

Inspection of a good school: West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre

4 Town Street, Stanningley, Pudsey, West Yorkshire LS28 6HL

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 June 2022

Outcome

West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils experience a personalised approach to learning at West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre. Pupils are taught in one of six provisions depending upon their age and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The main school site has the largest population of pupils. Some pupils attend other settings, including in mainstream schools. This ensures that pupils can experience elements of mainstream school with the support of specialist staff. Leaders ensure that pupils' needs are met through this structure.

Leaders are visible and involved in all aspects of school life. Pupils are used to seeing leaders around school. This includes teaching classes and supporting pupils at the beginning and end of day. Pupils enjoy talking to the principal. Staff know pupils and their families well. All pupils and their families are very much members of the school community. Pupils are happy at school as a result.

Pupils behave well and staff have high expectations of them. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. This ensures that each school site is calm and purposeful. Leaders ensure that each school setting has robust systems to monitor behaviour. Bullying is not an issue, but if it were, pupils say that staff would help them. Pupils say they feel safe.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a detailed overview of the curriculum. Curriculum plans are precise and well sequenced. They are ambitious and meet pupils' different education, health and care (EHC) plan targets. Assessment is used well to inform teaching.

Reading follows a systematic synthetic phonics programme. Teachers in early years prioritise learning to read for all pupils. For those pupils who are unable to access phonics, pre-phonics skills are taught. Across school sites, all pupils are taught to read by well-trained staff. Learning to read is an established part of school life. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils get the reading support they need on a one-to-one basis if needed. There is a culture of reading. Books are present in all lessons and pupils engage with

reading well. Pupils can describe the books that they have read. Pupils who can read are encouraged to read more challenging texts, including Shakespeare.

The informal curriculum is well developed. It supports pupils who are not ready for subject specific learning. Pupils are taught to develop their communication and interaction skills. They learn skills that develop independence and support physical development. Exercise books show progress for those pupils following a more formal curriculum. The formal curriculum is well planned. Leaders have considered the important knowledge that they want pupils to know. Pupils' knowledge builds step by step. They are able to incorporate new ideas into their work because teachers have thought carefully about how the curriculum is structured and delivered. However, the semi-formal curriculum is less well developed than other areas of the curriculum. Learning too often focuses on the lesson activity rather than deepening knowledge. This means pupils can be distracted by lesson activities rather than learning.

Children in the early years are taught at the main school and Farnley sites. Children have access to outside play and learning areas as well as thoughtfully designed classrooms. These are well resourced with learning materials and play items. Leaders have designed a curriculum that starts from what children know and helps them develop their knowledge over time. Teachers present subject matter clearly and check pupils' understanding thoroughly. Classes are fun and engaging places to learn.

Post-16 provision is a strength of the school. Students are based in a dedicated provision separate from the main school. It has been developed to promote work-related learning. Students can learn in a professional kitchen and 'The Hub'. This includes a supermarket and post office. Students are supported to prepare for adulthood in the 'home management and employability suite'. They can also broadcast their views on the school radio station. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their lives when they leave the sixth form.

The West Area Inclusion Partnership recently became the responsibility of the school. The provision supports pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Leaders have not fully embedded their quality assurance systems in this provision. As a result, leaders have yet to bring about improvements in some aspects of the provision.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Across the school sites, there is a caring and supportive atmosphere. Staff know pupils well. Sometimes pupils struggle to regulate and need adult support using physical intervention. Such strategies are used only when necessary. Leaders have ensured that there are secure systems in place to check pupils' attendance. Attendance rates have improved since pupils have returned to school after periods of national lockdown. The majority of pupils' absences are medical. Challenging persistent absence remains a priority for leaders.

Pupils experience a careers programme that meets the Gatsby benchmarks. It is linked to their individual aspirations. Pupils can try work-related activities in school before they take part in work experience. To prepare for adulthood, older pupils' school rewards are paid in virtual money with a payslip to develop financial skills. All pupils can access a range of therapies and personal development opportunities. These include hydrotherapy,

trampoline therapy and sensory interventions. Pupils can take part in clubs including choir and competitive sport. All pupils can experience school trips. Post-16 students are organising a trip for all pupils to Blackpool. Older pupils visit careers events and take part in open days with employers.

Staff feel they are supported by leaders. Each teacher receives half a day every week to complete lesson preparation work. Support staff receive appropriate training to support the curriculum, safeguarding and pupils' SEND. The local authority and governing body are supportive and knowledgeable about the school. They have an accurate understanding of its strengths and next steps to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across school sites. Procedures to check adults before their employment are strong. Leaders ensure that staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and are trained well. Staff are kept updated and informed about safeguarding issues. Leaders use external specialists to audit provision to further develop safeguarding systems. Governors know their safeguarding responsibilities well.

Leaders have developed a large safeguarding team across school sites. Each school site has a safeguarding leader who is fully trained. The team is led by a staff member with enhanced safeguarding training. Staff receive regular safeguarding supervision. Across sites, staff follow the mantra 'if in doubt write it out'. Safeguarding records identify clear follow up actions of support.

Pupils feel safe. Pupils know they can go to trusted adults if they need support, including the principal. Pupils know who the safeguarding leader in school is.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Quality assurance systems are not fully embedded in the West Area Inclusion Partnership. This means that the monitoring of the quality of provision is inconsistent across all sites. Leaders have yet to fully affect change in the leadership systems used to ensure the quality of provision. Leaders need to embed the quality assurance systems used at other settings consistently in the West Area Inclusion Partnership.
- The semi-formal curriculum pathway is less well developed than other areas of the curriculum. Learning often focuses on the lesson activity rather than deepening subject knowledge. This means learning can be distracted by activities rather than developing a secure bed of knowledge. Leaders should further develop curriculum plans that build on prior subject knowledge that enables pupils to know more and do more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	134884
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10200255
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Shelley Robson
Principal	Michelle Wilman
Website	www.westsilc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre is a special school for pupils aged between two and 19 years. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school is split across six sites, including three satellite provisions based in mainstream schools. These are The Farnley Academy, Hollybush Primary School and Co-op Academy Priesthorpe.
- The school is responsible for The West Area Inclusion Partnership. Primary and secondary pupils attending provisions are supported to improve their behaviour and reduce exclusions in west Leeds.
- The school makes provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities, specific learning difficulties, physical disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and SEMH needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the principal, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, teachers and some non-teaching staff.
- Inspectors visited each of the six school sites: Mainsite, Farnley, Hollybush, Priesthorpe, Powerhouse and West Area Inclusion Partnership.
- The lead inspector met with members of the school's local governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PSHE. Here, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. She reviewed the school's safeguarding records, relevant policies and other safeguarding documentation. The inspector also reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support. In addition, the lead inspector scrutinised the school's records of checks carried out on adults who work at the school.
- Inspectors visited lessons across the school sites, as well as activities at the start of the day.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally, including pupils who receive support to improve their reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils, and the online Parent View survey for parents.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christine Durand

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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