

West Oaks School North East Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108133
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	337028
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2009
Reporting inspector	David Muir 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	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Burges
Principal	Mr Andrew Hodkinson
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2007
School address	Westwood Way Boston Spa Wetherby LS23 6DX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff across all sites and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the learning leadership plan, monitoring and evaluation documents, questionnaires from parents and carers, pupils and staff, and the school's data, among other documents.

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

- progress for all individuals and groups of pupils in all key stages
- the quality of the school's monitoring of performance
- the leadership and management of the school over all three sites.

Information about the school

The North-East Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (SILC) operates on three sites: The West Oaks School site, incorporating a long established base in a local high school, the Oakwood Lane site and the Beckett Park site. It also provides support for local schools. West Oaks School has specialist status as a technology college and has been identified as a high-performing special school. It is also a leading edge and applied learning school. All pupils and students at the school have a statement of special educational needs, ranging from profound and complex conditions to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). More than 40% of pupils are on the autistic spectrum continuum. Pupils at the Oakwood Lane site are of primary age and have BESD as their primary special educational need. Pupils at Beckett Park are of secondary age and also have BESD as their primary special educational need. The school has not had any Early Years Foundation Stage children and is not presently resourced for them.

Most pupils are White British, although a few are from other minority ethnic backgrounds including Black Caribbean, Black African, Chinese, Indian, Polish and Pakistani. The number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is in line with the national average. Approximately 80% of the pupils are boys.

The school has achieved level 3 in the Leeds Healthy Schools Standard Scheme and has the Investor in People award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

West Oaks North East SILC is a good school. It has particular strengths in care, guidance and support, and pupils' personal development outcomes. Pupils feel safe in school and they are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles. They make outstanding contributions to their local community and have very strong links with local and international schools. These links promote an outstanding awareness of cultures different from the pupils' own backgrounds.

Due to the special educational needs and/or disabilities of pupils, attainment is low for the large majority and is not expected to reach levels expected for pupils of their age. There is a small minority whose attainment is low due to their previous negative experiences of school. Nevertheless, evidence shows that during their time in school pupils make good progress overall and some make outstanding progress relative to their needs and starting points. Progress in the sixth form is slightly higher than that in the rest of the school. Although pupils generally enjoy coming to school, attendance is slightly below average. This is because there are some absences due to medical needs although a few pupils are persistently poor attenders due to their previous experiences of school. This low attendance has impacted on the otherwise outstanding work in preparing pupils for their future economic well-being.

The quality of teaching overall is good. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of pupils. In the better lessons they use this knowledge well to inform their planning and ensure that all pupils' needs are well met. The curriculum is good and improving. The development of some exemplary provision recently, such as the impressive interactive area, has contributed outstandingly to the curriculum. This was created as a result of the school's technology college status.

A strength of the school is the way that the senior leadership team has engaged the whole school community in its plans to monitor and evaluate the work of the school more thoroughly. Although these plans are in their infancy, they clearly show the school's ambition to place pupils and their progress at the centre of all that they do. This approach, now being implemented across the three sites, has started to have a positive impact on the consistency of provision for all pupils, but more time is needed for it to embed fully in the work of the school. The collection of data throughout the school is increasingly thorough but not yet always well enough focused on evaluating all aspects of the school's performance. Due to an increasingly accurate awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and continued good progress of pupils over time, the school has good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop monitoring and evaluation systems in the school to ensure that more pupils make better progress, across all three sites, by consistently:
 - ensuring that the monitoring of lessons focuses on the quality of the learning taking place
 - using the raw data currently collated by the school to evaluate progress more closely and to enable the leadership team to monitor accurately the impact of its work on outcomes for pupils in all areas of the school's work
 - ensuring that levels of attendance are closely monitored and raised across all sites.
- Use the recently developed leadership systems to embed the best practice across all three sites by:
 - providing opportunities for staff to work together to share practice
 - developing consistent approaches across the breadth of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Overall, pupils made good progress in the lessons observed and all made at least satisfactory progress. A few made outstanding progress in their lessons. Targets in individual education plan targets are met well, particularly in the areas of developing communication skills and personal development. The school's data, and evidence throughout the inspection, confirms that pupils make good progress overall. The data also shows that there are no significant differences in achievement between different groups according to gender, ethnicity or special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils across the three sites enjoy their learning and their enthusiasm is unmistakable. An increasing number of students leave at the end of the sixth form with externally accredited qualifications, including AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) unit awards and ASDAN awards. Although behaviour is generally good, much of it is outstanding. There has recently been a significant reduction in the number of exclusions and so far this term there have been none at Oakwood Lane, despite the significant BESD needs that some pupils have when they enter the school. The improvement in the behaviour of pupils is increasingly evident the longer they are in the school. All of the questionnaires received from parents and carers during the inspection showed that they are confident that their children enjoy school and that they feel safe. The school council is inclusive and representative of all pupils irrespective of their ability or special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils are involved in a wide range of activities and curriculum opportunities in the school. They also participate in a variety of regular themed weeks, educational visits and residential trips, including to other countries, which take place throughout the year. The themed projects include Africa week and the ongoing Bangladesh project where the school is closely linked to special educational needs provision in Bangladesh. These

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

events contribute effectively to the good social, moral and spiritual, and outstanding cultural, development of the pupils. Sixth form outcomes are good due to the good teaching and care which students receive. The school is well integrated into the life of the village in which it is located and the local residents are keen to support the work of the school in developing life skills during their visits to the shops and a range of events throughout the year in the village. The school also welcomes 'silver surfers' to the school on a weekly basis to make use of its information and communication technology facilities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Overall, teaching is good across the different sites and key stages. Although some lessons seen were satisfactory, some outstanding teaching was also seen. In the best lessons, expectations are high. In these lessons, pupils are provided with appropriate

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

support to work independently and also to work in small groups and as a whole class. This helps them to meet personal development targets as pupils learn how to collaborate and cooperate with others. A particularly effective example of this was in a literacy lesson, where pupils identified rhyming words in a nonsense poem as a class. They then worked together to choose musical instruments which made sounds to match the words. When reading the poem back, pupils had to cooperate to produce the correct sounds for the words. From this whole-class approach pupils then worked in pairs to continue the identification of rhyming words.

