

# Forwards Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134291
<b>Local authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	381664
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Angela Westington 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>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the centre's roll</b>	21
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Gregory
<b>Headteacher</b>	Yvette Wright
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 January 2009
<b>Centre address</b>	(The Roscoe Fold Centre) Stephen Street Breightmet Bolton BL2 5DX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Seven teachers were observed teaching: the five teachers from the centre, one peripatetic music specialist and two wrestling coaches, across seven lessons including two extended observations of one hour, one assembly and two 'success time' sessions. The inspector held meetings with the head of the centre, staff, parents and carers, representatives of the management committee, the Head of the Pupil Referral Service, the headteacher of Red Lane Primary school and held a telephone conversation with an educational psychologist. She met with individual pupils, reviewed the centre's systems for tracking pupils' progress and scrutinised the case file of a pupil in local authority care. The inspector reviewed the centre's documentation and day-to-day procedures relating to safeguarding, recruitment and vetting, its development plans and its management records. Pupil, staff and 14 questionnaires from parents and carers were also scrutinised.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what extent has the centre responded to the safeguarding priorities identified by the local authority in September 2011? What has been the impact?
- To what extent has the centre responded to the teaching and curriculum priorities identified by the local authority? What has been the impact on pupils' outcomes?
- To what extent has the centre tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection?

## Information about the centre

The Forwards Centre is a Pupil Referral Unit for primary pupils aged seven to 11 years old, situated in the centre of Bolton. It serves the whole of the Bolton metropolitan district. The centre caters for pupils who have been permanently excluded or are in danger of permanent exclusion from mainstream primary schools; pupils who have longer term needs as a result of significant behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; and a number of pupils who have additional difficulties, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), are on the autistic spectrum, or have learning difficulties.

Half of the pupils in the centre have a statement of special educational needs, identifying the Forwards Centre as the named provision. All pupils attending the centre are known to be eligible for free school meals; all bar one are boys and all are of White, British heritage. One pupil is in the care of a neighbouring local authority; two pupils are known to the youth justice system. Pupils enter and leave the centre at different times in the school year. The centre holds the Healthy Schools status and The Go 4 It award. The centre moved into new accommodation in January 2011.

**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 centre?****2****The centre's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

## Main findings

The pupils at the Forwards Centre are in good hands. These pupils, who find themselves in the most vulnerable circumstances, are provided with outstanding care, guidance and support. It helps them overcome the obstacles they face in life and begin to rebuild their fractured lives and fragmented education. Staff at the centre work outstandingly well with parents, carers, partners and a very wide range of agencies to support the children. Due to their often disrupted educational histories, pupils' attainment on entry is typically below that expected for their age and abilities. Despite this, they achieve well. The centre's primary aim is to help pupils manage their behaviour and learn new ways of relating to others socially. As a result of the excellent support and effective behaviour management systems in the centre, pupils make good progress in improving their behaviour and this allows them to make generally good progress academically, as well as achieving good personal outcomes in a number of areas. Pupils enjoy reading and, in some cases, read in line with the expectation for their age. However, more could be done to strengthen and enrich the provision for reading within all lessons and across all subjects and to improve the reading levels of those whose reading is weak. In this setting, reading should have a much higher profile, especially given the difficulties that pupils may face at home or beyond.

Pupils report feeling safe at the centre; they build secure, positive relationships with the adults around them. Their attendance is above average; in some instances it is much better than it was at the pupil's former mainstream school. Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding; consequently, pupils enjoy their lessons. Increasing numbers of pupils are entered for national tests for eleven year olds and achieve well given their starting points. Recently, links with local primary schools have been established and these have strengthened the centre staff's understanding of expectations and developments in mainstream schools. Conversely, the good practice within the centre has been identified and this is to be disseminated to other schools. The curriculum is good, covering National Curriculum subjects and enrichment activities designed to stimulate and engage pupils. The recently appointed Head of the Pupil Referral Service and the Head of the Centre provide good leadership and management of the centre. Development plans are, appropriately, focused on key areas. Pupils' progress in relation to their behaviour is logged very carefully, daily, and increasing use is made of academic targets. The centre collates a lot of data about the pupils' progress, but it is not all easily accessible.

