

# Oakbank School

Oakworth Road, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD22 7DU

**Inspection dates** 13–14 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although improving securely, attainment overall is not as high as it should be, especially in the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades at A\* to C, including English and mathematics, because attainment in mathematics is not as high as in English.
- Not enough students make more than expected progress from their starting points to the time they leave school, especially in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and there is now more good teaching. However, too much teaching still requires improvement and there is not yet enough that is outstanding.
- The quality of marking and feedback is too variable and students are not always told exactly what they need to do to improve.
- Attendance has been improving over the past two years but is still below average. A significant minority of students are absent from school too often and this prevents them from making good progress in their learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and put in place actions to address its weaknesses.
- Governors systematically challenge senior leaders. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and students' achievement is rising.
- The wide range of additional help provided by the school is effective in ensuring that the learning and progress of students for whom the pupil premium provides support are good.
- The sixth form is good and students achieve well.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 49 lessons and two lessons were carried out jointly with the school’s senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with school staff, groups of students, a group of governors, and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also talked informally with many students and talked to teachers about their lessons.
- Inspectors listened to students read and observed some of the small group, additional support that is provided for students who are identified as in need of such support.
- A number of the school’s documents were scrutinised. These included: the school’s view of its performance, school improvement plans, data on students’ current attainment and progress, minutes of governing body meetings, external consultants’ reports, local authority reviews and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Students’ books were scrutinised during lessons with a focus on marking and the quality of feedback, literacy development and students’ progress.
- Inspectors also took into account information published on the school’s website, parent and student surveys, the responses made by 38 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View), letters sent to inspectors by two parents during the inspection and 54 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Helen Gaunt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
James Bradley	Additional Inspector
Barbara O’Brien	Additional Inspector
Sally Lane	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average sized secondary school, with slightly more girls than boys.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for funding from the pupil premium (additional funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of forces families) is above average. At Oakbank this applies to students who are entitled to free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority.
- A large proportion of students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than average. The proportion of students for whom English is not their first language is above average.
- The proportion of students who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion of students who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2011. In the past two years there has been a significant restructuring of staff.
- The school works with other providers to extend the learning opportunities for students. These include the Bradford partnership of schools, Keighley College, the Three Valleys Behaviour and Attendance Collaborative, the local pupil referral unit and local employers.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that all teaching is good or better in all areas of the school, including in the sixth form, by:
  - ensuring that teachers' comments in their marking inform students how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve and that teachers check to make sure that students act on this advice
  - ensuring that information about students' progress is used more effectively by teachers to plan activities that are matched more closely to their needs and abilities
  - providing students with more opportunities to learn for themselves without relying so heavily on the teacher.
- Improve students' attainment and progress further, in particular in mathematics, by:
  - providing students with more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solving problems
  - ensuring that students in Years 7 and 8 all have good basic mathematical skills to act as a foundation for more advanced work when they start GCSE courses
  - developing students' skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics in all subjects
  - providing sufficient challenge to enable more-able students to achieve the highest grades.
- Improve attendance further by working with parents, the local authority and external agencies to ensure that the persistent absence of some students is eradicated.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students join the school with generally average levels of attainment. By the end of Year 11, attainment overall is average and improving.
- Attainment in English has risen consistently over recent years and is now average. Progress is accelerating in English and the proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress compares favourably with national expectations. Attainment in mathematics is still below average. As a result, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen over the past three years but is still not as high as it should be.
- Leaders and managers are tackling achievement in mathematics effectively. The proportion of students gaining GCSE grades A\* to C in mathematics has improved in recent years. School data, supported by inspection evidence, show that the upward trend is set to continue.
- In English, students make good progress because there is effective additional support for students who have poor literacy skills on entry to the school and because teachers are providing increasingly challenging tasks and activities to enable students to reach higher levels.
- In mathematics, students make slower progress because: their mathematical skills are not always secure by the time they reach the end of Year 9; opportunities for students to apply their mathematical skills are limited; students do not always understand what they need to do to improve their work and; too much teaching lacks the challenge necessary to accelerate progress at a faster rate, especially for more able students.
- In the past two years, the proportion of students achieving GCSE grades at C and above has risen in many subjects. It is still not high enough in some subjects and there are still too few students who achieve grades A\* or A in many subjects.
- Leaders have decided not to enter students for examinations before the end of Year 11.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are in the care of the local authority achieve well because additional funding is used well to provide them with the additional support they need. The gaps in attainment and progress have virtually closed between those eligible for the pupil premium and their peers who are not eligible in both English and mathematics.
- All students who attend courses with other providers gain accredited qualifications.
- The progress made by disabled students or those with special educational needs has, in the past, not been as strong as others. Leaders have taken action to address this issue and school data indicates that progress for these students is accelerating. Students from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers.
- In Year 7, students who enter with low reading ages are provided with intensive support, bringing their reading ages more in line with what they should be by the end of the year.
- Students' skills in writing, speaking and reading are developing as a result of the extra support they receive. All students are encouraged to read widely. However, opportunities to develop further these skills are not provided in all subjects.
- Students enter the sixth form with average attainment. Their achievement throughout the two years is good. Art, Business Studies, design and technology, English Literature, physics and Health and Social Care were some of the highest performing subjects in 2012.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The proportion of good and outstanding teaching has increased since the previous inspection because senior leaders have raised expectations and are checking the quality of teaching more rigorously. Consequently, achievement is rising. No inadequate teaching was seen; however, too much teaching still requires improvement.

- Leaders have developed sharper systems for tracking students' progress and targets are becoming increasingly challenging. Where teaching is good or better, teachers use assessment data to plan lessons so all students are given work that gets the best out of them. However, some teachers are not using this data effectively enough and are setting work for students that is too easy for some or too difficult for others and not well matched to their needs.
- Where teaching is good or better, lessons are well planned and activities are closely linked to students' prior learning. Teachers have high aspirations, questioning develops students' thinking and a range of activities and resources engage and challenge students. For example, in a science lesson, where students were learning about DNA and the Human Genome Project, the teacher provided good opportunities for independent learning and research. Students were required to be 'roving reporters' and feed back their findings to the rest of the group. All students were enthusiastic about their learning, the teacher's questioning encouraged them to think more deeply about the issues and all students made rapid progress in their understanding.
- Where teaching is good, teachers mark students' work regularly and provide students with helpful comments on how well they are doing, how to make their work better and check if students have acted on their comments. However, this is inconsistent within and across subjects. For example in mathematics, work is not marked regularly, comments are often too brief and do not give clear advice on what students need to do to improve.
- Where teaching is less successful, teachers sometimes work harder than their students and are too quick to answer questions for them. This means that students are not able to work through problems for themselves, which slows down their learning and progress. Where this happens, students lose interest and lose confidence in their ability to succeed.
- Some of the strongest teaching seen during the inspection was in science, art, physical education and design and technology because there were well-planned practical activities, which encouraged students to work well together and to find things out for themselves.
- Teachers usually start their lessons by telling students what they are going to learn. However, sometimes this is simply a list of tasks. In the better lessons, teachers clearly link learning to students' target levels. In the weaker lessons, students are unclear about the level of the work they are doing and how it relates to their individual targets.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Students say that they enjoy coming to school and that they feel safe. The behaviour of the vast majority of students meets an acceptable standard in lessons and is good where teaching is better. In lessons where teaching is weaker, some students' lack of interest in their learning leads to low-level disruption which contributes to underachievement. In too many lessons, students were passive or lacked the confidence or motivation to contribute.
- Behaviour at breaks and lunchtimes is usually orderly although, students became more unsettled in the afternoon. Staff closely supervise students in corridors and frequently remind them about the rules regarding movement about the school and uniform.
- There have been no permanent exclusions. The recently implemented, zero tolerance, behaviour management policy has resulted in an increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions. Behaviour management strategies are under constant review, in consultation with students. Students said that behaviour had improved over the past two years.
- Students are aware of all of the different forms of bullying, say that bullying is rare and that, when it does happen, it is usually dealt with swiftly.
- There were a small number of parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, who felt that behaviour was not yet good at the school. Responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire supported this view. However, both groups acknowledge that behaviour is improving.
- Although attendance remains low, it is improving. The proportion of students who are

persistently absent from school has recently begun to reduce. Senior leaders recognise that there is still more to be done to improve attendance. A new system to promote punctuality has reduced the number of late-comers.

## **The leadership and management are good**

- The new headteacher and senior leaders have taken significant steps to improve teaching. They have improved the checks made on the school's work and the skills of middle leaders to evaluate accurately the quality of the school's provision. Recent initiatives are proving effective but have not been embedded sufficiently to raise overall achievement so that it is consistently good. Senior leaders are fully aware that continued improvements in the quality of teaching are vital if students' achievement is to continue to accelerate. Nevertheless, the success achieved so far and the quality of leadership at all levels indicates the school's strong capacity for further improvement.
- Staff unanimously support senior leaders and their aim to create an outstanding school. Increasing challenge has meant that inadequate performance has been eradicated, middle leaders are much more accountable for raising achievement and improving teaching and there has been a complete restructuring of staff. Staff say that they are energised by the improvements that are being made and proud to be involved in taking the school forward. Morale is high.
- A rigorous tracking system ensures that all teachers have a clear understanding of students' progress. This is contributing to higher expectations, rising standards and better achievement.
- The curriculum ensures that there are appropriate courses to meet the needs of all students. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which support students' personal development and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teachers are held to account for students' achievements through the performance management system which has been used to support and challenge teachers whose work was less than good. Performance objectives include a requirement that agreed proportions of students make expected and better than expected progress.
- Leadership of the sixth form has improved the guidance on course choice, reviewed the curriculum so that minority and less successful courses have been discontinued and strengthened the system for monitoring progress. The number of students progressing from Year 11 into Year 12 in 2013 is set to rise substantially.
- Leaders are working with the local authority, a range of external agencies and with parents to reduce the proportion of students who are frequently absent from school. Although some progress has been made, they recognise that this is still an area for improvement.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted soundly and the school has a zero tolerance approach towards discrimination in all its forms.
- Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice meet all current requirements.
- The local authority facilitates the Bradford partnership of schools, and has provided direct support to the school for lesson observation training in mathematics and the development of middle leaders' skills. . There is a positive working relationship between the school and the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body holds the school effectively to account and challenges leaders. They understand performance data provided by senior leaders on students' progress and the quality of teaching. This is resulting in better teaching and improving achievement. The governing body is well organised. It controls resources and finances effectively and makes sure that they are matched to priorities to make the school better. Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is targeted closely to boost support and to improve the achievement for this large group of students. There is a rigorous system of teacher appraisal and teachers' pay is linked to their performance in the classroom.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107441
<b>Local authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	405102

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,650
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janice Firth
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Maxwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01535 210111
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