

Oakmeeds Community College

Station Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 9EA

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate. GCSE results have fallen in recent years and were particularly poor in 2013.
- Students make inadequate progress in English, mathematics and many other subjects in both Key Stages 3 and 4. Teaching is inadequate in many subjects, particularly in mathematics, and has been over time. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what students should achieve or use progress information well to plan challenging lessons.
- In too many lessons, work is not well matched to students' different needs. The most able students and those with special educational needs are not set work that is challenging enough for them to reach their potential.
- The quality and regularity of marking and feedback is a significant weakness in many subjects, especially in mathematics and science.
- Leaders and governors have been very slow to recognise the decline in students' achievement and the lack of challenge in teaching. As a result, they are not demonstrating the ability to improve standards in the school to an acceptable level.
- Leadership is weak in key subjects. Subject leaders do not understand how to use the assessment information well to improve students' learning and progress.
- Senior leaders' evaluation of the school overestimates its effectiveness, especially regarding the quality of teaching.
- Governance is inadequate. Governors have failed to carry out their statutory duties with regard to safeguarding students. They do not challenge senior leaders or hold them fully to account for the quality of teaching and the achievement of all groups of students.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have improved attendance and reduced the number of exclusions.
- The school's curriculum is well suited to students' needs..
- The school ensures that students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 39 part-lessons, eight of which were jointly observed with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the business manager, leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the school's work, and several groups of students. The lead inspector conducted interviews with the Chair of the Governing Body, two other governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's own evaluation of its work, school policies, data on standards and progress, safeguarding and lesson observations, improvement plans, anonymised performance management records and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors also discussed lessons they had seen with senior leaders and looked at a range of students' work in lessons. They attended assemblies and a tutor-time session.
- Inspectors took into account 85 parents' responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and questionnaires completed by 58 members of staff.

Inspection team

Heather Leatt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Roger Fenwick	Additional Inspector
Tracy Luke	Additional Inspector
Jalil Shaikh	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

