

# North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134885
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	341559
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Honoree Gordon HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	186
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	31
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Alison Ings
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Purches
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Tongue Lane Leeds West Yorkshire LS6 4QE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Around half of the time was spent on observing learning. Inspectors observed 12 lessons across seven of the eight sites where specialist inclusive learning centre pupils are being educated. Inspectors also visited briefly a small number of other lessons. Eleven teachers' lessons were observed. Inspectors held meetings with governors, senior staff and other staff and pupils. They spent one day in each of the three main specialist sites and also visited three of the four partner schools, where they talked to headteachers and senior managers.

Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised documentation, including the school's data on pupils' progress; records relating to the care of pupils; the school's plans for further development; minutes of recent governors' meetings; and the latest reports from the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors also considered the responses from 57 parental questionnaires and a number of questionnaires from pupils and from staff.

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

- data on pupils' progress
- the impact of partnerships
- how effectively the provision across eight sites is being managed; the vision of the school's leaders and their plans for further improvement
- the aspects of work that the school considered to be outstanding, including care, guidance and support; the promotion of equality; and safeguarding.

## Information about the school

The North West Specialist Inclusive Learning centre (North West SILC) operates on eight sites in total, three of which are specialist sites and were formerly two special schools. The main site, Penny Field, is also the administrative centre. The two other specialist sites are situated side by side, nine miles away. A community nursery that is the responsibility of the school is on one of these sites. This nursery is also separately registered for children who are under three years old. The nursery has 45 children, 26 of whom are under three years old.

This inspection did not include a full inspection of the nursery provision at the Meadows Community Nursery. Inspectors looked at the provision and outcomes for the four children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who have special educational needs, and who are on the roll of the SILC, but are educated at the nursery.

The four remaining sites are in mainstream partner schools, two secondary and two primary schools, situated at distances ranging from 1.5 miles to 7 miles. In those schools pupils have base rooms or centres but are fully integrated into the life of that school. These are longstanding, formal partnerships, the longest of which is nine years. All the pupils are educated full-time at those schools as if on roll there, but remain the responsibility of the SILC, under its Principal. Numbers of pupils on the partner sites range from 11 to 30. Each specialist site is run by its own Head of Site and the

partnership school provision is managed by middle leaders (Teacher Directors).

Three quarters of the pupils are of secondary school age. Pupils are placed at the various school sites according to their needs, including an assessment of whether they might be best suited to placement in a mainstream school. On the main sites and in the larger partnership schools pupils are grouped in classes broadly by age and social grouping, but in some age ranges there is more than one class, reflecting the very wide spread of needs.

SILC pupils have a very wide range of special educational needs, disabilities and difficulties. Around one third have moderate learning difficulties, one third autistic spectrum disorders and one third have severe learning difficulties. Approximately one in seven SILC pupils have profound and multiple disabilities. A very small number of pupils have emotional, social or behavioural difficulties. One sixth of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are 17 looked-after children.

The SILC holds Healthy School award and Sportsmark.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The North West SILC provides outstanding care, guidance and support to its pupils across eight different sites. The SILC takes great care to place pupils where they are best suited. All benefit from a good, lively and rich curriculum that engages them well, allowing them to enjoy school and to achieve well, despite their barriers to learning. Outcomes for pupils are good.

The Principal and senior leaders have an excellent vision for providing the very best opportunities they can for their pupils through outstanding partnership work. The range of opportunities extensively promotes equality of opportunity. Safeguarding procedures and practice are robust, but staff face considerable challenges here as there are eight sites to oversee.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is good: attending a mainstream nursery with other children adds considerably to the SILC children's early social development.

Teaching is good: lessons are interesting and imaginative. Activities are typically tailored well to individual needs. Consequently, pupils' achievement and enjoyment are good. Assessment is good, but not all teachers and assistants use the information well enough to be able to maximise the progress of individual pupils.

Pupils successfully gain useful accreditation for their learning and are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their lives. Their involvement in their school community and within the city of Leeds is first-rate and contributes significantly to their personal development.

The sixth form is good, with a strong emphasis on developing students' independence. Excellent links with colleges further develop students' social skills and awareness of the world of work, easing transition to adult life.

