

North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre

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

Inspection dates

23–24 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Despite improvements, the quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school. Currently, the progress that pupils make is too reliant on which class they are in.
- For example, mathematics teaching does not always help individual pupils to make good progress. The quality of the learning environment is too variable across the different sites. Outdoor environments do not help pupils to develop their social or physical skills.
- Middle leaders have only been put into place recently to further strengthen the school. Consequently, the impact of their work so far has not been felt.
- The systems that school leaders use to check the progress that pupils are making, and the standards that they are reaching, are new. Although the systems are much more precise, teachers have not had time to use them to identify exactly what individual pupils need to do to improve and to help them in doing so.
- Not all students in the sixth form make strong progress. Too often, most-able students are not stretched sufficiently in their learning. New curriculum plans are in place for the sixth form, including developing the guidance given to support students' next steps after school. However, these plans are in their infancy.

The school has the following strengths

- The impact of senior leaders, none of whom were in position at the time of the last inspection, is impressive. There has been a palpable change of culture at school. This has been noted by pupils and parents and carers, who now have the utmost confidence in the school. In the words of one parent, the school is on the up and up.
- Standards of behaviour have been turned around, specifically on the Green Meadows site. Pupils now focus very well in lessons. They are respectful, courteous and welcoming.
- The attention to detail in planning to meet individuals' needs is developing strongly. It is having a strong impact on the progress that children in early years and pupils with the most complex needs make.
- Staff put the individual needs of pupils at the centre of their work. Pupils are happy, and they are making increasingly strong progress.
- The interim executive board and local authority have supported the school's improvement effectively.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - embedding the assessment procedures that have recently been introduced, so that teachers can spot gaps in learning more easily, and can plan to plug these more effectively
 - eliminating the inconsistencies in teaching across the school and its sites
 - further developing strategies to support the development of oracy
 - improving the way in which teachers plan mathematics teaching, so that it better meets the needs of individual pupils
 - ensuring that staff push the most able pupils forward in their learning more effectively
 - ensuring that the learning environment is of equal quality across the different sites in which pupils receive their education.
- Further develop the ability, expertise and experience of middle leaders.
- Improve the effectiveness of the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan activities, and, where appropriate, external accreditations, that offer stretch to the most able students
 - further developing students' skills in functional English and mathematics
 - evaluating curriculum plans to ensure that the programme of study is implemented effectively
 - further developing careers advice for students and ensuring that their preparation for adulthood is increasingly effective.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders have worked tirelessly over the past two years in order to improve the quality of education on offer. No members of the senior leadership team were in place at the time of the previous inspection. As a result of their actions, the school has improved markedly.
- By way of example, pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school, specifically on the Green Meadows Secondary and Post-16 site, is now respectful, welcoming and safe. The quality of teaching is improving, and the vision that leaders have for the curriculum is being embedded across the seven sites on which the school operates. Leaders have a clear understanding of what needs to be done, and they now have a proven track record of improvement.
- The executive principal leads with humility and a strong moral compass. She is determined that the pupils in her care will receive an excellent schooling. She is passionate about the school and has the highest of expectations for all of her staff.
- She is ably supported by a senior team that leads the school over its three specialist sites and four mainstream partnerships. These colleagues mirror her high expectations. Decisions are made with the sole purpose of improving the life chances of pupils.
- School leaders have been focused on the areas of school life that will have the greatest impact on pupils. They have been successful in improving provision. They are aware of the areas of strength of the school and where they now need to put their efforts. Leaders' self-evaluation of the school is strong.
- One of the areas of focus has been the development of a more cohesive curriculum. Pupils are now grouped into one of three streams: the sensory pathway; working towards independence; and the independent pathway. Pupils' needs are better met through this system. There is flexibility of approach, and pupils can access different aspects of each curriculum when needed. Leaders are now focusing on evaluating the assessment procedures that have recently been introduced linked to these pathways. They know that more precise assessment of pupils' learning will help teachers to spot any gaps more easily. They can then plan to plug these more effectively.
- The executive principal has invested time and finance into staff development. New members of staff receive high-quality induction training. They are quickly brought up to speed with school systems and leaders' expectations. Members of staff are placed in families for practical support and coaching. Systems to check the quality of teaching and learning, staff appraisal and performance management are strong and supportive. Teachers and other professionals appreciate the investment in their development and staff morale is increasingly positive.
- Parents have noticed the improvements. They appreciate leaders' attempts to ensure that pupils' health needs are met on site and that professionals work together for the benefit of individual families. They feel that pupils have a voice at the school. Many are positive about meetings to review provision and targets in pupils' education, health and care plans (EHCPs). Many parents see the positive difference that the school is making to their children, and how pupils are treated as individuals. One parent's comment

brought this to life, saying that teachers are full of bubbles for each child.

