

North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre

Tongue Lane, Meanwood, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS6 4QD

Inspection dates 11–12 May 2016

Overall effectiveness **Inadequate**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders' checks on all aspects of the school's work, including safeguarding, are not accurate. They have not kept an adequate overview across the nine school sites.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Leaders do not follow appropriate safer recruitment procedures and do not ensure all staff are trained in all aspects of safeguarding. Staff do not reliably record and report incidents and concerns.
- Governors do not ensure statutory requirements are met in several areas of the school's work. They have not kept an adequate oversight of the school's budget.
- Too few staff have the skills needed to support pupils with complex behaviour difficulties. As a result, these pupils do not make progress in learning how to manage their behaviour.
- Too many staff do not teach pupils about personal space, either between staff and pupils or pupils and pupils. This stops pupils developing a good understanding of personal safety.
- Teachers do not accurately assess what pupils can do. This means not enough teaching is planned to meet pupils' needs and interests. As a result, too many pupils lose interest in lessons and their progress is too slow.
- Progress in writing and mathematics is too slow for many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able. Pupils are not challenged enough to reach higher standards because leaders, governors and staff have expectations which are not high enough.
- Staff do not consistently use a range of communication methods to successfully communicate with pupils. As a result, pupils' progress in communication is too slow.
- Early years provision does not meet statutory requirements because the children are not taught by a qualified teacher.
- Not all students have equitable access to all parts of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Therefore the requirements are not met.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is stronger in the mainstream primary sites and the key stage 3 provision, the 'Lazer Centre'.
- Some teachers and teaching assistants have good specialist knowledge in teaching pupils with a wide range of needs. These staff support all areas of pupils' development effectively.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The local authority, governors and leaders must take urgent action to ensure safeguarding is effective, by:
 - robustly following the safer recruitment policy, undertaking all necessary checks and keeping appropriate records
 - systematically checking that all staff report incidents and concerns in an appropriate and timely manner
 - developing the confidence of staff in leaders' capacity to take appropriate actions when they express concerns
 - making sure that all staff complete child protection training and keep their knowledge and understanding up to date.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors meet their statutory duties, including their duty under the Equality Act 2010
 - senior and middle leaders' checks on pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching are based on accurate assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do
 - leaders provide development opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants based on an analysis of what they need to do to improve the rate of pupils' progress.

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment so pupils make better progress by ensuring:
 - teachers assess pupils' learning accurately and plan work that is matched to their needs and interests
 - all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in writing and recall of number facts and calculations used in daily life
 - all staff use the range of communication systems required by pupils' individual learning plans, consistently and accurately.

- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils, by:
 - increasing the number of staff who can identify why some pupils behave in the way they do and can plan effectively how to help those pupils behave in more acceptable ways
 - ensuring all staff understand the importance of teaching pupils appropriate social boundaries and personal space
 - increasing pupils' attendance.

- Improve early years provision, by:
 - ensuring that leaders understand the progress children make and how this compares with children with similar starting points in different settings
 - ensuring all statutory and welfare requirements are met.

