

Oak Heights Independent School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	313/6081
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135090
Inspection number	397671
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070.

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

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2012



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Oak Heights Independent School opened in September 2003 in the London Borough of Hounslow. It is registered as an independent day school for boys and girls aged from 11 to 16 years of age and currently there are 43 students on roll. There are no students with a statement of special educational needs. Admission is through an examination and interview process. The students' education is seen as part of a contract with parents and carers who are also interviewed. The school was last inspected in July 2009, when it did not meet a number of regulations. Since then, two progress monitoring visits have been carried out to check the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan on addressing the regulatory failures.

The school sees its aim as promoting an education which is more than academic, and one that encompasses dedicated sportsmanship and the acquisition of life skills. It aspires to produce students who will ultimately become leaders and pioneers in their chosen fields.

Evaluation of the school

Oak Heights Independent School provides a good quality of education for its students and meets its stated aims. Through an improved curriculum and effective teaching, the students are enabled to make good progress. All requirements regarding safeguarding are effectively met. The school has improved and has addressed the regulatory failures from the previous inspection; it now meets all the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of the students effectively. Overall, it provides good opportunities for all students to learn and make progress and prepares them well for the next stage of their education by placing a strong emphasis on developing their English, mathematical and scientific skills.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

It was judged at the last inspection that students had limited opportunities to develop the aesthetic and creative aspects of learning. These opportunities have now increased, with the exception of music. It is still not regularly incorporated into the timetable.

It was also judged at the last inspection that some schemes of work lacked sufficient detail. These have now been improved and staff create good lesson plans based on the improved schemes. The programmes for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), religious education and general studies reflect the ethos of the school and make a strong contribution to the students' personal development. This is helped by visitors to the school, for example the local community policeman, who during the inspection led a discussion on bullying awareness.

It was judged at the last inspection that the use of information and communication technology (ICT) was not coordinated to ensure development of a full range of ICT skills. This has been improved and ICT is now used more effectively across the curriculum. For example, in general studies the students completed a survey on the number of wrappings on their packed lunches and then efficiently collated the data electronically.

The curriculum is enriched by sports training, which takes place at a local sports facility with professional coaches. An appropriate programme of careers education is in place and the school provides good advice, and supports parents, carers and students in choosing post-16 provision. The curriculum is enhanced with a range of out-of-school visits, which have included trips to local places of interests including museums, a zoo and the theatre. Currently, there are after-school art, mathematics and science clubs.

Teaching and assessment are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Staff have begun the process of regularly monitoring teaching and learning to help raise the quality of the teaching. This has been incorporated into the school development plan. Teaching is effective in ensuring that the students are motivated and remain engaged. The staff prepare lessons well and generally use an effective range of teaching styles to engage the students, helping them to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills. The good use of discussion, paired and independent working in lessons helps students prepare well for the next stage of their education. For example, in a history lesson, students participated eagerly in a 'millionaire game show', expressing their opinions and demonstrating their knowledge of Elizabethan history. Staff know the students and their capabilities very well and use this information effectively in their teaching. They support students well within lessons, giving additional explanations when needed and students are confident to ask for help when they require it, which is helped by the small class numbers. There are excellent relationships in lessons, both between the staff and students and between the students themselves. The staff have high expectations of the students who mostly rise to the challenge, work hard and apply themselves to their tasks. The staff are good at checking learning in lessons, students mostly know the level at which they are working and are encouraged to do their best. Most, but

not all lessons, end with effective checking on the extent of students' learning. Students' work is marked and they understand the grades they are given but comments are sometimes limited on how to obtain a higher grade. These issues of checking understanding and always providing advice on how to improve are the main reasons why the quality of teaching is not outstanding. Homework is used effectively to extend learning and is often checked at the beginning of lessons to ensure that the students have understood it. A sufficient range of resources for teaching and learning is available and used well in lessons, including the use of ICT.

