

# Oakbank School

Oakworth Road, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD22 7DU

**Inspection dates** 24–25 February 2015

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement        | 3        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good                        | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Sixth form provision           |                      | Good                        | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement.

- Standards of attainment in mathematics are below average.
- Although it is improving, the quality of teaching has not been consistently good for long enough to ensure that students make good progress in all subjects.
- Some teachers do not consistently set work at the right level of difficulty, especially for the most-able students.
- Although teachers' marking is detailed and helpful, teachers do not always check that students have taken note and responded to it.
- In mathematics the quality of teaching is variable. Some teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are not high enough, and topics are sometimes repeated. As a result, some students' progress is too slow.
- Although it is rising, students' attendance is not yet at national average levels. The proportion of students who are frequently absent is too high.

### The school has the following strengths

- The determined leadership of the headteacher, leadership team and governing body have led to some substantial improvements in the quality of teaching, in students' behaviour, and in students' achievement in many subjects.
- The management of teachers' performance is effective. Leaders have taken difficult decisions on staffing in order to improve the quality of teaching.
- Middle leadership has been improved. It is more effective than it was at the time of the previous inspection.
- Students' achievement in many subjects is rising. In 2014 students' attainment in science was above national average levels.
- The school is a calm and orderly place to learn where students feel safe. Students' behaviour continues to improve.
- The sixth form is good and improving strongly. Students' achievement in the sixth form is rising as a result of highly effective leadership.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students’ learning in 50 lessons from Year 7 to Year 13. Three of these observations were made jointly with school leaders.
- The work in a sample of students’ books was evaluated. Inspectors observed an assembly and a number of tutor periods.
- The inspection team observed the behaviour of students in lessons, during lesson changeovers, at breaks and lunchtimes and as they left the school at the end of the day.
- Inspectors took account of 110 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered 101 staff questionnaires. They also spoke to a number of parents who contacted them.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher; with other school leaders including the head of sixth form, subject leaders and the special needs coordinator; with governors and representatives from the local authority; and with five groups of students of different ages. Inspectors also had a number of informal discussions with students at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at important documents, including examination results and the school’s own records of students’ progress. They scrutinised the school’s policies and procedures for keeping students safe. Inspectors examined records of students’ attendance and behaviour, plans for improvement and how leaders check on the quality of the work of school staff.

