

Oakwood High School

Moorgate Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S60 2UH

Inspection dates

18–19 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and the new governing body share an aspirational vision for the school. They have raised the expectations of staff and students. Standards of behaviour, attendance and the quality of leadership and teaching have improved. Results have improved significantly.
- The progress of students in English is now outstanding. Overall, results have risen over three years from significantly below average to significantly above average because teaching is now consistently at least good.
- The quality of teaching has improved quickly across the school because school leaders have raised the expectation of what their students can achieve. They have created a culture where both students and teachers believe they can improve. Students value their education and take pride in their achievements and in their school.
- The headteacher and governors have created the conditions that allow for highly skilled leaders, at all levels, to work with widely distributed responsibilities. All staff fully understand their role in improving education within this school. Leaders and teachers now reflect on their own performance and are sufficiently confident to be self-critical. The positive and supportive culture within the school enables staff to seek and achieve improvement; always refining their skills.
- Students talk confidently to adults, are courteous and mannerly. Behaviour has improved because students understand the impact of poor conduct and they are now taking personal responsibility for their behaviour and that of others. Students feel safe in an environment where everyone is respected and valued.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement is good in mathematics and is outstanding over time in too few subjects.
- The attendance of students who attend vocational provision is not as good as others.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors worked with senior staff while observing teaching and learning and reviewing work previously completed by students. Inspectors observed 36 lessons taught by 35 different teachers. They also made shorter visits to many lessons. Inspectors spoke to many students during breaks and lunch times, and during lessons.
- Inspectors observed activities taking place during form- and registration-time. They listened to students improving their reading skills and observed a school council meeting.
- Inspectors attended a school assembly and a school production of *The Wizard of Oz*.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders and with staff. A discussion was held with an external adviser on school improvement. Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including internal and external data about students' progress, school development planning, behaviour and attendance records and students' work. They investigated safeguarding procedures and records.
- When planning the inspection, there were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for publication. During the inspection 24 responses were made, and all were taken into account. Inspectors also analysed views of parents made through school surveys and took account of responses to staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Neil MacKenzie, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Zahid Aziz	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector
Janet Pruchniewicz	Additional Inspector
David Thompson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oakwood High School is an averaged-sized school situated in Rotherham.
- Since the previous full inspection the leadership team has been fully restructured and a new leader of mathematics has been appointed.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals (attracting additional funding to the school called 'pupil premium') is higher than the national average.
- The school is based within a diverse community. Almost a half of the student body are from minority ethnic groups, and students who have Pakistani heritage form a third of the school population. The numbers of students from an East European background are increasing. There is a significant proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above that found nationally. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school operates across two sites. The Hutton Park campus is jointly run by this school and one other. It provides vocational courses for about 150 Oakwood students.
- Within the last 18 months, the governing body has reduced its membership to 11 and significantly altered its methods of operation.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that students achieve equally well across all subjects by:
 - ensuring all teachers use assessment information to plan learning activities that provide suitable challenge, precisely matching the needs and potential of every student in the class
 - increasing the use of paired and group activities to create more opportunities for students to become fully active in lessons and develop the skills they require to learn both collaboratively and independently
 - requiring students to explain their answers or opinions more frequently and in depth
 - ensuring all teachers follow school policy on assessing students' work and on giving guidance on how to improve.
- Further improve the attendance of students who attend vocational provision by responding more quickly to reported absences.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students' attainment on entry to the school is variable over time but it is generally below average. Students' results at the end of Year 11 have improved significantly and rapidly over the past three years. GCSE results are now significantly above average. Last year students made outstanding progress in English, graphics and textiles. Achievement in mathematics is also improving and is now good. Achievement in other subjects is usually good; if it dips slightly, action to remedy the situation is rapid and effective.
- There is little variation in the progress of different groups of students. In the past, students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium did not perform as well as others. However, this gap in attainment is closing and their rate of progress is improving.
- Due to the very good quality of additional support and care, the achievement of disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, is at least good.
- Pakistani students achieve well and make better progress in this school than similar groups do nationally.
- Students who attend the school's shared vocational centre generally achieve well. However, the attendance of a small number of these students is not good enough and this means they do not do as well as they should.
- The school has made considerable improvements to the development of students' literacy skills. This has been a significant contributory factor in the improving results overall. Students' information and communication technology skills are good. Their numeracy skills have improved and are now also good.
- The school considers the needs of individual students before making the decision whether to enter them early for particular examinations. Teaching sets are reorganised and students' final GCSE grades are not limited by the early sitting of examinations.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because progress in most subjects, including mathematics, is only good.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Students achieve well because some teaching is outstanding, and almost all is consistently good. There is a small proportion of teaching which requires improvement.
- Students enter the best lessons knowing they are going to make very good progress. Teachers know precisely what their students are capable of and plan activities that are both challenging and interesting. Teachers encourage students to discuss their work with each other in order to solve problems and gain confidence. Students are expected to explain their ideas. The teacher regularly checks students' understanding and will adjust the pace of learning so that students can reinforce what they have learned or move on more quickly. These teachers use questioning very effectively to help students think more deeply.
- In the few weaker lessons, teachers tend to tell students what they need to know, which results in only superficial understanding. Teachers talk for too long, which means that students have too little time to work and think for themselves; consequently, they do not develop their understanding. Teachers tend to teach to the whole group rather than targeting work and support to the needs of individual students. They also do not analyse the responses of students and so do not adapt activities to help students either overcome misunderstandings, or extend their understanding. In these few lessons, students do not learn quickly enough.
- Students' work is checked frequently and teachers know how to give valuable written guidance to students on how they can improve their work. Students value this guidance and respond to it well.

