

Forwards Centre

(The Roscoe Fold Centre), Stephen Street, Brightmet, Bolton, Lancashire, BL2 5DX

Inspection dates

10–11 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make at least good progress in their personal development and as a result, they re-engage with learning. This means they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The majority of pupils make good progress overall in literacy and numeracy. This is because they participate well in the activities planned for them.
- Teaching is good. Learning mentors make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils try very hard to live up to the high expectations of behaviour and attitudes set for them and as a result, behaviour is often outstanding.
- Pupils say they feel safe and cared for very well. This is because staff ensure that pupils' individual needs are always closely met.
- The school is led and managed well by the senior leaders. Staff are a cohesive team, all with the same aspiration to enable every pupil to feel happy and settled. Pupils' achievement has improved within this environment that fosters high quality learning for every individual.
- Leaders support staff effectively to improve their teaching; staff benefit from a wide range of training.
- The management committee makes a significant contribution to the school's leadership because they use their expert knowledge to support the work of the centre. Committee members hold the leaders of the pupil referral unit (PRU) to account strongly for the quality of its work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are not as high as in reading and mathematics.
- Sometimes teachers' expectations are not high enough. The most able pupils are not challenged as much as they could be, especially in writing.
- Marking does not always provide pupils with precise information about how to improve.
- The role of subject leaders of English and mathematics is not fully effective. The checks made on the quality of teaching do not always focus sharply enough on pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed several lessons, one of which was jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' individual learning and behaviour plans.
- The inspector held meetings with the deputy headteacher of service, the local authority, pupils, two members of the management committee and members of the support and teaching staff.
- The inspector took into account 18 questionnaires from staff. There were two responses to the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View), which are too few to generate a report.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including plans for improvement, records of the school's checks on pupils' and teachers' performance, safeguarding and attendance documents, minutes of meetings of the management committee and school policies.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Forwards Centre is one of five PRUs which form part of the Pupil Referral Service for the local authority. The centres share the same overarching senior leadership team and management committee. The head of centre forms part of this team.
- The large majority of pupils is permanently excluded from mainstream school or are at risk of exclusion due to behavioural, social or emotional difficulties.
- All pupils attend full time at the centre. A minority of pupils are on the roll of their mainstream school, as well as the centre. Typically, over 40 pupils attend the centre each year.
- The average length of stay is three terms; however, a few pupils stay at the centre for more than two years. The vast majority of pupils are in Key Stage 2.
- Almost all pupils are boys. There were no girls on roll during the inspection.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage; other pupils come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds.
- All pupils have special educational needs. A minority have a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan or are in the process of being formally assessed for a plan.
- The majority of pupils are disadvantaged, those known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority. This is well above the national average.
- The Management Committee was re-structured in April 2013 at which point it received a delegated budget.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement, especially for the most able pupils and in writing, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring the most able pupils are always challenged
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length
 - improving the quality of marking so pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on the school's performance by:
 - developing the role of middle leaders in English and mathematics
 - ensuring the checks made on the quality of teaching always focus on pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- The centre is considerably enhanced through being part of the local authority Behaviour and Inclusion Service. The senior leadership team has a clear vision about how to move the full service forward together for the benefit of this centre, all the PRUs in the local authority and the service. The staff are a cohesive team and work well together. The headteacher of this centre is supported well by the other senior leaders.
- The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Leaders use data to analyse the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils. Clear plans are in place to refine further the information about pupils' progress and to ensure actions to improve the progress for the most able pupils and for pupils' attainment in writing, are more sharply focused.
- Senior leaders evaluate the quality of teaching effectively. They then follow this up by providing training where it is most needed and this is improving teaching. Leaders use the information from observation of lessons and data to set targets for teachers to improve their practice. The achievement of these targets is linked closely to salary rewards. However, at times the impact of teaching on pupils' progress is not sharp enough and some weaker aspects of teaching remain.
- All teachers have leadership roles and support school improvement. However, the leaders of English and mathematics are not fully effective because they do not contribute fully to the monitoring of pupils' progress in their subjects.
- The curriculum is extensively enriched by pupils' opportunities to be involved in sport, to make and listen to live music and to meet visitors. It meets the needs of the pupils because there is an emphasis on personal development as well as their basic skills.
