

Youth Challenge Pru

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132255
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	360419
Inspection dates	23–24 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Terry McKenzie

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Phil Ashcroft
Headteacher	Mr P Hodgkinson
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons presented by seven teachers and instructors. They observed the work of the unit throughout the three separate sites. Discussions were held with a member of the management committee, senior staff, teachers and students. Inspectors looked at key policies, improvement plans and one parental questionnaire.

- Whether teaching and assessments are used to challenge students to achieve as well as they can.
- Whether students' low attendance adversely affects their future chances in life.
- Whether leadership and management are effective in improving the unit and maintaining high standards.

Information about the school

Youth Challenge educates boys and girls who have been excluded from other forms of education. Most have previously experienced disruptions to their schooling and demonstrated low levels of attendance. A small minority have barriers to learning such as social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and autistic spectrum conditions. Students can enter the unit at any time during Key Stage 4. Youth Challenge is unrepresentative of the local community in that it has very few students from minority ethnic groups. Four students are looked after by the local authority and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is very much higher than the national average.

Since the last inspection Youth Challenge has maintained its status as a healthy school and been included on Ofsted's Outstanding Providers list (2008).

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is a highly effective pupil referral unit that provides outstanding education and care for its students. It is held in very high esteem by the local community and by the students themselves. Despite previous difficulties with education the very large majority have average attendance and feel very safe here. They greatly enjoy the activities provided for them and they contribute extremely well. Behaviour is exemplary and this makes it possible for students to participate in high quality learning experiences on-site and in the wider community. This adds to their understanding of others and provides opportunities to gain knowledge of the diversity of people and the different communities in the local area.

Almost all arrive with overall attainment that is below national averages but in their short time through Key Stage 4 they make outstanding progress at the unit. Although attainment remains below average, students begin to quickly catch up with the attainment levels of others nationally. Consequently, they gain qualifications and valuable vocational skills that prepare them for moving onto the next stages of their lives. They learn to cope very well in social situations, for example through experiencing work placements. Teaching is outstanding and continues to improve under the highly effective leadership of the teacher-in-charge. Teachers use extremely accurate assessments to match courses and tasks to students' needs and abilities. Nevertheless, students would benefit even further from more carefully constructed lesson targets so that they have more information about what is expected from them during lessons.

The curriculum is closely tailored to the individual needs of students and provides an outstanding range of courses and accreditations. However, the admissions policy of the unit does not make it completely clear who can or should attend. Consequently, a very few students are admitted with complex needs for whom staff have received little training or specialist resources. Care, guidance and support for all students are great strengths. Although this is a day provision, staff and resources are available to students during evenings, weekends and holidays. For example, staff and students have constructed a fitness suite that they utilise on most evenings, so that the work of the unit is supplemented after hours through enthusiastic use of the on-site gymnasium and boxing club. Managers make it clear to students that there is always someone available for them to contact during times of crisis. The teacher-in-charge has a clear vision for the unit and this is shared by all staff and highly supported by the very effective management committee that works closely with the local authority. Through regular review the unit knows about its strengths and weaknesses and quality assurance is accurate. The information from this audit leads to action planning that is well informed and appropriate. Therefore, Youth Challenge has outstanding capacity to improve.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As soon as possible ensure that Youth Challenge admits only the students for whom it is fully resourced by agreeing the admissions policy with the local authority.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students settle quickly into lessons, participate well and contribute to their learning. They behave very well indeed. Most make outstanding gains in basic skills such as literacy and numeracy and this aids their learning in other areas such as vocational studies. Because of previous disruptions to their learning, students' overall attainment remains below the national average for all schools. Nevertheless, all groups make exceedingly good progress and all but the very small minority of persistent absentees are fully included in learning. Most succeed in gaining externally accredited qualifications such as vocational qualifications, Entry Level Certificates and GCSE. A very few attain at the higher levels. Following these successful preparations for moving onto the next stages of their lives, the large majority undertake further education, employment or training, thus demonstrating the great success of this remarkable facility.

Students feel very safe at the unit. This is indicated through their responses to questionnaires and in discussions with inspectors. Youth Challenge regularly canvasses the views of parents and carers. Their responses overwhelmingly indicate that the unit is a very good place for their children to be. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved remarkably in the last two years. This is because persistent absence by the very small minority has been successfully tackled by senior managers with the help of the local authority. Most students now arrive promptly for their lessons and only a very few remain unwilling to attend. Those who attend benefit from all that the unit has to offer. Students eat well. They take part in helping to set lunch menus and contribute to the healthy eating choices. Regular exercise including competitive sport is part of the curriculum and encouraged after hours. These activities add to students' self-esteem and help them to learn to support each other. Thus, they gain high quality social and moral experiences and reduce their stress levels through exercise and the associated social activities.

Students contribute very well to the life of the unit. They support each other during lessons and breaktimes. Their representatives share views and opinions with members of staff during staff meetings. Students and staff have worked closely together to build and construct the interior of the vocational centre. Consequently, students feel great ownership over the provision. Most students undertake work experience to supplement vocational training. Several local employers regularly offer work placements to students because they know that they have been trained to a high level of skill and they trust them to behave in the work place. Students' cultural and spiritual education is good because they learn about different faiths and ways of living through aspects of the curriculum. Furthermore, students have opportunities for visits to museums, places of worship and cultural centres as part of their studies.