## Inspection team

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Michael Phipps, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Andrew Henderson               | Additional Inspector |
| Henry Moreton                  | Additional Inspector |
| Mary Lanovy-Taylor             | Additional Inspector |
| Pauline Pitman                 | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Oakbank School is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, at almost two fifths of all students, is higher than average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for students in the care of the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The large majority of students are of White British heritage, with smaller proportions of students from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds.
- The very large majority of students speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, at around one fifth of all students, is around average.
- In 2014 the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- In February 2014 the school opened its own achievement centre on the school site, which provides separate small-group support and teaching for a small number of students who may be in danger of underachievement.
- Two students from Year 11 attend full-time alternative provision at Bradford College, and two students from Year 9 attend full-time at the James project. Around 90 students in each year group from Year 9 to Year 11 study a work-related course at Leeds City College, Keighley Campus.
- Since the last inspection there have been a significant number of new staff appointed to the school, including appointments to middle leadership roles and to the senior leadership team. Following a substantial restructuring in 2014 of the responsibilities of pastoral staff, a number of teachers are now in new roles.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or outstanding, by making sure that:
  - teachers set work which more closely matches the range of students' abilities, especially for the most-able
  - teachers check that students always respond to the marking of their work so they make better progress.
- Raise students' standards of achievement in mathematics by making sure that:
  - the quality of teaching is consistently at least good across the department
  - teachers have higher expectations of what students can achieve, with less repetition of topics, so that students make more rapid progress.
- Improve students' attendance, and reduce the number of students who are persistently absent, by:
  - working more closely with those parents who do not send their children to school regularly
  - checking more closely the reason for every student absence.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides clear and determined leadership. He sets consistently high expectations for staff and students. He has an accurate and honest view of the school's areas for improvement, and is adamant there can be no excuses for low achievement or poor performance. He is well supported by a strong leadership team. They have brought about substantial improvements in teaching, students' behaviour and achievement in many subjects. As a result, there is a firm foundation on which good teaching and behaviour can flourish in the school.
- The management of teachers' performance is effective. Information is gathered regularly from observations of learning, checks of students' work and data on the progress that students' make. As a result, leaders have a detailed and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and a clear view of which aspects of teaching can be improved further. Teachers are set targets based on their students' progress. Leaders have taken some difficult decisions about staffing in order to improve the quality of teaching.
- The quality of middle leadership is good. Subject leaders play a positive and effective role in improving teaching and achievement in their areas. There is no inadequate teaching in the school.
- The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. It is committed to making sure that students from all backgrounds and starting points have an equal chance to be successful at school.
- The large majority of parents support the school and would recommend it. A number of parents contacted inspectors to express their appreciation for the support their children have received since starting school.
- Leaders make regular monitoring checks on the progress and attainment of students. Teachers are held to account for their students' progress. If any students fall behind, effective help is quickly provided.
- Leaders make regular checks on the progress, achievement, attendance and behaviour of students who learn away from the school site. There is a good working relationship with these providers.
- Policies and procedures to keep students safe meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority, working through the Bradford partnership of schools, has provided useful support to the school and carried out regular reviews of a number of aspects of its work.
- Leaders spend pupil premium funds on providing disadvantaged students with appropriate courses in Key Stage 4, on improving students' attendance, on the new achievement centre which supports vulnerable students and on individual support for disadvantaged students. Leaders recently carried out a review of the effectiveness of this spending. They found this is having a positive impact on the progress of disadvantaged students.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through a range of themed days, trips and visitors. Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain, especially through the school's 'Open Minds' programme which promotes British values of tolerance and respect for others.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and is generally well matched to students' interests, although it does not always result in teaching that fully engages students' interest or promotes their enjoyment of learning. There is a good balance of academic and work-related courses in Key Stage 4. As a result the proportion of students who end up not in education, employment or training is lower than average.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have received training in understanding what data on students' achievement tells them about the school's performance in relation to other schools. They make regular checks through the year on students' progress. They challenge school leaders to make improvements when they are needed effectively.
  - Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They make good use of external reviews of aspects of the school's work. They know how good teaching is rewarded, that teachers' targets are based on students' achievement, and how underperformance in teaching is tackled.
  - Governors make sure that school finances are well managed. They know how additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is spent and its impact on the achievement of disadvantaged students.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Their attitudes to learning and their effort are variable according to which teacher they have. Learning is not often interrupted by poor student behaviour, but

students are sometimes compliant, rather than enthusiastic learners.

- Students' conduct around the school is calm and orderly. They are polite and respectful to teachers and visitors. There are no graffiti around the site, although students do drop some litter at breaks and lunchtimes. Students told inspectors that behaviour is better now than in the past because expectations have risen.
- Students respond promptly to teachers' instructions. Adults supervise students well, and act as good role models for how students should behave. Students' standards of school uniform are high.
- A minority of staff, and a small minority of parents who responded to questionnaires, feel that pupils' behaviour is not good.
- Students' attendance, although rising, is still below national average levels. The reasons for students' absences are not routinely checked on and verified. The proportion of students who are persistently absent from school remains higher than average.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe in school. They are taught to stay safe and understand, for example, the potential dangers of using the Internet.
- The school site and buildings are safe and secure. There are effective procedures for checking on visitors to the school. All necessary checks are carried out on staff before they are appointed.
- Students learn about different types of bullying, but say it is rare in this school. If it did happen, students are confident it would be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Exclusion rates are falling, and racism is almost unknown.

### The quality of teaching

#### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching continues to improve, but it has not been good enough over a sustained period of time to ensure consistently good learning and achievement, particularly in mathematics. Sometimes teachers do not expect enough from their students, in either their achievement or work rate.
- Teachers do not always set work at the right level of difficulty for students of different abilities. The most able students are not always set tasks which are difficult enough to make them think hard or to deepen their learning.
- In mathematics the quality of teaching remains variable. Teachers' expectations of the standards that students can reach are not always high enough. Sometimes students are asked to repeat work on relatively simple topics that they have done before. This means that some students make slower progress.
- Teachers' marking has improved, and is now consistently detailed, frequent and helpful in all subject areas. It contains good advice on how students can improve their work. Newly introduced systems to check that students respond to this marking, however, are not yet applied consistently across the school.
- Teachers work hard, have a very good knowledge of their subjects and are very committed to doing the best for their students. Relationships between adults and students are warm, positive and respectful.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported, both in class and in extra sessions by teaching assistants. This provision has recently been improved to make it more effective.
- Teachers know their students well as individuals. They track their progress well, and are aware of which students may be vulnerable to underachievement. Teachers make sure that students develop their reading and literacy skills well.