The centre is the only provision in the borough for primary aged pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. Increasingly, it is used 'de facto' as special school for pupils with a statement of special educational needs, alongside pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion. A number of the permanently excluded pupils spend the remainder of their Key Stage 2 education at the centre; mostly, these are pupils who arrive at the centre during Year 6 or towards the end of Year 5 and for whom it is difficult for the centre to find a transfer school. However, there are instances of permanently excluded pupils spending extended periods at the centre, usually where re-integration into mainstream school has failed. There are protocols for re-integrating pupils back into mainstream schools, but, in recent years, these have applied to a small number of pupils. At the end of Year 6, pupils transfer either to a mainstream secondary school or to alternative provision. The work of the centre is currently under review as part of a wider, local authority review of the whole pupil referral service.

The centre was relocated in 2011 and moved into accommodation shared with other services. Leaders and managers spoken to acknowledge that the accommodation was not ready in time, that it took some time to get the new accommodation to the standard of the former accommodation, and that the move had a destabilising effect on the pupils and their progress. Consequently, the local authority undertook a major review of the centre in September 2011 and identified some concerns about the safety of the accommodation and some aspects of the provision. In a very short space of time, all the safeguarding and accommodation issues have been resolved. In addition, improvements to the curriculum and to staff development have been put in place and are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Given all that, the centre has good capacity to sustain improvement.

### **What does the centre, the Pupil Referral Service and the management committee need to do to improve the centre further?**

- Clarify the status of the centre and reduce the number of long-term placements for permanently excluded pupils.
- Improve the tracking data used by the centre, distinguishing more clearly between the different groups of pupils at the centre, the length of stay and progress made.
- Strengthen and widen the provision for pupils' reading to improve reading standards overall.

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

<b>2</b>
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Pupils enjoy being at the centre. 'It's miles better than my other school' is a typical comment, as is 'They listen to you here'. The staff work incredibly hard to engage the pupils in their lessons, whilst constantly reinforcing good behaviour and appropriate responses to others. Lessons proceed calmly, by and large, and when there are outbursts by individuals, other pupils in the room do not react or join in. For many pupils, the centre provides their first taste of success in social interaction and in their school work and they thrive as a result. In one mathematics lesson, Year 6 pupils were introduced to the concept of negative numbers. Through careful

explanation and questioning by the teacher, the pupils gained an understanding of the concept and, as a result, one able boy could relate what he had just learnt to bank overdrafts. In a Year 5 English lesson, the pupils were very effectively encouraged to work as a team to answer questions on nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. As a result, all the boys were able to use the parts of speech correctly in spoken sentences and then identify them in a written text. A number of pupils arrive at the centre with very low reading standards. More could be done and more quickly, to improve the reading skills of these pupils.

Pupils know a lot about how to keep healthy; they know which foods are good for them and why exercise is important. They like physical education lessons greatly, especially the wrestling sessions, and they take full advantage of the newly installed climbing apparatus in the playground. Despite their obvious difficulties in managing their own behaviour at times, the pupils gain new social and team work skills at the centre. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are learning the difference between right and wrong, but their appreciation of the impact of their actions on others and their ability to empathise are less developed. During this inspection, the inspector observed instances when pupils were enthralled by something and taken out of themselves.

*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:	4
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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	
<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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good. Some is outstanding, due mainly to the quality of the teacher's assessment throughout the lesson. For example, in a Year 3 /4 mathematics lesson on shape, the inspector observed outstanding teaching and assessment of pupils' knowledge of translation, rotation and reflection of two dimensional shapes. The topic was new to pupils, but, through very careful assessment of pupils' previous knowledge and their understanding of the vocabulary 'slide, turn and flip', pupils were taught new ideas and the correct technical vocabulary for movement of the shapes. Appropriate use of the interactive whiteboard and the reinforcement of key points through the pupils' completion of a very well-designed activity, ensured that all the pupils in the group learnt something

<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

new. Support staff are used well and contribute significantly to pupils' good progress. However, occasionally, there are examples of support staff doing too much for pupils, such as reading the worksheet, instead of allowing the pupils to read for themselves.