- Improve 16 to 19 study programmes, by:
 - ensuring all students have equitable access to advice and guidance about choices for post-19 options that match their interests and needs.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved. The review should be conducted independently of the local authority.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The principal and other leaders have not maintained a good quality of education since the previous inspection. They have been overwhelmed by a range of staffing issues, complaints from parents and financial difficulties. They have not kept an adequate overview of what is actually happening across all nine sites used by the school.
- Leaders do not systematically check if staff report incidents and concerns quickly enough. Inspection evidence confirms that incidents between pupils, incidents when staff have to physically intervene to keep pupils safe, and incidents when pupils are secluded as a result of their behaviour, are not consistently recorded. As a result, leaders do not know if pupils are safe or if staff need further training and support. A small number of staff indicated they are not confident that leaders take the appropriate action when concerns are reported.
- Leaders observe teachers and review the work in pupils' books. However, they are too optimistic about the effectiveness of teaching because they have not checked the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' progress over time. The guidance teachers receive about how to improve their work focuses on tasks to be completed and not on improving pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders are responsible for the effectiveness of teaching and the progress pupils make on different sites. They are enthusiastic about their roles. However, the difference they make is as varied as other aspects of the school's work across different sites.
- The range of subjects taught varies from site to site. The one common link is the school's work on the 'Rights Respecting School' programme. This means pupils have the opportunity to learn about different faiths and cultures, and how to respect the rights of other people. However, some activities do not enable some pupils to develop their understanding because they are not planned with enough precision to meet their individual needs.
- Approximately a third of parents responded to the school's recent survey. A significant majority were positive about all aspects of the school. Fewer parents responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online survey) and a small number of these parents expressed a negative view about all aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders, including governors, do not have enough understanding of the use of additional funding, such as pupil premium, Year 7 catch-up grant, and the physical education (PE) and sport premium to ensure they are being spent effectively.
- Recent developments led by the vice-principal and assistant vice-principal to improve all aspects of teaching and pupils' personal development and welfare are showing early signs of moving the school in the right direction. However, these are not sufficiently embedded to bring about the improvements required.
- The local authority has failed to provide the support the school needed to prevent the decline in standards since the previous inspection. When the local authority was made aware of the complaints against the school received by Ofsted in January 2016, they undertook a safeguarding review and commissioned independent reviews of other aspects of the school's work. However, officers have not checked if school leaders have acted on their advice.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have not established a culture of high expectations with clear messages about valuing all aspects of education. They focus on the pupils' happiness without checking if the school is safe or providing a good standard of education.
 - Governors have not maintained an adequate oversight of the school's finances. They said the current significant deficit position came 'as a bolt out of the blue'.
 - Governors have not met their statutory duties to publish the required information on the school's website; to ensure a teacher leads the early years class; or to ensure the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has the required training.
 - Governors have not ensured all pupils receive equally effective teaching. Pupils at different sites experience considerably different standards of education. As a result, pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties have better outcomes than pupils with severe learning difficulties and those on the autistic spectrum.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Despite the principal's recent assurances to the governing body, the records relating to the safer recruitment of staff were not complete at the start of

the inspection. Evidence indicates that leaders do not always follow all required checks on the appropriateness of staff offered employment. Just over a fifth of staff have not had up-to-date child protection training. Some staff, who have been trained, do not fully understand the range of safeguarding issues that they should. Records relating to pupils receiving extra support from the local authority are not maintained adequately. Leaders' lack of vigilance, and the reluctance of some staff to report concerns, compromise pupils' safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Over time, in too many lessons, inaccurate assessments, poor links to pupils' individual learning plans and a mismatch between planned activities and pupils' needs and interests result in slow progress for too many pupils. This is particularly evident in the specialist sites for pupils with severe learning difficulties and those on the autistic spectrum.
- Too few staff use the wide range of different communication systems pupils need. Sometimes, when they are used, they are used inaccurately and confuse pupils. Signing was largely absent or inaccurate in a number of lessons visited. Many staff lack the specialist knowledge they need to plan and deliver the activities that match pupils' different needs.
- Writing skills are poorly developed because in too many lessons pupils are only expected to write single words or sentences. Mathematics teaching does not give pupils enough opportunity to practise basic number skills and calculations. This restricts the development of the quick recall of number facts that will help pupils use mathematical skills in their daily life.
- Teaching assistants' contribution to pupils' progress varies considerably. Some remain entrenched in a view that their role is only to support pupils' welfare and care needs. Others demonstrate effective skills in supporting individual pupils and small groups to learn and make progress over a range of subjects.
- There is considerable variation in the effectiveness of teaching across the nine sites. At the Lazer Centre and at the mainstream primary sites, strong teaching, using a range of strategies which are well matched to the needs and interests of pupils, leads to good progress. Teaching for some pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties also demonstrated more accurate assessments leading to precise teaching delivered through an engaging sensory approach.
- Leaders have prioritised improving the teaching of science this year. An immersive approach using a sensory room enhanced to replicate the International Space Station was observed being used effectively. Pupils using the room made observable progress in their communication and social skills and some made progress in their understanding of the difference between being in space and on Earth. Pupils were enthusiastic about this approach to learning. Staff used questions, supported by clear symbols and words, to help pupils express their ideas and demonstrate what they knew about daily activities on the space station.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. Too many staff allow pupils to sit on their laps and do not provide strong enough guidance to older pupils about the inappropriateness of over-familiar hugging. This means pupils are not learning appropriate social behaviours and their development of personal safety skills is inhibited.
- The school's policy of securing classroom doors and corridors on the specialist sites restricts pupils' opportunities to learn to manage themselves independently. While some pupils need a high level of close supervision to ensure their safety, this is not the case for the majority of pupils on these sites.
- The buildings on the specialist sites are not well maintained, to the extent that pupils expressed concern about the leaky roofs.
- Some pupils learn to keep safe, particularly when working online. Some aspects of the personal, health and social education (PHSE) lessons focus on personal safety, for example crossing the road.
- Overall, pupils indicate that they feel safe. Pupils attending the mainstream primary sites were very clear about the pleasure and pride they take both in working alongside their mainstream peers and in what they achieve in their own classroom. However, some pupils at the specialist sites indicated they were concerned about the behaviour of some other pupils.

