

Oak Wood Secondary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123974
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	340461
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Gilbert
Headteacher	RoseMarie Scott
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2007
School address	Morris Drive Nuneaton CV11 4HQ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with governors, senior leaders, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school planning documents, assessment information, governors' planning and pupils' work. Forty-five parental questionnaires were analysed. Staff and pupils also completed questionnaires about the school's work.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of teaching and learning
- the use of assessment to measure pupils' achievements
- governors' planning to sustain improvement
- the quality of learning in the sixth form.

Information about the school

This is a special secondary school in which all pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The majority of pupils have moderate or severe learning difficulties. A few have profound and multiple learning difficulties, complex needs and/or social, emotional and behavioural needs. Most pupils are White British though a few pupils speak English as an additional language. There is sixth form provision for students aged 16 to 19. The school is part of a hard federation with the special primary school which shares the same site. There is a joint headteacher and governing body. The school has acquired 'Healthy School' status, Eco-Schools Bronze award and Sports Mark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has improved since the last inspection. Its key strengths are the good quality of leadership and management and the very clear vision and ambition of senior managers, particularly the headteacher. Innovative appointments have included creation of the post of business manager. This has had a very positive impact on achieving good value for money and in the development of outstanding safeguarding and child protection procedures. Because of the excellent personal care which the school provides, pupils feel extremely safe and secure. They enjoy coming to school and, as a result, attendance is rising. Pupils have an exceptionally good awareness of the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. They choose fruit for their snack regularly and many pupils talked about the importance of eating five fruits or vegetables every day and taking regular exercise. Staff have worked exceptionally hard to develop positive links with the community and, as a result, pupils' involvement with other schools, colleges and local businesses are excellent. The school council is regularly involved in planning community activities. For example, pupils are currently organising an 'African bazaar' to raise money for child education and fresh water in Africa. They are busy preparing cakes and other items to sell at the bazaar.

Most groups of pupils achieve well during their time at the school because teaching is good and relationships are strong so that pupils enjoy their lessons. As a result, they make good progress towards their expected academic targets and in their personal development. A small minority of pupils, particularly those who have severe learning difficulties do not always achieve as well as others. This is because expectations of what these pupils could achieve are not always high enough. Almost all pupils behave well in and around the school. An excellent range of curriculum opportunities is available, including some outstanding residential opportunities that have a very positive impact on pupils' good personal development. The vast range of photographs that are displayed around the school celebrate pupils' achievements in rock climbing, abseiling, trekking, cooking and cleaning during their regular trips to Wales and Derbyshire. Good quality support and guidance enable most pupils to know their targets and understand what is expected of them.

Provision in the sixth form is satisfactory and students make at least sound progress. Students achieve well where teachers have high expectations and provide activities that engage their interests fully. In other lessons, students are not fully involved in activities and a few, particularly those who are less able, become passive learners who do not achieve their full potential. They do not always have opportunities to be independent or make decisions about what they want to eat and drink for example, particularly in the common room.

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Governors and leaders work well together to promote improvement. Governors are regular visitors and fully meet their statutory responsibilities, continually challenging leaders about their decisions. Governors are fully involved in monitoring and reviewing the work of the school. Effective self-evaluation has enabled leaders to have a clear view of what is working well and what needs improving. Outcomes and provision have strengthened since the last inspection. The school has a good capacity for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of the small minority of pupils who do not achieve as well as other pupils by:
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of all groups of pupils and challenge them to do their best
 - increasing the pace of learning in all lessons so that all groups do more work in the time allowed.
- Improve provision in the sixth form so that all groups of students achieve their full potential by:
 - ensuring that all students, including the less able students have plenty of opportunities to take part actively in lessons
 - enabling all students to take personal responsibility for themselves, particularly in the common room.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Most groups of pupils achieve well during their time at the school and make good progress from their starting points. They achieve particularly well in communication and language and in their personal development. The wide range of good communication aids, including technology and the use of signs and symbols, promote good opportunities for interaction and enable most groups of pupils to talk with others, indicate their needs and engage in social discussions in class very well. The majority of pupils achieve, and many exceed, the targets that are set for them. Pupils acquire a wide range of accreditation by the time they leave the school to go to college or into the sixth form. Almost all of those who undertake the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) or Entry Level qualifications in English, mathematics and science achieve their certificates. A small minority, including a few who have severe learning difficulties, make satisfactory rather than good progress because expectations of what they can achieve are not regularly high enough. In a few lessons, too much is done for this particular group and, as a result, they do too little for themselves and are sometimes too passive.

