

Oakbank School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107441
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	336885
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Robert Jones

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1809
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janice Firth
Headteacher	Mr Chris Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. The proportion of inspection time spent looking at learning was 50%. The inspectors visited 44 lessons and held meetings with governors, students and school leaders. They observed the school's work; looked at the school's monitoring and evaluation records, governing body minutes, school policies and procedures, and documentation relating to child protection; and scrutinised 241 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

- the progress of students, particularly in mathematics and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the quality of assessment
- whether systems for tracking students' progress are effective in identifying those at risk of underachieving and whether targets are challenging enough
- whether students of all abilities are challenged sufficiently in lessons
- what the school is doing to ensure satisfactory outcomes for the group of lower-ability students in Year 11
- the outcomes for students in the sixth form.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average secondary school serving the town of Keighley and surrounding villages in the Worth Valley. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than average. Fewer students than average have special educational needs and/or disabilities but a greater proportion than average has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is smaller than average; most are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is similar to that found nationally.

The school has gained the National Healthy Schools Status, Artsmark Bronze, the Excellence in Enterprise Education Award and the Investors in People Award. It has specialist status in sport.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**4****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to students' achievement. Although the progress that students make is largely satisfactory, and has improved in recent times, attainment remains low. The key indicators of attainment against national benchmarks have largely been static over the past three years.

Too many students leave school without suitable GCSE or alternative qualifications in English and mathematics. The rates of progress have been inadequate for the past two years, particularly in mathematics. Inspectors found that most students are now making satisfactory progress towards their targets. Key to this recent improvement is the successful focus on improving the quality of teaching and assessment in lessons. However, pupils of higher ability make better progress than those of middle and lower ability and the progress pupils make in mathematics remains inadequate.

While there are examples of good and outstanding teaching, there is some which is inadequate. Consequently some subjects are improving at a faster rate than others. Similarly, the quality of assessment is satisfactory overall, but too variable across the school. While some teachers frequently assess students' learning in lessons, others do not.

Students are, for the most part, positive about their experiences at school. Most say behaviour has recently improved and that they feel safe and secure, always having an adult to turn to should the need arise. Students are very positive about the way the school helps them to lead healthy lifestyles and this is particularly well supported by the school's sports specialism. The curriculum is varied and enhanced well by extra-curricular sports activities.

There have been recent improvements, which are most evident in the much better rates of attendance and the rapid reduction in persistent absence. An energetically led, rigorous system of monitoring teaching is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. In turn, the rates of progress students are making in relation to their starting points are improving. Self-evaluation is undertaken by all school leaders and is largely accurate. These improvements demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise achievement and improve standards in English and mathematics by:
 - - ensuring students reach their challenging targets at GCSE level
 - - increasing the rate of progress so that it is at least satisfactory for all students, and particularly for those of middle and lower ability.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning by:
 - - helping more teachers use the data that are available to plan lessons that are more appropriate for students of all abilities and have sufficient challenge
 - - building in opportunities within the school day for teachers to share the good and outstanding practice that exists in some areas of the school.
- Sharpen systems for assessment by:
 - - giving students more opportunities to demonstrate their learning in lessons
 - - increasing the use of success criteria, so that students have a deeper understanding of what constitutes high-quality work
 - - increasing the opportunities for students to mark their own and each others' work in lessons
- - ensuring that the quality of marking and feedback to students is consistently high.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

From average starting points, Year 11 in 2009 made inadequate progress and left with standards that were well below average. The key reasons for this were the slow rates of progress, particularly in mathematics, and the underachievement of a group of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities who did not engage with what the school had to offer them. The school has introduced a more rigorous system for tracking and reporting progress, along with increased rigour in monitoring students educated in off-site provision. There are early signs that these measures are having a positive impact on accelerating progress. Students of all abilities are now making satisfactory progress overall towards their challenging targets. However, there is some variation between the progress made by different groups and in different subjects. In general, students of higher ability are making faster progress than those of middle and lower ability. Standards remain low, particularly in mathematics and English. There are stronger areas of the curriculum where standards are high, particularly in the school's specialist area of sport. Specialist subject targets have been met.

In most lessons students behave well and show they are ready to learn. In some lessons poor behaviour disrupts learning but students say, 'It has got a lot better over the past two years.' Students of different backgrounds relate well to each other and to adults. They contribute to the school and wider community through, for example, the opportunities to become peer mentors, house leaders and school councillors. A 'buddy' system ensures that Year 7 students settle quickly into their new surroundings. Students acquire a satisfactory understanding of the world of work through enterprise activities and work experience. The successful sports leaders' awards and plentiful opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum equip students with valuable skills. However, low standards in English and mathematics are not preparing students with the basic skills they need for the workplace.

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Subjects such as humanities offer students the opportunity to consider ethical, environmental and racial issues. This has resulted in a harmonious school, where students from a variety of backgrounds appreciate each other's differences. This, coupled with their satisfactory behaviour, means that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

As a result of a concerted effort to re-engage those students who are potentially vulnerable, attendance has improved as has the rate of persistent absence.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Where lessons are good or outstanding there is a clear focus on students' learning, which is checked at very frequent intervals, not just at the end of the lesson. In these lessons there are ample opportunities for students to use success criteria so they know 'what a good answer looks like'. They mark their own and each other's work and teachers ensure that they question all students to check their understanding. In one English lesson students demonstrated outstanding learning because planned, effective questioning by the teacher encouraged extended, detailed answers about the novel they

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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were studying. Where lessons are not so effective they contain repetitive, mundane tasks which fail to stimulate or engage. In these lessons, teachers give explanations which are too long and they usually work harder than the students do. This means that lower-ability groups, in particular, quickly lose interest and become disengaged. There is little evidence of some teachers using the assessment data the school has to prepare work that adequately matches students' abilities. On occasion, poor behaviour then follows and the teacher has to spend time dealing with this rather than teaching. In some lessons teachers use interesting visual stimuli and ICT to enhance lessons, but are insufficiently focused on students' learning. In these lessons teachers do not always give students clear success criteria and there are not enough opportunities for students to assess their own and each other's work. The quality of marking varies. Where it is good, teachers give students praise for what they have done and follow it up with clear targets for improvement. Sometimes though, marking is infrequent or cursory.