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

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	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

All teaching observed during the inspection was outstanding. This is because teachers know students well and organise tasks very carefully to match their interests and abilities. Lessons are planned meticulously for individual students and excellent learning targets are set for each based on outstanding assessments that are updated daily by teachers. Consequently, students are able to demonstrate their extremely good progress in carefully prepared very small steps.

The outstanding curriculum is highly individualised to meet the needs and abilities of students. Hence, whilst all further their learning in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, some study courses in GCSE. For others, Entry Level Certificates and qualifications in vocational studies are provided. A few attend courses off-site and work towards gaining accreditations that count towards apprenticeships. When necessary, arrangements are made for students to study more academic courses in nearby schools and colleges. Classrooms and workshops are well-equipped so learning is always enhanced by new and appropriate technologies. A remarkable strength of the unit is the use of partners who encourage students to take responsibility for their own behaviour and lifestyle. For example, a nurse is employed on-site to help students understand better about keeping themselves safe though aspects of sex education and in relation to drugs and alcohol. Through work experience and off-site education students gain confidence.

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Staff work very hard to support these ventures so that students develop the skills to help them move onto the next stages of their lives.

The great strength of the unit is in the outstanding care, guidance and support that is provided by staff on-demand at any time of the day or night and any day of the year if students are in a time of crisis. An example of this is that staff accompany students to football matches on Saturdays. Thus, students come to respect and trust the staff that they work with and this encourages them to take any concerns to the adults in the unit. Furthermore, staff work closely with each other, with parents and carers and with other professionals to ensure that students spend as much time in lessons as possible. Staff welcome students in the morning with breakfast and a friendly chat to ensure that they are ready to start the day. They remain alert to individual medical and other needs. They help students to feel positive about Youth Challenge when that might not have been the case in other educational settings. Students and their families receive excellent guidance and advice about transitional arrangements for moving onto the next stages of their lives.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The teacher-in-charge has greatly improved the quality of learning since the last inspection by ensuring that teachers make thorough use of assessments to match courses and content to the individual needs and abilities of the students. New curriculum pathways have been introduced to provide opportunities for all to catch up on aspects of learning that might have previously been missed and to gain meaningful qualifications. The senior team skilfully appraise the work of the unit to ensure that all have equal opportunities to progress and that none are discriminated against. The outstanding management committee is enthusiastic and supportive. It has a good mix of talents that are fully exploited at the unit. Consequently, the committee is highly effective in supporting the teacher-in-charge and checking rigorously on the work of the unit. An example of their effectiveness is that through their efforts the purpose of this pupil referral unit has been largely clarified with the local authority and regular predictable funding has been secured. Safeguarding practices are outstanding because policies and procedures are exemplary. Designated safeguarding staff and members of the management committee have completed training to the statutory requirements and beyond, and all aspects of safeguarding are undertaken with great care.

Youth Challenge is proud of its contributions to the community and has established highly effective partnerships with local employers and others that greatly benefit the students. Staff are successful in encouraging students to maintain good relations with others from

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different backgrounds through charity events and sporting ties. Contacts are maintained with organisations such as the police so that students are able to learn more about public services. Parents and carers engage very well indeed with the unit and are kept extremely well informed about the progress of their children. For example, one parent or carer commented, 'Partnerships with parents are a priority and the unit is brilliant in helping this to happen'. Staff make very good use of resources, including technical equipment in workshops and new computer technology in classrooms. However, for a very few students the unit is not well resourced because of their highly complex needs. Nevertheless, overall Youth Challenge provides outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

One questionnaire was received from a parent or carer and this is as might be expected from a provision of this nature. Youth Challenge, however, misses no opportunity to gather the views of parents and carers, and these surveys are very positive. Furthermore, the close working relationship that is established between the unit and most parents and carers means that members of staff are generally aware of how parents and carers feel about the service provided.

The one questionnaire returned was very supportive of the unit and was in full agreement with inspectors that this is a highly effective provision.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Youth Challenge Pru 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 1 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 51 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	1	100	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)	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	1	100	0	0	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 all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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">■ 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 pupils' 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.



25 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Youth Challenge, Bolton, BL3 6AB

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited Youth Challenge recently. We enjoyed meeting you on the different sites, in your classes and during breaktimes. I was particularly impressed with the bricklaying class where I observed older students mentoring pupils from Key Stage 2.

Youth Challenge is a superb unit and the adults look after you very well indeed. We believe that you feel very safe and secure here and that you very much appreciate the excellent relationships with other students and staff. Your contributions are outstanding because you behave very well and try hard to adopt healthy lifestyles. The very large majority of you greatly improve your attendance but small numbers do not attend regularly and therefore miss out on the opportunities provided.

The staff produce outstanding lessons and vocational learning activities for you. The teacher-in-charge, other senior leaders and members of the management committee all work hard to give you the best quality of education. You have many exciting opportunities to gain skills and qualifications both on-site and out in the community.

The inspectors feel that Youth Challenge together with the managers and the local authority should give urgent consideration to deciding who should attend the unit. This is because, despite the very best efforts of all staff, it is not resourced well enough to provide everything that all of you need.

We wish you all the best for the future and once again thank you for your help and interest in the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Terry McKenzie
Lead Inspector

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