



Oakwood School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107184
LEA Sheffield
Inspection number 277728
Inspection dates 13 March 2006 to 13 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Henry Moreton CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Northern General Hospital
School category	Community special		Herries Road
Age range of pupils	12 to 18		Sheffield, South Yorkshire S5 7AU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0114 2261691
Number on roll	22	Fax number	0114 2261692
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr D Caborn
Date of previous inspection	9 December 2002	Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Dudley

Age group 12 to 18	Inspection dates 13 March 2006 - 13 March 2006	Inspection number 277728
------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Oakwood School provides education for patients at Oakwood Young Peoples' Centre, which is a therapeutic unit for teenagers with acute mental health problems. Most patients are voluntary but some are sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

The school, situated on a large hospital site, has 25 day and residential places. The medical profession manages admission and discharge. The school caters for some of the neediest students in terms of their mental health problems - eating disorders, depression, conduct disorders and psychosis.

The ability range of the students is wide as the criteria for entry is simply the capacity to benefit from this therapeutic environment. All students are dual registered and after an average stay of about six months most return to their mainstream school or other educational setting.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which has some outstanding features. A multi-disciplinary approach underpins provision from the time students are admitted until they are discharged. There is a purposeful learning ethos within a caring and supportive environment. As one grandparent wrote 'I truly believe that I would be grieving for my

granddaughter now if it wasn't for Oakwood.'

Though they may only be at the school for a few months, students of all abilities make good progress in improving their behaviour and in aspects of their academic work, particularly the arts and computer skills. The educational experiences maintain students' morale and well-being. The quality of teaching is good and the use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning is excellent, though opportunities are

missed to set homework. The progress made by students is monitored on a daily basis. Students' social and moral development is outstanding. Expectations are raised by active participation in decision making and in local events. Parents and carers are very pleased with what the school offers and see positive changes in their children. The school works successfully with them in several ways.

The school is well led and managed. Governors and staff are dedicated to achieving the

best for each student - every one really matters. They are well experienced in meeting the challenges of working in a multi agency environment. Issues identified by the last inspection have mostly been addressed but improvements are still needed in assessment to improve learning, and the school needs to gain more information about students' prior

performance. The school provides good value for money and it has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve assessment arrangements so that students know how well they are doing in comparison to their peers in mainstream.
- Improve the timing and quality of the information it receives from students' schools so that teachers can more effectively plan lessons and measure the academic progress made.
- Provide homework or other extension activities where appropriate.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Crucially, as one parent wrote '...when our daughter went back to her school she had not fallen behind in her work'. The varying length of time in the school precludes the easy benchmarking of students' progress over time. Their ability varies and all have different starting points. Most have not been regular attenders previously. The attention span of many is limited because of their mental health problems. Therapy sessions form an integral part of the school's working day. In this context the school works hard to provide a learning experience that matches each student's needs, which are set out on admission. These focus on the social and emotional needs that led to referral. The strength of the school therefore is its curriculum planning for the individual. Baseline assessments made during the initial six week period are rigorous. The school uses a detailed profile of behaviour as an indicator of each student's attitude to learning. It uses this very well to highlight the learning, conduct and emotional support that will be required and addresses this through individualised programmes. Sometimes work is set by the students' schools. Most students make good progress in lessons. Assessment records show that students' achievement in relation to their behaviour targets is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' development and well-being are outstanding. The school's own evaluation is modest. Staff ensure students prosper in a safe environment. Attendance is good. Many do not miss a single session and unauthorised absences are few. This reflects students' positive response to a setting that they feel secure in. One student said 'I'm soon to be an ex resident. I've found Oakwood a really good experience. It's made my life more bearable and I will always remember it. There's loads of support on offer from everyone. Here everyone supports each other. I'm going to miss it.' Students are not excluded from this school. Challenging targets are set and these are closely monitored so that students achieve their behavioural goals. All students can access a range of recreational and therapeutic activities and there are places where they can socialise safely. Students take part in a range of physical activities, including using the multi gym, in order to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Students' spiritual and cultural development is good, while their social and moral development is outstanding. Students play a leading role in the daily meetings, in roles as chairperson and secretary, as well as in the multi agency mini teams. Like the staff, students may also call an emergency meeting at any time and this 'power' is not abused. This helps them to feel safe as well as equipping them with very useful work related skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Effective learning takes place because of the relaxed ethos that exists in classrooms and around the school. Students have confidence in their teachers. As one student said 'you get support, smiles and sensitivity from staff'. Daily 'hand over' briefings between the teachers and the health professionals ensure a detailed knowledge of every student so that their learning needs are clearly identified.