- Pupils are also helped to develop a clear understanding of life in and the values of modern Britain. They learn about respect for other cultures and lifestyles. For example, they make comparisons with their own lives when they learn about the Spanish language and culture.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Through the strong relationships all pupils make with each other and staff they develop a good understanding of equality of opportunity and the need for tolerance. There are no significant differences between the achievement of different groups of pupils, although occasionally the most able pupils are not always challenged enough to ensure they always make the best progress.
- Partnership with parents is excellent. There are very strong links with other providers and mainstream schools and these make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The local authority values highly the work of the centre and supports its development well. For example, recently securing a detailed external review of the performance of the centre and the services of a school improvement partner with expert knowledge of the role of PRUs.
- The centre uses the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils to provide additional carefully-targeted support in classrooms. As a result, any gaps in achievement are closing.
- The centre uses the primary school sports funding successfully. The specialist teacher has planned the outdoor sports area carefully, and trained staff are deployed well. Consequently, pupils have regular access to high quality sport to help to keep them fit. As a result, they do well and enjoy other special activities, such as wrestling.
- Arrangements for pupils' move back to mainstream education are usually successful because planning is thorough. In addition, during the initial period of return to mainstream school, pupils receive good support from the centre's staff.
- All policies and procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. This means that everyone is very clear about procedures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee gathers information firsthand about how well the centre is performing. It receives good and appropriately detailed information about the work of the centre and the achievement of pupils. Members have a clear understanding about the quality of teaching. Minutes of management committee meetings show that members use this knowledge well to challenge and support the leaders about all aspects of the centre's work.
 - Members review spending decisions carefully and make good use of funding.
 - Members of the management committee are rigorous in the annual review of the performance of the leadership group of staff, and receive information about the performance targets set for teachers and the link to any salary progression.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are outstanding****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding
- The friendly atmosphere in the school is underpinned by strong nurturing and caring relationships. The ethos for learning in school is very positive.
- Each day pupils have opportunities to earn raffle tickets for their good behaviour. Earning five tickets each day is a guarantee of attendance at chosen activities. Pupils respond very well to this system and, as a result, have developed skills to manage and improve their own behaviour very well. Pupils are very welcoming and polite, and consistently try very hard to live up to the high expectations set for them by staff.
- During assemblies, staff give pupils clear information and full explanations about how well they have done or, on rare occasions, about the disappointments associated with unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are given compliments about their achievements and conduct, which mean that they have the opportunity to feel good and they then try to repeat this experience.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and at lunchtime when they have the opportunity to discuss issues and then play in the well-designed outdoor area.
- Staff are trained carefully in how to manage pupils' behaviour. They are very skilled in calmly communicating clear, consistent expectations at all times throughout the day. Pupils respond very positively to this consistency of approach.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned programme of personal development, which, for example, includes a visit from a magistrate to explain about justice and the need for law and order. This helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Safeguarding practices are well very understood by all staff. Any concerns are promptly notified to the appropriate agencies. Staff have a very good understanding of the individual needs of each pupil.
- Pupils say they feel very safe. There is little bullying and pupils say that there is always someone to talk to if necessary. Pupils reflect, share and celebrate good news during the daily time allocated to sharing their successes.
- Pupils are aware of the different risks posed by the internet, as well as when they exhibit excessive behaviour actions that can upset others. This is because staff explain patiently what could happen if certain behaviour does not stop.
- Records show that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are recorded in detail and monitored meticulously, and robust action is taken as a result to ensure pupils are safe.
- Leaders are vigilant in ensuring that full checks on the safety of premises are regularly undertaken and acted upon.
- Parents say they are highly confident in the centre's policies and procedures and are very pleased with the ease and smoothness of the communication between home and school.
- Attendance improves rapidly when pupils begin to attend the centre and is usually maintained when they move to the next school.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- The quality of teaching is good. This helps pupils accelerate their achievement so they are closer to achieving their potential during their stay at the centre. Teachers have expert knowledge in the nurturing and teaching of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- A particular strength is the skilful way teachers make suggestions, question and encourage the pupils. These approaches are very positive and have a real impact on the quality of pupils' learning.
- The impact of teaching on learning and achievement in communication, literacy, reading and mathematics is good. Pupils' communication skills improve because pupils have many opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings in one-to-one thinking time, in class and in assembly.
- Reading is taught effectively. Teachers ensure that pupils read in all subjects, for example, in science when they study the human body. The teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds) is effective particularly for the less able and the very few younger pupils. Older pupils benefit from a carefully planned programme of reading activities, which match their needs very closely. As a result, they achieve well.
- The teaching of mathematics is successful. Teachers ensure pupils develop mathematical understanding

