

West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134884
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	341558
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Honoree Gordon HMI

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	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Geoff Roberts
Headteacher	Miss Michelle Wilman
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2006
School address	4 Town Street Stanningley Pudsey LS28 6HL
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons on the two main sites. They also observed West Specialist Inclusion Centre (West SILC) pupils in a small number of other lessons at two partner schools and at a nearby further education college.

Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They spoke to leaders and managers at West SILC and at partner sites. They observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation, including the school's data about pupils' progress; minutes of meetings; plans for improvement and records related to safeguarding. The inspectors also looked at 31 parental questionnaires and at the responses from pupils and staff to questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well all the different groups of students are doing and whether the provision for them is even
- how effectively the partnerships operate across the various sites
- how far the sixth form has improved since the previous inspection
- policies and practice related to safeguarding.

Information about the school

West SILC educates pupils from age two to 19 who have a wide range of special educational needs. These range from moderate learning difficulties to more complex needs. Over the last year or so, the number of pupils who also have behavioural, emotional or social needs has grown. Some of these students have been excluded from previous schools. All West SILC pupils have statements specifying the additional help that must be provided for them.

At time of the inspection, there was one child in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most of the provision for this age group has been transferred to a local authority children's centre.

The school occupies two sites approximately three miles apart, as West SILC was formed by merging two schools. The main site is the Milestone site in Stanningley. Pupils of primary school age; those with complex needs across the full age range; and sixth form groups are taught on this site. The Victoria Park site is located in temporary buildings in the grounds of Farnley Park High school. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those who have emotional, behavioural or social needs are taught at the Victoria park site. This site will close in summer 2010. A new site for the school has not yet been found.

A small number of pupils of primary school age attend Hollybush Primary School, but are on the roll of West SILC. A further group of secondary-aged students who have moderate learning difficulties follow lessons for two days per week at Priestthorpe Sports College, a local comprehensive secondary school. These two arrangements are part of the local authority's policy of promoting the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. Some sixth form students attend vocational

courses part-time at a local college as part of their curriculum.

The Milestone site has number of specialist facilities, such as a hydrotherapy pool. At the Victoria Park site students have lunch in the dining room of the secondary school, after the students from that school have finished and have separate playground areas. The school has been awarded the Inclusion Chartermark and the Healthy School standard.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

West SILC is a good school that has improved considerably since its previous inspection. The new school principal has galvanised the school into action and, as a result, the outcomes for pupils are much better. Leaders and managers form a strong team who show good capacity for sustained improvement.

The school meets the needs of pupils who have a wide range of special educational needs. The provision for those pupils who have complex needs is particularly good, with an effective system of personalised learning plans to promote their fundamental skills.

Achievement and enjoyment are good. All groups of pupils make good progress. Those with moderate learning difficulties achieve a number of qualifications by the time they leave. Pupils enjoy school. They have good attitudes to learning, encouraged by staff who take every opportunity to foster self-belief. The quality of relationships between pupils and staff is at the heart of the school's success. A very small number of pupils find the presence of growing numbers of pupils with challenging behaviour alongside them to be a source of some anxiety, but the vast majority of pupils say that they feel safe at school.

Teaching and the curriculum are good and are enhanced by the excellent partnerships the school has forged with two neighbouring schools and a college. These partnerships have extended the range of subjects and opportunities for pupils and provide good models of inclusion. Being integrated in this way into mainstream schools enhances pupils' experiences and helps them to develop their social skills.

The sixth form is satisfactory. All sixth form students, irrespective of needs, are on one site. The learning environment is not particularly stimulating for this age group. The school does its best with an old building. The sixth form is well led and is improving, with some signs that recent initiatives are beginning to bear fruit. Nevertheless, as yet not all lessons focus clearly enough on what individual students should achieve by way of outcomes in each lesson.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is good.

The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate. For example, the school has recognised the need to improve the provision for mathematics and has taken steps to do so, including further training and the sharing of good practice. Safeguarding procedures are good, with clear policies and strategies.

The school acknowledges that the use of assessment is an area for development. In many lessons, teachers adjust their teaching well to match students' prior knowledge or skill level, but this is not always the case. The school has recently begun to analyse the progress its students make compared to others nationally.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine existing data systems to provide a simple, clear analysis that will:
 - allow the school to set appropriately challenging academic targets for each pupil that are accurately reviewed against national averages or benchmarks
 - support the teachers in planning lessons that build upon what each pupil knows and can do.
- Improve the learning environment for the sixth form, by:
 - providing a more adult-focused environment
 - ensuring that teaching is more closely and consistently focused on the outcomes for learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school, at all ages, is low. However, pupils make good progress. Their progress is strongly improving year on year. In the lessons observed, teaching and learning were usually good. Pupils show great perseverance and are making good progress in their lessons.

