



# Oakfield Park School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number 133719  
LEA Wakefield

Inspection number 274856  
Inspection dates 17 - 18 May 2005  
Reporting inspector Alastair Younger

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

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Type of School	Special	School address	Barnsley Road
School category	Community Special		Ackworth
Age range of pupils	11 - 19		Pontefract
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01977 723145
Number on roll	117	Fax number	01977 723148
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Yvonne Holmes
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected	Headteacher	Ms Wendy E Fereday

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Age group	Published	Reference no.
11 - 19	June 2005	274856

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## Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff at Oakfield School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

## Description of the school

Oakfield is a large sized special school, near Pontefract, for pupils with severe, profound or multiple learning difficulties, often in association with autistic spectrum difficulties. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Over a third of pupils are entitled to free school meals and a similar proportion is considered to be looked after by the local authority. The school opened nearly three years ago, following local authority reorganisation.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

This is a good, happy school which knows what it does well and where improvements are needed. This is reflected in its self-evaluation. Pupils and students love attending and their parents are very happy for their children to come, knowing that they will be safe, contented and are making good progress. Pupils are well taught and keen to learn. They enter into a wide range of well planned, and often exciting, activities wholeheartedly. Because of the nature of their learning difficulties the standards reached by pupils are well below national averages but all pupils do well in their studies and make outstanding progress in their personal development. Assessment results at the end of pupils' stay show steady improvements over the last two years. Good leadership has created a school that pupils want to attend, where staff enjoy working and which gives good value for money. Leadership is slightly stronger than management.

This is the school's first inspection since it was formed nearly three years ago. Since then, it has shown a keen desire to improve. Informal checks by senior staff give the management a good idea how to build upon the school's strengths and address weaknesses, but these checks should be more systematic. Improvement could be faster if the school measured pupils' progress more consistently and used the information gained more effectively. The school's finances are stable and daily routines run very efficiently.

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

The inspector agrees with the school that Post 16 students are getting a very good deal. They are particularly well prepared for leaving school. The many opportunities they have to attend college courses and gain experience of work benefit them greatly. Good teaching results in students making good progress in the classroom. The students' personal development is exceptionally good. Independence skills are strongly promoted. These include encouraging students to make their own way to school when staff and parents feel that they are ready and able for this. Leadership and management are good. There is a strong vision of how the department can develop. Organisation is very good but there should be more regular checks of how good the teaching is and exactly how much progress students make.

### **Grade: 2**

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Get staff to put in place a better system for gathering information about pupils' progress.
- Make better use of the information gathered about pupils' progress.
- Check the quality of teaching more effectively.

## **Achievement and standards**

The school slightly underestimates the achievement of pupils. They achieve well throughout the school. The local education authority has gathered information about the level at which pupils were performing two years ago and compared it with where they are now. The results show that nearly all pupils are making good progress and are meeting most of their individual targets. These are realistic and challenging, but they are achievable if pupils continue to work hard.

Teachers know the children very well as individuals and understand what each needs to learn next, but the school has an insufficiently clear idea about progress overall. It has not made enough use of the total information it has about pupils, for instance to compare the progress of different groups of pupils or to make comparisons between different subjects. On the information available there is no evidence of any group of pupils underachieving and variations in progress relate more to the degree of pupils' learning difficulties than any aspect of provision.

### **Grade: 2**

### **Personal development and well-being**

Pupils and students are a delight. Their behaviour is exemplary, reflecting the school's very strong promotion of moral values and consistently applied behaviour programme. Those facing the most difficulty in managing their own behaviour usually succeed because of skilled management by staff. This means that the school is a calm place, where everyone can relax and concentrate on learning.

Many pupils have time away from school for medical reasons but apart from this they attend whenever they can. Attendance is close to that seen in many mainstream secondary schools. There is tremendous celebration of individual achievement so pupils' efforts rarely go unnoticed and this encourages them to keep trying harder. Pupils are always learning new skills to help them become more independent and helpful to others. They learn how to live healthily and as they get older develop a very good awareness of the complexities of adult life and the importance of being good friends and neighbours.

The spirituality of the school is well demonstrated by the happiness and contentment of pupils as they learn to make sense of their lives and the ways they can help others. Simple, but important social skills, such as being polite, are exceptionally well promoted. Pupils gain excellent insights into their own society and a fast growing awareness of other cultures.

**Grade: 1**

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

The school correctly identifies that teaching and learning are good. When teachers plan lessons they pay close attention to individual pupils' needs. By carefully considering these needs, teachers are able to arrange extra support for certain pupils and to set harder work for others. Work is carefully varied to allow each pupil to work as independently as possible. Staff form good classroom teams, working well together and sharing responsibilities. Many staff show considerable skill in working with pupils with specific disabilities, for instance, when they use signing to help communication.

