

# TLG Bolton

Concorde House, 2 Frederick Street, Farnworth, Bolton BL4 9AL

## Inspection dates

16–17 May 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Inadequate</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- School leaders have not ensured that the school meets the independent school standards.
- Senior leaders do not have a well-informed or realistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Leaders have been too lax in their monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. They have not kept a close eye on provision and outcomes to make sure the information they have is reliable.
- Risk assessments are not kept up to date. They do not identify appropriate control measures to make certain that pupils and staff are safe.
- For too long, teaching has not been good. Lessons have been too leisurely and there has been a lack of challenge. Consequently, pupils have not made sufficient gains in their learning.
- Teachers have not received the training, support and resources they need to teach reading and writing well.
- Senior leaders, including committee members, have not ensured that staff carry out their duties in line with the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour and risk assessments.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The school has not made sure that concerns about the safeguarding or welfare of pupils are reported in accordance with the school's statutory duties and local procedures.
- The school does not make sure that it provides frequent, useful information to placing schools, local authorities and parents, about pupils' progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- Excellent relationships between pupils and staff help turn around pupils who are often on the brink of exclusion from their placing school.
- Almost all pupils reintegrate successfully into their placing school.
- From their first days at the school, pupils make marked improvements to their attendance and behaviour.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership at all levels by making sure that:
  - monitoring of all aspects of the school’s performance is regular, rigorous and challenges weak practice
  - self-evaluation is based on a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
  - school leaders have a well-informed strategic plan that provides clear direction for the school and will help move it forward
  - school policies and procedures are reviewed and revised to ensure that there can be no misinterpretation
  - all staff have the knowledge and skills to apply the school’s policies and procedures correctly
  - there are robust systems for the recording and reporting of all concerns
  - there are robust systems for the recording and reporting of any behaviour incidents
  - pupils’ risk assessments are routinely reviewed as well as following any serious incidents
  - appropriate control measures are put in place to minimise all identified risks to pupils and staff.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that all groups of pupils catch up quickly, particularly those pupils who have low starting points, by:
  - providing appropriate, high-quality training for staff, to improve their practice, especially in the teaching of the basics of reading and writing
  - providing high-quality, age-appropriate resources to support the teaching of the basics of reading and writing
  - ensuring that frequent, comprehensive pupils’ progress reports are provided to placing schools and parents
  - maintaining frequent communication with placing schools, parents and other key partners.
- Senior leaders should take urgent action to make sure that the school’s arrangements for safeguarding are effective by:
  - implementing robust monitoring systems to ensure that the school’s policy and procedures are being followed
  - making sure that there is a clear recording and reporting procedure understood and acted on by all staff
  - ensuring that staff understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities assiduously.

### **The school must meet the following independent school standards**

- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy (paragraph 10).
- The proprietor must ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and they fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)).

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Senior leaders have failed to ensure that safeguarding is effective. They have not checked the reliability of the information given to them nor ensured that the school's policy and procedures are being followed. The school's laxity around recording and reporting of concerns could potentially put pupils at risk of harm.
- Senior leaders and the proprietor have not ensured that the school meets the independent school standards. There are a number of unmet standards in relation to safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying and risk assessments. As a result, senior leaders have put pupils' welfare, health and safety at risk.
- Senior leaders do not carry out thorough checks to reassure themselves that they have an accurate view of the school's performance. Leaders are overly reliant on the information provided to them by the headteacher. Senior leaders' lack of oversight means they have not been quick enough to identify and address weaknesses.
- Senior leaders acknowledge that the quality of reporting to parents has not been up to the standard they set. These reports have provided limited information about pupils' progress over the time they have attended the school.
- The school has struggled to recruit a high-calibre headteacher. Since the previous headteacher resigned, the school has had two interim headteachers. The current interim headteacher, who took up post at the start of the summer term, has started to make improvements. However, it is too early to evaluate any impact with confidence.
- During this period of turbulence, senior leaders have not made sure they have sought the views of key stakeholders. They have not been aware of the concerns of placing schools about the lack of communication from TLG Bolton. Although placing schools have continued to receive daily updates on pupils' attendance, TLG Bolton has not provided regular reports about pupils' progress or held review meetings as agreed. This lack of communication with key partners in pupils' education is detrimental to the success of the short-term intervention programmes the school offers.
- The new interim headteacher has made improvements to the curriculum offer. He has made good use of pupils' assessment information to refine long- and medium-term curriculum plans for current pupils. Senior leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum design. The school focuses on helping pupils to catch up with their peers in reading, writing and mathematics together with developing their personal and social skills. This approach has helped most pupils to reintegrate successfully to their placing school or move on to post-16 provision.
- The school provides pupils with opportunities to get involved with the community. Some pupils volunteer at the local youth club or help in the community café. Pupils attend an annual residential trip with young people from other TLG schools. During this trip, they take part in outdoor, adventurous activities. Pupils talk positively of the impact this experience has on their personal and social development.
- Staff are highly skilled in incorporating opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school day. Pupils are helped to reflect on their actions and the impact these actions have on other people. The school encourages

pupils to learn about different cultures, both locally and further afield. Pupils learn about the different major world faiths, as well as the contribution of different individuals and groups to the country in which they live today.

