

Oaklands School

Old Bethnal Green Road, Bethnal Green, London, E2 6PR

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Outstanding leadership by school leaders and the governing body ensures that all members of staff are extremely well trained and work together continually to address any weakness in teaching and students' progress.
- Leaders and staff ensure that all students are well prepared for the next stages of their lives and to be successful international citizens.
- Students make good, and sometimes excellent, progress from their starting points. Progress in science and languages, in particular, is consistently rapid.
- Teaching is good and, since the previous inspection, an increasing proportion is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons that engage students well as they have sound subject knowledge and high aspirations for their students' achievement.
- Increasingly, teachers share the best practice that is seen in the most effective teaching.
- The support for disabled students and those with special educational needs, and the support provided through the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up funding is a strength of the school. This support helps them to catch up with the standards reached by other students.
- Students' attitudes to learning and behaviour are exemplary. They take on responsibilities and participate enthusiastically in the exciting range of enrichment activities on offer. As a result, they develop strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural values.
- The school has established an impressive number of partnerships that make a very strong contribution to students' learning and personal development.
- The school works extremely well with parents and carers, including providing them with opportunities to gain national qualifications and training to help them gain employment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding, as work is not always set at the right level of difficulty to ensure that all students consistently make sufficiently rapid progress to reach the highest standards.
- Although marking and feedback regularly tell students precisely how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, students do not routinely act on the advice given.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons taught by 32 teachers. Twenty one of these observations were made jointly with the headteacher and other senior leaders of the school. Inspectors did not observe teaching in Year 11 as students had completed sitting their GCSE examinations by the time of the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, staff, including senior and middle leaders, and groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, assessment information, monitoring files, minutes of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding documentation and samples of students' work.
- The number of responses to the online Parent View survey was too few for the inspectors to consider. Inspectors took into account the 46 staff responses they received.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Raminder Arora	Additional Inspector
Sandra Teacher	Additional Inspector
Alison Pyle	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oaklands is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- A much higher proportion of students than average are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families). There are currently no children of service families in the school.
- About one in five students in Year 7 is eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A much higher proportion of students than average speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average. The largest group are of Bangladeshi heritage.
- A very small number of students attend alternative provision for two days a week at 'Old Ford Construction Training, Tower Hamlets, which allows them to access a course in construction.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is a National Leader of Education (NLE) and the school is a National Support School (NSS), providing support to other schools. Since the previous inspection, the school, in partnership with three other schools, has established a post-16 consortium, which is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers always plan work that is precisely matched to the needs of every student
 - students routinely act on the written advice of their teachers to enhance their learning
 - teachers continue to have opportunities to learn from the outstanding practice that already exists in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with standards in English and mathematics that are well below those found nationally. Students, including those of Bangladeshi heritage and from other minority ethnic backgrounds, make consistently good and, in some cases, particularly rapid progress across the subjects as they move through the school. Achievement is not yet outstanding as the proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress in English has not been consistently high over time.
- The proportion of students gaining five GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics declined in 2012 and was below average. This was a result of a dip in the English grades because of staffing difficulties during the year. Leaders put into action a robust range of strategies that have successfully reversed this decline. The school's assessment information, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicates that current Year 11 students are on track to attain above average standards and to achieve well.
- The school is successfully implementing opportunities across subjects to develop students' literacy skills. Additionally, students readily make use of the recently expanded 'learning hub' for reading and researching across many subjects and topics. Catch-up funding provides additional literacy support for Year 7 students with low reading ages. As a result, they are making rapid progress towards reaching age appropriate reading levels.
- The school enters many students early in Year 10 for the mathematics GCSE examination. Getting a grade boosts students' confidence and motivates them to strive for much higher grades as they all continue their study of mathematics and retake the examination in Year 11.
- As a result of well-targeted additional support, disabled students and those with special educational needs, students for whom English is an additional language, as well as those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make similar progress to their peers.
- The school carefully monitors the progress of the very few students who attend the part-time off-site construction course and, as a result, these students make similar progress to their classmates.
- Students supported through the pupil premium funding receive well-focused additional tuition, mentoring and opportunities to participate in activities to enhance their personal development. As a result, students known to be eligible for free school meals are making faster progress than their classmates and the school's tracking information confirms that, in the current Year 11, these students will reach similar standards to their peers in both English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is mostly good and, increasingly, outstanding. There are a few cases where teaching still requires improvement.
- Teachers have excellent working relationships with the students who, as a result, are engaged and motivated to try their best.
- In most lessons, teachers employ a number of resources and plan varied activities that cater for the full range of students' learning needs and interests. In a few instances, activities are not always suitable for every student's needs or set at the right level of difficulty.
- The most effective teaching has a number of common characteristics. Teachers demonstrate consistently high expectations for learning and behaviour. They help students by modelling the expected learning. They also use skilled questioning to enable students to develop their thoughts and ideas, and provide opportunities for them to be actively involved in tasks and activities, work together in groups and to help one another. As a result, learning proceeds at a quick pace.
- Notable strengths in teaching are the opportunities created for students to prepare for later life such as in 'passport to employability' lessons and activities that link learning to practical life,