well, based on good assessments of what pupils need to do next.

- Overall, writing is taught well and pupils understand different types of writing. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length. As a result, they do not have enough practise in applying their basic writing skills.
- Teachers and staff consistently give pupils information about how well they are learning and this helps to boost their self esteem. As a result, pupils' behaviour improves. Teachers spend less time managing disturbances, leaving more time for learning. Staff have good relationships with pupils. This results in a positive climate for learning in lessons.
- The skills of the learning mentors are considerable and make a good contribution to pupils' achievement. The mentors' personalised approach to support individual pupils helps to address pupils' learning needs well.
- Teachers' verbal feedback to pupils is very effective. It ensures all pupils are very clear about what they need to do next. However, marking does not always provide pupils with precise information about how to improve their work and learning.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged to reach the higher levels, or to deepen their knowledge. Targets do not always make it clear to pupils what they are to do and achieve.
- Staff reflect with other staff every day, on the quality of their teaching, including what has worked well with an individual pupil. As a result, teaching is improving continuously and pupils learn and achieve well at the centre.
- Pupils say they enjoy learning again, but sometimes the most able pupils say the work is too easy.

The achievement of pupils is good

- When pupils start at the centre at any time during the year, their attainment is usually below that typically expected for their age. Once in the school, pupils rapidly begin to re-engage with learning and accelerate their achievement, when compared to pupils with similar starting points.
- Pupils make at least good progress in their personal development because they make great strides in learning to control their behaviour. Progress made by each pupil in their personal development is tracked in detail and data is used very well to ensure that actions taken by staff to enable pupils to learn as well as possible are highly effective.
- Arrangements for pupils' move back to mainstream school usually result in success. This is because they are carefully planned and well supported by staff from the centre.
- Pupils who have special educational needs, who do not return to mainstream education but go on to another more appropriate placement, benefit from a careful assessment of their needs, resulting in them moving on to the most suitable provision.
- Although numbers are very small and the number of pupils in the centre at the end of Key Stage 2 varies greatly, school data for 2014 show pupils achieved broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics overall. This represents good progress from their starting points. However, pupils' grammar and punctuation skills are weaker aspects in their writing.
- In 2014, data show all pupils made especially good progress in reading, where over a half the pupils made more than the expected rate of progress. In mathematics, the majority of pupils made good progress. However, in writing, although many make the progress expected of them, only one quarter of pupils made more than expected progress.
- Information from the evaluation of the progress made in pupils' books show that the most able pupils do not always achieve as well they could. This is because these pupils' abilities are not always identified and as such, the work set for these pupils does not always challenge them fully. Nevertheless, they make good progress overall, especially in reading. Progress is less strong in writing because there are insufficient opportunities for them to write at length and develop their skills further.
- For the last three years, data shows that the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils in the school closes in English and mathematics. However, numbers of pupils are small so no meaningful comparisons can be made with national figures.
- Parents are delighted with the progress their children make, especially in their personal development.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	134291
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	448029

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	6–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Sidebottom
Headteacher	Yvette Wright
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2011
Telephone number	01204 333660
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