

Oakbank School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107441
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	356158
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Jan Bennett HMI

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	1,751
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janice Firth
Headteacher	Chris Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 43 lessons taught by different teachers and met groups of students, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation form, development plan and analysis of student achievement data. Inspectors also looked at the 113 completed questionnaires received from parents and carers plus questionnaire responses from staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Attainment and progress, particularly in English and mathematics, to see if there has been sufficient improvement across the school and whether any gaps in performance between different groups of students are closing.
- The quality and consistency of teaching and how well lessons meet the needs of students of all abilities.
- The quality of assessment and how effectively it is used to enable students to make better progress.
- The effectiveness with which leaders and managers at all levels have tackled weaknesses from the last inspection.
- The success of initiatives to improve the effectiveness of the sixth form.

Information about the school

Oakbank is a large secondary school. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than average and increasing. A smaller proportion than average comes from a minority ethnic background but the number is growing, mainly from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. The number of students with English as an additional language has also increased and is slightly above average. Fewer students than average have a statement of special educational needs but a greater proportion than average has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has specialist status in sport.

At the last inspection, in January 2010, the school was given a notice to improve as significant improvement was needed in relation to students' achievement. The school was judged to have made good progress at the monitoring visit in November 2010.

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? 3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement 2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Leaders and managers have been relentless in driving improvements across the school. Staff have risen to the challenge and played their part in improving provision and outcomes for students. Care, guidance and support are now good and attendance continues to improve. The curriculum is good and teaching is stronger and more consistent. The effect of these improvements is seen in the strongly improving progress made by students. However, it is taking time for the benefits to be reflected in the results of external examinations at the end of Year 11 and for the school to close the gap on national averages which are also improving. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is now good and the sixth form is sharing successful initiatives with the main school.

The drive to improve teaching began before the last inspection and has continued at pace. There is still some way to go but the quality of teaching is more consistent than at the last inspection and the majority of teaching is good. There are pockets of outstanding practice and although many teachers have developed the skills to deliver outstanding lessons, they are reluctant to try new approaches and to give students more responsibility for their own learning. In the better lessons, teachers use good subject knowledge, a wide range of resources and a variety of activities to engage students' interest. They make regular checks on learning and maintain a brisk pace. Students enjoy their learning, take an active part in the lesson and produce work of a high standard. In the weaker lessons, teachers talk too much and students are more passive. Students in all lessons know the level at which they are working and teachers make sure that they know what to do to reach higher levels. Usually everyone in the class works on the same activity and extension work is used to stretch the most able. Few teachers set separate tasks, of varying degrees of difficulty, to match the different levels of ability in the class.

Effective partnerships are a key strength of the school. Close collaboration with specialist agencies enhances support for the most vulnerable students; good relationships with parents and carers have helped improve attendance and reduced the number of exclusions; and effective partnerships with other schools, the college and employers underpin the rich and varied curriculum in Key Stage 4. There is

effective sharing of good practice with local schools and joint training sessions. The specialism also has a very positive impact on many aspects of the school's work by sharing best practice in teaching and learning, providing a wide range of extra-curricular activities, contributing to improvements in literacy and numeracy and strengthening links with primary schools and the local community.

The headteacher provides a clear and inclusive vision for the future of the school and misses no opportunity to communicate this to staff. There is a sense of purpose and energy amongst staff because they can see that recent initiatives have resulted in better outcomes for students and improvements to their own practice. Self-evaluation is accurate and future planning is strong. Leaders and managers have made good progress in tackling weaknesses identified at the last inspection and have demonstrated a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in every subject in order to keep pace with or exceed national averages.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - planning graded activities and tasks to meet the differing needs of students in the class
 - introducing more creative and innovative teaching strategies
 - ensuring that every student is challenged and stretched in lessons
 - giving students more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment is rising at an increasing pace as improvements in teaching and the curriculum take effect. The latest GCSE results obtained by current Year 11 students show a marked improvement on last year. The proportion achieving a high grade GCSE pass in English was 10 percentage points higher than at the same time last year and likewise for mathematics. The school's internal tracking data indicate further improvement in Year 10 where changes to the curriculum are having an impact. In Key Stage 3, teacher assessments are carefully moderated with local schools and show that students' attainment is at the national average and improving.

Students join the school with slightly lower than average prior attainment and school data show they make progress that is satisfactory and improving. Progress in lessons generally reflects the quality of teaching. In the good lessons, students work quickly, apply themselves well and are keen to improve their work in order to reach a higher level. They are lively, show pride in their work and are developing increasing confidence in their own ability. In the weaker lessons, students are less enthusiastic but they cooperate with the teacher and make satisfactory progress. Well-planned

and targeted interventions in Year 11 are accelerating progress and tackling any gaps left by a legacy of weak teaching. In mathematics, students are working on personalised revision programmes to make sure that their time and effort are focused closely on tackling individual weaknesses.

Over the last two years the school has begun to monitor the attainment and progress of different groups of students more rigorously and has strengthened provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities as a result. There is a programme of finely-tuned and highly-targeted interventions to improve the attainment of vulnerable students who are at risk of underachieving. The impact of these interventions is constantly monitored and adjustments are made to the teaching programme as necessary. School data show that students are making increasingly good progress and the current Year 11 will close the gap in performance between them and the rest of their year group. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds including those with English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers.

