



West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134884
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 294202
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Kath Halifax

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	4 Town Street
School category	Community special		Stanningley, Pudsey
Age range of pupils	2–19		Leeds LS28 6HL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 3862450
Number on roll (school)	109	Fax number	0113 2559162
Number on roll (6th form)	33	Chair	
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mr Peter Miller
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 2–19	Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006	Inspection number 294202
--------------------------	---------------------------------------------	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (SILC) opened in January 2005.

It is an amalgamation of two former schools, Milestone and Victoria Park. In addition, provision is made for a small number of primary aged pupils in two mainstream schools, Hollybush Primary and Raynville Primary. The majority of pupils are on either the Milestone site (originally a school for pupils with severe and profound learning needs) or the Victoria Park site (formerly a school for pupils with moderate learning needs). Of the prime learning needs, over a half of the pupils have moderate needs, one third severe, with the remainder having profound or complex needs. A considerable number of pupils have additional needs such as sensory impairment or complex behaviour. Attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected of pupils of this age. Around one in six pupils is from a minority ethnic group and about half of these are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. A small number of pupils are refugees, asylum seekers or looked-after children.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving learning provision with some good features. It provides sound value for money. The SILC was slow to take off at first because of a number of factors, including a serious fire at one of the two schools shortly before the amalgamation. It is now gathering momentum, thanks to strong and effective leadership and management, and pupils are reaping the benefits. Though standards are exceptionally low because of pupils' special needs, achievement overall is satisfactory, as are teaching, learning and the curriculum. However, there are differences in the quality of education on the different sites.

In the five terms it has been operating, much has been achieved in enabling pupils to be educated in mainstream schools. Pupils in this part of the SILC achieve especially well. Provision for young children in the Foundation Stage is good. All these children are educated in mainstream primary schools. They make good progress. Their achievements in communication and in their personal development are very good because, although they have their own base in the mainstream school, they spend much of their time in Nursery and Reception classes. With support, they join in all activities and are eager to do the same as their mainstream classmates. This has resulted in children with considerable learning difficulties taking responsibility, for example, for their bags and books and endeavouring to talk despite severe communication needs. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 based in the primary classes achieve equally well for similar reasons.

Though not based in mainstream schools, pupils in Years 7 to 11 gain new skills. Where appropriate, they take GCSE in subjects such as double science and design and technology through successful links with a number of secondary schools. Furthermore, physical activities, the creative arts and history modules make a substantial contribution to pupils' academic, social and cultural development. Headteachers in the linked schools report that their establishments gain much from the partnership and, as a result, their staff have developed invaluable additional skills in areas such as signing Makaton and managing behaviour.

Staff on the Victoria Park site have adapted well to the changes. As a consequence, pupils there achieve well. However, things are moving at a slower pace on the Milestone site. Some staff have taken longer to adjust to the increased range and complexity of pupils' needs. Many have embraced the challenges presented, undertaken training and are providing well for their pupils. Others, however, have been slow to adapt their practice to meet the complex range of pupils' learning needs and, despite the considerable effort of managers, this is affecting pupils' achievement.

The attitude and behaviour of pupils in all parts of the SILC are good. All pupils make good gains in their personal development because of the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are helped to adopt safe practices and are encouraged to consider a healthy lifestyle. They make a positive contribution to the community and work for the school committee promotes a greater

understanding of citizenship. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils receive satisfactory care, support and guidance.

Leadership and management are improving and are good. This is evident in the success of the inclusion programme to enable pupils to return to mainstream schools and the increased rate of school improvement. For example, the bringing together of students in Years 12 and 13 on one site is resulting in more effective provision, with a clear plan for development. The leadership team have a very accurate view of what the SILC does well and what needs to be improved, although their overall view of the school reflects the more successful parts of the provision.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The achievement of students in post-16 education (the sixth form) is satisfactory. Students have been together for less than a year. Prior to this time, those of differing capabilities were educated on different sites. The upheaval of transferring to new premises, and staff and students learning how to get along together resulted in students not doing as well as they should have done, especially in attaining national awards. To tackle the problem, an assistant head was moved to manage the post-16 group. Her decisive leadership and knowledge have led to clear improvements. Time spent training staff and working with students has engendered a sense of common purpose with challenging plans for development. Under her dynamic leadership there have been clear improvements but there is still a way to go, particularly in terms of improving the quality of teaching and extending the range of qualifications offered.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teaching on the Milestone site meets the full range of pupils' learning needs, so that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure plans for provision in the sixth form are fully implemented, so that all students have the opportunity to achieve nationally recognised awards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good on the Victoria Park site and in the mainstream provision because of good teaching. On the Milestone site and in the sixth form, achievement is satisfactory. In the time the SILC has been operating, pupils on the Victoria Park site have made substantial gains in all subjects. By Year 11, all pupils have gained nationally recognised qualifications, including up to six graded passes at GCSE. Whilst this represents low standards, compared with the national picture, it represents good achievement that has enabled pupils to take up further education placements at college, an option many have chosen.

