

Oxted School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125253
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	359869
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Robert Ellis 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2180
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	454
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret McNaughton MBE DL
Headteacher	Mr Guy Nelson
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2007
School address	Bluehouse Lane Oxted, Surrey RH8 0AB
Telephone number	01883 712425
Fax number	01883 723973
Email address	frontdesk@oxted.surrey.sch.uk

Age group	11–18
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Inspection number	359869

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. They observed 43 lessons taught by 43 teachers, and held discussions with groups of students, staff and five members of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at development plans, curriculum plans, the school's tracking data showing students' progress and attainment, departmental evaluations, teachers' lesson plans and students' work. In addition, they analysed the questionnaire responses from 377 parents and carers, 75 staff and 177 students, and took account of their views.

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

- How well the school manages and provides for those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those identified as School Action Plus and those with behaviour difficulties.
- How well teachers use assessment information to support learning and the extent to which tasks and activities are matched to the needs and interests of the different groups of students.
- The accuracy of self-evaluation and the extent to which leaders and managers at all levels accurately monitor and evaluate the impact of initiatives intended to improve student achievement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average secondary school with a sixth form, that has specialisms in science and mathematics. Students come from Oxted and the surrounding towns and villages. Most are White British but a small proportion of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds, although very few speak languages other than English as their first language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is broadly average. The majority of these students have learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school provides specialist provision for a small number of students who have visual impairment.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Although some aspects of the school's work are outstanding, its overall effectiveness is satisfactory because student progress is uneven and achievement is only satisfactory.

Following the previous inspection, those responsible for leading and managing the school did not monitor the progress of students sufficiently and significant proportions of students, particularly those who had low attainment when they joined the school and some who had special educational needs and/or disabilities, made inadequate progress. Attainment is now above average and progress has begun to accelerate so that for most groups of students it is now at least satisfactory.

Most students say they enjoy school and feel very safe and extremely well cared for. Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to make similar progress to that of other students because of the extra help they receive. Attendance is high and students develop the necessary skills and abilities that they will require for the next steps in their education or employment. Students have good opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the school and local community. They have an effective voice through the active school council.

Teaching is satisfactory. However, teachers do not always make effective use of assessment information to support learning by adjusting lesson planning in line with students' differing ability levels and prior attainment. Marking of students' work is also variable and does not sufficiently aid improvement. Students in some lessons are over-managed by the teacher, which means they do not have enough opportunities to take responsibility for their work and become independent.

The school provides a good curriculum that enables most students to follow courses that meet their needs and aspirations. A good range of well-attended enrichment activities, which students enjoy, supplements this.

The care provided to promote students' personal development is outstanding. Well-organised arrangements for care ensure that students are very safe and extremely well cared for. They receive good advice and guidance so that they can make informed choices about their futures. Work with parents, carers, and partnerships with other agencies, for example Surrey police and health professionals, make a strong contribution to students' good personal development.

Senior leaders have appropriate ambition for the school and its students. They have recently gained an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development and have begun to accelerate the pace of improvement. However, some leaders and managers are not fully effective and rigorous and systematic self-evaluation is not fully embedded at all levels. Consequently, there remain differences in outcomes across the

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

different subjects. The impact of the actions taken to improve attendance and progress demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The governing body is supportive but it has not provided rigorous challenge to the headteacher and has not held the school to account for the poor progress of some groups of students over the last three years.

Most aspects of the sixth form are good with some outstanding features. Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on improvements to teaching in order to raise standards and accelerate progress by:
 - embedding the use of assessment information to ensure that all groups of pupils are consistently and realistically challenged and enabled to make good progress
 - eradicating inconsistencies in teachers' marking and feedback to students
 - providing better opportunities for students to be independent
 - using monitoring and evaluation information more effectively at subject level to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning to ensure greater consistency between different subjects.
- Ensure that the governing body are actively involved in setting priorities for improvement and robustly monitor and evaluate the impact of any improvement plans.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students join the school with attainment that covers the full range of abilities, and more than half have attainment that is above average. GCSE results over the last three years show that attainment has been above average. However, students who started at the school with low prior attainment and some of those who had special educational needs and/or disabilities did not make the progress that they should have and consequently overall progress was significantly below average. The school's tracking data and inspectors' observations of students' work in lessons shows that the decline in progress has been checked. An increasing proportion of students are on track to achieve challenging targets, and progress has begun to accelerate. Improvements to the organisation of support for students who have additional needs ensures that they are well supported and most make satisfactory or better progress.

Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is generally good. Attendance and punctuality are consistently high; the school has worked hard to successfully support and challenge the small proportion of students who have previously had poor attendance. Students say that they feel very safe and that there is always someone to turn to if you have a problem. Students are proud of their school and willingly participate in the active school council and other opportunities to take responsibility. A large proportion of students participate in the good range of activities that are offered outside lessons and they demonstrate a good understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Students are very well prepared for the next steps in their education and those who choose not to join

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

the sixth form are given good advice and support to help them go on to further study or employment. The school is a cohesive community where students generally show respect for other students regardless of their differences. Students actively participate in house group events that raise considerable sums for charities each year, indicating a strong commitment to supporting others less fortunate than themselves.

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	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Although there is some good and outstanding teaching, the overall profile of teaching is not consistently strong enough to ensure that all students make the progress of which they are capable. The school recognises that improving the quality of teaching and learning is a key priority for accelerating progress. Actions are being taken to address weaker teaching and share good practice. There is emerging evidence that this is improving teaching. Teachers have access to reliable information about students' prior attainment and particular needs. Some teachers use this information well to plan lessons that take sufficient account of students' different abilities and interests, but in a significant minority of lessons the needs of some groups of students are not met and they do not make rapid progress. Some helpful marking enables students to make good progress, but the quality of marking is too variable and it does not consistently provide students with sufficient guidance to enable them to improve or develop their work. In the best lessons,

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

students are given clear success criteria and are encouraged to evaluate both their own progress and that of others.

The curriculum is successfully designed to offer breadth and balance. It meets the needs of the majority of the students, whatever their starting points and abilities. Partnerships with external providers are used well, particularly at Key Stage 4, to provide alternative courses of study that encourage students to continue to engage with school and gain useful skills. The specialisms are used to give additional time to science and mathematics at Key Stage 4. The impact is most evident in the significant increase in the proportion of students who gain at least two good grades in science at GCSE level. The curriculum is enriched by an extensive range of good enrichment activities, including House activities, a Year 8 camp and participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

Excellent attention is given to the care of students. The well-organised house groups provide exceptional opportunities for students' personal and social development. There are good transition arrangements for students joining and moving through the school. Students who have visual impairment are integrated fully in to the life of the school. There are effective systems to identify and support vulnerable students and those needing additional support so that they can take responsibility for their own behaviour. The school can demonstrate many notable successes in improving behaviour and attendance for particular individuals and groups. Actions taken to promote good attendance have been particularly effective. Students speak very highly of the support they receive when returning to school after absence resulting from illness. The school works closely with parents and carers of vulnerable students and provides training for some groups of parents so that they are better able to support students who have particular needs. The school employs a professional counsellor to support students' emotional needs and has recently introduced on-site medical services in partnership with the Surrey 0-19 Health team.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

There has not been sustained improvement in outcomes for students since the previous inspection. Those responsible for leading and managing the school at all levels were not sufficiently self-critical and did not act with sufficient urgency to address the previous poor progress of some groups. The governing body does not articulate a clear vision for the future of the school and it is not sufficiently influential in helping to shape the direction of the school. Appointments to the senior leadership team from 2009 onwards have strengthened capacity and the school now has a more accurate evaluation of its own

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

performance and appropriate plans to secure improvement. The recently reviewed and updated school development plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement. Many of the initiatives identified in the plan were introduced recently and they have not had time to impact significantly on outcomes for students.

Monitoring of teaching and learning by the senior leadership team is now rigorous and systematic, and systems are in place to record assessment information and track students' progress. Consequently, the school is now well placed to begin to accelerate developments in teaching and learning and build on recent improvement.