Pupils behave well in and around the school. They say they really enjoy school and this is evident in their good attendance. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles is outstanding. They know the importance of healthy eating and could explain why they eat fruit for snack time.

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

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They make healthy choices and take regular exercise. The many lunchtime clubs such as football and netball help them to keep fit and active and are well attended. Pupils have several national awards recognising their efforts in developing healthy lifestyles. Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to keep safe. This was demonstrated in a 'road safety' lesson where some of the older pupils were learning to cross the road. They showed high levels of understanding of the dangers and followed safety procedures very carefully as they successfully carried out their tasks. Links with the local community and local schools are outstanding, benefiting pupils who work regularly with their partner school to ensure smooth transition. Pupils regularly take part in community activities and welcome the community to their school for numerous events that they help to plan and run. For example, pupils themselves recently organised and ran a cafe to raise money for charity. They baked cakes and offered a range of drinks. Most pupils have simple jobs around the school and older pupils and students often maintain work placements in local businesses for long periods. The school council is effective and it has been instrumental in developing the outdoor area such as putting benches in the playground and improving play equipment. Pupils are well prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

2

How effective is the provision?

The outstanding curriculum provides a wide range of exciting and creative activities that meets the needs of most pupils well. The high quality accommodation plays an important role in catering for the very wide range of needs of the pupils. For example, the multi-sensory rooms and hydrotherapy pool help to improve mobility as well as ensuring that pupils enjoy school and have fun while they learn. The many residential experiences for all year groups help to improve personal development and confidence. For example, in the recent visit to Wales pupils succeeded in climbing a rock face and a climbing wall. Exciting provision for art and music is evident in the high quality of pupils' artwork around the school, much of it in the style of famous artists. The use of alternative communication aids and therapies plays an important role in pupils' well-being. Work experience for older pupils and students is a key feature of the provision. They have a wide choice of where they want to work because of very effective local links. Many work successfully in places such as local shops, garages, hairdressers and childcare placements, helping to prepare them well for the future. Classrooms are vibrant and well presented. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of their individual pupils and relationships are particularly strong. In the most successful lessons, challenging targets are set for most groups of pupils and assessment is rigorous, helping them to achieve well. Resources are used well to help pupils become actively engaged. In a few lessons, learning is more passive and pupils are not required to do enough for themselves. At these times, expectations are not high enough and a few pupils, particularly those who are less able do not achieve quite as well as others. This is because challenge is set too low and a few teachers lack the confidence in extending pupils' abilities.