- Provision for students new to learning English as an additional language, disabled students and those who have special educational needs is very good. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the progress of all students and to those with specific needs in particular. Staff work closely with families and endeavour to create independent and confident young people.
- Most teachers understand they have a critical role in improving students' literacy and numeracy skills. They are given very good guidance on how to do this and, as a result, students get consistent advice on how to improve. Students are now more confident in writing long pieces of work which enables them to attain higher grades in all subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- As a result of higher expectations, rigorous monitoring and very good adult support, students' behaviour has improved and is now good. Students from a wide range of different communities integrate exceptionally well. The school is harmonious and calm.
- Almost all students take responsibility for their own behaviour and safety, and that of others too. Despite narrow, meandering corridors and communal spaces that are too small, students feel safe because the school goes to great lengths to provide a safe environment. Students asked for and organised the reintroduction of a prefect system. Prefects say they are given the same levels of respect as adults.
- Older students told inspectors that behaviour has improved significantly. Younger students say there is some bullying, but it is restricted to name-calling and is always dealt with effectively by adults. Students fully understand different forms of bullying and are taught how to deal with this and how to be safe. Students say there are many adults they can turn to if they need guidance or support. Students appreciate the headteacher's very accessible approach and they know he will always be in the dining room or around school at break and lunchtimes.
- Students are positive in their approach to learning, particularly in English. There is little low-level disruption of lessons. When this does occur, it is a result of dull activities and when the rate at which students work is slow. Most value their education and they are well prepared for their next step in education, training or employment.
- Parents' views agree with students. They say the school is a safe place to be and that behaviour is good.
- The school works very effectively with families and agencies to support students. Care systems are of high quality. This has resulted in improved overall attendance and improved results for those students who, traditionally, would have found school difficult. Students with emotional problems are well supported. The school will use exclusion to punish poor behaviour reluctantly and incidences of exclusion have reduced significantly over three years.
- For one small group of students who attend the Hutton Park campus, attendance is not as good as the rest. The school is not following up these absences quickly enough.

The leadership and management

are outstanding

- The school's marked improvement has been driven by highly effective leadership and management teams at all levels. Consequently, because of outstanding leadership it has moved from being satisfactory at the previous inspection to good now.
- The school's leaders at all levels quickly intervene if the performance of students or teachers drops. They are able to do this because they have developed very effective and rigorous systems to monitor students' progress.
- Leaders at all levels, using performance-management procedures, are highly effective in directing staff on how to improve their teaching and rewarding those who are successful through salary progression. The school provides an excellent range of professional development for teachers, all of which is well targeted to individual teachers' needs. Teachers value this support as the quality is good, and they believe it has improved their skills as teachers.

- Students are very well represented through an effective school-council system. They initiated and led changes to their school uniform, which is now worn with pride. They are excellent role models and are helping to raise the expectations of all students.
- The school's curriculum provides a wide range of courses and qualifications that suits the needs of students. The curriculum has many innovative features including starting Year 7 students at Oakwood in June of the preceding academic year. This enables students to adjust to their new school before the summer holiday.
- Students' backgrounds represent a diverse range of faiths, cultures and beliefs. There is no discrimination. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced through an excellent range of enriching experiences including arts, sports, science and service to the community.
- Students say that they are given very good information, advice and guidance, particularly when choosing GCSE courses and when considering their future beyond this school.
- Pupil-premium funding pays for a wide range of support, including additional teachers and teaching assistants who provide specialised guidance and courses.
- Support from the local authority has reduced in recent years and it is now using Oakwood staff to help other schools in the area improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are striving to provide an outstanding education and facilities which are fit for purpose. It is a very reflective and self-critical body and, consequently, has made recent and radical changes to its structure and the ways it operates. It reduced its membership by half, eliminated sub-committees and is now able to respond much more quickly and precisely. The governors are very skilled; despite this they regularly look for any deficit in skill or experience and seek training. They provide excellent challenge and support to the school leadership. Governors are fully aware of how all funding is used, including the pupil premium.

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	106949
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	400874

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,031
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracy Briggs
Headteacher	David Naisbitt
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2009
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