In 2009, by the end of Key Stage 4 at age 16, those students who have moderate learning difficulties had all gained qualifications at entry level in the core skills of English, mathematics and information and communication technology(ICT). A small number had also gained one or more full GCSE passes. Published data show that this means the school has added above average value for those pupils.

Pupils with more complex needs make very good progress. This is largely as a result of a good system of personalised learning plans that ensure individuals' needs are well met. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. For a number of pupils, being in a mainstream primary school adds significantly to this picture, allowing them to flourish.

Much of the good advances pupils make is down to their self-belief and to the promotion of their social skills, encouraged by all the staff. The good and often excellent relationships between staff and pupils foster trust and encourage a very positive atmosphere for learning. Behaviour is good: pupils really enjoy learning. Attendance is broadly average, despite a number of pupils with medical needs, or who have been reluctant to attend school in the past. The school continues to keep a close eye on attendance because of its important link to achievement.

The school councils operate well, allowing pupils to have a good say in what happens in school. Pupils show good awareness of health-related issues.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is engaging and interesting, with a high degree of personalisation. There are good opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation, where they are able to do so. The excellent links with the secondary sports college allow students to benefit from specialised input on sport. Year 7 pupils observed there during the inspection were allocated to three different sports, best suited to their talents or interests. Learning together in other subjects with pupils in a mainstream setting, West SILC pupils develop social and other skills useful for future lives and employment. They can access a growing range of vocational opportunities, such as in construction, by attending a nearby college. The programme of personal, social and health education contributes significantly to pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves safe. Provision for those pupils who have complex needs is particularly good and much improved since the previous inspection. This focuses on improving pupils' fundamental skills and is very well led, with the school leader working across the other SILC partnerships. The school has been awarded quality marks to recognise its work with pupils who have complex needs.

Teachers use a good range of teaching methods and resources, including effective use of ICT, to ensure that lessons capture pupils' attention and usually proceed at a good pace. Pupils are often subdivided into groups for different tasks to suit their stage or preferred method of learning. Often, teachers allow good opportunities for pupils to express their views in lessons. This challenges pupils well and helps to encourage the development of oral skills. Not all lessons, however, are as closely tailored as they could be to pupils' needs. Occasionally, teachers' expectations of what some pupils can do are

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too low. The assessment system is not always reflected in lesson plans. Consequently, in a few lessons, outcomes for individual pupils are not specific enough. In good lessons, work is differentiated well, so that everyone in the class is able to make good progress.

The school's system for tracking pupils' progress demonstrates that pupils are making good progress. It shows how pupils are doing compared to the school's expectations of them. The school has a lot of data and has begun to analyse this further to see how an individual pupil's progress might compare with what is expected nationally, but this is at an early stage. As yet, the data do not show how a particular aspect of provision, such as a change in curriculum, might be making an impact on outcomes for a given group of pupils. Pupils' progress is reported to parents through annual reviews and at other times. This has improved in that the school now sets pupils academic as well as personal targets. However, this practice is new and so has not yet featured in annual reviews.

Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils well. Pupils say that they greatly appreciate the help staff give them. The school draws effectively on good links with a number of outside agencies and professionals as part of the care it provides for pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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?

The principal's dynamic and energetic leadership has ensured that many outcomes for pupils have improved since the previous inspection. Governors support and challenge the school well. They and all the leaders share a common vision for driving improvement. The leadership of the provision for complex needs is outstanding. Leadership of the sixth form has improved and is now good. However, some initiatives in the sixth form are new and it is too early to see their full impact.

The school's curriculum reflects its strong commitment to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. In this and in the procedures for safeguarding pupils, the contribution of working in partnership with other schools is outstanding. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are good.

Following a review of leadership roles, each of the two sites and the sixth form has a separate leader, reporting to the principal. In this way, the day-to-day running of each part is efficiently organised. Resources and facilities are shared wherever possible, so that no group of pupils is at a disadvantage. However, despite the best efforts of the school, the Milestone site is drab in places and does not provide a particularly stimulating environment for the sixth form, nor in parts for pupils with complex needs.

