

# Oakwood School

Balcombe Road, Horley, Surrey RH6 9AE

## Inspection dates

7–8 November 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- School leaders, working closely with the governing body, have succeeded in accelerating the improvements in students' achievement and behaviour and in the quality of teaching, which were highlighted by the school's last inspection.
- Students make good progress from their starting points to gain results at GCSE which are now above the national average.
- Teaching is consistently good and, at its best, is stimulating and highly successful in engaging students' interest and enabling them to make rapid gains in their learning.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. They have few concerns about bullying and a high proportion hold positions of responsibility.
- The headteacher and her senior team have made sure that staff share their passionate commitment to raising standards and their high ambition for the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It provides students with a wide range of experiences which promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school's performance and hold leaders rigorously to account for ensuring that challenging targets for improvement are met or exceeded.
- The substantial progress which the school has made since its last inspection confirms its capacity for further improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough highly effective and inspirational teaching throughout the school.
- Teachers do not always check students' understanding frequently or thoroughly enough during lessons, and adapt activities if learning is faster or slower than they had foreseen.
- Teachers do not all use imaginative enough teaching strategies to ensure that all students are fully engaged in lessons and are able to take responsibility for their own learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 40 lessons, nine of them together with the headteacher and other senior leaders, observing 38 teachers. They also made shorter visits to a number of other lessons and other activities, looked at students' written work, and attended an assembly and three tutor group meetings.
- The inspectors held discussions with groups of students, the chair and one other member of the governing body, and members of staff. The lead inspector also spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's information on students' attainment and progress, and data on attendance and exclusions. They examined safeguarding procedures and records of the school's own lesson observations, as well as the school's checks on how well it is doing, documents relating to the management of the performance of staff and planning documents.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, the inspectors took account of 81 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View) which were submitted before or during the inspection, as well as the school's own most recent survey of parents' views. They also considered 67 questionnaires completed by members of the teaching and support staff.

## Inspection team

Robin Gaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gordon Jackson

Additional Inspector

Jackie Jones

Additional Inspector

Terry Payne

Additional Inspector

Sandra Teacher

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- Just under one in six students is eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided for children in local authority care, children with a parent in the armed services and those known to be eligible for free school meals. This proportion is below the national average.
- About one in three Year 7 students are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium, which is provided by the government to support those students who have not previously reached the expected levels in English and mathematics.
- About one in eight students is supported through school action. This is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of students, about one in seven, who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- About 30 students in Key Stage 4 follow courses at East Surrey and Reigate Colleges.

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

- Improve students' achievement so that it is outstanding, by increasing the amount of highly effective and inspirational teaching by ensuring that:
  - teachers always check students' understanding thoroughly throughout lessons and adapt activities if students are making faster or slower progress than they had anticipated
  - creative and innovative teaching strategies are used more regularly to engage and maintain students' interest, and give students more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- In recent years, students' attainment, as shown by their results at GCSE, has risen substantially, especially in English and mathematics. The proportion of students who gained five GCSE passes at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, rose at a faster rate than nationally between 2010 and 2012, and was significantly above the national average in 2012. Their performance indicated that they had made good progress from their broadly average starting points. The provisional results for 2013, when students' attainment on joining the school had been below the national average, confirm that this upward trend has been accelerated and that all groups of students achieve consistently well.
- Attainment in other subject areas, including modern foreign languages, is also rising throughout the school. In a small number of subjects, however, GCSE pass rates have not been always been in line with or above the national average in recent years, nor have students always made at least good progress. However, gaps between standards in different subject areas have reduced significantly over the last three years.
- Most Year 11 students were entered early for GCSE in mathematics in 2011–12. The above-average proportion of students who gained the highest grades indicates that this policy has not prevented higher attaining students from achieving well and reaching their potential.
- In 2012, the attainment at GCSE of those students who were eligible for the pupil premium was just below that of other students in the school and of all students nationally. In English, grades gained by these students were just over two thirds of a grade lower than those of all other students in the school, and just over a quarter of a grade than those achieved by all students nationally. In mathematics, there was a gap of two thirds of a grade with other students in the school, and of just over a third of a grade with all students nationally.
- Their results indicated that, in English, these students had made faster progress from their starting points than similar students nationally. In mathematics, their progress was in line with the national average for this group of students. The provisional results for 2013 show an even better picture. This shows that the school is making good use of the additional pupil premium funding, for example on small group teaching and additional support for students, to narrow the gap in attainment between those students who are eligible for it and other students.
- The school has used the Year 7 catch-up funding to good effect for the benefit of eligible students. As a result, by the time they begin Year 8, these students' reading, writing and mathematical skills have reached a similar level to those of other students. Students throughout the school read widely and often, and are given good opportunities and encouragement by the school to do so.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress because teaching assistants and other specialist staff support them well in and outside of lessons, and because teachers adapt activities well to meet their individual needs. Their good achievement, as well as that of other potentially disadvantaged students, demonstrates the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity.
- Those students who attend courses at local colleges achieve well because these courses are well suited to their interests and abilities.
- In most lessons, students learn well and make good progress because tasks are well paced and provide a good match with students' abilities. When learning is slower, this is often because teachers have not checked students' understanding thoroughly enough in order to ensure that all are making as much progress as they could.
- By the time they leave the school, students' levels of attainment, together with the skills they develop such as problem-solving and team working, ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for future employment.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school, with examples of outstanding practice.
- Teachers plan their lessons carefully to include activities which are well tailored to match students' different abilities, including those of higher attaining students, as well as their needs and interests. They ensure that tasks build on students' prior learning and enable them to make good and sometimes excellent progress.
- Teachers know their subjects thoroughly, and make good use of their detailed understanding of GCSE requirements to make sure that students are well prepared for examinations. Students say that they learn best when teachers are passionate about their subjects and succeed in sharing their enthusiasm with them. For example, in a Year 11 physical education lesson, the teacher successfully communicated his passion for his own particular area of expertise. He made excellent use of this expertise to enable the students to rapidly and securely develop their own knowledge and skills.
- Teachers in all subjects and in both key stages pay close attention to ensuring that students can read fluently and confidently and that their writing, including spelling and grammar, is accurate. Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop students' mathematical knowledge and skills in a range of subjects, including science, technology and geography.
- Teaching assistants are well informed about the particular needs of the students they support, including disabled students, those with special educational needs and those students who are learning English as an additional language. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to enable these students to participate fully in lesson activities.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly and thoroughly. They give students detailed written comments about their strengths and weaknesses, and what they need to do next to improve their work and meet their targets. Teachers also make sure that students have good opportunities to respond to teachers' comments, for example by correcting their own work.
- Teachers make good use of a range of questioning techniques to enable students to share and develop their understanding of topics. However, there are occasions where they do not always check students' learning frequently or thoroughly enough. As a result, students' ability to make more rapid progress is occasionally limited by teachers' failure to adapt tasks which have proved to be too hard or too easy for some students.
- Teachers include varied and interesting activities in their lessons, which succeed in engaging and maintaining students' interest. School leaders recognise the need, however, for more teachers to develop the self-confidence to try new approaches to teaching and to give students more opportunities to take charge of their own learning.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- All those students to whom inspectors spoke stated that behaviour has improved a great deal in recent years, and staff confirmed this. Most parents agree that the school makes sure its students are well behaved and that it deals effectively with bullying. School records confirm that behaviour has improved over time and there are fewer incidents in school.
- In lessons, students show positive attitudes to learning, and are keen to participate in classroom activities and to learn independently, as well as from teachers. This enables lessons to proceed at a good pace, and students report that disruptive behaviour is rare. The school can point to examples of how its actions have improved the behaviour of those students whose conduct was a cause for concern. The school receives frequent reports about the behaviour of students who attend courses elsewhere. This helps it to ensure that these students behave well.
- In the small number of lessons where students' behaviour is less positive, this usually results from more lacklustre teaching.
- Students behave sensibly in and around the school. Almost one in three students holds a post of responsibility, including a relatively high proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs. This demonstrates the school's success in avoiding any potential