seen in a computing lesson on online banking and the use of credit cards.

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- Teachers frequently encourage students to assess their own work and give feedback to their classmates on how to improve. Teachers' marking gives students helpful guidance on how to improve their work. They do not, however, routinely ensure that students respond to marking by making improvements to their work or through undertaking a more challenging task to extend their learning even further.
- Teaching assistants provide good one-to-one or small-group teaching and in-class support to help students to catch up.
- Teachers across a range of subjects are increasingly working together to plan activities to help students develop their literacy and numeracy skills in their lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students are very well mannered towards each other and adults alike. The 'global ambassadors' ensure that the many visitors to the school are always offered a warm welcome.
- Students, including the very few who attend alternative provision, have exemplary attitudes towards learning and this makes an excellent contribution to their consistently good progress. They behave extremely well around the school and in lessons.
- Students say that they feel very safe in school and they are aware of how to keep safe, for example, when using the internet.
- Students are fully aware of all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying. They appreciate the regular workshops that help them to understand how to stay safe in range of situations and to be tolerant of all. They highlighted the recent work they have done about the wrongs of homophobia.
- Pastoral staff work well with students or families facing difficulties. As a result, students arrive punctually to school, attendance is consistently above average and there have been no permanent exclusions since 2011.
- Students are proud of their school and relish the many opportunities that they have to make a positive contribution. For instance, students in each year group choose a charity to support and arrange their own fund-raising activities; they work with senior citizens who visit the school, write a half-termly newsletter and designed and built their own garden which has been acknowledged nationally and internationally..

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school benefits from the highly aspirational leadership provided by the headteacher, governing body and other leaders. Together with all staff, they are fully committed to ensuring equality of opportunity by supporting all students to achieve their best in their academic learning and personal development. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated.
- Leaders have created a climate where members of staff feel valued and, as a result, they welcome and act on the advice given following their regular lesson observations. They appreciate the many training opportunities through the school's own in-house training programme, as well as peer coaching. As a result, teaching is increasingly outstanding. Where teaching is weaker, leaders organise additional training and individual support plans to bring about sustained improvements.
- Students' rates of progress, behaviour and attendance are frequently checked and the information is used to support any students not on track to reach their targets. Leaders also use this information to hold teachers to account for the progress of each of their students.

- The school has excellent procedures for checking all aspects of its work. Consequently, leaders have a thorough understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Improvement plans focus on the right key priorities and the effect of resulting actions is carefully checked. Through timely and rigorous actions, students' rates of progress in English have notably improved.
 - Middle leaders benefit from high-quality training in school and from national providers. These opportunities help them to be highly competent in their respective roles.
 - The headteacher and other school leaders offer valuable support and training to other schools to help them improve.
 - Leaders make sure that students are well prepared for the future. Students study a range of subjects that are well matched to their needs and abilities. Additionally, the school has established many partnerships to help students to prepare for the world of work and further education, such as work experience, practising interview techniques with local companies, having business mentors and visiting Oxbridge colleges.
 - The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness extremely well through the many opportunities provided within taught subjects and additional activities, including work with schools internationally and frequent educational visits in this country and abroad.
 - The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The highly skilled and experienced governing body has a firm grasp on all aspects of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and students' achievement. They are aware of how this compares to similar schools. Governors rigorously support and challenge the school's leaders and visit the school regularly to check its work. They keep a close eye on self-evaluation and action planning processes, monitoring their implementation closely. They have good oversight of the school's appraisal procedures and make sure that successful teachers are rewarded. They ensure good value for money and make sure that the pupil premium funding is spent effectively to narrow any gaps in achievement. Governors make sure that all statutory duties are met and that arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100972
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	412314

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	587
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Sherratt
Headteacher	Patrice Canavan
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2007
Telephone number	020 7613 1014
Fax number	020 7729 3756
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