

# Oak View School

Whitehills Road, Loughton, IG10 1TS

## Inspection dates

25–26 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils make good progress and their achievement in English, communication and personal development is outstanding.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a very good start to their education.
- The sixth form is good. Students leave well equipped for adult life and further learning.
- Pupils' communication and behaviour are very well supported by the consistent, widespread use of symbols.
- The school's leaders have worked systematically and successfully to improve the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good throughout the school. Class staff teams work very well together to help pupils understand and meet their targets.
- The school works very well to keep pupils calm and involved so that they learn well.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are outstanding. They enjoy school and take part enthusiastically in all that they do.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and parents, carers and staff agree. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent.
- The school keeps a close check on pupils' progress so that help can be given quickly if any are in danger of falling behind.
- Teaching is closely checked and leaders continually seek to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.
- The subjects provided are enriched by exciting additional activities such as the breakfast club and various sports clubs. These help develop pupils' academic skills and personal and physical well-being.
- The work of the school-based therapists makes a very good contribution to pupils' achievement and well-being.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress is not as marked in mathematics as it is in English and personal development. Not enough pupils make better than expected progress in science.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are not always given the right expertise and resources to help them learn as much as possible.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons. All were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed pupils at other times, such as in the breakfast club, on arrival in the morning and in transition between classes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior teacher, the teacher in charge of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and seven members of the governing body of which two were current parents. Informal discussions were also held with pupils and support staff.
- Inspectors reviewed many documents including those relating to pupils' academic progress and behaviour management, curriculum and lesson planning, the quality of teaching, safety and safeguarding, governance, school self-evaluation and development planning.
- There were insufficient responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, to be shown. Inspectors took account of the most recent survey of parents' and carers' views, correspondence from parents and carers, and nine responses to the staff inspection questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Judith Charlesworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Oak View school provides for pupils with a wide range of difficulties. The two largest groups have severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. A very small number of pupils have moderate learning difficulties and a small but growing number have profound and multiple learning difficulties, particularly in the lower school. Many pupils throughout the school have severely challenging behaviour. The vast majority of pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- There are twice as many boys as girls, which is typical for schools of this type.
- There are about twice the average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic families, many speaking English as an additional language. Pupils from a White British heritage make up about half of the pupil population.
- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional government funding to support the achievement of certain groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- There are 11 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The number of pupils has increased since the previous inspection, and a temporary building has been installed to increase the accommodation available.
- The school has links with Epping College and Harlow College for students who will move on there after they have left school, and provide additional learning and work experience opportunities for some students at Roding Valley High School and Well Gate Farm.
- The school has recently been re-accredited by the National Autistic Society.

