

Oaklands School

Woodlands Road, Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 6JZ

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress. Achievement is improving as school leaders raise expectations for all students and track students' achievement with greater accuracy.
- Behaviour in the school is outstanding. There is a safe and caring approach and students enjoy the opportunities to learn and develop increasing independence.
- The quality of teaching is good. It is improving quickly and at times is outstanding. The best of teaching encourages students to participate and is highly effective in developing communication skills. Some teaching is not yet focused precisely enough for individuals.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students make outstanding progress because of excellent teaching and a wide range of opportunities that are highly tailored to the needs of individuals.
- The headteacher has had an excellent impact in developing the school over the last few years, clearly identifying and prioritising key issues. She has implemented with the support from senior staff, teachers, teaching assistants and support staff a highly effective strategy to ensure students achieve more.
- There are very strong links and transition planning with further education providers that help to ensure all students continue their studies after the sixth form.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not secure outstanding progress overall. Learning objectives are not always precise enough and so teachers do not make best use of teaching assistants.
- The governing body is developing well but is not yet systematic enough in holding the school to account and monitoring school performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons and attended a rewards assembly. Some joint observations were undertaken with senior leaders as well as a learning walk through the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including policy documents, safeguarding arrangements, school evaluation and development plans. The school’s student progress tracking data were scrutinised and minutes from governing body meetings considered.
- The five responses to the parents’ online survey (Parent View) were considered.
- Staff views were considered through the responses to the 34 questionnaires completed at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

Paul Scott, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Jackie Blount

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Oaklands School caters for students with severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound or multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). A number of students also demonstrate challenging behaviour.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is above average.
- The school provides support and training for other schools in the area.
- The ethnic heritage of students is diverse.
- Around half of students have a first language that is not English.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality of teaching further by:
 - ensuring learning opportunities are more precisely targeted to the needs of individual students
 - developing and making better use of the skills of teaching assistants to support learning.
- Ensure that governors are more systematic in their role in holding the school to account and challenging the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment of students on entry to the school is below what would be expected for their age due to the range of learning difficulties they have. Some students have not previously engaged well in education but this improves rapidly when they join the school because of the care and support they receive.
- Students are making good and increasingly effective progress in developing literacy, communication and numeracy skills. This is outstanding in the sixth form and in some other lessons because of precisely targeted teaching and the skilled use of signing and other communication techniques by staff.
- Achievement on occasions requires improvement as learning objectives are not precise enough to support and promote learning.
- The school ensures students are successful in achieving a range of externally accredited examinations.
- The school is very skilled at supporting transitions to colleges and to continue to develop life skills and increase independence. The very strong learning attitudes developed in the sixth form support students to consider an increasing range of destinations when they leave the school.
- The school has improved systems for tracking students' progress which are used very well to set challenging targets and improve accountability.
- There is a trend of improving achievement and leaders have a clear understanding of the key areas for improvement and a determination to increase progress for all groups in the school but particularly for those with ASD.
- There is some excellent use of signing and communication development in the school which, when used well, ensure that progress is outstanding for all students in the group. During one lesson, when pupils followed a social story relating to friendships, skilled signing, use of symbols and clear voice and intonation of the teacher helped to engage students and develop understanding very effectively. The most successful lessons observed included a confident use of a range of communication techniques that were supported by teaching assistants.
- The personal develop of all students is strong and the school promotes equality very well. There is little difference in performance between groups in the school, including those eligible for the pupil premium. Students with ASD do not always make quite the progress of other groups but this is improving quickly as the school leaders are developing this area of work.

The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of teaching over time is good and is developing very effectively because leaders are clear about the strengths and weaknesses, and support improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The teaching in the sixth form is outstanding, bringing about outstanding progress. Teachers demonstrated skill in developing highly tailored learning opportunities for individuals and learning objectives are precise and clear. They use questions very effectively to promote learning and check understanding. This inspiring teaching is also present in other areas of the school but is not yet consistent enough across the school.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is effective and the processes in place have already had a positive impact in the school. The leaders are aware that the use of teaching assistants is not always as effective as it could be and learning outcomes are not always precise enough for individual students.
- There are very positive relationships between staff and students and a great deal of respect. This ensures a positive and productive environment for learning and students enjoy coming to school.
- Music is used to very good effect to engage students in learning and build confidence. During

one lesson, students learned about rhythm and voice, exploring instruments. Students were highly motivated by the skill and enthusiasm of the teacher. They responded well to the certificates awarded for positive contributions. All of the students left the lesson thrilled by their achievement and eager for more.

- The school uses a range of partnership services very effectively to increase mobility and promote movement as well as developing speech and language.
- There is effective development for staff, including a comprehensive training scheme for teaching assistants. The development of strong assessment and the development of teaching has been a key priority to drive improvements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour is very positive and for those students who have particularly challenging behaviour it improves rapidly. This ensures that students can concentrate on learning with little distraction.
- Students respond very well to the range of rewards. During the rewards assembly, the headteacher shared the successes of students with the whole community, highlighting a real sense of achievement and supporting the moral, social and spiritual development of students very well. Many students were awarded certificates for the achievements of the previous week and were eager to show others their awards.
- Staff understand very well a range of behaviour management strategies and use them very effectively. This ensures that classrooms are safe and productive. Students feel confident and safe to try new things, to answer questions in lessons and engaged in conversations with inspectors readily.
- Staff model good behaviour and are positive role models for students. The sixth form students also add a great deal to the school ethos and are a positive influence around the school, eager to contribute to the school community.
- Students were polite and friendly and demonstrated empathy for others and an increasing awareness of social norms. Students are able to go to staff if they have a problem but there are very few issues between students.
- Students enjoy school and apart from a small number with specific medical needs, their attendance is good.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher and the senior team have brought about significant improvements, including in the quality of teaching, raising achievement and developing systems in the school further, such as progress tracking and assessment. This has ensured that the school is increasingly successful at meeting the individual needs of students.
- The leadership of the sixth form is very strong and demonstrates the impact that the school has had on improving the lives and future destinations of students.
- Leaders are realistic about the school's achievements and are not complacent about the success so far but continue to look at the next stages of improvement. Leaders value the contribution of staff and the many partner agencies and the positive contribution the local authority gives in supporting the school. As a consequence, morale is high and staff are passionate and committed to the further development of opportunities for students.
- The pupil premium is targeted well to support individuals and it contributes well to their good achievement.
- The local authority is supporting the school in developing plans for the school's future, particularly with the facilities the school needs as it expands further.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is looking carefully at how it can further refine the impact it has in school improvement. Governors are exploring how they can be more involved directly in supporting, reviewing and monitoring the performance of the school. The new Chair of the Governing Body has some good plans to develop the role of the governing body and is eager to ensure that the wide range of skills, the passion and commitment remain, while balancing this with the time it takes to undertake the role and the time that governors have available. Governors use salary progression effectively to support school improvement and have ensured safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The use of the pupil premium is monitored to ensure that eligible students make the same good progress as their peers.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	102555
Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	408907

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
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	77
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	18
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Mary Davey
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Clinton
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 November 2009
Telephone number	020 85603569
Fax number	020 85688805
Email address	office@oaklands.hounslow.sch.uk

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