



Oak View School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115460
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279599
Inspection dates 29 June 2006 to 30 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Maureen York HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	Whitehills Road
School category	Community special		IG10 1TS
Age range of pupils	3 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0208 5084293
Number on roll	64	Fax number	0208 5021864
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Mitchell Cohen
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr. Stephen Armstrong

Age group 3 to 16	Inspection dates 29 June 2006 - 30 June 2006	Inspection number 279599
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Oak View is an all age special school with 64 pupils on roll. Pupils have learning difficulties which range from profound and multiple to moderate. Many also have associated learning needs including autistic spectrum disorder and challenging behaviour. The number of pupils on roll has been steadily decreasing although numbers are stable for September. The school's future special educational provision is the subject of discussion with the local authority. It is currently exploring the possibility of becoming a New Model Special School. Thirty percent of pupils have free school meals. A small proportion learn English as an additional language and a similar proportion is in the care of the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and provides satisfactory value for money. This is a judgement supported by the school's self-evaluation. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the school has the capacity to improve further. The personal development of pupils is good and the school is a safe and friendly community. Transition arrangements are effective in supporting pupils with managing change in their lives. Child protection procedures are fully in place and links with external agencies are effective. The quality of care and guidance is good. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children make steady progress and achieve in line with their abilities. As pupils move up through the school achievement and progress overall continues to be satisfactory and this is the result of educational provision that meets their needs. The curriculum, teaching and learning are satisfactory. While effective planning and use of assessment in some lessons leads to good and some outstanding learning this is not consistent practice across the school. The recording of pupil progress is not yet capturing all of the small steps that pupils make and teachers' planning is not therefore detailed enough to build on these gains. There are pockets of good practice in the teaching of some autistic pupils and some who have complex learning difficulties. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leadership team are clear about the strengths and weaknesses in the school but the school's self-assessment processes and procedures are not sufficiently focused and evaluative. Furthermore, the links between the outcomes of the school's self evaluation and the school improvement plan are not explicit and the action needed to bring about improvement is not clear, especially in relation to curriculum development. Recent changes in the governing body have led to improvements in leadership and management. There is a new committee structure which is intended to help the governing body to fulfil its role in challenging the school to improve further. These changes are recent and have not had time to make a measurable impact.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessment is consistently used to inform teachers' planning and improve the system for recording progress so that the school has accurate information on which to plan next steps. - Ensure that the curriculum effectively meets the needs of the pupils and adaptations to meet changing needs are reflected in whole school planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The standards pupils reach are well below average for their age because of their learning difficulties and disabilities but their achievement is satisfactory. This is the result of educational provision that is adequate in meeting pupils' needs. At the upper end of the age range, pupils and students gain awards from units of study in entry level courses and a few have passed GCSE in art and design. However, pupil achievement across the school varies and overall progress is satisfactory. In some lessons, where

planning and assessment are effective, progress is good and sometimes outstanding. However, the quality of planning is too inconsistent and in some lessons not all pupils make the expected progress. There are pockets of good practice in the teaching of some autistic pupils and some who have complex learning difficulties. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily. The school is systematically collecting information on pupils' performance. However, it is at an early stage of analysing this in order to set targets to improve achievement. The school's current targets, based on a general assumption about the progress pupils should make, lack the challenge that a greater insight into pupils' performance would bring.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Relationships in the school are strong and pupils say that they are happy. One pupil commented that the best thing about school was that, 'it helps you to learn things.' Two of the higher achieving pupils spoken with felt that they could do harder work. Pupils are very positive about the school; they feel safe and are secure in their friendships. In particular they show great care for each other and are mutually supportive. This is effectively modelled by teachers and learning support assistants, who work well together in the classroom. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school council and are drawing up plans for a garden, which was a suggestion made by the pupils themselves. Behaviour is good, challenging behaviour is managed well and there are clear guidelines on restraint. The school is an orderly community and break times are managed well. Attendance is good and there have been no exclusions in this academic year. Healthy eating is promoted and the school uses locally sourced food. The pupils are effectively guided in making good choices at lunchtime. All pupils are encouraged to be active and there are opportunities for football and other games at break times. Arrangements for transition into adult life are good and pupils have access to work experience which enhances their future economic well-being. Links with local colleges are good and the curriculum supports them in understanding the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. While effective planning and use of assessment in some lessons leads to good and some outstanding learning, this is not consistent practice. In the best lessons there is good knowledge of pupils and their needs. This leads to careful planning of activities which effectively builds on what pupils have already learnt. In these lessons clear learning objectives are set for individual pupils, the pace of learning is brisk and pupils enjoy their work. In some lessons, approaches used in teaching autistic pupils are well established and result in them learning effectively. Overall, pupils are supported and managed well. Teachers face substantial

