

# Oakwood School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131115
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	315724
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Greg Sorrell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	51
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Sandford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms R Lindsey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Woodside Road Bexleyheath DA7 6LB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 553787
<b>Fax number</b>	01322 526754

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- standards and achievement
- teaching and learning
- personal development and well-being
- aspects of the curriculum
- child protection procedures
- leadership and management.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, observations of teaching and the work produced by pupils. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with students, the chair of governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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

This is an average sized school of its type set in a residential area of Bexleyheath. The vast majority of students have statements of special educational needs related to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A small number of students are placed for assessment and several students have additional special educational needs including autistic spectrum. A high proportion of students are eligible for free school meals. The school has gained the Healthy School award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Oakwood is a good school where students make good progress in their academic studies as well as their personal development. On arrival to Oakwood, most students' standards are well below average and by the time they leave standards have risen to below average, which represents good achievement. For example, at the end of Key Stage 4, 80% of students leave with 5 GCSE passes and the vast majority go on to further education. In Key Stage 3, progress is also good and some students make excellent progress. The school has good tracking systems to ensure that additional literacy and numeracy support is provided where necessary. This targeted intervention is a key factor in the students' success.

The students eat healthily and sociably in the dining room and exercise enthusiastically despite limited space for indoor physical education. The students' behaviour is good and this, for the majority, represents outstanding progress. Most students respond very well to the many systems in place to reward attendance, work and effort. The weekly celebration assembly enables tutor groups to see how many points each has earned. The students understand and value these systems. Students are justifiably proud of their achievements, and displays of work are treated with respect. Several students have won awards for work in the community. In discussion with students it is clear they recognise the impact that school has had on their behaviour and personal development. For example, 'You wouldn't have recognised me when I first came to Oakwood, I was angry with everyone and myself. We are like a family here, but now I'm looking forward to college and I know I'll be alright.' Parents indicate they too are very happy with the school's effect upon their children.

There is a minority of students who pose significant challenges to the school in relation to behaviour and attendance. Such students account for all fixed term exclusions where they have not managed their behaviour effectively. The school always seeks alternative strategies to ensure the minimum disruption to everyone's learning. Staff work tirelessly to maximise students' attendance, including home visits and rewards for being in school. The headteacher has recently considered making these rewards more immediate than termly.

The quality of teaching is good overall and is of outstanding quality on occasions. Teaching is typified by good attention to individual needs and high expectations of work and behaviour. Increasingly good use is made of assessment, including the involvement of students in assessing how they have done. The recent access granted to students, to enable them to look at their own assessment and behaviour data, is an excellent initiative and empowers them to assume responsibility and shape their futures. Teachers work collaboratively with the well qualified teaching assistants, some of whom have specific expertise and responsibilities such as supporting students in individual literacy programmes.

At the heart of the school is the headteacher who provides excellent leadership to her talented leadership team: indeed, all staff share the commitment to improve the school further. They have developed good systems to see how well the school is doing and what needs to improve and the curriculum is subject to regular review in the light of students' needs. There is a strong emphasis on key skills including literacy, numeracy, communication and working with others. Such themes are clearly identified in planning and implemented successfully. Older students have good opportunities to develop vocational skills in building and horticulture as well as on work experience and by attendance at a college of further education. Meeting individuals' needs is given high priority. For example, the staff have developed personalised programmes

for students who need an alternative curriculum. Although this type of provision is a relatively recent initiative, there is telling evidence of success in relation to students' achievement and attendance. However, elements of these programmes are partly or wholly off-site and do not have the rigour that is the hallmark of all school-based programmes. Year 9 pupils do not currently have the opportunity to study a modern foreign language as required. Nevertheless, the curriculum is good, meets the wide range of needs and ensures the students make progress.

Overall, good leadership and management ensure that arrangements for safeguarding students are appropriate. Links with outside agencies and other professionals make a good contribution to students' well-being and achievement. Excellent use is made of visitors to the school to enrich the curriculum. For example, a drama group emphasised the importance of road safety and the prison service demonstrated some consequences of not being a positive citizen. The leadership team are involved in several projects that provide support for other schools. Oakwood enjoys the confidence of the local authority as is earmarked for expansion with the authority's overall planning. The governing body provide satisfactory support for the work of the school. Their relevant expertise is used well for finance and personnel issues and the recent recruitment of a local headteacher will strengthen their role further. The school provides good value for money and has made good improvement since the previous inspection. Oakwood's capacity to improve still further is outstanding.

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

- Further consider ways of reducing the number of exclusions in order to maximise the students' learning opportunities.
- Ensure that all alternative curriculum programmes are of the same quality as those that are school-based.
- Provide opportunities for Year 9 pupils to study a modern foreign language.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	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	3
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

28 January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Oakwood School, Bexleyheath, DA7 6LB

Thank you for helping me to get to know your school this week and for giving me such a warm welcome. I found that your school gives you a good education. One of the main strengths of the school is the good effect it has on your personal development and well-being. You are also able to leave with qualifications that will help you when you leave school.

The teaching you receive from the staff is good, as is the additional support to help you improve your behaviour so that you can get on with everyone and your school work. It is clear you become more confident as you get older. I was pleased to hear how much you enjoyed school and you told me that you feel safe and know that the staff are there to help if you have problems.

The school tries hard to make all your learning just right for what you need. Lessons for older students in Years 10 and 11 are good at preparing you for leaving school and going to college. These experiences, and your time on work experience and at college, prepare you well for leaving school. A few students need a different timetable and this can help them to carry on learning even if they sometimes find school too difficult. Some students have found these courses suit them very well, although some parts could be planned a bit better. Students in Year 9 don't get lessons in French as they should.

You get on well with the staff and mostly do your best to see that everyone can get on and learn in class. Your behaviour is good although for a few students this remains a problem and leads to them being excluded. Time out of school has a bad effect on the good progress you can make. I think being able to look at your own records on the computer is a really good thing and I know you are impressed too! The school works hard to keep you fit and healthy. Most of you know about dangers from drugs and keep away from things that are harmful. Even though the space in the hall is a bit tight, you played very well together.

In order to improve the school further, I am asking the headteacher to look at exclusions to see what can be done to keep them to a minimum. She also needs to make sure that all the alternative programmes are really well planned and finally to ensure that Year 9 students can study a foreign language. Good luck!

Greg Sorrell

Lead inspector