- The personal development and welfare of the pupils who attend the 'Lazer Centre' is highly effective. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their improved attitudes to work and learning. Their attendance improves while placed at the centre. The Lazer Centre has not been in operation long enough to know if the pupils' improved attendance and attitudes are sustained when they return to their mainstream schools.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Leaders acknowledge that attendance is declining further this year from an exceptionally low point in 2015, when just under a quarter of the pupils were persistently absent. Governors and leaders have agreed a policy of authorising holidays in term time, citing the needs of some pupils as a reason. This is not acceptable. It demonstrates leaders' low expectations for pupils to succeed academically and in their social development, independent of their families.
- Individual pupils' behaviour plans are not reviewed often enough. Of particular concern is the failure to review individual plans following serious incidents which led to the forced seclusion of pupils. It may be necessary in exceptional circumstances to seclude a pupil for their own and others' safety. However, three incidents in two months indicates that leaders are not ensuring suitable plans are in place to manage foreseeable events without restricting pupils' liberty.
- Plans to support pupils who experience challenges in managing their behaviour are not specific enough. Leaders have not ensured there are sufficiently skilled staff who can work out why pupils react the way they do and how to help them learn more appropriate ways to respond to different situations.
- Pupils' attitudes to lessons and learning vary. Overall, pupils with severe learning difficulties at the specialist site are compliant rather than keen to learn. However, pupils at the mainstream primary sites displayed a joyful approach to activities that are matched to their needs and interests.
- Pupils respond positively to the effective teaching and learning environments at the mainstream sites. Overall, pupils' social and emotional needs are better supported at these sites than on the specialist sites. Unfortunately, attendance at the secondary mainstream sites is very low.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- From their different starting points, too many pupils do not make the progress they should. Work in their books and progress files does not demonstrate the progress leaders report to governors.
- By the end of Year 11, pupils with severe and moderate learning difficulties gain a range of qualifications and a very small number achieve GCSE passes, including in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving qualifications, and the number achieved, dropped significantly from 2014 to 2015. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties do not work towards externally recognised accreditation at key stage 4.
- Leaders predict that the number and range of qualifications pupils achieve at the end of Year 11 will improve this year. However, inaccurate assessments undermine leaders' assertions.
- Leaders' information that the progress of disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils is in line with other pupils is equally unreliable.
- The degree of variation in the amount of progress pupils make is too great. Overall the proportion of pupils who make poor progress is greater than those making stronger progress.
- However, examples seen in some pupils' progress files, particularly from the primary mainstream sites, the Lazer Centre and for some pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, indicate that some pupils make faster progress as a result of effective teaching.
- Leaders have recently introduced a system for tracking pupils' personal development. It is too early to judge whether this information is either accurate or indicates good progress. However, anecdotal evidence and some records of progress in individual learning plans indicate that some pupils do make good progress in developing social and communication skills and independence skills.
- The vast majority of pupils choose to move into the school's post-16 provision, either at the specialist sites or the mainstream sites. At post-19, the range of destinations is improving for students with severe or moderate learning difficulties but not for those students with more complex needs.

Early years provision

is inadequate

- Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding is effective across the school, including the provision made for children in the early years. Therefore this aspect of the school's work is inadequate.
- Leaders' understanding of children's progress in the early years is inaccurate. They have published information that indicates children make progress in line with that expected for all children nationally. This is not the case.
- The small group of early years children, both Nursery age and in Reception, is taught by a nursery nurse under the supervision of a teacher working in another class. This arrangement does not meet statutory requirements.
- There are many strengths in the provision made for the children. The staff team accurately assess children's very small steps of progress. The evidence supporting the team's assessments is detailed and shows some children make good progress from their very low starting points. Some children's progress is slower due to medical conditions affecting their attendance.
- Children make progress because staff provide activities that match their interests. Staff are skilled at watching for the subtle signs children make to indicate their choices. This encourages children to develop their communication skills. Sometimes, staff do not probe deeply enough to understand why children do not progress in some areas, for example in increasing the use of their hands to grasp and hold different materials.
- Staff provide a good level of care for children, demonstrating detailed knowledge of each child's complex needs. Welfare requirements are met for the most part, although not all staff store their personal belongings in the lockers provided.
- Daily communication through 'home-school' books provides a useful link between parents and staff. Staff work hard, with some success, to reassure parents about the benefit of regular attendance.
- The classroom is a cheerful place with different activity areas set out to capture children's interests.