- TLG provides a range of training and support to staff. However, senior leaders have not ensured that staff have the skills and knowledge to support those pupils who have low levels of prior attainment in reading and writing. Moreover, senior leaders have not made sure that staff are putting their training into practice in their day-to-day work.
- Senior leaders have revised the approach to manage the performance of staff recently. However, lack of day-to-day oversight of the work of the school means that senior leaders are not picking up on issues quickly enough. Too often, staff are left to get on with the day-to-day running of the school by themselves. Senior leaders' reliance on remote monitoring is having a negative impact on staff effectiveness and pupils' performance.

## **Governance**

- The management committee meet regularly to evaluate the work of the school. However, the proprietor has not made sure that senior leaders from TLG have carried out their duties in relation to monitoring and evaluation. The proprietor has been overly reliant on the information provided by TLG. The proprietor has not challenged senior leaders from TLG robustly enough to assure itself that the school's self-evaluation is reliable.
- The proprietor is working in partnership with senior leaders from TLG to secure the appointment of a high-calibre, substantive headteacher as a matter of urgency. He understands the pressing need to stabilise the school's staffing.
- Senior leaders from TLG and the proprietor have a clear vision for the school, which is understood by all stakeholders. They are committed to transforming the lives of some of the most vulnerable young people in the local community.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that staff are following the school's policy and procedures for safeguarding. Record-keeping is erratic. The recording and reporting of concerns is inconsistent and unreliable. Safeguarding concerns are not routinely passed on to the local children's safeguarding team. Staff attend relevant training, however, they do not carry out their duties in line with statutory requirements. Staff have a weak understanding of potential signs of types of abuse and neglect, and possible safeguarding risks. This is evidenced by the inconsistencies in how and where concerns have been recorded.
- The school's policy and procedures are in accordance with statutory guidance and local safeguarding board procedures. The school's policy is published on its website.
- The school's curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of potential risks and to learn how to keep themselves safe, including from radicalisation and extremism. Pupils report that they feel safe and well cared for while at the school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Senior leaders have responded to concerns about the quality of teaching at the school. Their recent monitoring of teaching and learning highlighted weaknesses which they have taken action to resolve. Historically, teachers have not set high enough expectations for pupils in lessons. Previously, teachers have not ensured that they had the information they needed to plan lessons matched to pupils' learning needs. However, it is too early to evaluate whether senior leaders' actions have made a positive, long-term difference to the quality of teaching.
- Despite teachers' efforts to encourage pupils to read and write, pupils with low prior attainment are not making sufficient progress. Teachers do not have the expertise to put appropriate interventions in place to help these pupils catch up quickly.
- The range of pupils' ages and abilities presents a challenge to staff. Teachers do not have secure subject knowledge or resources to teach those pupils who are working significantly below age-related expectations in reading and writing. As a result, these pupils are not equipped with the necessary skills to catch up quickly.
- The school has had limited engagement with parents and placing schools over the past few months. Valuable information about how the pupils are getting on at the school has not been shared with the placing schools. School staff do not have sufficient up-to-date information about how, or whether, pupils are applying their learning at TLG Bolton in their placing school. Given that all pupils are part time and dual registered, this absence of information sharing is potentially detrimental to pupils' success.
- Senior leaders have provided training and support to teaching staff. This support and training is beginning to improve the quality of teaching. Moreover, senior leaders have appointed an experienced member of staff, who is a qualified teacher, to take on the role of interim headteacher. These actions are starting to make a positive difference to pupils' learning day to day.
- The new interim headteacher has ensured that pupils are clear about the learning objectives for each session. He makes sure that expectations for each pupil take into account their prior learning, as well as their interests. As a result, pupils increase the amount of time they engage in lessons during their time at the school.
- Teachers get to know their pupils well. They adapt lessons to make the most of pupils' interest and enthusiasms. They are adept at reshaping lessons to respond to pupils' moods so that time is not wasted. However, the new interim headteacher recognises the need to prepare pupils to return full time to their placing schools. He now makes sure pupils are in no doubt what work they are expected to complete by the end of each lesson.
- Staff make sure that, so far as is possible, lessons are planned to give pupils the opportunity to develop skills which will be useful in their day-to-day lives. In mathematics, those pupils in key stage 3 were developing an understanding about profit and loss, through buying and selling drinks. Pupils were encouraged to consider the pricing of their drinks to maximise profit, while making sure the cost would not be prohibitively high compared to similar products.
- Many pupils are reluctant to read and write when they join the school. Teachers provide meaningful opportunities to encourage pupils to write for purpose. For example, some

