

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Park School Teaching Service

Chorley New Road, Bolton BL1 4QR

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 November 2024

Outcome

Park School Teaching Service has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Gareth Webb. This school is part of the Bolton Impact Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Hodgkinson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Keith Davies.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attending this school have often faced considerable difficulties and disruption to their learning. Some are too unwell to attend a mainstream school. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). When they join Park School, they begin to put their previous educational experiences behind them. Pupils overwhelmingly recognise the positive impact that the school has on them. One parent, reflecting the views of many, described the school's provision as a 'lifeline'.

The school welcomes pupils into a safe and nurturing environment. Pupils build trusting relationships with staff. They behave respectfully and learn to celebrate each other's differences. This helps pupils to regain their self-confidence.

The school is determined for all pupils to achieve. From typically low starting points, pupils build up their attendance and develop a more positive outlook on school. Over time, they successfully overcome their barriers to learning and rise to meet the school's high expectations. Almost all pupils leave the school with the qualifications and skills that they need to successfully move on to college, training or employment.

The school ensures that pupils benefit from a wide range of life experiences. This includes learning how to administer first aid and volunteering in the local community.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The trust and the school have worked together seamlessly to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education. Trustees and governors have a thorough understanding of the school's work. Their keen oversight has ensured that the school continues to meet pupils' needs well. For instance, staff have benefited from training that helps them to meet a wider range of pupils' needs than in the past.

Pupils study the same ambitious curriculum whether they learn in school, at home, or in hospital. This curriculum is well designed. It combines academic subjects with social and emotional learning. Typically, the curriculum is skilfully taught by staff with strong subject knowledge. Most pupils learn what is intended. They achieve well from their individual starting points. Pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans make good progress towards the objectives within them.

When pupils join the school, their needs are assessed thoroughly. This provides staff with detailed information about pupils' SEND. In addition, as many pupils have also missed considerable amounts of their education, the school uses a wide range of strategies to find out what pupils already know. Staff keep track of how well pupils are learning, and any knowledge they have not gained securely. At times, however, staff do not use this information well enough to inform how they teach. This means that gaps in some pupils' knowledge go unaddressed. This hinders these pupils' future learning.

The school has prioritised reading. Most pupils read fluently. Any pupils who struggle are supported effectively to catch up. Pupils encounter a broad range of carefully chosen texts. They quickly develop the confidence to read aloud in front of their peers. Pupils benefit from activities designed to increase their vocabulary. This supports their learning across the curriculum.

Staff create a welcoming, positive atmosphere. This helps pupils to focus on their learning in a calm manner. Pupils are respectful to staff and each other. They conduct themselves very well.

Staff quickly develop strong relationships with pupils and their families. The school communicates closely with parents and carers, and other professionals, to ensure that pupils are supported to attend school more often. Typically, this is successful. From low starting points, most pupils make considerable gains in their rate of attendance.

The school prepares pupils well for their futures. A comprehensive careers programme helps them to develop appropriate aspirations. Staff ensure that pupils' medical needs do not hinder them from experiencing the full range of opportunities that the school provides. This includes taking part in suitably adapted work experience. The school also ensures that pupils develop the wider life skills that will help them to live fruitful and independent lives. For example, pupils learn about healthy sleep habits and they practise taking public transport. Typically, the progress that pupils make towards their social and emotional targets sets them up very well for adulthood.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils' prior educational experiences have left large gaps in their knowledge. At times, staff do not use assessment information well enough to address these gaps. This makes it harder for pupils to build their understanding cumulatively. The school should ensure that staff use assessment information successfully to remedy any missed or forgotten learning so that pupils' knowledge gaps begin to close.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142719
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10321455
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Keith Davies
CEO of the trust	Paul Hodgkinson
Headteacher	Gareth Webb
Website	www.boltonimpacttrust.org.uk/our-academies/park-school-teaching-service
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school provides education for pupils with medical needs, and also for pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools. Some pupils are dual-registered with their mainstream school, while others are on longer single-registration placements. Most places at the school are commissioned by Bolton local authority.
- The school also provides short-term education for pupils who are too unwell to attend school. This takes place in pupils' own homes, or on the children's ward at the Royal Bolton Hospital.
- All pupils at the school have social, emotional and mental health needs. A large proportion have an EHC plan.
- Pupils join the school throughout the year and stay for varying periods of time.
- Since the last inspection in 2019, the school has moved to new premises. The address of these premises is not recorded accurately on the Department for Education (DfE)'s 'Get Information About Schools' website. The correct address is 33-35 Chorley New Road, Bolton, BL1 4QR.

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. The trust has also appointed a new chair.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy CEO of the trust, other school and trust leaders, and staff. The lead inspector met with some trustees and representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at examples of their work. They also considered the school's self-evaluation document, along with other documentation and analysis provided by the school.
- The inspectors observed pupils during social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lindy Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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