At the time of the last inspection, there was no effective system in place to monitor the progress that students made over time from their varied starting points. The school has since devised and implemented an effective system which tracks students' performance in termly tests and compares this with their predicted levels based on their starting points and prior attainment. This system enables the staff to support those students who need additional help to achieve their target. Most students now make good progress and the older ones do well in GCSE examinations.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the behaviour and attendance of the students are good. This is a happy school where students confirmed, through discussion and via their questionnaires, that they are 'all friends together' and enjoy school life. In both religious education and general studies students have a wide range of opportunities to study world religions, politics, economics, philosophy and communication. This work helps support each student's personal development effectively and parents and carers are involved as much as possible. For example, when studying world religions, the students are asked to interview their family about their own beliefs and then present their findings to the class. This work helps the students to increase their awareness of other religions and cultures. Since the last inspection the older students have been encouraged to take on more responsibilities and now take a more active role in supporting the younger ones and in carrying out tasks around school. Students are encouraged to express their views, which are highly valued. For example, during a discussion on euthanasia, sensitively led by staff, students expressed opinions and drew symbols, for example a 'switch of tears' to represent the ending of life. There is no student council but students expressed the view that, if established, it would be helpful to give them a more formal voice. The students are introduced to English institutions through the PSHCE curriculum and through educational visits.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was found that staff were insufficiently trained in safeguarding and too little attention was paid to routine health and safety issues and to the risk assessment of visits off the school site. The school has now devised, and has effectively implemented, a range of policies which pay due regard to national guidance. These include anti-bullying, health and safety, including

arrangements for visits outside school, behaviour and safeguarding. The designated persons responsible for child protection are trained appropriately in both safeguarding and safer recruitment. All staff are suitably trained in child protection, and the detailed safeguarding policy fully meets requirements and is on the school website.

The school undertakes appropriate risk assessments for all activities and visits outside the school and is vigilant in checking safety within the school building. There are sufficient staff who are suitably trained in first aid and any accidents are carefully recorded. The precautions for fire prevention have improved since the last inspection and are now thorough, with an annual fire risk assessment undertaken, fire appliances checked and fire drills undertaken each term and formally recorded.

The students eat lunch together and are encouraged to eat healthily, but some students have yet to be convinced of the value of this habit. Students recently undertook a food project in general studies. This encouraged them to investigate for themselves and become aware of what they need for a healthy diet. As one student commented, 'Our minds are quite broadened in this school.' They have the opportunity to take regular exercise through the physical education programme, but would like to go to the park more often at lunchtime. The students are well supervised. The admission and attendance registers are kept in accordance with requirements. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and has devised a three-year accessibility plan.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has carried out all of the required checks on all staff and others to confirm their suitability to work with children. The single central register contains all of the necessary information.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation create a pleasant environment and enable the students to learn safely and effectively. One of the two buildings is currently undergoing extensive restoration and is planned to be back in use for the autumn term. The current building is in good order and provides suitable classrooms with additional specialist rooms for science and ICT.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or is made available, to parents and others. The school provides sufficient clear, accurate and up-to-date information through its website and prospectus for all interested parties, including information on the academic results from the previous year which were not easily available at the previous inspection. Parents and carers are kept well informed through termly detailed reports on their children's attainment and progress and via consultation

evenings. Parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive in their views on the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Improve the marking of students' work by providing comments on how they can improve their work still further and ensure that the students' learning is effectively checked at the end of lessons.
- Provide more planned opportunities for musical activities.
- Help students to develop a healthier lifestyle by encouraging them to eat more healthily and through more regular visits to the local park for recreational activities.
- Establish a student council.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
--	--	---	--	--

School details

School status	Independent day		
Type of school	Secondary		
Date school opened	September 2003		
Age range of pupils	11–16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 24	Girls: 19	Total: 43
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,000		
Address of school	3 Red Lion Court Hounslow London TW3 1JS		
Telephone number	0208 5771827		
Email address	enquiries@oakheights.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Sukhvinder Dhillon		
Proprietor	Mr Sukhvinder Dhillon		

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 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Oak Heights Independent School, Hounslow, TW3 1JS

Thank you for your welcome when I inspected your school recently. I enjoyed my visit, including the opportunity to speak with a number of you. The inspection judged that Oak Heights School provides a good quality of education through effective teaching and a good curriculum, both of which enable you to make good progress.

I was pleased to learn from talking to you, and your questionnaires confirm, that you enjoy your education and you recognise that the staff care about you and you show respect to them. You all work well together and concentrate on your work and give of your best. You mentioned that you would like more music in the curriculum with the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. You felt you could always speak to members of staff but thought that a school council would give you a more formal opportunity to express your opinions at the school. Although many of you are aware of the need to eat healthily some students still need more guidance as to what they should bring in their school lunch. Although you go to the sports centre weekly, many of you expressed the wish to visit the local park more regularly at lunchtime for recreational activities.

I have asked the school to take you to the park more regularly, give you the opportunity to form a school council and encourage more healthy eating. I have also asked the school to provide more music as part of the curriculum and to ensure that all lessons end with the staff checking on your learning. Staff are good at marking your work and I have asked them to make it even better by telling you in their comments how you can improve your work still further.

With all best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bainton
Lead inspector