In the majority of lessons pupils are well engaged, which contributes well to their good and sometimes outstanding progress. In the less effective lessons, pupils are not sufficiently challenged and therefore make only satisfactory progress. Staff's good knowledge of pupils' personal needs is well used in the best lessons to ensure the best progress. Careful monitoring of pupils' progress also allows appropriate learning objectives to be set in lessons to challenge pupils and to enable them to make good progress overall. These objectives also complement the high-quality individual education plans which contain challenging and well thought out targets. These are regularly reviewed, updated and evaluated to ensure that they are relevant and fit for purpose.

The curriculum is strong and increasingly meets the needs of all pupils in the school across the sites. This allows pupils to make the progress that they make. A good awareness of pupils' individual targets ensures that the curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of all pupils in all of the key stages, including the sixth form. A wide range of links with other schools and colleges allows the school to extend its curriculum offer to suit all pupils. The school's range of activities complement the curriculum well and provide learning which is relevant and accessible to all pupils.

The school is a very caring and welcoming place for all pupils and they are exceptionally well looked after. There is extremely well-planned transition into the school and when it is time for pupils to move on to another school or stage of their learning. Specialist therapy is a strong feature of the school's work and this allows pupils' needs to be well met through a variety of support services, such as speech and language therapy and occupational health.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team is increasingly effective in its monitoring of the work of the

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school. Recent developments have been led by the 'leading learning plan' for school improvement. The distributed model of leadership and dedicated staff in the three sites has enabled a strong vision and ethos to develop and be disseminated effectively throughout the school. The returned Ofsted questionnaires show that this vision is widely shared by staff, and parents and carers.

Senior leaders have a very good understanding of how well the school is doing and what it needs to do to improve further. Assessment of the school's work and self-evaluation is accurate and becoming increasingly robust and detailed. The tracking of pupil's progress is very effective and the data which is collected is also used to monitor the progress of groups of pupils based on gender, ethnicity and special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the data is not always used consistently well to evaluate the progress of all areas of the school's work. The school has established a very wide range of partnerships, including with parents and carers, other schools and support services, to enhance pupils' learning at all key stages and for all groups of pupils. These partnerships make an outstanding contribution to the progress of the pupils on all sites. The school is outstanding in its work on promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination and is continually aware of the performance of all groups. The governors provide good support and challenge and are well involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. They know the school well and are able to contribute well to discussions about school improvement. The school promotes community cohesion well and knows the impact that this work has on outcomes for pupils. However, the school is aware that this work needs to be more finely focused on the socio-economic aspect of this area to further improve its impact. The school's safeguarding arrangements are good and meet all statutory requirements well. Due to the good progress made by pupils, the school provides good value for money.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Sixth form

The good and sometimes outstanding work in promoting the personal development of pupils throughout the school continues into the sixth form, consolidating the work of earlier key stages. Students develop a strong sense of right and wrong and their responsibilities in the community. Students continue to make good progress in all subjects during their time in the sixth form and a large majority leave school with externally accredited qualifications.

The leadership of the sixth form is good and is improving. It has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. There are high expectations throughout the sixth form and this contributes to the good progress. The curriculum meets and serves well the wide range of needs. Staff know students' needs very well and have a good understanding of their abilities and levels. This knowledge is used well to plan the transition to the next stage of students' lives. There is a strong emphasis on improving literacy, numeracy and in developing workplace skills.

The good personal development programme develops students' self-awareness and awareness of personal safety. Students grow in maturity during their time in the sixth form and are increasingly able to take on additional responsibilities.

These are the grades for the sixth form

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

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed, or strongly agreed, that their children enjoy school, that their children are safe and that they are happy with their children's experience of school. In all other areas of the questionnaire parents and carers also showed overwhelming support for the work of the school. There were no areas of the questionnaire which elicited negative responses from any parents or carers. The inspection evidence supported parents' and carers' views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Oaks School North East 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 136 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	95	1	5	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	71	5	24	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	76	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	67	7	33	0	0	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)	16	76	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	81	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	67	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	95	1	5	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.



16 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Oaks School North East Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre,
Wetherby, LS23 6DX

I am writing to you on behalf of all of the inspectors who visited your school recently. Thank you very much for making our visit very interesting and enjoyable.

We found your school to be good and many parts of it are outstanding. The staff in your school work very hard to make your time in school very happy and successful. You make good progress when you are in the school, but some of you need to make sure that you attend more to make the most of your time there. You and your parents and carers are very happy with the school and only had positive things to say about it. Your personal development is a particular strength of the school and you all work very hard to improve your personal skills and manage your own behaviour more and more.

We have asked the school's leadership team to improve in two important areas to make your time even more successful while you are there. I have asked them to do the following things.

- Make sure that all of the school's work is closely monitored, including teaching, your learning and progress, and your attendance.
- Ensure that all of the good work across the school's three sites is shared so that there is more consistency throughout the school.

You can help with this by telling your teachers what would help you learn more and what you like most about school.

I would also like to wish you all the best of luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mr David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector

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