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The shortcomings of the Victoria Park site for physical education and for play are largely overcome by using off-site sports facilities and by the provision of a small, enclosed playground, suitable for break-times and for playing football.

There are good opportunities for pupils to share in the facilities and expertise available at the different sites. Links between all parts of the provision are managed effectively. Good care is taken to ensure transition is smooth when pupils change schools, by some crossover of staff to ensure continuity. For example, some primary-age pupils move up to the Victoria Park site at the end of Year 6 and pupils at Victoria Park transfer to the sixth form at Milestone.

The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. It is not easy for the school to promote community cohesion with a split site. One area of strength is the amount of outreach work the school does across the West Leeds area related to special educational needs.

These are the grades for 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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It is well led and is highly inclusive, with the partner primary school link particularly effective. Children are encouraged to develop independence skills. They receive high-quality care and support and, as a result, grow in self-confidence and make good progress, especially in their social and communication skills. Personalised learning plans target resources appropriately to meet their needs. Many activities are 'hands-on', stimulating interest and enthusiasm. A multi-sensory approach promotes children's language development

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well. The 'circle of friends' is a strength in fostering their social skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

A new sixth form leader has invigorated the sixth form. A number of aspects of provision are showing signs of improvement: personalised plans for sixth formers match provision to their needs; partnerships, such as those with the college, enrich the curriculum; pathways for transferring into the sixth form and on to further education or employment are clearer. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of these recent initiatives on outcomes for students. Students' core skills in English and in ICT are getting better, but there is less evidence of improvement in their mathematical skills.

Whilst teaching is often good, sometimes lessons do not stretch students sufficiently, because the aims are too generalised, rather than specific to each student. This means progress is not always as fast as it could be for some students and this affects the outcomes overall. The environment for sixth formers is not distinguished from that of the rest of the school in a way that would reflect their age or stage of maturity.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are highly supportive of the school and all reported in their questionnaires that they felt their children were safe there. Pupils also said that they were very happy at the school and had someone to turn to if they were worried. However, a very small minority of pupils said in their questionnaires and in conversation with inspectors that they did not feel safe.

Inspectors discussed this further with pupils, leaders and a representative group of staff.

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They also looked at the school's analysis of questionnaires issued in November 2009 as part of anti-bullying week. Recently, the school has admitted more pupils who have challenging behaviour. This is managed well, with a clear behaviour policy. Those students have a separate classroom and breaks. However, at times other pupils on the site observe or hear disruptive behaviour and this may be the source of their anxiety. Inspectors found no shortcomings in physical safety measures and judge that the school gives a high priority to safeguarding pupils. They are very closely supervised at all times. As one pupil said 'We all have things we find difficult to do. The teachers are helping these pupils to get better at behaving'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 140 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	74	8	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	68	10	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	71	9	29	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	65	10	32	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	61	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	58	13	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	52	10	32	1	3	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)	17	55	13	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	71	8	26	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	55	13	42	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	48	14	45	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	61	11	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	68	10	32	0	0	0	0

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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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 pupil's 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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre, Pudsey, LS28 6HL

I am writing to thank you for your help when I visited your school recently with two other inspectors and to tell you what we found. We were pleased to meet some of the school council. It is good you get a chance to be involved in what happens in school. You told us that you enjoy school.

We went to lots of different places: Victoria Park, Milestone, and to two other schools and the college to see what you were doing. We think all the different adults work really well together to give you exciting and interesting things to do and to learn.

- Your school is good overall.
- You work hard and you are making good progress.
- You get qualifications. This is helpful for getting a job or for going to college.
- Teaching is good. Teachers vary the activities in the lessons to help you understand.
- The sixth form is satisfactory. Your skills are improving in English and in ICT, but not so much in mathematics.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage, for the youngest children, is good.
- Teachers and other adults take good care of you and support you well.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. There has been a big improvement since your last inspection. We think the headteacher and the other leaders have good ideas for how to make your school even better.

How can you and the staff make the school even better?

- Your parents all said they thought you were safe in school, so did nearly all of you. We agree. But a few of you said you did not always feel safe. We know that sometimes when someone behaves badly it can be noisy or frightening to see. However, we have checked and we feel sure that the teachers are looking after you. So, do speak to a teacher if you are at all worried in future.
- We have asked the headteacher to make sure that the teachers know how well each of you is doing, so that lessons build up on that every time. You should know what you are meant to be learning in every lesson.
- We would like to see some further improvements to the building at the Milestone site.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Honoree Gordon,

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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