The school provides outstanding personal care for pupils. Regular links with the school nurse and visits by the local fire and police services ensure that health and safety systems are regularly reviewed. The support and guidance provided for almost all pupils are good, ensuring that they have clear and appropriate targets as part of their individual education plans, and that there is always someone for them to talk to. Effective support for individual pupils' special educational needs ensures that most make good progress. The guidance and support offered to the least able pupils to help them improve the amount of progress they make is less effective and as a result their needs are not always fully met. Several staff are trained in language therapy and effective links with external support services ensures that pupils' physical needs are met and attention to their well-being is good. Support for transition from junior school and movement to college is smooth and well organised. Monitoring of personal development and attendance is effective because of the rigorous approach of the pastoral support manager.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	
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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Clear vision and enthusiasm for improvement is a key feature of leadership and management of the school. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses because of rigorous self-evaluation which identifies the right priorities for development. The school has improved in almost all areas since the last inspection because of some innovative practices. These are evident, for example, in the excellent safeguarding practices, including rigorous checks on all visitors. At the time of the inspection child protection and health and safety procedures were particularly strong. Clear systems for tracking and assessing how well pupils are doing have become securely embedded in daily practice. Senior managers share the vision and ambition of the headteacher and take their roles seriously. Links with the community and external agencies, including the federated partner school, are good and ensure that pupils have many opportunities to improve their skills. Leaders promote equality of opportunity well ensuring that there is no discrimination, as for example the wide range of communication aids enabling all groups of pupils to interact and offer ideas and opinions. Governors are proactive in their approach to monitoring and supporting the school and meet their statutory responsibilities effectively. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning has helped leaders to develop a clear awareness that provision and outcomes for the less able pupils and for those in the sixth form require improvement. The schools' strategy for promoting community cohesion is good. There is a clear action plan that ensures very effective local national and global links. These result in effective awareness, by pupils of the lifestyles and beliefs of those who live in other parts of Britain and in the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

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	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Students enjoy the informal approach in the sixth form and take pride in their surroundings. They are mature young people who are looking forward to the future. Most behave well and are confident in communicating with adults and explaining about their work. Good quality accreditation for all groups of students, along with high quality accommodation and resources, helps most students to make at least satisfactory progress. However, there are not always sufficient opportunities for students to develop practical everyday skills such as making their own drinks and snacks because too much is done for them. They are not regularly challenged to develop independence for their future lives. The least able students in particular do not take part fully enough in lessons, and are often waited on by staff. As a result, a few become passive observers rather than active participants in lessons and in more informal surroundings such as the common room. In the best lessons, students are fully engaged and enthusiastic about their tasks. This was evident in a lesson where some of the more able students were studying characters from a film that they had really enjoyed. They were able to use descriptive language well to describe different characteristics and were very knowledgeable about the plot of the film. Students in the sixth form have the same opportunities as pupils in the main school and regularly take part in community activities and residential visits.

Leadership of the sixth form is satisfactory. Students are safe and secure and systems to ensure the health and well-being of students are robust. Students' work is regularly marked with clear guidance on how they could improve and course work is accurately assessed. However, there is a lack of clear overview of provision for the different groups of students, resulting in varied achievement by different ability groups.

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

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

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Views of parents and carers

Parents are very supportive of the school. Almost all of the parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school was providing their children with healthy lifestyles and that their children were safe at school and doing well. 'The teachers and teaching assistants are excellent and I can't fault the staff who care for my child,' wrote one parent. 'Oak Wood puts pupils first,' wrote another. A few parents are concerned about the provision for and the amount of progress made by less able pupils. Inspection evidence shows that this is an area that the school needs to improve.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakwood Secondary 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 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 114 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	73	9	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	91	3	7	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	64	15	33	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	56	16	36	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	69	12	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	58	17	38	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	58	19	42	0	0	0	0
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)	30	67	14	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	73	12	27	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	73	10	22	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	67	11	24	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	71	9	20	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	78	8	18	0	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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 pupils' 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.



9 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakwood Secondary School, Nuneaton CV11 4QH

Thank you for your help in our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your school. You told us that you enjoy school and we know that you come to school as often as you can. Well done for that. This letter is to tell you about some of the other things we found out about your school.

Most of you achieve well and gain good qualifications by the time you leave school.

You behave well and are kind and helpful to each other.

You lead very healthy lives and you told us that you feel safe at school.

You work very well with others to raise money for the different charities that you support.

You have lots of exciting activities, including the regular trips to Wales and Derbyshire.

Your teachers help you to improve your work by checking it regularly, and teaching assistants support you well in your lessons.

We have asked the school to do two things to help you achieve even better:

- to make sure that the least able pupils improve their achievement and do more work in lessons
- to make sure that all students in the sixth form are helped to be more independent so that they can take part fully in lessons.

I hope you will all help with these so that everyone achieves well.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris

Lead Inspector

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