demands in meeting the needs of pupils who range widely in age and learning difficulties. The school rightly identified the need for better approaches to planning and assessment to meet the needs of all its pupils. The new systems introduced over the last year are effective where they are used consistently but they are not yet fully in place and embedded across the school. As a result, in some lessons pupils are not challenged effectively and the pace of learning is too slow.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Much of it is undergoing review as a result of the increased range and greater complexity of pupils' learning difficulties. In addition there are fewer pupils on roll and classes now contain pupils with a wide age range than before and in some classes this range is considerable. The impact of this wider age range is that much of the existing curriculum planning is no longer suitable to meet the needs of pupils and it does not always ensure they will make appropriate progress. Action which helps pupils to communicate, for example, using objects, symbols and electronic aids, is good. Pupils' independence is promoted in well planned programmes across the curriculum. Personal, social and health education contributes to pupils learning about healthy lifestyles, personal safety and relationships. There is some good provision to meet the needs of autistic pupils is in place. In Key Stage 4 and 5 pupils have the opportunity to pursue appropriate accredited courses in both school and college. The scope for the school to develop additional activities after school is limited by the long distances many pupils travel to get home. A few lunchtime clubs are keenly supported. The Saturday morning sports activities attracts a small number of enthusiastic families. There are a good number of links to organisations beyond school offering a variety of activities which enrich pupils' learning experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school nurse makes an effective contribution to the health and well-being of the pupils and effectively helps teachers in supporting pupils on sexual health and managing personal change. Child protection procedures are fully in place and staff are regularly updated. Links with external agencies are good. There is evidence of appropriate risk assessments in lesson planning. Parents responding to the questionnaire are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Transition arrangements are good and pupils are prepared well for the world of work. The school and the Connexions service work well together to ensure an appropriate range of work placements for pupils and they guide them on making choices.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management and value for money are satisfactory. The school has the capacity to improve further. The headteacher has a vision for the school and is planning

effectively against a background of some uncertainty over its future role. Morale remains high. The self-assessment is accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses but it is insufficiently evaluative and is too long and descriptive. Links with the school improvement plan are not sufficiently explicit and it is not clear about the activity which will result in the planned outcomes. The recent restructuring of the senior leadership team is sharpening the focus on school improvement. There has been good progress in developing provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and this is led well. There have been improvements in assessment but it is not yet consistent practice across the school. There is a rigorous system of monitoring the quality of teaching. Senior staff have taken action to secure improvements where they are needed. They know where there are strengths and weaknesses in teaching and their view is accurate. The new chair of governors has recently introduced changes in the governing body and it is now more focused on securing school improvement. A new committee structure means that it is better placed to challenge the school and to hold it to account for outcomes for pupils.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We recently visited your school to meet you and to look at the work you are doing. We enjoyed meeting you and you gave us a really good welcome. You told us that you were happy in school and that it helped you to learn. You have good friends and you all help one another. This was very good to hear. Your teachers look after you well and take care to make sure that you are safe. When you leave school they help you to make choices about the courses and work you may want to do. We have asked them to plan your lessons carefully so that you enjoy your work and make good progress. Also we have asked them to keep a careful record of what you can do now so that your next activity can be well chosen. We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Oak View and send you all of our best wishes for the future.