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

- Improve achievement in mathematics and science so that more pupils make better progress than expected nationally by:
  - checking the quality of teaching in these subjects and providing support and training to staff if required
  - reviewing the curriculum and resources for these subjects to ensure that they are sufficiently interesting and demanding to enable pupils to achieve as much as possible.
- Improve provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties by:
  - checking the quality of teaching for this particular group to make sure that their multiple needs are properly met
  - providing training and guidance for staff, particularly support staff, to make sure that provision, tasks and support are appropriate
  - reviewing the curriculum and its adaptation and resources for this group of pupils to make sure they meet these pupils' complex needs.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment when they join the school is almost always very low for their age due to their significant difficulties. A few pupils' attainment is closer to expectations for their age.
- The proportions of pupils making expected or better than expected progress have increased over the past three years. There are now very few pupils who make less progress than is expected nationally. All groups of pupils throughout the school now make good progress, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Most parents and carers agree that their children are doing well.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in English and personal development. Since the previous inspection the use of communication aids is more consistent. This has improved pupils' understanding and ability to communicate, and has been of great help to those with autistic spectrum disorder and those who speak English as an additional language. It has resulted in a calm, productive, uninterrupted atmosphere in which pupils are keen to work and enjoy learning.
- Throughout the school pupils learn to read and write. This starts with understanding and using objects, symbols and simple words to convey meaning. Many pupils progress to reading sentences and books, and understand some grammar and punctuation. One Year 5 pupil, for example, was able to re-arrange a sentence that had been cut up into single words, and place the full stop in the right place. In the upper school and sixth form, some students write for a range of purposes, including making shopping lists and producing newsletters.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good. They develop their skills well, although fewer make more than expected progress than they do in English. Pupils' mathematical skills vary according to their ability. For some, great success is shown by learning to match shapes or items. For more-able pupils, success involves learning to use money and do simple calculations. Almost all pupils make at least expected progress in science. However, relatively few make more progress than expected.
- The progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is rapid. Children settle happily and quickly learn to separate from their parents and carers. Their communication skills and personal development improve rapidly. This was clearly seen in a physical development session where two children with social and communication difficulties laughed with joy as they ran around the hall together as a companionable pair.
- Provision for the older pupils and students in the sixth form has improved. As a result, their achievement and independence have improved and they now make good progress. Most students now achieve an increasingly demanding range of useful qualifications, which was an issue for improvement in the previous inspection. These help them to reinforce the life skills they need for adult life, and for continuing their learning out of school.
- The school has analysed different groups' achievement. Often, groups are so small that the data are not reliable. Nevertheless, they show no differences in the achievement of pupils of varying disabilities, abilities and learning needs, or between key stages or ethnic groups. Girls tend to do slightly better than boys in English and slightly less well in science. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make better progress in both English and mathematics than other pupils, which is contrary to the national trend.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching is good in all areas of the school and underpins pupils' good achievement. The school uses a highly structured approach to monitoring and supporting teaching. This indicates strengths and areas for development in individuals and in the teaching staff as a whole. Records show that teaching has improved steadily over the past five terms and is typically good or outstanding. Inspection findings agree.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress towards their personal and subject targets. Personal targets are clearly displayed in classrooms and every opportunity is taken to work towards these across the day. In addition, challenging subject targets are set for each pupil in every lesson. For example, one pupil's target was to count reliably to 15 in a mathematics lesson. He more than met this target by managing to count to 17, which was a 'first'.
- The previous inspection found that pupils did not know their targets and did not understand what they needed to do to achieve them. This is now greatly improved. Teachers review targets with pupils at the end of lessons in a helpful way that checks and re-confirms the learning and allows celebration with the whole group. Pupils are also praised immediately they have met a target within the lesson so they know exactly how they have succeeded. In a physical education lesson for pupils with complex needs, for example, staff spontaneously exclaimed with delight when a pupil reached his target early in the lesson.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well throughout the school. Teachers use the national guidance on helping pupils to read using the link between letters and the sounds they make wherever possible. Mathematics activities are interesting and meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. The use of communication aids, particularly symbols, is a strength of teaching. Pupils have their own books of symbols, teachers prepare work using symbols, and classroom items and storage are labelled with symbols. All of these help pupils to communicate, understand what is happening, stay calm and learn effectively.
- Teaching for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage concentrates very well on supporting the development of children's personal, physical and communication skills. The staff work very well together to provide interesting activities in a nurturing setting. Children's progress is closely monitored and recorded. Teaching in the sixth form is now much better focused on helping these young adults to become as independent and well equipped with life skills as possible, in preparation for the next step in their lives.
- Class staff teams work very well together throughout the school. Teachers maintain an overview of all pupils and adults in the room to make sure that everything is running smoothly. Teaching assistants are usually very well briefed and provide very good support for both learning and maintaining individuals' calm behaviour. Their relationships with pupils are outstanding. Occasionally, however, they do not have enough knowledge or guidance on how to help pupils with the most complex needs learn as much as possible from an activity.
- The pace of lessons is usually good with plenty of demanding work provided. Learning expectations and resources match pupils' abilities. This is an improvement, as the previous inspection found that older pupils and sixth form students did not do enough work in lessons. Sometimes, though, work with small groups of pupils with the most complex needs is rather too gentle and can sometimes be insufficiently well resourced. These sessions lack the excitement and vigour of the great majority of lessons. This results in the pupils being less actively involved, and so on these occasions they learn less than they could.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is outstanding and they fulfil the school's 'community code' of 'confidence, achievement, respect and responsibility'. Pupils enjoy school and their attitudes to learning are excellent. This includes those who are still learning to concentrate for longer periods of time. Pupils are enthusiastic about all that they do, in class and during lunch time and after-school activities.
- A number of pupils have very challenging behaviour that is associated with their particular difficulties. Staff work successfully to help pupils stay calm and to recognise themselves when they need some time away from the group. Pupils do not do this unnecessarily and are still keen to learn. On one occasion, a pupil asked to go to his special chair to calm down, but watched the teaching activity carefully from this distance. When given resources of his own, he happily completed the tasks given. On another occasion, a pupil recognised that his short reward time away from the table was finished. He put his timer away and returned to the table unprompted.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has made very effective changes to improve pupils' behaviour. These include the more consistent use of communication aids and symbols to help pupils understand the structure of the day and so reduce their anxieties. The school has also changed its overall strategy for managing behaviour, and focuses on preventing challenging behaviour rather than reacting to it. This has resulted in a considerable reduction in incidents.
- Pupils are generally polite, friendly and sociable. Their relationships with adults are excellent, and they learn respect and appropriate behaviour from the staff. Pupils are accepting of each other's varying needs, and show pleasure in each other's successes. They respond very well to the school's reward system.
- Pupils are usually kind to one another and there are almost no deliberate anti-social incidents or difficulties between ethnic groups. More-able pupils say they feel safe at school and have an understanding of how to keep safe and what to do about bullying. Almost all pupils understand the difference between right and wrong, and how this applies to them and others.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The school's leaders are determined that the school should improve to be an outstanding resource for its own pupils and the wider community. Since the previous inspection, accurate self-evaluation linked to clear development planning has led to improvements in practice and the quality of teaching and learning. The school is now better placed to advise others in the community. The local authority has provided helpful support to the school in these areas.
- The school has many partnerships with a wide range of professional agencies and community organisations which contribute well to pupils' education and well-being. All pupils, especially those with the most complex needs, benefit from the on-going work of the school-based therapists. Increasing use is being made of community links to support pupils' life skills. Older students receive good advice and support for moving on from an independent external agency.
- Pupils' progress is carefully checked each term by the senior leaders and support arranged if any are in danger of falling behind. Their judgements are compared with other schools' to check their accuracy. Teachers are taking increasing responsibility for checking on progress which is improving their skills and management capability.
- The senior leaders continually seek to improve the proportion of outstanding teaching. They provide support, training and encouragement to staff to take responsibility, so that should any

