

Oaklands Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116503
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312346
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Jones HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1264
6th form	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Captain Paul Quinn RN
Headteacher	Mr Matthew Quinn
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2004
School address	Stakes Hill Road Waterlooville PO7 7BW
Telephone number	02392 259214
Fax number	02392 230317

Age group	11-18
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Inspection number	312346

© Crown copyright 2008

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. During a one-day visit, the inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards in the sixth form and achievement in the main school; suitability of curriculum provision to meet the needs of all learners; and the effectiveness of the academic guidance in ensuring students know how they can improve.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, curriculum and planning documents, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff and pupils and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Oaklands Catholic School is larger than other schools. Students travel to the school from a wide area. Few students come from minority ethnic groups or have English as an additional language. In comparison with other schools, a below average proportion of students have a statement of special educational needs or learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is designated a humanities specialist school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Oaklands is a very special school and gives a good Christian teaching as well as being a good school academically'. This quotation from a parent represents the broad view of parent's opinions and encapsulates the outcomes of this inspection. Oaklands is a good school where students and staff are well cared for and know the importance of their community.

Overall, the school provides a good standard of education where students achieve well. In Year 11 students attain good GCSE results, representing good progress from their starting points. In 2007 75% of students gained five or more GCSEs at A* - C. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE's including English and mathematics, at 72%, was significantly above the national average. In Year 9, students consistently reach above average standards and make good progress, most notably in English. Recent developments in provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities and the good quality guidance and support they receive is improving their achievement and the progress they make is at least as good as their peers.

Students make good progress because teaching and learning are good. Teachers are expert and enthusiastic in their subject areas. They reflect on the impact of their classroom practices and are constantly striving to raise the achievement of their students. Students learn well when teachers encourage them to think for themselves and they thrive on a variety of activities that capture and keep their interest. They learn less well when teachers talk too much and provide them with little opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. The school recognises that there is some inconsistency between teachers when marking students work and providing useful and positive guidance on raising individual performance. Students are aware of their current and potential attainment levels but not so clear on what exactly they have to do to improve further. The school leadership is determined that existing good and outstanding practice in supporting students' learning through using assessment will be spread consistently across all subjects.

The personal development and well-being of students are good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. A parent who described her child as becoming a 'well educated, responsible and caring individual' illustrated this. Students behave well; they enjoy school, work hard and want to do well in their studies. Some students do not come to school as regularly as they could and attendance dropped to below average levels for the first time in 2007. Students are very aware of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They understand what constitutes healthy foods as well as the importance of physical activity. Students enjoy happy relationships with their peers, are very appreciative of the opportunities available to them at school and confirm that they feel very safe, reporting that any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively. Students are very willing to take on responsibilities that contribute to the school community. For example older students act as very effective 'buddies' for younger ones, especially those in Year 7. Other roles include members of the School Council, form captains and sports representatives.

The good curriculum in the main school mostly offers students appropriate courses to meet their needs. The school has worked hard to extend the range available to provide greater flexibility and choice, for example in areas such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT), but the more vocationally based courses have not proved popular with students and parents. The specialist school status permeates all areas of the school and has a significant impact on teaching in subject areas. Strong personal and social education along with occasional

focused activity days on topics such as relationships in Year 9 prepare students very well for future adulthood and give them an understanding of a wide range of social and economic issues. The school offers an excellent range of extra curricular activities that are closely linked to students' interests. Staff give freely of their time to organise and run these well-attended sessions and students are keen participants.

The school places a strong emphasis on pastoral care in keeping with its Catholic faith within a highly inclusive community. Any student experiencing difficulties, or at risk of underachieving, is identified and supported. Pastoral managers work effectively with individual students, and their parents, to help overcome barriers to success. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are vulnerable are particularly well looked after and supported. One parent of a child with specific learning difficulties felt their needs were 'met beautifully' resulting in excellent progress. Good systems record students' academic achievement and personal development giving staff the background they need to plan future learning and to give student's guidance on their performance. Not all staff are as yet using this information consistently to tailor their lessons to individual learning needs or to fully inform students how they might improve the quality of their work. Health and safety, risk assessment and child protection procedures are firmly in place and good contact between the school and partner support agencies adds significantly to the breadth of students' learning experiences.

The new headteacher is developing a clear vision for moving the school forward based on a strong focus on learning, strongly supported by an effective governing body. High expectations of staff are supported by an approach to professional development that encourages new and innovative approaches to teaching. Managers and leaders at all levels are empowered to take greater responsibility for the quality of education within their areas and many are taking a creative approach to this opportunity. Governors are full involved and committed to the life of the school. Good leadership and management have created good capacity for continuous improvement based on an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and a very clear view of how they would wish to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Standards in the sixth form are above the national average. This represents satisfactory progress given the students above average attainment on entry to the sixth form. Personal development and well-being are good; students are keen to take on a range of responsibilities both in school and in the wider community, for example acting as buddies with younger students, working in a local primary school and hospice as well as other settings such as charity work in different countries. Students take the lead in running the whole school council including organising meetings. Teaching is good and takes place in an atmosphere of respect and trust that encourages learning. There is not at present a sufficiently wide range of vocational courses offered in the sixth form. The satisfactory curriculum offers mostly academic subjects that do not meet the needs of some students and they often do not make enough progress in some popular subjects. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory and clearly focused on giving the students good guidance and support as well as developing their individual talents and interests. Students appreciate the approachability of staff and feel the school takes very good care of them. This is exemplified by good careers advice that prepares students well for future study and the world of work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure curriculum provision in the main school and particularly in the sixth form meets the needs of all students.
- Improve attendance through rigorous implementation of strategies for monitoring and following up absence.

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	16-19
---	----------------	-------

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
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	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

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

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?	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

14 May 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Oaklands Catholic School, Waterloo, PO7 7BW

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and appreciated your openness and cooperation. This letter summarises the findings of our inspection. Your parents or carers will have a copy of the full report should you wish to read it.

We think that Oaklands is a good school and that you make good progress especially in the main school. We were impressed by the good working relationships that many of you have with your teachers and are pleased that so many of you enjoy school and taking part in the different activities, the school provides. The school takes good care of you. You tell us that you feel safe and that there is always someone to turn to when you need help. You speak highly of your teachers' readiness to assist you and the good teaching you receive. Many of you make a difference through the school council and buddy systems and your work in the wider community such as raising funds for charity. Most of you come to school regularly and on time but a few people could make better progress if they came to school more regularly.

Because you co-operate so well, with what your school is trying to do for you, we are convinced that you will continue to support your teachers' efforts and go from strength to strength in developing your personal skills as well as your academic prowess. To help you with this we have asked your teachers to give you more choice in the courses you are offered, especially in the sixth form. You can contribute by making sure you come to school as frequently as you can.

We wish you and your school a very successful future.

Christine Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector