, many have commented that they do not yet feel involved in school life.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on recent improvements in teaching so that a consistently higher proportion is good or better and so raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that teaching consistently supports and challenges all students, particularly for those who have the potential to reach the highest grades in examinations
 - involving all students more actively in their lessons through whole-class, individual and group work to foster independent and cooperative learning
 - giving students greater opportunities to develop, apply and reinforce their learning across subjects
 - checking the understanding and progress of all students in lessons and giving clear written feedback to ensure that they all know about how to improve and so move to the next level in each subject.
- Ensure students feel safe and improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning across the school by:
 - providing and clearly communicating a code of conduct for behaviour
 - training staff so they effectively and consistently apply the behaviour policy
 - developing students' understanding of how to keep safe and their confidence that any concerns will be heard and effectively acted on
 - involving all students in school decision making - giving students more opportunities to take on roles of responsibility.
- Develop the home-school learning partnership by improving the effectiveness of communication systems and involving parents and carers more in school life.
- Develop senior and middle leaders so they take a more evaluative and strategic approach to their roles in order to maximise their impact on all outcomes for students, in particular on achievement, behaviour and staying safe.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Outcomes overall for students are inadequate because their inadequate behaviour contributes to the extent to which they feel unsafe in school. This is compounded by the lack of consistency across the school in approach to improving student attitudes to learning and their behaviour. However, the quality of students' learning is now satisfactory and is improving, particularly at Key Stage 3. This is due in part to the Opening Minds course in Years 7, which is developing students' study skills and learning independence. Good or better progress was seen when students were given ownership of their learning, tasks were varied and practical, and teachers worked in partnership with students rather than directing them. For example, in a Year 10 science lesson on the solar system, an outdoor activity had very effectively engaged students and enabled them to work independently in class to consolidate and build their knowledge and understanding. Students' progress accelerates when they are given opportunities for creative thinking, good account is taken of their needs and abilities, and a strong dialogue for learning is established between the student and teacher. This was exemplified in a Year 9 religious education lesson observed during the inspection when students made outstanding progress. Most students complete the work set them in lessons but they seldom take a proactive and mature approach to their learning and are over reliant on their teachers, which slows their progress.

School data and results, from examinations and coursework that is already validated show that the students in Year 11 are set to build on the trend of improvement reflected in the 2010 GCSE examination results, including in English, mathematics and science. For older students, strong intervention programmes have helped most of them overcome the effect of past underachievement. Progress towards more challenging targets, including in English, mathematics and science, is satisfactory for almost all students. Careful tracking of student data, together with better teaching and more effective support, is also securing satisfactory progress for different groups, including middle-ability boys and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have underachieved in the past.

Many students participate in out-of-school activities, in particular in sport, and while their understanding of healthy lifestyles is promoted well across the curriculum, their adoption is satisfactory. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, with religious education and personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons providing a range of appropriate opportunities. Social aspects are less well developed so students lack maturity in their behaviour towards both their peers and adults. The school's steel band, links with schools overseas, celebration of different religious festivals and a newly introduced multicultural week provide for stronger cultural development. Attendance has improved significantly and is now above average. The specialism contributes well to students' preparation for the future, through their good and frequent use of information and communication technology (ICT). Students can apply their satisfactory basic skills in a range of contexts and most proceed into employment, education or training.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	4
Pupils' behaviour	4
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and use of assessment have improved since the last inspection with almost half of the teaching observed being good or better. Lesson planning has improved with all teachers now taking a common approach to planning. They provide structured lessons that divide learning into manageable steps supported by a variety of tasks and activities. However, too many lessons are over-directed by teachers, so students are too passive, and in some instances their poor behaviour and lack of engagement disrupts learning for all. The most effective lessons are well tailored to meet the differing learning styles of students, provide engagement and maintain good pace. Resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), are used well to maintain student focus and teachers use skilled questioning techniques to check and deepen students' learning as well as improve their speaking and listening. However, not all teachers make sufficient use of students' assessment data to fully inform their planning and delivery, and there are inconsistencies in the way teachers check students' understanding to ensure they are suitably supported and challenged in lessons. In other lessons, students experience too few opportunities to apply their skills in technology or develop skills in research and analysis, and teamwork. Students receive some helpful verbal feedback on their written work, although this is often not recorded. Pockets of excellence in written assessment can be found, such as in English and history, but this is not consistent in or across subjects.

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Students benefit from a good curriculum that has been adapted and tailored well to meet their needs and interests with a good balance of vocational and academic courses. This includes the new Diploma in hair and beauty, BTEC courses in science and languages and separate sciences. Students who are vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with identified speech, communication and language needs, are suitably supported by the Alternative Learning Unit, which is currently being restructured for September 2011. The tutorial programme and special activity days, for example, in careers and teenage health, enhance students' personal development. A good range of trips, including those overseas, and visits are offered alongside revision classes and after-school clubs broadens students' learning experiences.