There is good capacity to improve further. The school has moved forward on all the points for improvement suggested at the previous inspection. Self-evaluation is good. The partnership working is coordinated exceptionally well. Information is used to plan next steps; for example, to improve teaching in some parts of the school and to change how some classes are grouped. There are good plans underway to enhance the curriculum further.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that all teachers' lessons are securely based on what pupils know and can do, so that appropriately challenging tasks and activities can be set to

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move the learning of individual pupils on

- ensuring that there is purposeful learning activity throughout a lesson.
- Implement the plans for developing the curriculum further, focusing on:
  - the development of emotional well-being and creativity
  - flexible and more extensive use of multi-sensory resources and approaches
  - more extensive use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment are good. Attainment on entry varies, but is mostly very low. The school's data show that pupils make good progress. In lessons observed, across all the sites, learning was good. Pupils try hard and their behaviour is good. The school's data show no difference in the rate of progress made between different groups of pupils, whether by gender, or type of special needs. All pupils leave school with accreditation including Level 1 or entry level qualifications and, occasionally, full GCSEs. All stay on in education or training, gaining places at college.

The rich curriculum promotes pupils' economic well-being particularly well. Basic skills in numeracy and literacy are prioritised throughout. Many opportunities to get involved in the community and a strong emphasis on work-related learning mean that pupils' social skills and confidence develop very well. They grow more assured in dealing with other young people and adults in less familiar settings, easing transition to college and employment.

Regular trips out of school add significantly to enjoyment. During the inspection, 15 activities took place off site, from the choir singing in Leeds, to canoeing, shopping, and a visit to a stately home.

Attendance is average. Many pupils' attendance is good. A very small number of pupils have transferred in with a history of poor attendance. The school works hard to improve this.

Pupils feel very safe in school. This is evident from talking to pupils and from the relaxed atmosphere and excellent relationships among pupils and staff on all the sites visited. Strong communication systems between the SILC and the partner schools enhance safety still further.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are aware of the feelings of others and show respect for each other's views.

Awareness of a healthy lifestyle is promoted effectively through a myriad of sporting activities and through access to the hydrotherapy pool and sensory rooms. The school is seeking to improve the flexibility in using sensory approaches. Life skills lessons include relevant, practical activities to promote health, such as cooking and shopping.

Though pupils attend eight different schools, there is a strong sense of being part of the wider SILC community. The school also encourages good contribution city-wide, opening

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pupils' eyes to what might be possible for them, despite their barriers to learning.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	*
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. Teachers and assistants on all the sites show great patience in supporting and encouraging pupils to try hard. Pupils show great perseverance and interest in learning. The atmosphere is calm and productive. Staff manage any challenging behaviour well, and as lessons engage pupils well, restlessness is uncommon. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to help pupils participate fully in lessons.

Lessons are imaginative and enjoyable; smiles and laughter were frequent. Nevertheless, expectations are high. In one Key Stage 3 class in a partner school, for example, a pupil read out to the inspector a short, imaginative piece of writing he had created about a snail's visit to Paris. On one of the main school sites, Key Stage 4 pupils

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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with needs on the autistic spectrum imagined life as a child in Victorian times, as a flower seller or chimney sweep. Finishing the 'working day' in the lesson with a chimney sweep's supper of bread and cheese was an inspired touch!

Assessment systems have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. Pupils have suitably challenging, but realistic targets. Managers at the SILC centre carefully monitor data on pupils' progress to ensure that this is maximised for each, spotting if a pupil falls behind and investigating why.

Teachers generally use assessment information well, appropriately tailoring tasks to each pupil's specific needs. They skilfully help pupils to make small steps in learning. Occasionally, tasks are too general. The pace slackens so that time is wasted for some pupils. This slows down their progress. However, such approaches are not widespread. The curriculum is rich and meaningful, with plenty of practical activities and varied opportunities that are relevant to young people and foster their independence. Pupils' experiences are further enhanced by a full programme of regular visits and events off site. Vocational courses and a work experience programme for all pupils in Key Stage 4 promote their awareness of others and responses to the world around them. Partnership working significantly enhances the curriculum, allowing a wide range of needs to be met across the settings.

The use of ICT to promote learning is becoming more widespread across the main sites. The school is at an early stage of implementing a programme for pupils' social and emotional development and creative thinking. Resources for sensory development and outside play on the main sites are improving rapidly, through successful fund-raising and more flexible use of resources.

Inspectors noted some exemplary practice in how the school, families and outside agencies work together very efficiently to support pupils whose circumstances have made them most vulnerable. Records are very carefully kept. Nursing staff help with medical needs and give good guidance to other staff, for example when taking pupils on trips.

Daily arrival and dismissal from the main school sites are well ordered and dignified. As a result, pupils' stress is minimised. Drivers and escorts have been trained in working with pupils who have special educational needs.

Points of transition in pupils' lives are managed very well; for example the detailed preparation for placement at a partner school, or the strong guidance to sixth formers moving on to college.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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



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## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers present a coherent, determined vision to do the very best for all of their pupils. This relentless pursuit of improvement is apparent across the senior leadership team and from all the partners. The Principal at the main site holds overall responsibility for all the pupils and has a strategic role. He spends much of the week on the other sites, retaining an overview and promoting good communication. These arrangements operate very effectively. Data from all the sites are held centrally for analysis and inform decisions on provision.