16 to 19 study programmes

are inadequate

- Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding is effective across the school, including in the provision for post-16 students. Therefore this aspect of the school's work is inadequate.
- The 16 to 19 study programme is inequitable. Students with complex, profound and multiple learning difficulties do not have the same range of opportunities to prepare them for choosing their post-19 destinations as students with less complex needs.
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning for post-16 students is as variable as it is across other key stages. Some teachers' assessments of students' work are inaccurate and some of the most able students are not challenged. Typically, after quickly finishing set work they wait, albeit patiently, as no extension work is set.
- Students, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, study for an increasing range of qualifications and accredited courses, including functional skills in English and mathematics. Due to the inaccuracy of assessment it is not possible to confidently measure the progress students make from their starting points. However, many of the courses followed are suitably linked to students' individual personal development needs. Some students are keen to describe what they do in post-16 and expressed justifiable pride in their achievements.
- Students appreciate and benefit from the opportunity to develop their employability skills. Developments this year include offering supported internships, in partnership with the local authority and other organisations, including Tropical World and the TUC. Some students' success in the independent travel training programme makes a significant contribution to their development as independent young adults.
- Staff provide effective support for the majority of students to understand their role as young adult citizens. Students try to keep to class rules and accept having to pick a sanction from the 'sanctions box'. This is because they understand there are consequences for breaking rules.
- The vast majority of students leave at 19 to continue their education and training in a range of destinations. For most students, this is matched to their own aspirations. For students with complex needs this is, on the whole, restricted to one destination.

School details

Unique reference number	134885
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10017737

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Knights
Principal	Michael Purches
Telephone number	01133 368 270
Website	www.nwsilc.org
Email address	info@nwsilc.org
Date of previous inspection	25–26 June 2013

Information about this school

- The North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (NWSILC) is a complex special school which places pupils in nine different sites. All the pupils are taught by NWSILC teachers and staff, led and managed by the NWSILC principal, senior leaders and the governing body.
- The three specialist sites are: Green Meadows Primary, Green Meadows Secondary and Post 16, and Pennyfield for pupils aged three to 19. The five mainstream sites are: Rawdon St Peter's Primary School; Brudenell Primary School; Allerton High School; Benton Park School and Guiseley High School. The ninth site, the Lazer Centre, is a provision for key stage 3 pupils who need a short-term placement to improve their attitudes to learning and behaviour. These pupils remain on the roll of their mainstream school.
- In addition leaders also manage a city-wide service, 'Stars', which provides support for pupils with communication and interaction difficulties in mainstream schools. The 'Stars' service was not considered as part of this inspection.
- The school is above the average size for special schools. There is a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding for pupils entitled to free school meals and those looked after by the local authority). There is an above-average proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and for whom English is not their first language.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The pupils' primary needs range from moderate learning difficulties to profound and multiple learning difficulties. A significant proportion of pupils experience communication and interaction difficulties and/or have a diagnosis of autism.
- At the time of the inspection the governors did not publish the required information on the school's website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons at eight of the nine sites used by the school. The visits covered a range of different subjects and activities.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, a group of teaching assistants, the acting chair of the governing body and three other governors, two representatives from the local authority and members of the school's nursing team.
- Inspectors talked and communicated with pupils during visits to lessons, at breaktimes and in a meeting with pupils from the Green Meadows secondary site.
- Parents' views were considered through reviewing the school's survey and the small number of responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online survey). One parent spoke with an inspector.
- Staff views were considered through conversations, meetings and reviewing the school's survey of staff views.
- A wide range of documents were reviewed, including: records relating to safeguarding, including the recruitment of staff, records of incidents between pupils, when physical interventions have been used and records relating to the seclusion of pupils; the minutes of governors' meetings, and records of leaders' checks on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. In addition the inspectors reviewed pupils' assessment records, work in their books and individual learning plans. A random sample of pupils' statements or education, health and care plans, documents relating to pupils and their books, and progress files, were reviewed jointly by the lead inspector, vice-principal and assistant vice-principal.
- Concerns raised by a member of staff during the inspection are being examined by the appropriate bodies.

Inspection team

Susan Hayter, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Belita Scott	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Millard	Ofsted Inspector
Suzette Garland-Grimes	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Helm	Ofsted Inspector

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