

Oak View School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115460
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	379077
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2012
Lead inspector	Denise Morris

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Gould
Headteacher	Dianne Ryan (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	3 June 2009
School address	Whitehills Road Loughton IG10 1TS
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Age group	3–19
Inspection date(s)	9–10 February 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Denise Morris

Additional inspector

Debra McCarthy

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Eleven lessons were observed taught by nine different teachers, some jointly with senior leaders, over a period of four hours. Meetings were held with leaders, members of the governing body, teachers and pupils. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at school planning documents, pupils' assessment data and individual education plans as well as the governing body minutes and school monitoring reports. Inspection questionnaires were received from 36 parents and carers as well as from some staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This is a special school for pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties. Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the number of pupils with complex needs and those with autism spectrum disorders. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, and boys far outnumber girls. The majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average although only a few are at early stages of learning English as an additional language. Most pupils are from the local area although a few come from the adjoining boroughs. There has been an acting headteacher and leadership team since September 2011.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- Oak View is a satisfactory school and the sixth form is satisfactory. A trend of improvements recently is helping the school move forwards. The pupils, parents and carers are positive about the school.
- Older students, including those in the sixth form, achieve satisfactorily in English and mathematics. Those in the primary department, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage class, achieve well. All pupils make the best progress in literacy and communication skills.
- Teaching is at least satisfactory with some that is good. Teaching typically consolidates pupils' skills and ensures that they have equal access to an appropriate range of learning opportunities. In a small minority of lessons in the secondary department and the sixth form, the pace of learning slows because tasks are not sufficiently challenging.
- There is appropriate support for each pupil ensuring that their personal and educational needs are sensitively met. A good start has been made on introducing accreditation and qualifications for the older students.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Most pupils, parents and carers say that the school is safe and secure, and that pupils behave well. Attendance is below average but is beginning to improve.
- The curriculum has improved recently and an appropriate range of experiences contribute to the health and welfare of pupils and to their satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, not all pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop independence.
- Monitoring of pupils' achievements has improved but it is not undertaken regularly or rigorously enough in some classes. All pupils have targets but they are not all clear how to achieve their next steps.
- The acting headteacher, along with other leaders and the governing body, has created a warm and welcoming ethos. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are fully aware of what needs to improve.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, improve achievement, particularly for the older students, by:
 - improving the pace of learning for the older students and students in the sixth form so that they all do enough work during lessons
 - ensuring that pupils know their targets and understand what they need to do to achieve them
 - consolidating the new accreditation for the oldest students so that they all achieve their full potential
 - monitoring the impact of provision, and in particular all the small steps taken by pupils so that there is a clear picture of their rates of progress in English and mathematics.
- Develop opportunities for pupils to develop more independence by taking on greater responsibility in class and in helping around the school.
- Improve attendance by developing procedures to encourage pupils to come to school every day.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most pupils' attainment on entry to the school is extremely low because of their severe learning difficulties, their autism spectrum disorders and other special educational needs which adversely affect their learning. Nevertheless, in the main, the achievement of pupils and students including boys, girls, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who speak English as an additional language, is at least satisfactory, given their starting points. They acquire the skills to help them continue to make at least sound progress in the future. When they leave the school to go to college, most have achieved some accredited qualifications and vocational experiences. Most parents and carers are rightly satisfied with their children's progress.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage class and pupils in Years 1 to 6 make better-than-expected progress in learning because of careful and rigorous planning and some exciting tasks that meet individual needs well. This is particularly the case in communication skills because of the very good teaching and the good range of communication aids used in lessons. For example, in one lesson the use of the pictures and symbols as well as signs, were used effectively to engage pupils in some spontaneous and intentional conversation. Pupils were able to indicate a symbol for the weather or for a song they wanted to sing. Objects of reference were used well to aid understanding and engage eye contact. Staff were extremely patient, waiting

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as long as necessary for each pupil to make a response. Younger pupils also make good progress in learning to match letters and sounds (phonics). A group of pupils in Years 4 to 6 joined in well with singing rhymes and were able to recognise initial sounds in words and add a rhyming word to the end of a line. The excellent use of a video presentation on the interactive whiteboard really engaged their interest and helped them to enjoy their learning.

Older students in Years 7 to 11 and the students in the sixth form continue to make the best progress in communication but their overall achievement is satisfactory because too few tasks are planned in lessons to ensure students work at a fast enough pace. As a result, they do not all do enough work in the time allowed and the use of targets is variable. A few students do not understand how to achieve their next steps. Some very good teaching for the older students was evident in one class however, where the teacher planned individual tasks meticulously ensuring that each student knew exactly what was expected. As a result, the students worked quickly and accurately to complete their tasks, made their own decisions about their learning and achieved well. The independent use of communication aids in this class was exceptional.

Pupils across the school develop confidence and self-esteem through undertaking simple jobs such as taking the registers to the office. They are proud of the newly formed school council. Throughout the school some extended sensory awareness sessions, structured speech and language or physical therapies contribute well to pupils' personal development and well-being.

Quality of teaching

Teachers take good care of their pupils and most provide an appropriate range of activities to help them succeed. A coaching system for new staff has been introduced and, is helping teachers to gain confidence and expertise. Teaching for the younger pupils is consistently good resulting in pupils' good achievement in these classes. It is characterised by very positive relationships, exciting tasks, focused learning targets and individualised learning programmes. For example, in the Reception class children made good progress as they worked individually with adults on their own literacy targets. Because of high levels of attention and some focused practical tasks, including dressing up, children enjoyed their learning and learned new words.

