

Oakfield Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133719
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	381540
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Pauline Hilling-Smith

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	B Holmes
Headteacher	Wendy Fereday
Date of previous school inspection	07 October 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons involving 12 teachers. Meetings were held with students, partners, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at the school's evaluation of its performance, the current development plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body and safeguarding documentation. The responses to 41 questionnaires from parents and carers were also analysed.

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

- The progress of all groups of students towards their targets, particularly in writing and especially for the more able.
- How well the curriculum and teaching promote the learning and personal development needs of students, especially in the sixth form.
- How effectively leaders are bringing about school improvement and how well the school is supported by its partners.

Information about the school

Oakfield Park is an average size specialist school for cognition and learning. Students have a wide range of complex learning, physical, sensory and communication difficulties. The majority of students are male and most are White British. Every student has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school has been awarded Healthy School status, Investors in Careers and Outstanding Centre for the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). It also holds the International School Award and the Sportsmark.

In September 2010 three assistant headteachers, one new to the school, and the school business manager joined the leadership team. A number of teachers have joined the school since the last inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. The way in which the school prepares students for success in adult life is outstanding. This is because all aspects of school life promote students' personal development very well. Outstanding engagement with parents and carers and excellent partnerships with a wide range of agencies ensure that no student leaves school without a meaningful future placement. In addition, the school is active in developing links within the local community and helps to extend provision and raise awareness of the needs of its students as adults.

Arrangements for care, guidance and support are outstanding. The purchase of an additional vehicle with the provision to carry a wheelchair and the priority given to supervision needs enable the vast majority of students to undertake work experience. Careful attention is paid to arrangements for safety in school and in all locations in which students learn to ensure that they always feel safe. As a result, students make choices confidently and say that they can fulfill their ambitions. They have a good appreciation of how to keep healthy. Behaviour is good because students respond well to any additional guidance from staff to modify their behaviour if necessary. They have a very clear understanding of right and wrong.

Many clubs and residential visits enrich the good curriculum. The facilities in the Vocational Learning Centre enable sixth form students to familiarize themselves with a more adult setting in preparation for leaving school. However, some opportunities are lost to promote learning in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects and locations because they are not often identified in long-term plans.

The quality of teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. However, on occasion, students spend too much time working on the same learning objective as a full class group. This means that progress slows as lessons fail to move all students' learning on at a fast enough rate. This particularly affects the more-able students. As a result of good procedures to evaluate the work of the school, the headteacher and senior staff are aware that further steps need to be taken to increase the percentage of outstanding teaching and have a very clear understanding of how this can be achieved. Actions taken so far have been effective. This and other improvements demonstrate that there is good capacity to sustain improvement. Staff have a good level of expertise and understanding of how to develop the learning of those with complex needs and learning difficulties. As a result, students' achievement is good

overall and often better in personal development. There are numerous opportunities for students to develop independence and take on positions of responsibility, thus raising their confidence and self-esteem. Recently staff from a school in China came to visit the school and students showed curiosity as they extended their understanding of a different culture exceptionally well.

Attendance is above average and inspectors are confident that the school is doing all it can to ensure that students can spend as much time as possible devoted to extending their learning.

Everyone at Oakfield Park shows a deep understanding and respect for individual differences. Meeting individual needs and equality of opportunity for all are at the heart of everything that the school does.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that long-term planning clearly identifies the opportunities to develop English, mathematics and ICT in all subjects
- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by:
 - planning more group work activities with different learning outcomes so that students of all abilities, especially the more-able, experience a higher level of challenge
 - deploying the expertise of the teaching assistants more effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

All groups of students make good progress overall. Students very much enjoy coming to school and achievement is good. Progress in social development is often outstanding because skills in communication are well attended to in lessons as well as at other times during the school day. Behaviour is good because staff encourage students to involve themselves in purposeful activities. During break and lunchtime, students make choices about, for example, the best way for everyone to enjoy the roundabout together or choosing to play cricket.

Students are confident to participate in activities in lessons because here they make choices too. For example, in an outstanding lesson, Year 7 students were excited when they chose a mystery item from a bag and decided what to do with it. They were consistently supported in fully communicating their wishes and there was much enjoyment. In another good lesson, students told a story using voice recorders and props. They gave the items to each other as the story unfolded and shining eyes when they looked at each other showed how much they valued their relationships.

Procedures to establish where the students are in their learning when they start at Oakfield Park show that most students arrive with low or very low skills. Although students make good progress, the steps they take in their learning are very small and so their attainment is judged against benchmarks appropriate to their needs. During their time at Oakfield Park, students make good progress in English and mathematics because staff track students' progress carefully and set new targets

termly. Students with additional or more complex learning needs also make good progress towards the targets set for them.

