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Ms Michelle Wilman
Principal
West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (SILC)
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Dear Ms Wilman

Short inspection of West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre

Following my visit to the school on 19 October 2016 with Marian Thomas, Her Majesty's Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have led the school purposefully and with determination through a period of significant change. Your high expectations, strong child-centred values and deep commitment to 'get it right' for every pupil remain at the heart of the school's work.

Inspectors identified two areas for improvement at the school's last inspection. First, to further improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that learning activities interest and motivate pupils and the most able pupils are challenged to work and learn more independently. Second, to improve communication with parents and carers by providing information in a more timely way. You have tackled these areas for improvement well and the impact of your actions is clearly evident. For example, as a result of higher expectations and better teaching, the most able pupils are making faster progress in English, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects. However, although you have improved the curriculum and the way you assess pupils' learning and progress, you know that more needs to be done to fully embed these important developments.

You and your senior team have an accurate picture of your school's strengths and the areas needing further work. For example, you identified that the school's 16 to 19 study programmes did not prepare the most able students well enough for the next stage of their learning and adult lives. As a result of determined action, new

post-16 provision has been set up at 'The Powerhouse'. Students greatly value the 'college-like' approach in this new setting. Crucially, students are now working towards a wider range of higher level qualifications and developing the confidence and skills they need to be better prepared for further study and the world of work. However, you do not always use the information you collect about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to clearly identify which aspects of teachers' practice need further work. As a consequence, your summary self-evaluation does not provide a sufficiently clear view of the strengths in teaching, learning and assessment and the areas needing further work.

Governors are knowledgeable about what the school does well and the things that need to improve. They are meticulous in checking the information and reports they receive and robust in challenging you and your senior leaders. However, they have not ensured that the information on the school's website is up to date.

The actions taken by you and your senior leaders have placed the school in a strong position to secure further improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. There is a strong and firmly embedded culture of protecting pupils and keeping them safe.

You know your pupils and their families well and records show that you take timely and effective action when you are concerned about a pupil's safety or well-being. Case studies show that you work closely and effectively with a wide range of other professionals and services to give pupils and their families the help and support they need.

Pupils say that they feel safe and well supported by the adults who care for them. They also say that the support they have received has helped them to be more confident and independent, for example when they are out in the community or using public transport.

Inspection findings

- You have managed a number of staff changes and new appointments since the school's last inspection. You have built a strong, cohesive and effective senior leadership team. In addition, middle leaders are having an increasingly positive impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for pupils, for example in post-16 provision and for pupils with complex and multiple learning needs. You manage teachers' performance well and hold them robustly to account for improving their practice. Although you keep a close eye on the quality of teaching by observing in lessons, checking assessment information and looking at pupils' work, you do not always use this information to identify precisely where teaching and outcomes for pupils need further work. Similarly, the school's

summary self-evaluation does not pinpoint the strengths and areas for improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment clearly or precisely enough.

- Since the last inspection, you have radically redesigned the curriculum and the way you assess pupils' learning and progress. The curriculum is more closely matched to each pupil's interests, needs and different levels of ability, and assessments are more focused on the small steps you expect each pupil to make in their learning and wider development. As a result, teachers know exactly how well individual pupils are doing and use this information to inform their planning and teaching. However, your assessment and tracking system is new and, as a result, you do not have a full picture of how well pupils are doing, when compared with other pupils with similar needs and starting points. You know that this is a next step and you are already taking action to strengthen this important aspect of leadership and management.
- Assessment information shows that primary and secondary pupils and students in the post-16 provision are achieving, and sometimes exceeding, their individual targets. In 2015 and 2016, pupils in key stage 4 and students in the post-16 provision achieved higher level qualifications in a range of academic and vocational subjects. Crucially, the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making stronger progress in English, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects.
- Historically, levels of attendance for disadvantaged pupils were lower than for non-disadvantaged pupils. As a result of effective action, the attendance of all pupils improved in 2016 and there was no difference between the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.
- You have improved the aspects of teaching that were weaker at the time of the last inspection. Teachers now pitch work at the right level for the most able pupils who are also challenged to work and learn more independently. Similarly, much has been done to develop the most able pupils' reading skills and their interest in reading. As a result, they read confidently and fluently, showing a good understanding of what they are reading. Work in the most able pupils' English books shows strong progress over time and, importantly, disadvantaged pupils make fast progress in English as a result of highly effective support and intervention.
- As a result of effective training and development, teachers and other adults have a deep understanding of pupils' complex special educational needs. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' conduct and are skilful in promoting good attitudes to learning and positive behaviour. Pupils with the most acute and complex needs and those with challenging behaviour are supported well. Case studies highlight the positive impact of this work on individual pupils and the frequency and intensity of incidents of challenging behaviour.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's website is kept up to date and includes all the information schools are required to publish
- the school's assessment and tracking system is further strengthened so that it provides a detailed and accurate picture of the progress that all pupils make
- senior and middle leaders use information from a range of monitoring activities to pinpoint the aspects of teachers' practice which need further work
- the school's summary self-evaluation provides a clear view of the strengths in teaching, learning and assessment and the areas needing further work.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leeds. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nick Whittaker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and other senior and middle leaders, secondary and post-16 students and representatives from the governing body and the local authority. Inspectors visited lessons with senior leaders, looked at pupils' work and talked to them about their learning. Inspectors considered the survey results from Parent View, including four written responses, and considered 64 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors examined a range of documents including information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and information about pupils' progress.

Inspectors focused their inspection activities on:

- the outcomes achieved by pupils, especially the most able pupils
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and whether the areas identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection had been tackled
- leaders' understanding of the school's strengths and the areas needing further work
- how well teachers understand and meet the complex needs of some pupils.