Information about this school

- Oakmeeds Community College is an average-sized mixed comprehensive school. The number of students on roll has fallen in recent years.
- A much lower than average proportion of students comes from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is also very low.
- A smaller proportion of students than the national average is known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for specific groups including looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action is higher than the national average, as is the proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- There are 30 students eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding, which is for students who did not achieve the expected Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- A very small number of Key Stage 4 students receive part of their education off-site at Central Sussex College in Crawley.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that teachers:
 - have much higher expectations of what students can achieve, especially the most able, those in receipt of the pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs
 - plan lessons that are more challenging, so that all students make at least good progress from their starting points
 - check students' progress more often during lessons to ensure that activities meet the needs of all and adapt work when necessary to do so
 - use information about students' abilities accurately so that work is set at the correct level, especially for those who learn most quickly
 - mark all work regularly and accurately, giving students clear feedback that helps them to improve their work, especially in mathematics and science, and require students to respond to the advice given.
- Raise standards and improve the progress of all groups of students in a range of subjects, particularly English, mathematics and science, by:
 - developing teachers' knowledge and understanding of the information they have about students' progress and how best to use it in planning and teaching.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
 - the school’s arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements
 - leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance
 - leaders, including subject leaders, check rigorously on the quality of teaching and use information about students’ progress more effectively so that judgements made about teaching accurately reflect students’ achievement
 - governors challenge senior leaders and hold them more effectively to account for the quality of teaching and the achievement of all groups of students
 - pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is used more effectively to accelerate the progress of eligible students so that the attainment gaps with their peers in school and nationally are closed rapidly
 - teachers are held to account for planning lessons which meet students’ different needs.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Students across the school do not make enough progress in many subjects, including English, mathematics and science, because teaching is inadequate.
- Many students join the school with above-average attainment. They make inadequate progress and underachieve by the end of Year 11. Too few students achieve five or more good GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. Consequently, many are not well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Too many of the most able students do not make the progress that they should, because teachers do not plan lessons that provide them with sufficient challenge to fulfil their potential. They were willing and able to tackle more demanding work than was asked of them in many lessons.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs also make poor progress in many subjects and achieve significantly less well than their peers. Teachers receive good information about these students' abilities and circumstances, but few plan teaching to meet their needs. These students make better progress in mathematics than in English.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding has been used to provide reading support and small-group teaching in literacy and numeracy. These students are making slow progress in improving their skills in English and mathematics.
- The achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium funding is inadequate. Fewer than half of this group made the progress that they should have in English, while a little more than a third made the progress expected in mathematics. In 2012, their attainment at the end of Year 11 was one grade below that of their peers in English and just over a grade below in mathematics. In 2013, the gap in English widened to one and a quarter grades below and one and a half grades below their peers in mathematics. The school's data for this year indicate that the gap in attainment will widen even further in 2014.
- The few students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. They performed better than their peers in GCSE examinations in 2013.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics. In November 2013, a very small group of students were entered for IGCSE English to ensure they secured at least a grade C, which was a successful strategy that served them well. All will be given the opportunity to resit examinations in the summer of 2014.
- The progress of the very small number of students who attend Central Sussex College for part of their education is checked regularly and these students achieve well given their starting points.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- The school's view that the majority of teaching is good or better is inaccurate. Teaching overall is inadequate, as too few students make the progress that they should. In particular, the needs of the most able students and those with special educational needs are not met, as teachers do not plan lessons that are challenging enough, or well suited to their needs. Leaders and teachers have not used assessment data well to ensure that students make good progress from one year to the next. Consequently, too few of them make the progress expected.
- Where teaching is weakest, teachers do not expect enough of students. Many teachers do not have a good enough understanding of student progress information to inform lesson planning. They do not check students' progress enough during lessons to ensure that activities are adapted when it is necessary to do so.
- The quality of writing in students' books and folders was good. Students took pride in their writing and were keen to do well.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is variable across subjects. While there is some very good practice, notably in English and modern foreign languages, very often work is not checked and goes

unmarked, especially in mathematics and science. As a result, basic errors in literacy across the curriculum are not corrected. In addition, feedback given is not always detailed or helpful enough to ensure students know what they have to do to improve. There was little evidence that students were expected to act upon the advice given and make necessary improvements to their work.

- The school is now beginning to focus more attention on rates of students' progress at both Key Stages 3 and 4. In English, teaching observed was often good. Changes to the English curriculum and closer checks on progress mean that English results are justifiably forecast to improve considerably in 2014.
- Where good or better teaching was seen, teachers had planned lessons that built on students' prior learning and were matched well to their abilities and needs. As a result, students made rapid progress. For example, in a Year 8 history lesson about the Spanish Armada, the teacher used excellent subject knowledge, together with a detailed knowledge of students' abilities, to plan tasks that met different groups of students' needs and challenged them to excel.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. This is because senior leaders have not implemented safeguarding procedures with sufficient rigour.
- The behaviour of students is good.
- School data on attendance and exclusions show behaviour improving strongly over time. Attendance has been improving steadily for the past three years and is now above average. Rates of fixed-term and permanent exclusions have been falling for more than two years and are now below average. The school has used a range of effective strategies which have had a very positive impact on the behaviour and attendance of different groups of students.
- Despite the weaknesses in certain safeguarding procedures, students of all ages report that they feel safe and happy at the school and say that very little bullying occurs. They know who to go to if they have a problem and have confidence that staff would take swift action if needed. They say that racist and homophobic bullying is rare. This view is supported by the detailed records kept by the school of any incidents.
- Students appreciate the advice given about how to stay safe. The school has an effective programme for teaching about a wide range of issues, such as cyber bullying and using the internet safely. The local police community officer gives talks about matters such as the dangers of drug abuse and knife crime. Students say staff look after them very well.
- Throughout the inspection, students behaved politely and respectfully to each other, staff and inspectors. They behaved well in and around the school. Good relationships between staff and students were a feature of the vast majority of lessons, creating a positive climate for learning.
- Students arrived punctually to lessons and had very positive attitudes to learning. They were keen to please their teachers, worked hard and took a pride in their work. Lack of progress seen in books, and evident in data, was due to teachers' poor planning and low expectations rather than unwillingness on the students' behalf to do their best.
- Despite a significant proportion of the teaching observed being poor, behaviour in the vast majority of lessons was good. In a very small number of lessons, where teaching was particularly weak, students sometimes lost a little focus on their learning.
- The behaviour and safety of the small number of students who attend off-site provision are good.
- Parents and staff overwhelmingly agree that students' behaviour is good.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders, managers and governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to bring about the improvements needed in order to raise students' achievement. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and standards of achievement have declined in many subjects, including in

