

# Oakwood School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	855/6021
Unique Reference Number	128078
Inspection number	334279
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Declan McCarthy

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

---

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.

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 08456 404040

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Oakwood is a small independent day special school providing education for boys and girls aged 8 -16, from across the country, who have behavioural emotional and social difficulties. At the time of the inspection there were nine pupils aged 13 -16 on roll. Five Year 11 pupils were on study leave. Nearly all pupils are looked after and accommodated in one of four small residential homes within short driving distance of the school. One day pupil travels from Leicester City. The majority of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, primarily for behavioural emotional and/or social difficulties. Some have additional needs such as Asperger's syndrome, moderate or specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The school is located in a refurbished building in a village suburb of Leicester in close proximity to local shops. The school has a stable staff group and the headteacher is newly appointed to the school. The school's aims identified at the last inspection still remain. These are 'to develop and encourage home school contact, academic skills, creativity, imagination, initiative and individuality, and to enhance self esteem to facilitate positive behaviour'. The school was last inspected in September 2006.

## Evaluation of the school

Oakwood School provides a good quality of education and care for its pupils. It meets its aims successfully. It has maintained its strengths and made further good progress since its last inspection. All regulations are now met with improvements in the quality of the curriculum and teaching and learning, which are now good. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is shown by the positive relationships and good improvements in behaviour of the pupils from admission to the school. Parents and pupils report that they are satisfied with the work of the school.

## Quality of education

The school provides a good quality of education which enables the pupils to make good academic progress and improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning. The curriculum is good. A clear curriculum policy is in place, fully supported by published schemes of work for all subjects which are suitably adapted for individual pupils' needs. A wide range of subjects is taught with a strong emphasis on literacy,

numeracy and personal, social and health education (PSHE), aspects of which permeate the life of the school. Policies and planning are suitably based on the National Curriculum and an approved syllabus for religious education. At Key Stage 3, science, design and technology (DT), information and communication technology (ICT), history, geography, religious education, drama, art, physical education (PE) are also taught. Music and modern foreign languages are taught in the extended curriculum after school. Pupils in Year 9 have good opportunities to take literacy and numeracy entry level examinations. At Key Stage 4, pupils follow examination courses in English, mathematics, science and art at GCSE and Entry level. In recent years, standards have risen with a year on year increase in the range of examinations on offer to pupils. Pupils achieve GCSE grades ranging from B to G, a range of entry level certificates and ASDAN bronze, silver and gold awards. In 2009 pupils in Years 9 and 10 pupils have taken adult literacy and numeracy certificates for the first time. Through good links with the local college, pupils in Year 11 also have the opportunity to take an NVQ Level I course in hair and beauty. Pupils attend a local tuition centre known as 'STARS' once per week to study NVQ Level 1 sports and the school also provides good opportunities for pupils to take PSHE entry level. The school recognises the need to develop the range of vocational course to re-engage the more disaffected pupils with learning.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and the responsibilities of adult life through the programme of citizenship and work related learning. Strong links with the local Connexions service is a key element in the effective careers guidance and work experience placements provided for pupils. Nearly all pupils leave to enter further education, employment or training, and this represents good progress by the time they leave school. There are good opportunities for enriching learning through regular visits to the leisure centre, visits to places of interest such as Warwick castle and through a range of lunchtime and after school clubs.

The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Learning tasks and well chosen resources are carefully matched to pupils' individual learning needs. However, the use of ICT to support teaching and learning in different subjects is not fully developed. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils who mostly show appropriate respect and follow instructions. Pupils new to the school do not always follow classroom routines and sometime lose interest or lack concentration in learning. However, high expectations for behaviour and the brisk lively pace of lessons, coupled with interesting and varied activities, help ensure that they eventually refocus on learning. Teamwork between teachers and support staff is strong and effective monitoring of teaching and learning has ensured that teaching is good throughout the school. A good teaching and learning policy has been developed to further promote good practice. Teachers have good subject knowledge which ensure that pupils are well taught and learn new skills quickly.