discrimination.

- Students have few concerns about bullying. They know about different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Attendance has risen in recent years, and is now broadly average. Students are punctual to school and to lessons.

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

- The headteacher, ably supported by her senior colleagues, has succeeded in substantially raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching, as well as students' behaviour. They have ensured that the school is a harmonious community in which students from different backgrounds respect and get on well with one another. They have done this by inspiring staff to share their high ambition for improving outcomes for students and by managing their performance well.
- The headteacher and her senior team have accurately evaluated the quality of education which the school provides, and have drawn up well-conceived plans for future improvement which focus strongly on what is needed to make the school outstanding. They recognise in particular the need to increase the amount of outstanding teaching across the school.
- Senior leaders have acted firmly and decisively to eliminate weak teaching and have ensured that all staff receive the training and support they need to improve their practice. They make sure that any pay increases are closely linked to the quality of teaching and progress towards meeting or exceeding the challenging targets the school has set for itself.
- Subject and pastoral leaders are enthusiastic, have good levels of expertise and are increasingly effective in bringing about improvement in the areas for which they are responsible.
- The local authority has provided good support to senior leaders and other staff to help them improve teaching and successfully manage students' behaviour.
- These factors, together with the school's success in tackling the areas for development highlighted by its last inspection report, demonstrates its capacity for further improvement.
- The curriculum includes a good range of subjects and enables students with different abilities to achieve well. Students benefit from a wide variety of special events, including trips and visits, and extracurricular activities which enable them to develop their sporting and cultural interests and skills. Some of them spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about their recent sports-related visits to Spain and Malta, where they had enjoyed competing against and learning from local students. Others told inspectors about the strong impression that the recent Remembrance assembly had made on them. These are typical examples of the school's successful promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are increasingly supportive of the school, and a very high proportion would now recommend it to others. They are particularly pleased with the helpful information they receive about their children's progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors regularly visit the school, as well as receiving detailed reports from the headteacher and other school leaders, whom they challenge and hold rigorously to account for raising achievement, managing the staff's performance, and improving teaching. Their understanding of how well students achieve, how this compares with that of students in other schools, and of the quality of teaching, is comprehensive and accurate. Governors know how pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are being used to close gaps in students' performance, and what is being done to reward good practice and how inadequate teaching has been eliminated in the past. Their careful stewardship of the school's resources has ensured that it has remained on a firm financial footing. Governors make sure that all requirements for safeguarding students, including vetting staff appointments, are met.

## 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>	125273
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	429575

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	987
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Child
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20–21 June 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01293 785363
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