

Inspection of Oaks Park High School

45–65 Oaks Lane, Newbury Park, Ilford, Essex IG2 7PQ

Inspection dates: 8–9 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know that when they join the school in Year 7, leaders have strong ambitions for them. Along the way, pupils receive lots of good-quality support, advice and guidance to help them choose courses. As a result, most stay at school for seven years and achieve well in the public examinations they take. This includes students in the sixth form who are excellent role models for their younger peers. However, in Year 9, pupils do not study a broad enough curriculum. Some subjects are not taught in sufficient depth because of the school's two-year key stage 3.

Pupils said that the school provides lots of opportunities to discuss and debate a wide range of issues. They do this in lessons, assemblies and in the daily tutor time. Pupils value this because it improves their understanding about the world. It also develops their skills of organising ideas and expressing their arguments in a coherent way. Students in the sixth form do this particularly well.

Pupils confirmed that all areas of the school are safe for them to visit. They know that adults in the school care about them and want them to succeed. Pupils' attendance is above average. Most behave well and work hard. Pupils know what to do if they have concerns, including on the rare occasions when bullying occurs. They know that staff will deal with concerns quickly, and they can report them on the school's online system.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

A well-planned and well-implemented subject programme in Years 9 to 11 ensures that pupils achieve well in GCSE examinations, year on year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities prosper in this school, as do those who are disadvantaged. This is because their needs are identified accurately, and the right support put in place. For example, visually impaired pupils are provided with larger text and picture cues to support them in remembering important information. Pupils settle down to work quickly and show good attitudes to learning.

Subject leaders have started to review the key stage 3 curriculum. Most think carefully about how to order topics so that knowledge builds on pupils' previous learning and on what is planned next. For instance, in science, the primary key stage 2 curriculum is used to plan for pupils' learning in Year 7. Leaders also draw upon the GCSE requirements to start embedding important subject skills early on. Such thoughtful planning is evident in other subjects, such as mathematics and English. However, it is currently not as strong in some foundation subjects, such as design and technology, and music. Although the broad aims of the curriculum are covered over Years 7 and 8, the subject content is not taught in sufficient depth. In practice, this means that pupils learn about key ideas at a rapid rate, without enough time to bed down important knowledge. Pupils choose four options in Year 8 and start their GCSE subjects in Year 9. Although they study a range of subjects, pupils miss out on some subjects in Year 9. Leaders and governors have not ensured that all pupils have the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects, as

exemplified by the national curriculum, in Year 9.

A full personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is in place throughout Years 7 to 11. The school has been recognised for its work in careers education. The school also provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, for example in music, sport and performing arts. However, not all Year 9 pupils participate in these and this does not compensate for their lost curriculum entitlement.

The proportion of pupils studying the five English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subject areas has improved over the past three years. Previously, fewer pupils were studying languages. Leaders noted this as a concern and put clear plans in place to reverse this. As a result, the quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment in languages has improved for those who continue to GCSE. The take up of GCSE language courses has increased. Currently, in Year 11, almost half the pupils are studying the five EBacc areas, including a modern foreign language.

Students in the sixth form get an excellent deal. The curriculum is extremely well matched to their needs and aspirations. The staying-on rate from Year 11, in academic and vocational courses, is high. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge and ability to communicate mean that concepts are taught in great depth. This prepares students well for higher education. Most go on to university courses, including the Russell Group institutions. Disadvantaged sixth-form students are not left behind. Most of them continue to higher education too.

Teachers told inspectors that leaders have begun to take important steps to reduce unnecessary workload. Staff appreciate this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are vigilant in their care of pupils. Leaders' thorough checking processes ensure that only adults that are safe to work with pupils are employed by the school. All staff receive annual safeguarding training as well as frequent updates. Leaders know their pupils and their families well. The strong positive relationships that they have built with pupils' families help them to provide early support. They work well with partners, for instance the police, to ensure that the local risks to pupils from gangs and knife crime are minimised. Leaders are relentless in pursuing help for their vulnerable pupils when it is needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils in Year 9 receive their entitlement of a broad and balanced curriculum that is at least as ambitious as the national curriculum. Leaders need to continue reviewing the current offer in

Year 9 and revise it so that all pupils have universal access to the full curriculum.

- The depth of the curriculum in the foundation subjects in Years 7 and 8 varies. There are many subjects with a strong curriculum in key stage 3 for leaders to draw upon to support improvements, including mathematics and English. Leaders need to work with departments in a systematic way to ensure that all subjects have a well-sequenced curriculum, allowing pupils to learn in greater depth.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	133405
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10115152
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,885
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mohamed Omer
Headteacher	Joanne Hamill
Website	http://oakspark.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	10–11 October 2011

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school uses the following alternative providers to educate some of its pupils for part of the time: Redbridge Alternative Provision, Beacon Business Innovation Hub and Havering College.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, and four groups of teachers who teach a range of subjects. We also held discussions with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. We held a further telephone

conversation with the school's link adviser for school improvement from Redbridge local authority.

- We held discussions with the designated leader for safeguarding, looked at records and scrutinised the school's safeguarding practice.
- We observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day and spoke to staff about pupils' wider development.
- We considered English, mathematics, science, languages, design and technology and business studies in depth as part of this inspection. This entailed discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We also carried out lesson visits jointly with senior leaders. We scrutinised pupils' work to gain a view about how much they were knowing and remembering.

Inspection team

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