There is a high level of teaching expertise in the separate units for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and in the classes for pupils with autism. This greatly helps these pupils and students to learn and make the same good progress as those in other classes. Teachers quickly build up a keen understanding of pupils by observing them carefully and keeping a close eye on their work and behaviour. There is a bit of inconsistency in the way that different teachers assess how well pupils are progressing and this is getting in the way of helping the school to make better use of information overall.

**Grade: 2**

### **Curriculum and other activities**

Each day features purposeful, interesting activities. These are frequently fun and memorable, as was seen in the 'Super Learning Day' during the inspection. Work is carefully selected to make it relevant, interesting and well matched to pupils' needs. Many activities take pupils out of the classroom, teaching them that new things can be learned in all sorts of situations. A wide range of clubs and activities add interest to breaks and lunchtimes and encourage pupils to make the best of their time in school. A good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education helps pupils to learn important things about life and work. Breaks and lunchtimes provide good opportunities to encourage healthy eating and exercise. The curriculum meets all requirements.

**Grade: 2****Care, guidance and support**

This is a safe school and it cares well for its pupils and students. This makes a big contribution to their personal development and helps create the right mood for learning. There are very few instances of racism and they are dealt with quickly and effectively; however, the recording of such incidents is scant. All the evidence points to child protection procedures being in place. Pupils receive good quality advice about how they can improve their work and overcome their difficulties. They are offered good guidance to help them make important choices that will affect their lives. This includes very helpful information about the opportunities open to them when they leave school.

**Grade: 2****Leadership and management**

The school's self evaluation is similar to the findings of the inspection; the leadership team have a good understanding of their school. In less than three years a good school has been established and an effective and happy staff team built up. Opportunities for all pupils and students to thrive equally have been ensured. Good systems have been developed to keep the school pushing forward. Governors have been influential in the school's development. They meet regularly and offer support and challenge to the headteacher's vision for a better school. Income and expenditure are carefully balanced. The governing body is very much in tune with the views and wishes of parents. At the moment, however, they rely very heavily on the headteacher passing on information about standards in the school and this does not include enough detail about pupils' progress or the quality of teaching. The main reason for this is that although the headteacher and senior managers have a good understanding of the school they are not picking out smaller details in the variation of provision, for instance the relative achievement of boys and girls. This is because they do not use fully effective systems to check on the quality of teaching and how much progress pupils make overall. The school is in a good position to continue improving.

**Grade: 2**

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## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<b>Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</b>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

### **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

*\* Standards are judged 1, well above average; 2, above average; 3, average; 4, below average*

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	<b>*4</b>	<b>*4</b>
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

### **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING**

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
The behaviour of learners	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
How well learners enjoy their education	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

### **THE QUALITY OF PROVISION**

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well does the provision promote the well-being of learners?</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are taught about sexual health risks	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Procedures for Child Protection meet the requirements of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>How well learners enjoy and achieve</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Support is given to learners with poor behaviour and attendance	Yes
Learners' personal and academic development are monitored	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, are consulted when key decisions affecting them have to be made and their views are listened to	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop their enterprise and financial skills, and work in teams	Yes
Education and training for all learners in 14-19 is co-ordinated to give experience of work based learning	Yes

Alexandra House      T 0207 421 6800  
33 Kingsway            F 0207 421 6707  
London WC2B 6SE      [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



Oakfield Park School  
Barnsley Road  
Ackworth  
Pontefract  
WF7 7DT

19<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Dear Pupils and Students

Well done! Not long ago I came to your school to have a look at how well you were getting on and whether there was anything I could suggest to make the school better. You made me very welcome and I enjoyed your company. Thank you.

I know I was only with you for two days but that was long enough for me to realise that Oakfield Park is a good school. One of the reasons for that is because you are so well behaved and keen to learn. I especially enjoyed watching assembly at the end of your 'Super Learning Day'. There are a lot of other things I liked. Here are a few.

- I know you like coming to school because many of you told me. Your parents say so too.
- There are so many different people working in the school and they are all doing their best to look after you and help you learn.
- You are made to do as much as you can for yourselves. This is helping you to grow up and become more independent.
- In Post 16 classes you are growing up fast and learning a lot about life and work. This will help you when you leave.

There are only a few things that I felt would make the school better. The main one is that I would like staff to find better ways of showing how much progress you are making. The trouble with that is they might make you work even harder. Good luck anyway

All the best,

Alastair Younger (Lead inspector)