

Oak Lodge School

Roman Road, Dibden Purlieu, Southampton, SO45 4RQ

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- In relation to their starting points, students make good progress by the time they leave school at the end of Year 11. All students now achieve nationally recognised qualifications.
- Students make impressive strides in their personal development and this prepares them successfully for the next stage of their education.
- As a result of a sustained and rigorous focus on improvement by the leadership team, the proportion of good or better teaching has increased since the previous inspection. Teachers plan work well to ensure students' needs are met and provide a variety of good quality resources to make learning interesting and lively.
- The Oakmore unit is managed well. Students' achievement is checked carefully and action taken to improve it. As a result, these students make good progress.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent, which is a result of highly effective classroom management by teachers and other adults supporting in lessons and around the school.
- Students told the lead inspector that they are safe and enjoy school, which is further confirmed by the school's own surveys of students' opinions.
- The headteacher, supported by the senior leadership team, provides effective leadership of the school, including good arrangements for regular reviews of staff performance. Areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection have also been dealt with successfully.
- The experienced governing body is effective in its role as a critical and supportive friend and successfully ensures the school is financially stable.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are not enough opportunities for students to be independent learners in lessons.
- Students' literacy skills are not promoted consistently enough across all subjects.
- A few of the more able students in the school are not making rapid enough progress in order to achieve high standards by the time they leave the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, seeing 16 teachers. Three of the lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- A meeting was held with a group of older students. Meetings were also held with the headteacher and the senior leadership team, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a number of staff, including the head of the Oakmore centre and those with subject leadership responsibilities.
- Inspectors took account of 19 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of the school's own regular parental surveys, as well as two individual letters from parents addressed to the lead inspector.
- Inspectors observed the school's practice and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, data on students' progress, documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's work, governing body documentation and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

James Bowden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Collins

Additional Inspector

Lily Evans

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oak Lodge provides for students with a broad range of special educational needs who live in a wide, predominantly rural, catchment area. Just over a half has a formal diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. All have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school shares a campus with a local secondary school and a local authority leisure centre. In addition, the school manages the Oakmore centre. Run jointly with the secondary school, the centre provides for more capable and higher performing students, all of whom have autism and very high anxiety levels. An outreach service provides training for other schools and agencies to support students with autism.
- Currently, the large majority of students are boys and most are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium, which provides additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority, is above the national average.
- The school has specialist school status for the arts and has gained numerous awards for different aspects of its work and provision. More recently, it has received level 1 accreditation for Rights, Respect and Responsibility.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - providing consistently good opportunities for students to learn independently
 - creating more opportunities for students to use and improve their literacy skills in all subjects.
- Increase the proportion of more able students in the school who make rapid progress and reach high standards by the time they leave school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Because of the diverse range of special educational needs, students' attainment on entry to the school is well below that of their peers in mainstream schools. Although attainment at the end of Year 11 remains below the average for mainstream schools, students make good progress and achieve well. All achieve a range of academic and vocational qualifications, which prepares them well for the next stage of their education. At the end of the last academic year, all students progressed to further education or work-based training.
- Initial assessments effectively highlight students' capabilities and help teachers plan work to ensure their needs are met. Each student has an individual education plan with clear academic and personal development targets. Regular reviews of these targets ensure progress is carefully checked and enable extra support to be provided if needed.
- Over the last three years pupils have achieved well, particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). While most students make good progress, a few could do even better, particularly the most able.
- There are no significant differences in the rates of progress made by boys and girls or those supported by pupil premium funding. Good progress is also made by students attending the Oakmore centre. A few successfully pass GCSE examinations.
- In most lessons seen, students made good progress. The school's accurate and detailed records confirm that this level of progress is typical over time across different subjects.
- Students are keen to do well and strive to produce good quality work. One student approached the lead inspector in order to read out his work about *Oliver Twist* and another joined an inspector's meeting to explain what progress he had been making as a result of the extra activities, such as theatre production, provided as part of the school's specialist status for the arts. Students make good use of new technologies such as computers, hand-held devices and digital cameras.

