

# Oak Heights Independent School

2–3 Red Lion Court, Alexandra Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 1JS

**Inspection dates** 17–19 May 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the school and its pupils. He wants only the very best for them and has shown determination to take action to deliver this.
- This is an improving school and fully meets the independent school standards.
- Staff are proud to work at the school. They are always ready to offer additional help and support to pupils to ensure their success. Pupils and parents commented very positively on the commitment of staff.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan challenging activities for pupils and use high-quality visual resources so that pupils make good progress.
- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. Standards of attainment are high, particularly in mathematics and French.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are impeccably presented in their uniforms and conduct themselves well around the school and in lessons.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. The school is a harmonious community, where pupils respect and care for each other so that they all achieve together. One pupil described this using a metaphor saying, 'no one is left at the bus stop'.
- Pupils very much enjoy swimming and a range of team and individual sports. Sport is a high priority for the school and effectively promotes pupils' healthy lifestyles, leadership and social skills.
- The school prepares pupils very well for their education post 16. Pupils are successful in gaining places at a range of college and sixth form destinations of their choice.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers follow the school's assessment policy and so the quality of feedback to pupils on their written work is not consistently good.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to develop their speaking skills in lessons. This is because some teachers do not follow up with further probing questions or cut pupils' answers off too soon, when pupils are still speaking.
- The headteacher takes on too much of the leadership of the school himself. Not enough areas of responsibility are delegated to other members of staff and so leadership capacity is underdeveloped.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make better progress and develop their speaking skills by ensuring that all teachers:
  - follow up on their initial questions with further probing questions to deepen pupils' understanding
  - allow pupils to finish their answers
  - follow the school's assessment policy when giving pupils written feedback on their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management and build leadership capacity so that other staff, in addition to the headteacher, take responsibility for aspects of the school's work.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is very ambitious for the school and its pupils. He wants the best possible experience and outcomes for the pupils and works hard and resolutely to make sure this is delivered.
- Staff who responded to the survey are unanimous in their praise of the school and how it is led. They are proud to work in the school and recognise the improvements that have been made.
- Teaching is well led. Teachers are observed at least twice a term and receive feedback and targets for improvement as part of an annual cycle of evaluation. In addition, the headteacher visits classrooms regularly to check on pupils' progress and engagement. One staff member described this by saying the headteacher has 'his finger on the pulse'.
- If performance dips, as it did in 2015, the headteacher takes swift action to improve teaching, for example by moving staff out of the school and appointing new experienced and qualified staff.
- The headteacher took decisive action in response to the areas for development in the previous inspection report, to the extent that the provision for music, healthy lifestyles and student leadership are fast becoming strengths of the school. Pupils and parents value these opportunities and are clear about the impact these changes are having on pupils' achievement and personal development.
- The curriculum is kept under review to make sure it is meeting the needs of all pupils, national changes to GCSEs and the timetable, as required.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The ethos of the school is explicitly based on respect and tolerance. Pupils study current affairs, including information about the structure of government in Britain, personal, social and health education (PSHE), and other world religions in religious studies.
- In addition to the taught curriculum, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through a range of trips and other activities. During the inspection, pupils were rehearsing for a performance event celebrating the range of cultures represented in the school.
- The safeguarding requirements for recruitment are met. Staff are trained in safeguarding and child protection. They have received training from the local authority about the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. Arrangements for the supervision of external candidates on site for examinations are appropriate.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View survey or met with the inspector were positive about the school and would recommend it to others. Parents were unanimous that their child felt safe at school.
- The headteacher and governors value the effective links they have made with Hounslow local authority, in particular the development of music provision at the school by the Hounslow Music Service.
- The headteacher takes on too much of the responsibility for the strategic and day-to-day running of the school himself and this is limiting the capacity of the school to improve further. The headteacher has recognised this and has made a few appointments in key areas. However, this process needs to be continued as it is of key importance for the future success of the school.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors are fully committed to the success and continued improvement of the school and share the headteacher's ambitions for the future. They bring a range of skills from the academic and commercial world and use their knowledge and expertise to do the best for pupils.
  - Governors know the school well. They visit regularly and have worked hard to build positive relationships in the wider community and with parents.
  - Governors receive information about pupils' achievement, teaching and behaviour and provide challenge to the headteacher to make sure that areas for improvement are identified and followed up in the school development plan.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan challenging activities which encourage pupils to think and apply their understanding in a range of contexts. As a result, pupils learn well and make good progress.