Care, guidance and support are inadequate overall. New systems and approaches to manage behaviour are not consistently applied across the school nor have they been sufficiently effective in improving students' attitudes to learning and preventing disruptive behaviour in lessons and around school. For this reason, despite strengths in the curriculum and satisfactory teaching, the school is not providing an acceptable standard of education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, associate headteacher and leaders at all levels have worked with determination to improve the progress being made by students and have successfully focused their efforts on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Middle leaders are being developed and increasingly taking responsibility, being held to account for improving provision and the performance of students. Many new systems have been put in place to support improvement; some have had more impact than others. For example, the rigorous and accurate monitoring of student progress is enabling underperformance, both for individuals or groups of students, particularly in Year 11, to be identified and tackled. Consequently, discrimination is being tackled and equality of opportunity promoted satisfactorily, which is reflected in students' above average attendance and broadly average attainment. However, other aspects of school improvement, such as improving students' attitudes to learning and behaviour, have not been tackled sufficiently, strategically or effectively.

Safeguarding is inadequate because insufficient attention has been paid to ensuring that bullying is dealt with effectively so that students feel safe in school. Although safeguarding training, policies and procedures are in place, these do not operate effectively to ensure students feel safe. .

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Governance is inadequate because members of the governing body have not fulfilled their statutory duty to ensure that students are safe in school. However, they are well informed on most issues, make good use of their expertise and provide effective challenge in relation to the quality of teaching and student progress. The school has satisfactorily developed a range of partnerships, including with the local police and other agencies, to promote and support vulnerable students. Strong partnerships with local education providers have increased curriculum opportunities at Key Stage 4, and have contributed well to securing students' satisfactory achievement, in particular for those who need more encouragement and support to engage in their education. The school understands its context well and has put in place a range of actions to adequately promote community cohesion, although it is yet to fully evaluate the impact of its work on students from different backgrounds.

The school has worked to improve its engagement with parents and carers but this has yet to have a full impact. Information and progress evenings are well attended, although some parents and carers felt that they could not obtain the appointments with teachers they wanted and that information about their children's progress was provided too late in Year 11. This is reflected in the views expressed by parents and carers and suggests that the effectiveness of new systems has not been fully evaluated in order to develop good relationships between home and school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers returning the inspection questionnaires was in line with the national average. Over half included a written comment. A few commented positively on the care given to students and on recent improvements in the school. However, most, including the parents and carers spoken to during the inspection, raised

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concerns, many of which were put forward at the last inspection. These included bullying across the school, the management of unacceptable behaviour, inconsistency in teaching, the progress being made by students and information on how well their children are progressing. These and other comments were investigated by the inspection team during this inspection and their judgements are reflected in the main findings of this report. While the inspection team recognises that the school has worked to improve its engagement with parents and carers and is increasingly taking account of their views, for example, through the parents' forum, the school has yet to develop a consistently effective learning partnership with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakwood School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 184 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1232 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	14	124	67	19	10	12	7
The school keeps my child safe	18	10	130	71	23	13	7	4
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	11	119	65	30	16	11	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	11	110	60	38	21	11	6
The teaching is good at this school	12	7	109	59	44	24	7	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	7	109	59	41	22	9	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	6	118	64	36	20	8	4
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	30	16	98	53	20	11	8	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	10	114	62	32	17	10	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	3	73	40	57	31	32	17
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	10	94	51	37	20	10	5
The school is led and managed effectively	23	13	87	47	36	20	22	12
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	13	101	55	37	20	15	9

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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 pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 June 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Oakwood School, Horley RH6 9AE

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for sharing your views with us in meetings, lessons and around the school. We are concerned that not all of you behave responsibly in school, and that you do not feel confident that any concerns you raise will be taken seriously and acted on. As a result, we have placed the school in 'special measures' and this means that inspectors will regularly visit the school to check that it is improving. Here is a summary of our main judgements.

- The teaching you receive has improved since the last inspection. It is satisfactory overall and an increasing number of lessons have good teaching. However, you sometimes rely too much on your teachers and have difficulty working on your own, or in groups, and too little opportunity to take the initiative in your own learning.
- Your attainment is improving and is now in line with national averages, including in English, mathematics and science.
- Your attendance has improved significantly and is now above average.
- The curriculum gives you lots of good opportunities for learning. Students in Key Stage 4 said they particularly enjoyed their college courses.
- Although too few of you are involved in school decision making or take on posts of responsibility such as mentors or school councilors those of you who do, enjoy and benefit from these opportunities.

To help the school improve, we have asked senior leaders and the governing body to:

- further improve the quality of teaching you receive and ensure you are all given clear advice about how to improve your work
- help you all to behave responsibly, feel safe and have confidence that any concerns you raise will be acted on
- develop a learning partnership with your parents and carers by involving them more in school life and improving communication systems
- ensure that the school leaders and managers consider the overall direction of actions as well as their day-to-day work in running the school so that your personal and academic development is maximised.

All of you can help, for example, by maintaining your good attendance and trying to become more independent learners.

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett Her Majesty's Inspector

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