Governance is good: governors challenge and support the school well, bringing considerable experience and expertise to bear.

The outstanding partnership working is a significant factor in pupils' good progress. For many pupils, the opportunity to work in mainstream school settings further encourages their social development. The additional challenge suits some pupils particularly well and helps to maximise their achievement. In this way, equality of opportunity is maximised and discrimination tackled.

The school's engagement with parents and carers has improved since the previous inspection. Regular newsletters are appreciated. A working group is exploring ways to improve engagement still further.

Each site applies the required safeguarding policies and procedures and the Principal keeps in close touch. The school judged safeguarding procedures to be outstanding. Practice is very strong, but partnership working is extensive and it is a tall order to ensure safeguarding throughout, at all times and on all sites, for such vulnerable pupils. It is not sufficiently clear to inspectors how the local authority and Principal currently assure themselves that this is indeed 'outstanding' for all their pupils.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>

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<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>
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## Early Years Foundation Stage

The needs of the children are well served by attending the on-site community nursery. The setting is bright and welcoming, with imaginative, well-resourced provision for education and outdoor play. Children make good progress, particularly in their social development. Welfare requirements are fully met.

Leadership and management are good overall, but leaders are less clear about the resources needed to enable children who have special educational needs to be fully engaged in all activities. The methodology for regular, daily checks to note the small steps of progress these children make is not yet securely in place.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Sixth form

The sixth form is well led, with a clear vision based on helping students prepare for leading independent adult lives. There is a strong emphasis on developing skills related to looking after yourself and being able to take part in a working environment. Students follow a life-skills and key-skills-based course, supplemented by a weekly ICT programme at a partner school, and a choice of vocational courses.

Well-established links with several local further education colleges enable all students to attend college at least one day a week, following accredited courses. The continuity and familiarity of the college environment and staff encourage students to stay on in education when they leave school.

Achievement is good. Most students have been with the main school or a partner school for several years. All gain accreditation for their learning and in 2009, all stayed on in education, employment or training.

Transition to adult life is very well managed: students are encouraged to make choices and to seek out information for themselves. They helped to design the online portal for the city of Leeds, making it attractive and accessible to students who have special educational needs.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school. Parents made many glowing comments about the happiness, growing confidence and progress of their children.

In discussion, a parent commented that communication had improved since the previous inspection. The school recognises that, with eight sites, this remains a daunting task.

A further comment was made regarding the deployment of staff. This is a matter for the school to decide, but inspectors' observations are that deployment appears to be appropriate. Teachers and assistants work well together and pupils are carefully supervised.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North West 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 186 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	65	20	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	81	10	18	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	61	20	35	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	56	22	39	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	68	18	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	54	24	42	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	56	23	40	2	4	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)	27	47	25	44	0	0	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	70	16	28	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	56	20	35	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	60	20	35	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	65	17	30	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	70	16	28	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



17 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North West Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre, Leeds, LS6 4QE

I am writing to thank you for all your help when I came with Mr Alexander and Mrs Hilling–Smith to your school recently and to tell you what we thought.

I am sorry we were only able to spend such a short time with you. We had lots of different places to try to get to, so I hope you were not disappointed if we did not manage to stay very long in your part of the school. Your school is good for these reasons.

- All the different parts of the North West SILC work well together. The partnerships with all these schools are excellent. They open up lots of opportunities for you to learn as suits you best.
- We can see that you really enjoy school. You work hard and your behaviour is good.
- Teaching is good. Some of the lessons are fun and you are making good progress.
- The sixth form is good and it prepares you well for adult life. There are excellent links with colleges so that you can follow courses there.
- The school does really well in helping you become more independent and confident.
- There is a good range of activities and things for you to do, especially lots of opportunities to get out and about in the community.
- The SILC children in the nursery get a good education.
- The care, guidance and support the adults provide for you are excellent! They are very patient and help you to understand and respond in the lessons.
- The school does very careful checks on all the people that work with you, to help keep you safe.

Mr Purches and his team of directors and leaders do a super job! They have some good ideas for how to make the school even better, for example to use ICT more in the lessons and for you to be able to think and talk about your feelings.

We have asked Mr Purches to look also at what is planned for your lessons. We would like him to see that you don't have to sit around, sometimes not sure what to do or waiting for an adult to help you. It doesn't happen often, we know, as most lessons are really good.

Once again, thank you for all you help. We did enjoy coming to see you.

Yours sincerely

Ms Honoree Gordon

Her Majesty's Inspector



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