English, mathematics and science.

- Although the leadership team and subject leaders are committed to tackling the issues the school faces, they are not working well enough as a team to bring about the rapid improvements needed in teaching and achievement. Recent actions have not had enough time to have had an impact.
 - Senior leaders' judgements about the school's performance are not accurate and are too generous. It has only been since the poor GCSE results in 2013 that senior leaders have recognised the need to improve students' progress in all subjects. They have put strategies in place to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate students' progress, but some subject leaders and many teachers lack the skills and expertise to ensure these actions are implemented. Although the school has a training programme to support teachers to improve, the school has not done enough to develop the skills and expertise of subject leaders. As a result, their capacity to bring about improvements in teaching and achievement in their areas is limited.
 - Senior leaders have taken firm action to link teachers' pay to the quality of their performance; however, evaluations of teaching are not accurate. The school has a wealth of information about lesson observations, but there is no evidence that it has had any impact on improving the quality of teaching. Senior leaders have not made a clear link between the quality of teaching observed in lessons and the lack of progress made by students.
 - Leaders have not adequately evaluated the effectiveness of the pupil-premium spending, which is failing to close the gaps in achievement for these students.
 - Leaders are effective in tackling discrimination when it occurs. However, many groups of students, including those supported by the pupil premium, those with special educational needs and the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable. The school is failing to demonstrate a commitment to equality of opportunity for all groups of students.
 - The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets students' needs well. Literacy is promoted across the curriculum and the school has invested in extra English and mathematics teachers in order to have smaller classes and small group teaching at Key Stage 3. It is too early, however, to measure the impact of these actions.
 - The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and enrichment activities. For example, Year 11 students volunteer to support extra-curricular activities at a nearby special school several times a week. The school has excellent links with local businesses, which enhances work-experience opportunities. All of this provision makes a very positive contribution to students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
 - The local authority has only provided light touch support to the school in recent years, not considering it to be at risk. It was therefore surprised by the poor results this summer.
 - Procedures for safeguarding did not meet statutory requirements. The single central record was incomplete. A number of staff were working at the school without having the necessary checks into their background undertaken. The child protection policy did not meet all requirements or reflect best practice. Senior leaders acted immediately to rectify these issues. At the end of the inspection all statutory requirements were met.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has failed in its duty to ensure that the safeguarding of students complies with statutory requirements. It has not recognised that students have made too little progress over a number of years and has not held leaders to account robustly enough for students' achievement. Governors have not had an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. They are aware of the school's arrangements for managing the performance of teachers and rewarding good teaching, but have not linked this process to the lack of progress made by students. They have not checked for themselves how well groups of students perform, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. Following the poor 2013 results, however, the governors acted quickly to bring about improvements. They instigated an external review of the school and now meet regularly with subject leaders to question them about students' progress. They are much better informed about the work of the school now and have an improved understanding of its performance and the quality of teaching.
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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	126084
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	441062

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	891
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Fry
Headteacher	Colin Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 June 2011
Telephone number	01444 241691
Fax number	01444 235261
Email address	office@oakmeeds.co.uk

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