- Provision on the Penny Field site is particularly strong. Here, teachers, support staff and health professionals work together to support pupils to make strong progress. Most children in the early years are based at this site, and this is having a positive impact on their development. Pupils with the most complex needs are also based here and are well served at the school.
- The local authority has been on the front foot in working with this school. They have offered good advice and effective practical support since the school was judged to require special measures. This support has been in several areas of school life, including leadership support, safeguarding training and development, and practical support when implementing structural changes.
- Leaders have added an additional tier of leadership to the school, with the express purpose of creating further capacity. Middle leaders are now in position and are new in their roles. For example, the leader with responsibility for mathematics is moving quickly to upskill colleagues, but it is too soon to see a strong impact across all classrooms. The executive principal is delivering a training programme for these leaders, as she recognises the need to develop their abilities, expertise and experience.

Governance of the school

- The school is governed by an interim executive board. Members of the board were appointed by the local authority and bring a wealth of experience to their roles. Some members have worked in the education sector; others bring perspectives from other avenues of life.
- Members of the board reflect on their own impact. They consider how they operate and alter systems and processes in order to better help the school to improve. The information that they receive from school leaders and the executive principal is comprehensive and honest. As a result, they are more able to challenge the school effectively.
- Members of the board keep a keen eye on how any additional funding is spent. They know how pupil premium funding and additional money to develop engagement in sport is being used, for example. They know that a more precise assessment system will refine their understanding of the impact of these funding streams.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There has been a step change in the priority given to safeguarding at the school. Training is now extremely comprehensive, and weekly briefings are given in different aspects of safeguarding. Policies and procedures are tight. The buildings are secure. These systems help to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The school is not only reactive to possible safeguarding issues. Staff are highly attuned to the needs of pupils and seek additional support for families if they identify any safety issues. Safeguarding topics are threaded through the curriculum in an age-appropriate way. A culture of safeguarding pervades the school. The senior leader with responsibility for safeguarding is highly effective and leaves no stone unturned in this

regard.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable. Although some teaching is strong, leaders are aware that provision is not consistently good across the school and its sites, including in classrooms based on mainstream sites.
- Where learning is weaker, staff do not ensure that the most able pupils are being pushed forward in their learning. In mathematics, sometimes lesson planning and questioning in class do not meet the needs of individual pupils. Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop oracy on the part of the pupils. Teachers are increasingly effective in developing pupils' reading skills, however.
- The impact of leaders' changes to the curriculum and the monitoring of teaching is ensuring that the quality of provision across the school is improving. Teachers know the pupils in their care well. The development of curriculum pathways is increasingly effective in meeting pupils' needs. The use of the white file, in which teachers organise information about pupils, is consistent across the school.
- The way in which the useful information contained within the white files translates into effective strategies in the classroom remains varied, however. For children in early years and for pupils of all ages who have the most complex needs, there is a clear line of sight from pupils' needs, as recorded in EHCPs, through to how teaching is delivered in the classroom. This includes therapeutic and medical support. Here, teachers and teaching assistants work with individuals to help them to focus and move on in their learning, because activities are directly linked to pupils' abilities and designed to stretch them further. This line of sight is not consistent on all sites and in all classrooms, however.
- Some very thoughtful provision was observed during the inspection. Strikingly high expectations were observed in a phonics session, where the teacher supported some pupils who had complex needs to develop their phonics skills. Another teacher added lemon scent into modelling clay, as she knew this engaged one of her pupils well. In another classroom, one boy was able to show preference for five little ducks over other nursery rhymes and did so with confidence and gusto!
- Teaching in the satellite classrooms based in partnership mainstream sites also varies in quality. Nonetheless, in the best examples, pupils are able to access subjects and curriculum experiences that better match their needs in these schools. This system enhances the three curriculum pathways by responding to individual pupils' interests and needs even further. The design of this system is strong, but the quality of its implementation is not consistently good.
- Teachers are positive about the assessment procedures that have recently been introduced. They understand that these can support them in identifying any gaps in skills or knowledge that pupils have. Teachers know that this system is in its infancy.
- The learning environment for pupils with the most complex needs supports their academic and physical development. Inspectors noted that sometimes the learning environment does not support the physical development of other pupils as well, and that it is not of an equal quality across the different sites.