The quality of teaching is good

- The key strength of teaching is how well students are encouraged and the oral feedback they receive during lessons. Effective planning ensures there are activities to keep pupils interested and on task. In an art lesson, for example, students were encouraged to describe the designs they were producing and say what they liked about them, and their art portfolios showed good development from start to finish.
- Teachers and adults supporting lessons work well together, enabling students to make the best progress possible in relation to their individual targets. Because of careful checking and recording of students' progress, lessons are planned effectively in order to build on previous learning and to provide challenge for the next steps in learning. This means the work is suitable for all students' needs.
- At the start of lessons, teachers explain clearly what students are expected to learn so that students are aware of what is expected of them. In addition, lively starter activities gain students' attention quickly. In an English lesson, students identified English equivalents to American-English words in preparation for writing initial ideas for a script for a 'scary' film.
- In the best lessons, teachers encourage students to be actively involved in learning. In a physical education lesson, for example, students were encouraged to model good basketball skills and to assess the skills of their peers by identifying best practice as well as suggesting areas for improvement. Key terminology was also displayed and students were encouraged to read these examples aloud. In a practical mathematics lesson, students recorded accurately the results of probability experiments and willingly responded to the teacher's probing questions about fairness and bias.
- Although teaching has continued to improve since the previous inspection, senior leaders

recognise there are inconsistencies in providing appropriate opportunities for students to learn independently. At times, adults supporting in the room do not give students enough time to respond to questions or the tasks set. In addition, there are not always enough planned opportunities for students to use and extend their literacy skills in all subjects.

- Students told inspectors that teaching is good. They said that they are helped individually if they have problems and that the methods teachers use suit their needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- As a result of well-established routines and consistently high expectations, behaviour in lessons and around the school is largely outstanding, as is typical behaviour over time. This is reflected in the fact that there have been no recent permanent or fixed-term exclusions. The number of recorded 'serious' behaviour incidents has declined dramatically. Unauthorised absence is minimal.
- The success of the school's work in managing behaviour, promoting excellent attitudes to learning and ensuring all get on well together has been recognised by the school's level 1 accreditation for Rights, Respect and Responsibility.
- Attitudes to learning are excellent because behaviour in lessons is managed highly effectively and adults know their students very well. In lessons seen, students worked successfully as individuals, as well as in pairs and small groups, supporting one another particularly well and collaborating with the adults in the room. This was particularly evident in a personal, social and health education lesson where students contributed to group decisions, listened to one another's views and worked together to produce a display board reflecting this collaboration.
- Behaviour management plans are used to excellent effect and policies and individual cases are reviewed regularly. Where appropriate, this includes individual risk assessments for students. The school takes all necessary steps to ensure that pupils are kept safe, including making students fully aware of the potential dangers of using the internet.
- Without exception, those parents who responded to Parent View feel their child is happy and safe at school and that the school makes sure its students are well behaved. These views are reflected in the school's own parent surveys. Students too feel they are safe and well looked after, telling the lead inspector that all get on well together and help each other out. In addition, they said that adults handle any behaviour issues well and that, should there be any bullying, this would be quickly dealt with by the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's and senior leadership team's drive and ambition underpin the work of the school, ensuring continuous improvement is sustained. All staff are committed to ensuring the best outcomes possible for all students, both academically and socially.
- The robust programme of checking the quality of teaching provides the leadership team and governors with in-depth knowledge of existing strengths and remaining areas for further improvement. Annual reviews of teachers' performance are linked closely to the progress made by their students and this information is used effectively to determine teachers' progression through the salary scales. This has helped to raise the proportion of good and outstanding teaching.
- Staff and governors all contribute well to evaluating the school's effectiveness and the views of parents are canvassed regularly and taken into account. Self-evaluation is accurate and feeds into detailed action plans for continuing improvement. The issues identified by the previous inspection have been successfully dealt with.
- The well-planned curriculum mirrors that found in mainstream secondary schools, whilst at the same time ensuring the specific learning needs of all students are fully met. As a result of the school's specialist arts status, a wide variety of visits out of school, as well as visitors to the school, contributes immensely to all aspects of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. Ofsted's subject survey report earlier this year judged provision for personal, social and health education to be good.

- The local authority knows the school well, providing light touch but effective support to enable the school to sustain its focus on continuing improvement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The governing body is effective in its support for the school, whilst at the same time holding it to account for its performance and students' achievement. It is involved in school improvement planning and in checking and evaluating the performance of the headteacher. Governors check how well senior leaders evaluate staff performance and relate this to pay and promotion. The governing body also ensures safeguarding procedures are of a high standard. The finance committee carefully oversees the allocation and use of pupil premium funding. The bulk of this is being spent on extra staffing for English and mathematics and the setting up of a special nurture room for the most vulnerable students in order to improve students' achievement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116637
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	401611

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Rowles
Headteacher	Beverley Hawker
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 February 2010
Telephone number	02380 847213
Fax number	02380 845112
Email address	headteacher@oaklodge.hants.sch.uk

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