Parents and carers agree with students when they say their children feel extremely safe and secure. Students know they are listened to; they can see their views about school rules, made known through their council, are being put into practice. Students develop the skills to lead a healthy lifestyle and their vocational skills first in school and later, alongside their mainstream peers in the Vocational Learning Centre. This, together with their good attendance, makes a very strong contribution to the outstanding development of skills to promote their future well-being. Students further develop their understanding of different cultures when they visit a range of places of worship and work with the Chinese language assistant.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of lessons are good. However, in a minority of lessons, learning slows because students spend too much time in large groups listening to the teacher and some students disengage from learning because they are not challenged and excited by their learning. In good and better lessons, teaching promotes positive attitudes and a good aptitude for learning. As a result, work produced by the students is of high quality. In the best lessons, the expertise of the teaching assistants is used well to move learning on as well as to support behaviour. In these lessons, learning proceeds at a faster pace and meets the students' learning needs well. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and plan conscientiously. In the satisfactory lessons, planning is not always sharp enough to address the needs of students at different levels, especially the more able, by specifying different activities for the varying ability groups. In these lessons, teaching assistants are not always deployed to best effective. Students are clear about what they need to do to improve because all staff give good clear information to students about how well they are doing. Electronic whiteboards are used to good effect.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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

The curriculum is good. Facilities and resources have been developed well to reflect the priorities of communication and preparation for adult life. This enables students to develop their ideas and apply their learning in a range of contexts. The curriculum meets the needs of all the students well. It is enriched by a wide range of clubs, visits, residential and visitors to the school. The opportunity to develop independent travel, become proficient cyclists and to be as healthy as possible, are strengths of the curriculum. However, long-term planning documents do not always identify opportunities in all subjects to build on what students can already do in English, mathematics and ICT, especially for the more able.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The work of the Parent Support Advisor and the development of Person Centred Reviews ensure that students and their families are able to make the most of the opportunities the school offers. Links with the Careers Service are particularly strong and the school organises the Moving On event each year, which is attended by all schools in the local authority.

The school provides accurate and reliable information about its students. This is a result of staff, parents, carers and support partners working exceptionally well together. Relationships are sensitive, supportive and warm and students seek help with ease. Students, including those with very significant needs, have great confidence in the adults around them. The attractive environment and welcoming staff mean that students wait for their transport in the mornings with eager anticipation.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

The strong and stable leadership of the headteacher drives school improvement well. The headteacher is very effective in identifying and capitalising on the strengths and expertise of the senior leadership team to move the school forward. During a period of leadership change over the last 15 months, the headteacher's successful building of an effective leadership team, supported and challenged by the good governing body, has enabled the school to move forward in harmony. Carefully-planned professional development has ensured that the assistant headteachers, although relatively new, share the governing body's vision and expectations.

Monitoring arrangements are thorough. Observations of teaching lead to detailed evaluations that celebrate strengths and point out aspects in need of further development. However, the targets are not always followed through to the next observation.

The composition of the governing body reflects the needs of the school well and this

enables members to support and challenge the work of the school effectively. Induction of new members, although informal, is a priority, which enables them to contribute well to the work of the school. Training for all staff is seen as important and this has had a positive impact on improvement. Although the school has had problems with the consistency of data on transfer to a new system to track student's progress, it is clear that effective headway has been made with the improvement of writing, even though the school now caters for students with more complex learning difficulties. Equality of opportunity is exceedingly good and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding; there are strong links with them at all levels. Class teachers are in regular contact by telephone or through the home-school diary. Procedures for safeguarding and health and safety are outstanding due to very robust arrangements for child protection, the careful assessment of safety and the commitment of the school to training all the staff to a high level in the management of students' behaviour. Highly developed partnerships with support agencies play a very effective part in improving learning for all students and contribute substantially to their well-being. Community cohesion is particularly well developed at local level where many organisations use the schools facilities and are fully involved in school events. There are effective links with a school overseas.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Almost half of the school population attends the sixth form which caters for students who have progressed from other special and mainstream schools as well as students from Oakfield Park. Although there is a sixth form shared area, it is not big enough to accommodate the full population. Consequently, classes are spread throughout the school. The sixth form is distinctive only by virtue of the 'pathways' it offers. The sixth form mirrors the good provision and good progress found in the rest of the school in all respects. Students of all abilities attend the Vocational Learning Centre where facilities have been developed so that an appropriate curriculum can be experienced when they attend this off-site facility.

Almost all students carry on to further training or employment when they leave school because transition planning for each individual is very well developed from the beginning of Key Stage 4. The range of accredited courses builds towards this end. Staff are trained to lead verification of accreditation and the range of courses is under development.

Partnership with parents, carers and other agencies is exemplary and contributes well to the well-being of the students. Development planning is effective in looking to ways to maintain and enhanced provision. However, analysis of data is not sufficiently developed to identify exactly what will result in better than good progress for all students in basic skills.

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	2

Views of parents and carers

Thirty-five per cent of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority were exceptionally positive. No parent or carer expressed any negative comments and over a third expressed positive comments, some by telephone or voice recorder.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakfield Park School, Ackworth 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 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 117 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	85	6	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	83	6	15	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	80	7	17	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	78	8	20	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	76	9	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	73	9	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	71	12	29	0	0	0	0
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)	32	78	8	20	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	85	6	15	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	76	7	17	0	0	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	76	9	22	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	78	6	15	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	80	8	20	0	0	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



7 November 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Oakfield Park School, Ackworth, Pontefract, WF7 7DT

Thank you for being so welcoming to us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking with you and visiting lessons. We were impressed by how polite and well behaved you are. Thank you for taking the time to give us your views of the school. It was clear from talking together and the questionnaire replies we received from you and your parents and carers that you feel very safe at school.

We found that Oakfield Park is a good school and outstanding in the way it cares for you and prepares you for the time when you will be an adult. You are making good progress in learning. Your personal development is excellent because the staff are very skilful in helping you to understand how to do as well as you can.

We have asked the teachers to do two things to make Oakfield Park even better. First, ensure that all teaching is good or better. Second, ensure that you all learn as much as you can in English, mathematics and ICT.

We know you will try to do all you can to help your teachers and encourage each other to do well. We wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely,

Pauline Hilling-Smith
Lead inspector

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