- Although inconsistencies are in evidence, leaders are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Provision is improving quickly as a result.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are typically respectful of each other and adults, welcoming to visitors and courteous when in class or moving around the building. When learning in partnership mainstream schools, many pupils integrate well and develop friendships with pupils from those schools.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Many aspects of the curriculum are designed to help pupils to develop an understanding of their own well-being. Personal, social and health education is designed to help pupils work towards independence where possible. Teachers ensure that pupils have an appreciation of risk, according to their own level of understanding.
- During the inspection, there was a focus on Black History Month. Pupils were seen to be developing an understanding of tolerance and freedom. Some pupils wrote poems and designed posters. Others created paper chains and broke them to feel what it is like to break free. These activities are examples of teachers' purposeful delivery of pupils' personal development, and are increasingly common at the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils on all sites respond positively to the school's maxim, 'be ready, be respectful, be safe'. Changes in systems for the way in which pupils' behaviour is managed have had a remarkably positive impact.
- Staff, pupils and parents all agree that standards of behaviour have improved substantially. School leaders, and specifically the senior leader with responsibility for the Green Meadows sites, quote pre-emptive strategies as having made the most difference. Staff are trained to look for potential triggers for poor behaviour on the part of the pupils, and to plan to avoid them. Staff are also encouraged to see the problem as the problem, not the child. As a result of these strategies, together with much-improved communication with parents, behaviour is now good.
- Incidents of physical intervention by staff to help manage pupils' behaviour are now rare, and only used as a last resort. This is also as a direct result of these new approaches. In addition, the use of fixed-term exclusion is now much more regulated. At one point, its use increased as new expectations were embedded, although this is now reducing once more. Behaviour logs and inspection evidence show that good behaviour is now the norm.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, and that adults will help if there is ever a problem at the school. Pupils understand that everyone is different and accept each other as they are.

- Pupils know the importance of attending school. Members of staff work well with families to ensure that any barriers to attendance are removed, as far as practicable. As a result, there are examples of individuals' attendance improving markedly. In addition, the integrated approach to education and health care on the Penny Field site is reducing the need to attend medical appointments elsewhere. This too is improving the rates of attendance for individual pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress that individual pupils make from their starting points requires improvement, because it varies too much according to the class they are in, or according to their specific needs. School leaders know this, and plans are in place to ensure that the progress that pupils make improves.
- The progress that most-able pupils make requires improvement because they are not stretched as much as they could be in lessons. These pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable in English and mathematics. For some pupils across the school, provision in classrooms could be more tightly aligned to their requirements as published in their EHCPs.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils requires improvement. Additional pupil premium funding has been used effectively to meet the pastoral needs of these pupils. Leaders are now focusing on the use of this funding to further support the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils who have the most complex needs at school make good progress from their starting points. Here, teachers plan to meet academic and health targets as described in EHCPs effectively. Professionals work together well to plan individual timetables that meet the needs of these pupils. Consequently, they make strong gains in their learning.
- The progress that pupils made in the primary phase of the Green Meadow site has been stronger historically than that in the secondary phase, chiefly due to better behaviour. The progress of pupils in the secondary phase is increasing now as leaders have ensured that pupils' focus on learning is stronger.
- The progress that pupils make in classrooms based on mainstream sites also varies, depending upon the quality of teaching they receive. Additional curriculum opportunities that are available, however, support the progress of some pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- The leader of early years is at the top of her game and knows the needs of the children in her care very well. She is supported by the highly effective principal at the Penny Field site. Both have a strong vision for continued improvement.
- There is a real sense of teamwork within early years. Staff work well together for the benefit of the children in their care. Health professionals, teaching assistants and teachers all play their part in ensuring that provisions, as outlined in EHCPs, are delivered. Staff ensure that communication with parents is positive, and that, where possible, parents play their part in supporting the school in meeting their children's needs.