Students and their parents and carers say that the school is a very safe place. Behaviour in lessons is dependent on the quality of teaching but is at least satisfactory in the vast amount of lessons and is often good. Students' behaviour on corridors can be boisterous, however, and they do not always show sufficient consideration for each other. Students are well-informed about sexual health and the misuse of alcohol and drugs. They participate well in extra-curricular sports and the vast majority walk to school. Healthy options are available in the dining hall but the majority of students do not choose them despite knowing about the importance of a healthy diet. Students are extensively involved in the local and wider community as part of sporting initiatives such as coaching in primary schools. Involvement in fund raising is widespread. There is an active student council and students are pleased to have influenced decisions such as the summer uniform and the colour scheme in the dining hall. Attendance continues to improve and punctuality is good. Literacy and numeracy skills are improving. A number of students are developing work skills through sports coaching which sometimes leads to paid work. Sports, tutorial time and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) lessons are supporting the development of students' spiritual, moral, cultural and spiritual development but opportunities are missed in other areas of the curriculum.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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

The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching continues to improve and is more consistent than a year ago. The vast majority of lessons are at least satisfactory and an increasing number of lessons are good. Most teachers use questioning effectively, make time throughout lessons to recap and check on learning and manage behaviour well. Students are encouraged to assess their own work and that of their peers critically and are becoming increasingly confident and skilled. The vast majority of marking is of a high quality and provides detailed comments that help students to improve their work.

The curriculum is broad and balanced with appropriate pathways that meet the needs of all students. The specialism makes a significant contribution with BTEC and GCSE courses in sport and a very wide range of enrichment opportunities. The wide variety of vocational options in Key Stage 4 is a result of good collaboration with local providers. Recent changes have ensured that all students attending off-site provision are able to gain accreditation and there is a much stronger focus on developing the English and mathematics skills of these students. Opportunities for students to gain work experience are planned and monitored well. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been strengthened and students have the opportunity to take some GCSE examinations, such as foreign languages, early.

Care, guidance and support have improved and the school works very hard to be as inclusive as possible. There are extensive systems in place to monitor and care for the well-being of students, especially students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Good partnership working with external agencies ensures that the school makes a significant difference to the life chances of some of the most vulnerable students through the provision of high quality care. Transition arrangements between key stages are good and students are given good advice and guidance especially when deciding between options post-16.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities throughout the school. Middle managers have been made more accountable and relish the challenge. The monitoring of teaching is rigorous, giving senior leaders an accurate view of its quality and any areas for improvement. Well-timed training and support is provided that has resulted in a significant increase in the proportion of good lessons. Data

from assessment are used effectively to track students' academic progress, determine which students need extra support and to set targets for improvement. Governance is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The Chair of the Governing Body is extremely effective. The governing body offers increasing challenge to the school as its members develop a clearer understanding of data. The governing body provides good support and its influence on the strategic direction of the school is developing but is limited.

The school engages well with parents and carers and their views are sought regularly, for example, on uniform and changes to the curriculum. Equality and diversity are promoted well and there is no evidence of racist behaviour or homophobic bullying. Gaps in achievement between different groups of students are monitored closely and tackled effectively. Government requirements for safeguarding are met well. The school is making an increasing contribution to community cohesion and plans are based on a good understanding of the communities involved but the school has yet to evaluate the effectiveness of its actions. Financial management is good, resources are deployed well and outcomes for students are satisfactory. Value for money is now satisfactory.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Sixth-formers make much better progress than their entry qualifications would suggest. Attainment is average and improving. Teaching is good, with some outstanding practice, and assessment is used well to enhance learning. Students are set challenging targets that are monitored closely. There is a good range of courses at Levels 2 and 3 enhanced by a wide range of enrichment activities including foreign visits, fundraising and opportunities to work with younger students in school. Support for sixth-formers is good and they receive high quality advice and guidance about higher education and employment opportunities. There is good engagement and communication with parents and carer. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The strong focus on improving outcomes for students has had a very positive impact. Self-evaluation is robust and accurate and there are very clear plans for further improvement.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received questionnaire responses from just over 6% of parents and carers and they were very positive. Almost all parents and carers think that the school keeps their child safe and that their child is making sufficient progress. They are very happy with the quality of teaching and the leadership of the school. A very large majority say that their child is prepared well for the future. Most say their child enjoys school and that they are kept informed about progress. Parents' and carers' major concern is about behaviour but only a few are unhappy with the way that the school deals with any unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour was good in the majority of lessons but only satisfactory in corridors and other areas of the school.

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 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,751 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	33	72	64	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	33	29	77	68	3	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	42	59	52	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	40	64	57	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	34	63	56	8	7	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	32	64	57	12	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	18	78	69	11	10	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)	39	35	61	54	7	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	29	71	63	8	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	22	63	56	14	12	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	21	68	60	10	9	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	25	22	76	67	6	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	35	69	61	3	3	2	2

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 is for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and is consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100. Sixth-form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



3 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Oakbank School, Keighley, BD22 7DU

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and hearing your views. Following the last inspection in January 2010, when the school was given a notice to improve, leaders were asked to make a number of important improvements. I am delighted to tell you that, as a result of the changes that have been made, Oakbank now provides a satisfactory education that is continually improving.

Here is a summary of our findings which we hope will be of interest to you.

- Examination results are improving and students in all year groups are making increasingly better progress.
- Attendance is improving and punctuality is good.
- Behaviour is good in most lessons but can be too boisterous in the corridors.
- Teaching is improving and is satisfactory but there is not enough good or better teaching.
- The curriculum is good and you have a wide range of choices in Key Stage 4.
- The care, guidance and support that you receive are good.
- Leaders and managers have made significant improvements to many aspects of the school since the last inspection.
- Provision in the sixth form is good and it is very well led and managed.

In order to improve further we have asked the school to:

- make sure that examination results match or exceed national averages in all subjects
- increase the amount of good and better teaching.

The headteacher and his team have a very clear vision for the school and they know just what to do to improve the school further. We hope that you give them your full support and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Jan Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector

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