Relationships with parents and carers are productive and the school makes regular contact with parents. A range of good partnerships, including mutually beneficial partnerships with local primary schools and other local organisations, make a positive contribution to students' learning and development.

The school has only recently focused on the performance of different groups of students. Although overall student progress is now generally satisfactory, the school has not been fully effective in promoting equality of opportunity.

The school adopts recommended good practice in safeguarding and students are safe and very well cared for. Analysis of the various religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups which make up the school community has enabled the school to create a cohesive community where different groups mix well. The impact of its work is seen most strongly within the school and in local community, for example students represent the school on the 'Master Park' committee. The evaluation of actions taken to promote community cohesion provides some evidence of impact but evaluation across the various strands is patchy.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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

Sixth form

Students in the sixth form make good progress in relation to their starting points. Most students successfully complete their courses of study and although there are no particular differences in outcomes for different student groups, there are some differences in outcomes across subjects. Sixth form students play an active part in the life of the school and many students are involved in mentoring younger students or acting in various leadership roles, for example leading assemblies or serving on the thriving sixth form council.

Teaching in the sixth form is good overall but observation of lessons and the school's own monitoring of teaching shows that the quality of teaching is too variable for it to be outstanding. A diverse and varied curriculum provides a range of courses, with suitable entry points for different levels of ability. Students receive high quality care, guidance and support and those who have additional needs are able to access the support that they need. Students say that they feel very well prepared for university or other education and training.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. The Sixth Form team has established a clear and firm vision that is both inclusive and aspirational. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the sixth form ensure that the head of the sixth form has a very clear understanding of strengths and areas for development. Leadership roles and responsibilities are clear and students' views and opinions are sought regularly and acted upon. Relationships between staff and students are very good and there are appropriate procedures for safeguarding and supporting students, which are diligently applied.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were happy with their child's experiences at the school. A higher than average proportion felt that their children enjoyed school and were kept safe. A small number of parents, staff and students had concerns about the extent to which behaviour was managed consistently. Inspectors identified a strong correlation between behaviour in lessons and the quality of teaching. The school accepts that there remains variation in the way that rewards and sanctions are applied. It is working to ensure that this is more consistent in the future. A group of parents who have children in Year 7 are unhappy about the frequency of parents' evenings. The headteacher has indicated that the school will take account of these concerns when planning future events.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oxted 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 377 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 2180 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	142	38	215	57	16	4	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	163	43	206	55	5	1	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	134	36	207	55	29	8	6	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	136	36	199	53	31	8	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	101	27	250	66	16	4	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	110	29	213	56	34	9	8	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	19	249	66	40	11	3	1
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)	146	39	195	52	16	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	129	34	216	57	18	5	4	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	98	26	211	56	37	10	16	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	95	25	225	60	32	8	8	2
The school is led and managed effectively	164	44	195	52	8	2	4	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	168	45	191	51	16	4	2	1

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 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 2009/10 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.



18 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Oxted School, Oxted RH8 0AB

Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for helping us with the inspection. I would particularly like to thank those of you who took time to complete the inspection questionnaire or who spoke to the inspection team about your experiences at the school. I particularly enjoyed speaking to the representatives from the school council.

We judged the school to be satisfactory because, until recently, groups of students in the main school have not made the progress that they should have and the school had not acted swiftly enough to correct this. I am pleased to say that we saw that most of you are now making progress that is at least satisfactory.

Most of you told us that you enjoy learning and feel very safe and extremely well cared for. We saw that you get on well together and that you are involved in your community and are prepared to take responsibility. You have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. We were pleased to see that most of you have excellent attendance and are very well prepared for the next steps in your education.

These are the key things that we would like the school to do to improve.

- Make sure that the work and activities that teachers give you are always set at just the right level, so you can all make good progress in your learning, and that they give you good advice on how you can improve your work and enable you to become independent.
- Make sure that all subjects provide you with the opportunity to do as well as you can
- Ensure that the adults who have responsibility for your school know how well it is doing and use the information to plan and secure further improvements.

I am sure that you will want to play your part by working hard and helping to make the school even better.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.