- Adults in classrooms focus on helping children to develop as effective learners. They take care at moments of transition from one activity to another and they ensure that children's academic and physical needs are supported. Planning for individuals is strong and includes therapeutic intervention where needed.
- As a result of consistently strong provision, children make good progress from their starting points. In 2017 for example, all children made the progress expected of them, and several made accelerated progress from their individual starting points.
- The early years settings are safe. In addition, children are taught how to engage with one another effectively. For example, they are taught how to share and take turns. They often show delight when spending time with each other.
- Leaders are aware that the outdoor learning environment is not consistently strong for children across school sites. The interim executive principal also acknowledges that school-wide assessment procedures will help adults further refine interventions for children in her care.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Comprehensive plans are in place to improve the quality of 16 to 19 study programmes at school, but these are in their infancy. Their impact on learning within classrooms remains too varied.
- The most able students in sixth form are not pushed to make as much progress as they could, especially at the Green Meadows site. The qualifications that students access are not stretching for some. The focus on developing functional skills in English and mathematics is not consistently strong. In addition, careers guidance and preparation for moving into adult life could be further developed.
- The leader of sixth form has already correctly identified these aspects of provision and plans are in place to evaluate the delivery of study programmes in the light of these priorities. The leader of sixth form is convincing and compassionate, and is having an increasingly positive impact.
- Stronger aspects of the sixth-form offer include the way in which planning meets the needs of students with the most complex needs. In addition, those students based in satellite classrooms linked to mainstream provision have the opportunity to access courses that interest them and stretch them academically.
- Students enjoy being in the sixth form. Their personal development is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and want to do their best. Relationships between students and adults are based on respect.

School details

Unique reference number	134885
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10054502

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 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	25
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Jon Hosegood
Principal	Diane Reynard (Interim Executive Principal)
Telephone number	01133368270
Website	https://nwsilc.org/
Email address	info@nwsilc.org
Date of previous inspection	11–12 May 2016

Information about this school

- The North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (NWSILC) is a special school which teaches pupils at seven different sites. All of the pupils are taught by NWSILC teachers and staff, led and managed by the NWSILC interim executive principal, senior leaders and the interim executive board.
- The three specialist sites are: Green Meadows Primary, Green Meadows Secondary and Post 16, and Penny Field for pupils aged three to 19. The four mainstream sites are: Rawdon St Peters Church of England Primary School; Brudenell Primary School; Allerton High School; and Benton Park School.
- The school's size is above average for special schools. There is a high proportion of

disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding.

- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The pupils' primary needs range from moderate learning difficulties to those with very complex needs. A significant proportion of pupils have communication needs and/or a diagnosis of autism.
- Since the time of the last inspection, there have been major staffing changes. Since September 2016, an interim executive principal has been leading the school. The senior leadership team also changed significantly, and new leaders are now in place at the three specialist sites. In addition, the two assistant principals were not in position at the time of the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across the site to observe teaching and learning. This included visits to the three specialist sites, and the four mainstream partnership school sites. A number of these visits were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of staff and parents, from across the sites and partnership. An inspector met with a representative from the local authority. Meetings were also held with members of the interim executive board and members of staff with responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for early years and the sixth form.
- Documentation relating to the school’s website and safeguarding, including the single central record and information linked to recruitment checks, was scrutinised.
- A range of other documents was examined, including the school’s self-evaluation, evidence from the monitoring of teaching, plans for improvement and the school’s own analysis of pupils’ attainment, progress, behaviour, exclusions and attendance. Inspectors listened to senior leaders’ description of the curriculum and assessment system.
- Inspectors looked at the evidence provided by the school as to the level at which pupils are working. This included pupils’ work where applicable. Inspectors took particular note of pupils’ education, health and care plans, and how these were reflected within teachers’ planning. Inspectors looked at how well children in early years are doing, as well as students in the sixth form. Inspectors also listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons, and during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their work informally during some lessons and met with two groups of pupils to discuss their learning and listen to their views about their school.
- Inspectors talked to a number of parents at different sites and took account of the 15 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire Parent View, in addition to the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Paul Barton	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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