Achievement on the Milestone site reflects the quality of teaching. Where teaching is good, pupils achieve well. However, in too many classes activities are not carefully matched to pupils' abilities so they do not do as well as they could. This, together with the satisfactory achievement in the sixth form, means that achievement for the SILC overall is no more than satisfactory. The achievement of pupils who have English as an additional language matches that of others within their class.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils develop into thoughtful young citizens. The school committee provides many chances to raise self-confidence and develop a good understanding of citizenship. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies and good personal and social education help pupils to reflect on important matters and develop values such as consideration for others, respect and a sense of fairness. Relationships are good at all levels, including between different racial groups. Behaviour has improved and is now good. The number of recorded incidents has reduced significantly in the time the SILC has been operating.

Pupils make a good contribution to the community, supporting charities and good causes, including those that they suggest because of personal links such as relatives caught up in the Pakistan earthquake. Pupils know about healthy living and are adequately prepared for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although good teaching was observed in all parts of the provision. Some teachers are finding it difficult to teach the range of needs in each class because they are not fully aware of how pupils with different needs learn. As a result, some lessons are not stimulating. Where teaching is good, lessons are lively, work is pitched at the right level and resources are used effectively to make learning interesting. In the good lessons teachers know how pupils learn using, for example, real objects to aid understanding.

The assessment and recording of pupils' achievements is not always accurate. While it is easy to identify gaps in learning, the inaccuracies mean plans for the next stage of learning are not always matched to pupils' needs. In most cases, pupils are managed well but some staff are less successful in managing those with complex needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is developing as teachers endeavour to provide for the wide ability range on each site. The original curriculum did not meet the needs of pupils with more severe and complex needs in Years 7 to 11 who transferred to the Victoria Park site. Therefore, subjects other than numeracy and literacy are being taught as part of a Foundation Course to help pupils make links between the different areas of learning. While the planning for this is in place, the course has been running for less than a month and it is too soon to judge the impact of the initiative.

In all age groups, opportunities to work alongside pupils in mainstream schools contribute to pupils' skills and personal development. Work related learning is in place and links with colleges enable pupils to gain vocational qualifications. The work experience programme is being revised to meet the challenge of the ability range. Staff endeavour to make learning enjoyable and meaningful through, for example, constructing a tepee as part of an American Indian project.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Pupils say that staff are approachable, friendly and supportive. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory, though managers are aware that monitoring procedures need tightening. Child protection procedures are in place and made known to all staff. The care and guidance given to pupils looked after by the local authority are good. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language is well supported by a bilingual worker so they are able to value and use their mother tongue. Pupils with medical needs are provided for well and links with therapy support agencies are good. Personal development is monitored well and information is used positively, leading to good personal development. Guidance in academic areas of learning is satisfactory but not all teachers are accurate in their assessment of pupils' achievements. The learning mentor based at Victoria Park makes a good contribution to the school's work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. Managers are successful in dealing with the complexity of the provision and are making good strides in moving it forward. Through the success of the policy for educating pupils with special needs in mainstream schools, numbers on the two sites are falling and are projected to do so for the next two years. This has necessitated redundancies and led to continued uncertainty. Furthermore,

staff have been faced with teaching groups of pupils for whom they have had little training. Managers, led by the principal, have worked hard to maintain morale and support staff through these challenging times. A wide range of training has been offered although not all staff have chosen to take advantage of the opportunities available. To tackle the need for additional training, staff have been moved between sites to coach and mentor their colleagues. In many cases this is working well. In addition to effective day-to-day site management, the assistant heads provide good examples as classroom teachers. Commitment to inclusion in mainstream education is the whole thrust of this school and the work of the principal and the assistant head responsible for partnerships is instrumental to the success of the programme that promotes it.

Governance is satisfactory. Much of the work is carried out by a core group. Through necessity, much of the governors' time has been spent discussing staffing and finance but this has been at the expense of having an overview of all that is happening in the SILC. Governors recognise they need to be more rigorous with health and safety. In the light of its recent track record, such as the success of inclusion and moving the sixth form to one site, the SILC demonstrates good capacity to improve. Greater attention to monitoring classroom practice and pupils' progress is enabling managers to identify what needs to be done to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Mr Hussain, Mr Simm and I enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for helping us with our work and talking to us.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education and some things about it are really good. Here are the main ones.

- You behave well and enjoy your lessons.
- The inclusion programme works really well and helps even the youngest children to settle into mainstream schools. (I was fascinated by the pictures of Years 7 to 11 making Venetian masks, tepees and taking part in the Kielder Challenge alongside their classmates in secondary schools.)
- Your teachers work closely with the nurse and other health workers to make sure you are safe and well cared for and the MOVE programme is helping you enormously.

Here are the things we have asked your teachers to do to help your school become a really good one.

- School staff work hard and are mostly successful in providing work for the different groups of pupils in each class. Sometimes this is not quite so good. So we have asked your teachers to make sure that activities help all of you to learn well, especially those of you with more complex and profound needs.
- The post 16 group has had a lot of changes of staff and buildings. Now you are settled in your own area (complete with pool table, microwave and toaster!) things are getting better. We have asked your teachers to make sure you have the opportunity to gain qualifications that will help you when you leave school.

We enjoyed our short time with you and wish you well for the future.