### The achievement of pupils

#### requires improvement

- Students join the school in Year 7 with standards in English and mathematics which are often well below average. Too few students make good progress in mathematics.
- In 2014, all students in Year 11 were entered early for GCSE English and mathematics, and all then retook these examinations in the summer in order to improve their grades. Based on their first examination entry, the proportion of students achieving 5 or more A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, fell in 2014, and was well below average. Based on students' best results, this proportion was at broadly average levels. There is evidence that this policy of entering students early for examinations limited the achievement of the school's most-able students. The school will not continue this practice in 2015.
- The proportion of students who made or exceeded the progress expected of them in mathematics in 2014

was well below average. This was caused by changes in leadership and staffing in the department and some pupils were unable to catch up the ground lost caused by their slower progress in earlier years. Nevertheless, teachers' expectations of what students could achieve are sometimes too low, and there is too much repetition of more simple topics. School leaders are aware of this and have appropriate plans in place to address these issues.

- The progress of the school's most able students requires improvement, because teachers do not always plan work for them which is difficult enough. The proportions gaining the highest grades at GCSE were well below average in 2014 in mathematics, but, by contrast, were well above average in science.
- In 2014 students eligible for the pupil premium in Year 11 were one GCSE grade below others in school in English, and one and a half grades below in mathematics. Compared to other students nationally, they were one and a half grades below in English and two grades below in mathematics. School data indicates, and inspectors' checks confirm, that these disadvantaged students are now making more rapid progress than in the past, and that gaps in achievement are closing with increasing speed.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. School leaders are aware of a legacy of low achievement in Key Stage 3 in mathematics. Provision for these students has been improved, resulting in them making more rapid progress. The school's achievement centre provides effective support for the most vulnerable students.
- School leaders make appropriate use of the extra 'catch-up' funding for students in Year 7 who join the school with the lowest starting points. Extra support for these students in English and mathematics means they begin to catch up.
- Students who attend alternative provision achieve results in work-related courses that are in line with their abilities. Most of them progress successfully into employment or training.
- Minority ethnic students and those who speak English as an additional language make progress which is in line with that of other students.
- Students make similar progress in English to that of all students nationally. Their attainment, taking into account the best GCSE grade they achieved, is rising steadily and in 2014 was slightly higher than national average figures as a result of good leadership and teaching.
- Students achieve very well in science. School leaders recently made this subject a priority area for improvement, resulting in changes to leadership and staffing. As a result, students make rapid progress, and achieve results which are above national average levels.
- Students' achievement in many other subjects is good and improving. In 2014 students' attainment in several work-related subjects, art, sports studies, food technology and graphics were all above average.

### The sixth form provision

is good

- Achievement in the sixth form is good and improving strongly. Students' prior attainment when they start the sixth form is broadly average. Achievement rose sharply in 2014. In A-level examinations almost half of students gained the highest A\*-B grades. Results of BTEC qualifications were also high, and results of AS examinations improved. The attainment and progress of all groups of students are similarly good. The sixth form meets the 16-19 interim minimum standards.
- Most students study academic courses, with a minority following work-related courses. Completion rates of both are above average. As a result of their good achievement, all students who left the sixth form in 2014 were able to enter higher education or employment, with an increasing proportion entering the most prestigious UK universities.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is consistently good. Leaders check on teaching closely to make sure it is of high quality. Students appreciate teachers' commitment and enthusiasm for their subjects.
- Students have very positive attitudes to their studies, and are growing in confidence in their ability to succeed. They like being in the sixth form, and enjoy their excellent relationships with staff. They willingly take on responsibilities such as supporting younger students and organising charity fundraising events. This helps to prepare them well for the future. Attendance rates are high. Students work hard, behave well and feel safe.
- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding. Leaders have taken decisive steps to strengthen sixth form provision, including the quality of teaching, which has had a notable impact on students' outcomes. Leaders track students' progress carefully and provide strong support to keep them on course for success.

## 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

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 107441   |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Bradford |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 453752   |

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

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                         | Secondary             |
| <b>School category</b>                        | Foundation            |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 11–18                 |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                       | Mixed                 |
| <b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>     | Mixed                 |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>    | 1,604                 |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 240                   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body    |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | Janice Firth          |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                            | David Maxwell         |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | 13 March 2013         |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 01535 210111          |
| <b>Fax number</b>                             | 01535 210555          |
| <b>Email address</b>                          | office@oakbank.org.uk |



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