A satisfactory curriculum is much enhanced by the school's sports specialism, for example in the use of trampolines to illustrate forces in science and in the widespread use of dance across the curriculum. Numerous well-attended and highly valued extra-curricular sports activities enrich the curriculum. A growing range of vocational options is available for Key Stage 4 students of all abilities through partnerships with outside providers. However, there are not enough opportunities within the curriculum to support those students who find GCSE level work too demanding to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy.

Parents and carers are generally satisfied with the level of care, guidance and support the school provides. The Year 7 pastoral team ensures that there is an efficient system of transition from primary school. The guidance for options at Key Stage 4 and post-16 is sound. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities have case files, but it is sometimes difficult to track their progress because the information in them tends to be anecdotal rather than based on progress data. The school places high importance on the care of individual students, such as those who are potentially vulnerable or in the care of the local authority. Students who are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language are also well supported.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Following several years of apparent inertia in rates of students' progress and the quality

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of teaching, there is evidence that the school now understands the position it is in and has clear plans to build on its recent modest successes. School leaders have raised expectations and there is a growing sense of shared ambition. The leadership of teaching and learning has improved notably, and the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are exemplary. However, the effectiveness of the leadership of teaching and learning is taking time to embed fully across the school.

The school is a highly inclusive community. The dedicated inclusion team ensures that any discrimination is tackled decisively and that students at risk of dropping out are fully included. Equal opportunities are promoted well through the curriculum and enhanced by the sports specialism. The school meets statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding, but complex records relating to child protection cases are not summarised as effectively as they might be.

The governing body give generous support to the school. All statutory requirements are met. However, the governing body does not have a complete enough understanding of performance data to appreciate fully the challenges the school faces. This means that governors are less effective in challenging the school on the key areas of raising standards and improving achievement for all students.

Oakbank makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. The school community is diverse but harmonious. There are effective links with other cultures, and countries such as Cameroon, which have been formed through the school's sports specialism. The planning to develop community cohesion further are less clear.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

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Sixth form

Students in the sixth form gain examination results that are below the national average but represent satisfactory progress in relation to their GCSE results at the end of Year 11. Teaching is satisfactory overall but varies significantly both within and between subjects. This results in students making better progress in some lessons and subjects than they do in others. Students have good opportunities, both within school and through voluntary work in the local community, to take responsibility and develop their skills in communication and organisation. For example, some are involved in peer education, helping younger students with aspects of drugs and sex education. Students choose from a wide range of AS and A-level courses and a satisfactory range of courses for those who enter the sixth form with lower GCSE grades. Enrichment activities within the curriculum are satisfactory and extra-curricular activities, including sports, the production of a sixth-form magazine and a good range of visits, all extend students' experience. Students value the care that is provided and the interest that teachers take in them as individuals. They appreciate teachers' willingness to provide extra help when they find work difficult. The head of the sixth form is enthusiastic, works hard and knows what needs to be done in order to improve students' achievement. Her work is now underpinned by that of achievement managers who are helping to keep a closer eye on students' progress. However, these recent improvements are yet to have a sufficient impact in minimising the inconsistencies in teaching and learning that currently limit students' progress in the sixth form.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are supportive of the school. Many comment favourably about the increased communication regarding students' progress and the arrangements for transition from primary schools into Year 7. A very small minority raised concerns about the way the school helps students to have a healthy lifestyle and about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. These were investigated in detail by inspectors who found that the impact of the school's work on healthy lifestyles is good. While some lessons are adversely affected by poor behaviour, this is not widespread across the school and, overall, behaviour is satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakbank School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 241 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1809 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	26	156	65	18	7	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	44	18	173	72	18	7	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	73	30	153	63	11	5	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	25	162	67	11	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	21	174	72	11	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	15	167	69	32	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	13	167	69	36	15	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	53	22	158	66	11	5	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	18	171	71	18	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	21	147	61	27	11	7	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	15	164	68	21	9	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	49	20	158	66	17	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	27	155	64	14	6	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Oakbank School, Keighley, BD22 7DU

Thank you for welcoming us during the recent inspection of your school. We appreciated the time you spent with us telling us about the work you do and how the school helps you.

You told us of recent improvements in behaviour and teaching. You said you now feel far safer. More of you are now making better progress, but this varies between subjects. We visited some lessons where you made good progress due to interesting and demanding activities, but others where you were not challenged as much. We found that although there have been improvements, the pace of change has been slow in helping you achieve as well as you can. We have therefore given the school a 'notice to improve'. This means that the school will receive extra help to increase the pace of its improvement and make sure more of you reach the standards of which you are capable. Inspectors will visit the school again to check on its progress. We found the sixth form to be satisfactory.

To improve the school, we have asked the leaders to focus on these things:

- raising standards in English and mathematics
- improving the quality of teaching and learning so it does not vary so much between subjects and teachers
- making sure assessment happens in all lessons and helps you to improve your work.

You can help by ensuring that you behave well in all your lessons and attend school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Mr Robert Jones

Lead Inspector

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