

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Youth Challenge Pru

Smithills Dean Road, Bolton, Lancashire BL1 6JT

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 2024

## Outcome

Youth Challenge Pru continues to be an outstanding school.

The headteacher of this school is Victoria Sutton. 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, Paul Hodgkinson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Keith Davies.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive the very best education at this inspiring school. Many join the school having experienced considerable barriers and disruption to their learning. The school helps them to put their difficulties behind them and to embrace the world of opportunity on offer. Pupils grow, thrive and learn in this school's highly inclusive environment.

Expectations for pupils' achievement are extremely high. Pupils, many of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), try their best to rise to these high expectations. Pupils commit to their learning. They take pride in the work that they produce. Pupils typically achieve well in the academic and vocational subjects that they study.

The school offers pupils a fresh start. Their behaviour improves considerably once they join the school. Pupils are supported to reflect on any issues that arise, and to take responsibility for their own conduct. Pupils understand and follow the school rules, including in lessons. They show respect for staff and to each other. The school is calm and orderly.

Pupils benefit from excellent provision for their personal development. For example, pupils undertake voluntary work as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They learn about sustainability and the environment through the production of their own food in the school's amazing vegetable garden. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of sports, such as golf and football. They participate in water safety sessions and learn to travel independently on public transport. Almost all pupils return successfully to mainstream education or take up places at college or in employment when the time comes.

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

The quality of education for pupils is exceptional. Pupils join the school at different points in the year. Their needs are wide-ranging and sometimes complex. All have experienced turbulence and unhappiness in their prior education. Regardless of the challenges that have brought pupils here, the school has the very highest aspirations for their success. These high aspirations underpin a broad, ambitious curriculum that enables pupils to achieve extremely well in academic and vocational subjects.

Most pupils stay at the school for relatively short periods of time. The school has taken this into account when designing its curriculum. The curriculum lays out the most important knowledge that the school wants pupils to learn during their time here. Meticulous care has been taken to ensure that this knowledge has been broken down further into smaller, well-ordered steps from Year 7 to Year 11. This helps to ensure that pupils build new knowledge on firm foundations, whenever they join the school. Those who return to mainstream education are well prepared to do so when that time comes.

The trust ensures that staff have the strong subject knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum effectively and consistently well. Staff are adept at checking that pupils understand the learning in lessons. This helps to ensure that any misconceptions are quickly and successfully addressed.

The school uses the information from assessments to make sure that the curriculum is having the intended impact on pupils' learning. For instance, staff check that the curriculum is helping pupils to know more and to remember more over time in each subject. This insight enables the school to continue to improve and refine the curriculum even further.

Reading has been placed at the heart of the curriculum. The school has provided pupils with a wealth of interesting and exciting texts to read. These texts introduce pupils to a wide vocabulary that enlivens and enriches their writing. Staff ensure that pupils receive prompt help if they need to catch up on any missing reading knowledge, for example phonics knowledge. This helps to ensure that pupils have the strong skills that they need to read complex and technical vocabulary in other subjects, such as science or construction. Pupils typically enjoy reading, even when they have found it challenging in the past. Their competence in reading contributes well to pupils' success in examinations such as functional skills, vocational qualifications and GCSEs.

Some pupils join the school with SEND, and some have education, health and care plans. However, any additional needs that pupils may have are quickly identified once they are admitted. Staff successfully adapt their delivery of the curriculum to ensure that all pupils are able to access the intended learning, including those with SEND. The school communicates regularly and effectively with parents and with other professionals to ensure that pupils receive any additional support that they need. Pupils with SEND achieve well from their individual starting points.

Some pupils have not attended their previous schools regularly. However, once pupils are admitted to this school, their attendance usually improves dramatically. The school makes

effective use of information about pupils' attendance in order to check that they are safe, and to provide pupils with support to improve their attendance if this is necessary. Staff combine kindness with firmness to set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils make a significant contribution to pupils' willingness to engage in learning, and to their enjoyment of school life.

The programme for pupils' wider development is as ambitious as that for their academic achievement. Pupils benefit from comprehensive careers advice and guidance. The work experience that they undertake fires their interest in a range of future careers. Older pupils relish the opportunity to visit different colleges. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about difference and diversity in the wider world. They learn to consider and to take account of the views of others, and to recognise and challenge stereotypical thinking. Pupils receive relationships and sex education and health education that is appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Trustees have an excellent grasp of the school's current strengths and of its priorities for improvement. They hold the school to account for its work effectively. The school considers the impact of its decisions on staff's workload and well-being. Staff are highly appreciative of this concern and enjoy working at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in February 2019.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142758
<b>Local authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10321456
<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Academy alternative provision converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	67
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Keith Davies
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Paul Hodgkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Victoria Sutton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.boltonimpacttrust.org.uk">www.boltonimpacttrust.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	26 and 27 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed to the school. The trust has also appointed a new chair.
- The school is registered for pupils aged five to 16. However, the school no longer admits pupils of primary school age. At the time of the inspection, all pupils were in key stage 3 or key stage 4.
- 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.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with trustees and with governors. She spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.

### **Inspection team**

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kevin Sexton

Ofsted Inspector

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