Good systems of assessment include diagnostic assessment of pupils' needs on admission, the formulation of individual education plans (IEPs) from information derived from pupils' statements and baseline assessment, looked after children (LAC)

reviews, Personal Education Plan (PEP) reviews, transition plan reviews and annual reviews of statements. Parents are also provided with bi-annual reports coinciding with LAC reviews. National curriculum attainment targets are recorded in reports for every subject, although attainment levels for pupils to achieve are not indicated in IEP targets, nor marked in pupils' written work. Pupils work is marked consistently with comments listed to show them how to improve their learning. All courses are assessed according to the requirements for accreditation.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are well supported by staff, gaining in confidence and increasing their self esteem through the nurturing and caring ethos and very good relationships with staff. Consequently their attitudes to learning, their behaviour, attendance and overall enjoyment of school steadily improve. This was affirmed in pupils' responses to a pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussion, when they said that they enjoyed school and made good progress in their behaviour. Overall, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school are satisfactory given that new pupils do not conform to school rules when they first arrive, until they have settled into their routines. Sometimes they find it hard to focus during a whole lesson, and minor disruption ensues. However, from admission pupils make good progress in behaviour because they learn to distinguish between right and wrong and respond positively to their own targets and the school's system of rewards and sanctions. As a result pupils' moral development by the time they leave school is good. Pupils are also encouraged to consider how to improve their communication and interaction with others. Pupils eagerly participate in physical activity and some make healthy choices. Their attendance is satisfactory but markedly improved from poor attendance during their previous education. Through the well conceived programme of citizenship and PSHE, pupils develop good awareness of public institutions. There are good opportunities to promote cultural development, through for example, learning about Aboriginal art and multi-cultural days where pupils prepare food from around the world

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. All recommended training in child protection is in place and there are clear policies and procedures to ensure that requirements are met. The school's central register and procedures for staff appointments meet all requirements. All potential risks are assessed, including when taking pupils on educational visits. High levels of staff supervision in all activities in and out of school ensure pupils stay very safe. The school works closely with parents, carers, and relevant agencies to promote the pupils' well-being. Healthy lifestyles are promoted through sport, trips to the local leisure centre and through careful selection of healthy items in packed lunches. Water and fresh fruit are available in the school. However, despite this, not all pupils make healthy choices. The school liaises effectively with care staff from the homes, to promote regular attendance and punctuality.

The school implements effectively its detailed policy for promoting good behaviour and effective systems are in place to manage challenging behaviour. A first aid policy is in place and accidents, restraints and interventions by staff and incidents of inappropriate behaviour are recorded appropriately. Regular checks are made on equipment, and close attention is given to fire safety. Admissions and attendance registers meet requirements and the school has implemented an effective plan to increase accessibility under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. This is carefully monitored by the headteacher to ensure implementation

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school fulfils its responsibilities to ensure that all staff are appropriately checked prior to taking up their appointments. A comprehensive record is maintained of the checks made on all staff, regular visitors to the school and the proprietors.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school building is located on the main street of a village on the outskirts of Leicester. It consists of 6 classrooms, including a new ICT suite, an art room, a science room and kitchen. All rooms are kept in a good decorative order with good quality classroom furniture appropriate to the ages of the pupils. There are sufficient washrooms and separate toilet facilities for all pupils and staff. The Woodlands site provides good quality classrooms and office space within a mobile building in the grounds of the home. There is a well resourced staff room and headteacher's office and reception area with good provision for school administration. The school is well maintained and attractively decorated. Flooring is of good quality with hazard warning tape suitably displayed where the floor level changes in corridors. A wide range of students' work is displayed on walls, such as progression of course work. Examples of work in ICT demonstrate notably good achievement. The school provides space for car parking and a small recreational space for pupils. The school makes good use of local leisure facilities and the local park to compensate for limitations to the outside space.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides parents, carers and referring local authorities with all the required information in relation to policies and procedures, together with the various required addresses and contact details. Responses from parents and pupils indicate that they are satisfied with the work of the school and information received. The proprietors make available information for the local authorities and parents receive detailed information about the attainment and progress their children make through LAC reviews, annual reviews of statement and in bi-annual reports.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school's clearly written complaints procedure meets all the regulations.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations").

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Use ICT more consistently in lessons to support teaching and learning across subjects.
- Ensure that the levels of attainment pupils are expected to gain are recorded where relevant in IEPs and in pupils' written work so they have a clearer idea of how well they are achieving and what they must do to improve.
- Increase the range of vocational options for the more disaffected pupils.

## Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils			✓	

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
--	--	---	--	--



## School details

Name of school	Oakwood School		
DCSF number	855/6021		
Unique reference number	128078		
Type of school	Day Special School for BESD		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2 August 2005		
Age range of pupils	8-16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 3	Total: 9
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 5	Girls: 1	Total: 6
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 5	Girls: 3	Total: 8
Annual fees (day pupils)	£27,000		
Address of school	20 Main Street Glenfield Leicester LE3 8DG		
Telephone number	0116 287 6218		
Fax number	0116 232 1614		
Email address	JCollighan@barfordcare.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Jennifer Collighan		
Proprietor	Barford Parkhouse Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Declan McCarthy		
Dates of inspection	9–10 June 2009		