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Learning has clear aims and proceeds at a lively pace. In a Year 7 French lesson on prepositions, the teacher's use of the target language throughout the lesson encouraged pupils to challenge themselves and 'have a go' at an answer. As a result, pupils enjoyed their learning, were proud of their efforts and made good progress.
- The school has focused on developing its range and use of visual resources for pupils to use in lessons. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. In a GCSE chemistry lesson, the teacher provided a storyboard showing how the Earth's early atmosphere changed and developed into our modern atmosphere. This was a useful prompt for pupils and enabled them to develop their understanding in much more depth.
- Teachers model vocabulary very well, so that pupils hear these subject words and phrases in context. This enables pupils to use the vocabulary readily in their own answers and in their writing. In a Year 9 history lesson, pupils discussed the push and pull factors involved in migration of people to the United Kingdom throughout history.
- Teachers adapt work for pupils with special educational needs so that they are supported effectively. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the teaching assistant lead additional support sessions to develop pupils' confidence and social skills in a small-group setting.
- Pupils' work is not always assessed according to the school's own assessment policy and so the quality of the written feedback on pupils' work is inconsistent across subject areas. Pupils know when they have done well but are not always aware of how to improve their work.
- Teacher questioning is usually good and is generally appropriate to the level of challenge of the work. However, sometimes pupils' progress is limited and their speaking skills are underdeveloped. This is because teachers do not probe pupils' understanding further or they stop pupils when they are in the middle of an answer.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are developing into confident young people, willing and able to contribute to their school and the community.
- Pupils are encouraged to be ambitious for themselves yet at the same time caring and respectful towards each other. There is a real sense of community among the pupils and they are equally proud of each other's achievements as they are of their own.
- A higher than usual number of pupils join the school after the start of Year 7. The school works very effectively with late arrivals and some of these pupils spoke eloquently to the inspector about how the school had given them the opportunity to focus on learning as a priority and learn to manage their own behaviour so that they can make the most of their education.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills. The school council meets regularly and has brought about a number of improvements to the school as well as opportunities for recreation and charity fund raising. Pupils feel listened to and enjoy representing their peers. The recent introduction of a house system and reward points is proving successful.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say there is no bullying, racism or homophobic name-calling but they would know how to report it if there was. They have had talks in assembly and from the local police about keeping themselves safe on the internet. Parents and staff also say that pupils are safe.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- There are strong relationships between teachers and pupils and high expectations, so all pupils are focused on learning and achieving their best. Lessons are calm and orderly. There is a strong study ethic and no disruptions to learning.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well around the school site. They respect their learning environment and there is no litter. They are very polite, helpful and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils' appearance is impeccable. They are very smart in their uniform and proud of their school and their achievements.
- Pupils' attendance is slightly better than the national figures. They enjoy coming to school and understand the importance of good attendance. Pupils' punctuality is very good.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils achieve well in all their subjects as a result of good teaching and their positive attitudes to learning.
- Attainment in mathematics is good in all year groups. Lively teaching engages the pupils and so they attain well. Four pupils in Year 11 were entered early for GCSE mathematics and have already attained A\* and A grades. Others are on track to make at least good progress in their examinations and achieve high grades.
- Pupils' achievement in English is improving. The headteacher has taken action to ensure that predicted grades are accurate and standards of work indicate that Year 11 pupils are likely to make good progress and achieve at or above their target grades in 2016.
- In Year 7 and 8, younger pupils make better progress in mathematics than English. Pupils' achievement in English is inconsistent. The headteacher has already made plans to increase the proportion of English teaching from next term to address this issue.
- Across a range of other subjects, the vast majority of pupils are on track to achieve or exceed their targets. Pupils' achievement in French is particularly high.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability make good progress as a result of good teaching. Parents are extremely supportive of the school's efforts and unstinting in their praise for how their child is developing academically and personally.
- Pupils make good progress in music. All pupils in Year 7 and 8 play either the clarinet or the trumpet. The school works effectively with Hounslow Music Service so that pupils develop a love of music and improve their performance skills. Pupils in older year groups continue with music if they wish.
- All pupils go swimming every week and have further lessons in football, netball, basketball and athletics. Pupils really enjoy these opportunities and they have a very positive impact on pupils' overall achievement, personal development, physical fitness and leadership skills.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about moving on to the next stage of their education. They receive good support and all move on to sixth forms or colleges of their choice.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135090
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012837
<b>DfE registration number</b>	313/6081

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	73
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Sukhvinder Dhillon
<b>Chair</b>	Jamshed Butt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sukhvinder Dhillon
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£6,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8577 1827
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oakheights.co.uk">www.oakheights.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:s.dhillon@oakheights.co.uk">s.dhillon@oakheights.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16–17 May 2012

## Information about this school

- Oak Heights Independent School is a secondary school for girls and boys in the London Borough of Hounslow.
- The school opened in 2006 and is located in two former commercial building units which have been adapted for educational use. The school also uses the sports facilities of Hounslow Leisure Centre.
- The school is registered for 80 pupils from Year 7 to Year 11. There are currently 73 full-time pupils. There are a few pupils with specific learning difficulties and some of these have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher of the school is also the proprietor. There are two governors and five trustees.
- The school also operates as an examination centre for external candidates wishing to take public examinations.
- The school was inspected in October 2013 for the approval of the addition of new premises and an increase in the capacity of the school to 80 pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed pupils' learning in parts of six lessons and made a number of other shorter visits to lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, a governor and representatives from Hounslow Music Service.
- Three groups of pupils spoke to the inspector about their views of the school and the inspector also talked informally with pupils.
- The inspector considered a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, policies, schemes of work and information about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector took account of 11 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and also met with some parents.
- The inspector took account of the eight responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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