

Oakwood High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106009
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	309004
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Blackband

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Norman Parry
Headteacher	Mrs J Triska
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
School address	Chatsworth Road Eccles Salford Manchester M30 9DY
Telephone number	0161 7861920
Fax number	0161 7861922

Age group	11-16
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2007
Inspection number	309004

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oakwood High School provides for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Many of the pupils have additional learning needs caused by social and emotional difficulties, visual or hearing impairment or other complex problems. Most of the pupils are White British with a very few pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds. Over half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has specialist school status in arts and technology.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Oakwood High is a superb school, led by an inspirational headteacher and which continually strives to improve the provision for all its learners. Because of their learning difficulties, the pupils' levels of attainment on entry to the school are below average and in some cases are exceptionally low, but all pupils do very well in their studies and most make outstanding progress. The pupils love coming to school and parents are very happy for their children to attend, knowing they will be safe. They enjoy their lessons and the school has extremely high expectations of their progress. One parent commented: 'I could not wish for my daughter to attend a better school.' The quality of teaching is excellent. The pupils enjoy their lessons and respond by trying their best. Lessons are very well planned and they are characterised by the high quality of support given to pupils by well-trained learning assistants. The school's monitoring and tracking of pupils' overall achievement is exemplary. The curriculum is outstanding and this is because of the excellent quality of assessment which enables teachers to tailor the learning activities very accurately to individual pupils' needs. The pupils feel safe and well supported. They make excellent gains in their personal development because of the outstanding support they are given and the school's exemplary work to develop the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils told inspectors that, 'we all help each other get along'. They learn to remain healthy, to keep safe and to behave well. They value the school and this is evident through the good relationships they have with staff, their very good attendance and the way they all proudly describe their school. The pupils made many comments to inspectors such as, 'the teachers are great', and, 'we work hard all the time'. The school demonstrates very convincingly in its work that every child matters.

Locally the school is held in high regard. Oakwood High leads many 'cutting-edge' educational developments and provides valuable support to other schools. The school's high quality work has been recognised by the award of specialist school status. This has contributed to the pupils' excellent work in the arts and in technology. Exceptional leadership and management drive all this. The headteacher's dedicated work and her skills inspire the whole staff as she continually strives for higher and higher standards. A very able senior team supports her and this team has been very effective in leading staff in the drive to constantly improve pupils' achievements. The school monitors and evaluates its work extremely well. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure standards throughout the school are maintained at a very high level. The governing body is supportive, well informed and monitors aspects of the school's work robustly. The school has developed a wide range of sophisticated and effective procedures since the previous inspection and there has been enormous progress in what was already an exceptional establishment. There remains an outstanding capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no issues for improvement but the headteacher and staff wish to increase their opportunities to share their expertise and good practice with a wider range of schools.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

All the pupils achieve well and many make outstanding progress. Pupils making exceptional progress are from all sections of the school population, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with sensory impairment. The assessment and tracking

of pupils' progress in the acquisition of basic skills is really exceptional and this has a significant impact on pupils' achievement. The extremely high level of pupils' achievements places the school very close to the top of national league tables of pupils' progress. From their low levels of attainment on entry to the school, the pupils make rapid and sustained improvement so that by Year 11, all pupils attain nationally recognised academic and vocational qualifications and many pupils leave with several GCSE passes to their name. There has been a steady rise over several years in the number and quality of GCSE qualifications awarded to pupils at the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' excellent progress in personal development reflects the school's strong management of behaviour and emphasis on moral values. The younger pupils develop a good awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles and of keeping themselves safe. They make excellent gains in their social skills and are unfailingly pleasant and polite to others. Similarly, older pupils make excellent gains in acquiring valuable life skills through work experience and effective careers provision. Pupils feel safe and confident and know what is expected from them within the school's calm and supportive atmosphere. The pupils' behaviour is exceptional and their attendance is very good because the pupils enjoy school so much and love to be there. The pupils feel valued, encouraged and supported to reach their potential. For example, the displays of pupils' work throughout the school are outstanding and emphasise the value that teachers place on the pupils' efforts. Those pupils who were spoken to were emphatic that they felt free from bullying or unpleasantness and that they really looked forward to coming to school. The many parents who returned questionnaires were unanimous in their unqualified praise for the school and its impact on their children's lives. A typical comment is: 'the school cannot do enough for the pupils. Every child is treated as special'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers know their pupils very well and this enables them to plan interesting well-paced lessons. The management of behaviour is excellent. Pupils understand and respond to clear routines. There are very good relationships between the members of classroom teams. The well trained support staff give the pupils high levels of individual tuition. For example, in a Year 10 science GCSE group, all the staff had a very clear understanding of the pupils' learning targets and gave focused and effective support to pupils who needed it. The pupils enjoy their lessons and try their best. The quality of the assessment of pupils' work is especially strong and this enables teachers to provide challenging and enjoyable activities for the pupils. Teachers capture the small steps in progress which pupils make and this leads to well focused targets for each pupil's further improvement. There are very high expectations of their progress. This has a significant impact on the pupils' excellent standards of behaviour and on their outstanding achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy a carefully constructed curriculum which is rigorously monitored for its effectiveness. Because the quality of assessment is so good, the teachers are able to adapt the curriculum