gaps in staffing arise, they can be quickly filled without affecting pupils' education.

- The quality of teachers' work is closely checked by senior leaders who use a commercial system to help them identify and track individuals' strengths and areas for development. The system is in line with national guidance. Targets are set for teachers to improve pupils' achievement, the school's work and their own skills. Teachers also work to support one another through paired observations and coaching which helps to spread good practice. The accuracy of observations are checked by external professionals and supplemented by regular checks on various other aspects of teachers' work, such as planning. This system does not extend to support staff, which means they sometimes lack the necessary expertise to help pupils with profound and multiple difficulties make the best progress they can.
- The range of subjects and activities usually provides well for the wide age and ability range and encourages pupils' interest and participation. Sometimes, however, activities and resources for working with pupils with the most complex difficulties do not fully meet their needs. The curriculum makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through numerous events such as raising money for charities, celebrating cultural and religious festivals and taking part in educational journeys.
- Both the sixth form and the Early Years Foundation Stage are well led. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in line with national guidance and concentrates well on developing children's skills through play, free choice of activities and individual teaching. The provision in the sixth form has improved. It is now more community-based, so students can practise their skills in real-life situations. It provides a greater range of accreditation and work experience opportunities, and is designed to develop students' independence and key skills in preparation for adult life.
- Extra activities at lunch times and before and after school enrich the curriculum. The breakfast club provides an excellent start to the day and contributes greatly to those pupils' self-help, academic and communication skills. The school has recently re-launched clubs involving physical activities such as trampolining, dance and football. This is in recognition that physical activity helps both learning and well-being and should be at least a daily event. In this way the school has already anticipated the receipt of the new government funding to develop its sports provision.
- The school has good partnerships with parents and carers. They say that the staff are approachable, that information is shared and that there are regular opportunities to meet. The school is working to reach those who find accessing the school difficult. The recent appointment of a family liaison officer is helping towards this and in supporting those who need it. There is regular communication with parents through newsletters and by various online means, and staff use progress reviews as a means of gaining parents' and carers' views about other matters.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors evaluate their own effectiveness rigorously and play a full part in determining the direction of the school. They know the school and its strengths and weaknesses very well. Governors are well informed and fully understand the school's performance data, for example, on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They hold the senior leaders to account through constructive challenge. The governing body has chosen to focus closely on the group who receive additional support through the pupil premium, and the impact this is having on their attainment and well-being. The governing body is clear about the link between the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and staff salary progression. It is well informed about the school's systems for checking teaching, setting teachers' yearly targets and supporting newly qualified teachers and tackling any weaker teaching. The governing body keeps a close eye on finances and supports the school over its many challenges with the building. All

statutory requirements are met, including those to safeguard pupils.

## 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>	115460
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	425178

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<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>	83
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	19
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Maureen Gould
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dianne Ryan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 February 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 508 4293
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