Teaching for the older students in Years 7 to 13 is mainly satisfactory with some that is good. Students are well supported but teaching is not always focused well enough on planning individual tasks to meet each student's ability. The use of targets is variable as is the checking or marking of students' achievements.

Improvements to the curriculum ensure that teachers are able to plan a broad range of activities to extend pupils' personal development. For example, older students are fully involved in planning some arts experiences linked to the Olympic Games following a recent visit to the site. Opportunities for pupils to explore the world around them are regularly planned and help the school to create a sound spiritual, moral, social and cultural ethos. Assemblies and circle times are used well by

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teachers to extend personal skills.

School staff know pupils well. Parents and carers are satisfied with the quality of teaching and agree that their children are cared for well. These views are supported by inspection findings. A small minority of parents feel that more could be done by staff to support parents and carers to help their children at home. Inspection evidence found that there is regular contact with parents and newsletters have improved and are informative. Effective behaviour-management techniques and secure knowledge of each individual pupil lead to mainly positive relationships, ensuring that lessons are calm. Teaching assistants play a vital role in the support and care of all pupils. While there are many different procedures for assessing pupils' skills, these are not always used regularly enough to show pupils' rates of progress over time.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave well in most classes and around the school, although a few pupils say that some pupils do not behave as well as they should. They say that there is no bullying of any kind, including name-calling, cyber-bullying or prejudiced-based bullying related to their special educational needs, race or beliefs. Parents and carers are positive about behaviour and safety. A focus on positive behaviour is reflected in the regular circle times where pupils have an opportunity to talk about any concerns. The quality of relationships within the school is good. All staff have appropriate expectations of positive behaviour. Most pupils say that they feel safe in school and that adults are always there for them. The very youngest children demonstrate clear enjoyment in their lessons as a result of good relationships with peers and adults who promote their independence through effective management. In some older classes too little pupil participation is evident in preparing snacks for example or finding resources and helping to clear away. Pupils do enjoy cooking and sometimes join in with cooking lunch but there are too few opportunities for them to take responsibility for themselves. This limits their abilities to develop some of the skills they will need later in life. Pupils themselves make a satisfactory contribution to a safe, positive learning environment. They behave appropriately in lessons and around the school. They listen carefully to others, take turns and wait patiently. Attendance varies because of the number of pupils who have medical conditions. Although it is below average, there has been some improvement recently.

Leadership and management

The new acting leadership team and the governing body have begun an improving trend. They have been working successfully to improve provision in the primary department and are beginning to do the same in the secondary department and the sixth form. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, are strongly focused on further improvement. This is demonstrated by good quality self-evaluation, which identifies clearly what has already been achieved and what still needs doing. For example, in 2011, the new range of accreditation and qualifications

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for the oldest students resulted in many acquiring these for the first time. Improvements to the curriculum have resulted in a carefully planned range of learning opportunities that are helping teachers to build steadily on pupils' prior skills. It is now personalised to the individual needs of pupils ensuring at least sound promotion of academic and personal skills. The outdoor environment has been improved and provides a creative area for play and learning. The coaching system has started to help new staff learn from those who are more experienced and though this is in its infancy it is beginning to have an impact on the quality of teaching. Additionally, senior leaders work closely with external agencies and schools to develop extended provision for pupils and students and help prepare them for their futures. The impact of professional development is evident in the high levels of skill that staff in the primary department exhibit showing their expertise in promoting good learning for their pupils. It is not yet sufficiently evident in the secondary department or sixth form. Monitoring of these areas of the school has not been systematic or rigorous enough to secure good outcomes for students. This is now a key priority for the new acting leadership team. Overall, the school demonstrates that it has the capacity for further improvement.

Sound partnership work with parents, carers and external agencies promotes at least satisfactory and often good well-being and achievement of pupils. The sound promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is evident in pupils' positive learning attitudes, their cooperation across different classes and with different staff, and their improving understanding of their emerging responsibilities both in school and beyond. Parents and carers comment favourably on the difference the school has made to their own and to their children's lives with typical comments such as, 'I am very pleased with all aspects of my child's everyday care and development. Staff are always so helpful and supportive.' Leaders and managers ensure that they are effective in tackling discrimination and promoting equality. All groups of pupils have opportunities to take part in visits into the community for example and to play a full part in the annual drama productions. The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



13 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oak View School, Loughton, IG10 1TS

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. It was lovely to meet and talk with you. You told me many things about your school, such as what you like doing and how well you are achieving. You also told me that you feel safe and secure at school.

It was very clear from our talk, and from the answers to the questionnaires that I received from you and your parents and carers, that you are happy at school. There are lots of positive things in your school, such as the good achievement and behaviour of the younger children in the Reception class and of the pupils in Years 1 to 6. You all behave appropriately and you are trying hard to improve your attendance. Well done for that! I would like you to keep coming to school as often as you can. Your headteacher and the other managers are working hard to make your school better. They keep you safe and secure.

Sometimes, there are not enough tasks for you in your lessons. This is particularly true in the older classes in Years 7 to 13. I am asking your teachers to provide more challenging tasks for those in these classes so that you all achieve better. You can help with this by trying to do a bit more in each lesson. I know that your work is checked by your teachers but sometimes this is not often enough to show how quickly you are improving. I am asking your teachers to check your work more often. I am sure you will want to help with this. Sometimes you do not have sufficient opportunities to do things for yourselves. I know you could learn how to make your snacks, make choices about your own learning and take responsibility for your own belongings. I have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to become more independent. You can help by trying out new challenges as teachers present them to you.

Thank you again for your welcome.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris
Lead inspector

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