exceptionally well to meet the needs and abilities of each pupil. All pupils have equal access to learning opportunities because of the excellent levels of support for those with extra learning difficulties. There are very good programmes for older pupils and particularly good provision for work-related learning. Most subjects are taught by specialist teachers. The school's excellent provision for the development of pupils' basic literacy, numeracy, and information and communications technology skills (ICT) is extremely effective in promoting their confidence and access to learning opportunities in other subjects. The pupils' work in art, drama and technology is exceptional and reflects the school's specialisms. There is a wide range of activities to take pupils out of the classroom, teaching them to behave appropriately in the community. This, together with the excellent provision for personal health and social education (PHSE), adds substantially to the pupils' social skills, their self-confidence and their interest in learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides a very high standard of care for all of its pupils. Child protection procedures are well observed and the necessary checks on staff are securely in place. The generous staffing means pupils have many opportunities to talk to adults, and relationships are very supportive. All staff place a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to achieve their potential and to experience success in all they do. The pupils are proud of their achievements. They like the way that staff tell them how well they are doing in both their work and personal development, and that they reward them with praise and encouragement. Pupils are involved where possible in the assessment of their work and they are constantly made aware of their targets and how to improve their work.

Parents receive accurate and comprehensive progress reports for annual review meetings and report a high degree of satisfaction with their level of involvement in their children's education. Pupils receive very good advice and support as they are about to leave school. There are good links with local colleges which results in most pupils taking advantage of further education courses when they leave school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher shows exceptional leadership through her determination to maintain the highest standards of teaching and pupils' progress. A strong senior team supports her and shares her vision of continually examining procedures and provision to make things ever better for the pupils. A strength of the school lies in the rigorous and effective way managers monitor, evaluate and improve on every aspect of both the school's performance and the pupils' achievements. There are very effective procedures, for instance, to measure and improve staff performance. Because of the excellent procedures for assessment and tracking, the management team retain a very good overview of pupils' achievements and are able to ensure that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities and that their targets are both relevant and challenging.

Communication within the school is excellent. Staff feel fully consulted, involved and valued. There are excellent procedures to support new staff. Governors provide outstanding support to the school, they work closely with individual staff and they rigorously monitor the school's strengths and areas for development. Relationships with parents are extremely good.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Oakwood High School, Chatsworth Road, Eccles, M30 9DY.

Not long ago, my colleague and I came to the school to see how you were getting on and whether we could suggest anything to make the school better. You made us very welcome and we enjoyed meeting some of you in the classroom, at the school council and at lunchtimes. Thank you and well done.

We were with you for two days. That was long enough for us to realise that Oakwood High is an outstandingly good school. We could see that you all enjoy school very much. We liked many things. Here are a few:

- You work hard and make excellent progress in your work and in your personal development.
- The many different people at the school look after you very well.
- There is an excellent range of activities including those that help you become independent, make choices and learn how to behave well.
- You receive excellent teaching and your teachers and other staff are very good at recording all the progress you make. This helps them to prepare interesting work for each of you.
- Your school is extremely well run by your headteacher who is very well supported by everyone else including your parents.

We couldn't think of anything that is needed to help the school to improve, because your teachers are constantly thinking of their own ways to make things better. We know, however, that your teachers would like to give support to teachers in other schools so that those teachers can help their pupils to make as much progress as you do. You, of course, can help by continuing to work hard!

Please thank your parents for all the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

Best wishes and good luck.