The curriculum is good and is enriched by a range of activities designed to support the development of pupils' social skills. Theatre trips, participation in music festivals, cookery lessons, swimming, wrestling and African drumming are regular features. Pupils at the centre attain the end of Key Stage 2 swimming standard earlier than is expected nationally. Pupils are eager to talk about their displays of armour, shields and models of Motte and Bailey castles - all part of their current 'castles' theme. Improvements in pupils' writing are evident over time, a reflection of the centre's focus on one of the key areas for improvement at the last inspection. There are, however, some missed opportunities to extend pupils' reading by reading books related to the themes they are covering.

The care, guidance and support provided by the centre are outstanding. Staff are committed to the children in their care and work very hard to help them achieve and improve. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the centre and its positive impact on their children and on their family life. The centre works with a very wide range of health and social agencies in support of pupils and families. Those spoken to hold the centre and the work it undertakes in high esteem.

*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>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The Head of Centre provides strong day-to-day leadership of the centre and is extremely committed to the pupils and the staff. She is regarded highly by the centre's partners. She has managed well a difficult relocation of the centre and, in a very short space of time, successfully brought to conclusion the necessary improvements to the accommodation, in order to ensure the safety and stability of pupils. Safeguarding procedures are now excellent. Systems to monitor the progress made by pupils are well embedded, although they could be sharpened further to clarify the length of stay and progress made by specific groups. The recently appointed head of the Pupil Referral Service brings a clear and purposeful, strategic overview of the centre's work. The management committee provides satisfactory oversight of the centre and has been particularly supportive of the centre through the difficult period of the move.

The centre's relationships with parents, carers and partners are exemplary and are a major factor in the good outcomes achieved by the pupils. The centre promotes equality of opportunity well: each pupil and their family are supported individually and patiently. The centre promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Staff know the

pupils, their families and local schools well and, increasingly, pupils engage in activities within the broader locality. Pupils learn about a range of faiths in their religious education lessons.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Twelve parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. All are overwhelmingly happy with the work of the centre. Seven parents and carers wrote positive comments about the impact of the centre's work on their children's life and about the excellent relationships between staff and parents and carers. One parent wrote 'I would like to say that the care and support of every member of staff in this school, in and out of school is second to none. The children always come first and with learning, fun and this support it helps these children turn things round. Superb!'



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Forward 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 inspector received 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 21 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	9	64	5	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	86	1	7	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	93	1	7	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	93	1	7	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	79	3	21	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)	10	71	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	93	1	7	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	93	1	7	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	86	2	14	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	93	1	7	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	86	1	7	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



28 November 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Forwards Centre, Bolton – BL2 5DX**

As you know, I visited your centre recently to see how you are getting on. Thank you all so much for making me feel so very welcome. I enjoyed my two days with you and was pleased to be able to see you at work and hear about your lessons. Thank you especially to those who showed me around the centre and who chatted to me in lessons and let me discuss their work with them. I want to thank especially the young man who gave me his mathematics work on shape! I thought that work was fantastic.

You are right to be proud of the Forwards Centre because it is a good centre and it looks after you outstandingly well. The adults work exceptionally hard with your parents and carers and other adults to make sure that you are looked after and that you do as well as you can in your lessons. You are making good progress overall, especially in your behaviour because your teachers teach you well and they provide lessons that are interesting.

I have discussed with your headteacher some ways in which the centre could be even better. These include:

- making sure that pupils who can go back into mainstream schools do so as quickly as possible
- making sure that all the information that the centre has on your progress is easier to use
- making sure that you read for longer every day, that you read many more books and a much wider range of books and that you can listen to and follow books on compact discs.

Thank you again for your warm welcome.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Westington  
Her Majesty's Inspector