Staff challenge students without causing them further stress and adverse reaction. Teachers are flexible in adapting their methods to meet the needs of the students in the class. Teaching assistants contribute fully in supporting learning, effectively using their own skills, including work with computers. Resources are used well to motivate students, especially in design & technology and art. Though students are encouraged to take part in extracurricular activities, opportunities are missed to provide homework or extension work.

Assessment is satisfactory. The school has developed its own method of measuring improvement; quite a challenge since students can spend as little as two months at the school. It does this by tracking the change in key aspects of their behaviour from admission to discharge. In lessons teachers focus assessment on students' efforts. This encourages students but it does not help them to understand how well they are doing in comparison with their peers or inform them what steps they need to take to raise their standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The importance of living safe and healthy lives is emphasised in all aspects of the school's work. Provision is matched to individual needs and is underpinned by the focus on changing behaviour. Each student has an effective learning programme with clear behavioural targets. There is a strong focus on creative and practical work, complemented by an extensive range of educational visits/visitors. The work done by students in the area of film, photography, drama and art is of high quality. This contributes significantly to the raising of their self esteem and confidence, while developing their team working skills. Provision for the personal and social development of students is firmly embedded across the school and prepares them well to contribute to society. They are fully involved in decisions about their future. The curriculum provides opportunities for students to be supportive and take responsibility for each other during the therapy sessions and various meetings that form the core of the working day. These students are vulnerable and the school maintains a high profile in educating them about the dangers of tobacco, alcohol and drug addiction.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes excellent care of its students. Staff are sensitive to their needs and there is outstanding support for them when they are upset or troubled - a common occurrence for many. Students whose difficulties are reflected in extremely challenging behaviour receive immediate and well targeted support. Very good counsel is given to parents/carers, and they appreciate the work the school does such as computer club and open days. The school's multi disciplinary work is integral and this is well co-ordinated for individual students. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place and well known by staff, who are experienced in identifying risks to students. There is a well co-ordinated approach to promoting the health of students including appropriate sex and relationship education. The work done to ensure smooth transition is good though not enough information is received about students' previous achievements. The excellent links that exist with the Connexions service and a local college ensures that those students who do not return to their schools move on successfully; the school supports them even after they have been discharged.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Self evaluation by managers is generally accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses and there is a good awareness of what needs to be done to improve. The systems to check on the quality of teaching are well established. Communications within the school are outstanding with daily briefings for all staff, setting out current issues for individuals. Opportunities are planned throughout the day to check how students are doing. The school is effective in seeking and acting on the views of students and their parents/carers, who are overwhelmingly supportive of it. One parent commented that '...Oakwood managed to get my daughter to do some learning, where others had failed'. Many other comments are in the same vein.

The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership and has established an inclusive ethos and high staff morale. There is a clear focus on ensuring that students are supported as best they can so that they are in a position to make a successful transition back into the wider world. She is well supported in this by her deputy and a dedicated governing body, ably led by its chairperson. This management team offer considerable expertise and effectively challenge each other. The school has improved since its last inspection and is in a good position to make further improvement.

This is a complex school set within a multidisciplinary environment. Managers are confident about the role of the school in this setting. Staff have amassed a wealth of experience in meeting the needs of young people facing mental health problems and they are well placed to extend the scope and nature of their outreach work by offering support to anxious students in secondary schools.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed finding out about how you are doing.

What I most liked about the school:

- the calm and purposeful way you go about your work
- the way that you are supportive of each other
- the quality of your work in art and design & technology
- your use of computers for the school website and your video/animation work
- the way the school works with your parents/carers
- the way your staff ensure that you are well cared for.

What I have asked the school to do now:

- let you know how well you are doing compared to your peers back in mainstream
- get better information about your academic performance as soon as you start
- provide homework or extension activities where it is appropriate.

I hope that you continue to keep up with your studies so that when you are well enough to return to your school you will quickly pick up from where you left off.