pupils currently enjoy cooking. Through the teachers' encouragement, they write out their recipe, draw up shopping lists, visit the local supermarket to buy their ingredients and evaluate their finished dish. Consequently, these pupils have more opportunities now to practise and improve their literacy skills.

- When pupils arrive at the school they are highly disaffected. Teachers make sure pupils are helped to overcome their barriers to learning, in particular their low self-esteem. Teachers make sure pupils acquire the skills they will need to be successful in their placing schools. Teachers build in small steps, week by week, to develop pupils' confidence and self-assurance as learners.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Lax recording and reporting with regard to safeguarding and behaviour, together with a lack of clarity around the school's thresholds for concern, pose a potential risk to pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Although staff review any serious behaviour incidents that occur now, these are not consistently recorded and reported. Moreover, staff do not regularly review and update pupils' risk assessments to ensure that suitable control measures are put in place. As a result, the welfare, health and safety of staff and pupils are potentially at risk.
- Staff and pupils agree that any racist, homophobic and derogatory language would be challenged. However, leaders are unclear about the thresholds at which staff record and report these incidents. Although pupils report feeling safe and having confidence in staff to deal with any issues, sloppy reporting and recording could mean that any early signs of bullying could be missed.
- Over time, pupils learn to reflect on their own actions and the impact that these have on other people. Staff make sure they reinforce appropriate behaviour throughout the school day. The school's commitment to giving every pupil a fresh start every day contributes to pupils' success.
- Teachers make the most of opportunities to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Teachers encourage pupils to achieve personal goals, such as giving up smoking. The school's curriculum provides formal and informal opportunities to teach pupils about how to keep themselves safe.
- Most of the pupils enjoy coming to school. The excellent relationships staff build with pupils are key to their re-engagement with learning. Staff are adept in using pupils' interests and enthusiasms, however fleeting, to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, as well as to promote their personal and social skills.
- Pupils learn to treat each other and staff with respect. Although they may still have angry outbursts, they generally look after the school building, furniture and equipment.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and respectful to staff and visitors. They listen to their teachers and follow instructions quickly. Consequently, the school is calm and orderly and lessons proceed without interruption.
- Almost all the current pupils are at risk of exclusion or have been excluded from school. A significant group already attend pupil referral units following permanent exclusion from their mainstream schools. Despite their history of presenting with challenging behaviour, the overwhelming majority of pupils conduct themselves well during the school day. Moreover, they work well together and encourage each other to do their best. Consequently, no pupils have been permanently excluded from this school and fixed-term exclusions are rare.
- The school's relentless focus on improving pupils' behaviour helps to achieve positive outcomes. Pupils told the inspector that their behaviour improves markedly over time both at TLG Bolton and in their own schools. This view is shared by staff from pupils' placing schools.
- Staff make sure pupils are clear about the standard of behaviour the school expects. Staff make sure they provide excellent role models. Pupils talked positively about the good relationships they have with staff and the willingness of adults at the school to listen to them. Staff help pupils to develop the range of skills they need to behave appropriately, both in school and out in the community. Staff provide a wealth of opportunities to help pupils practise these skills.
- Prior to starting at TLG Bolton, most pupils have a history of poor attendance. Moreover, when they have been at school, pupils have often been out of class for significant periods of time. From these low starting points, almost all pupils have high attendance during the time that they are at this school and increase their engagement in lessons. Moreover, staff from placing schools who spoke with the inspector talked positively about how these improvements had been replicated in pupils' placing schools.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Generally, pupils have missed considerable chunks of their education prior to joining the school. This means that almost all are working well below the standards expected for their chronological age. However, weaknesses in the quality of teaching over time mean pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable. Consequently, pupils have not caught up quickly enough.
- Many pupils are reluctant to engage in any assessments on entry. This presents a challenge for staff as the information the school receives prior to pupils starting is limited. The new interim headteacher recognises the importance of securing an accurate view of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. He is ensuring that not only are assessments completed, but also he makes good use of this information to plan lessons. As a result, the early signs are that gaps in learning for current pupils are being addressed more effectively.
- Lack of teacher expertise in teaching basic reading and writing is hampering the progress of those pupils with low levels of prior attainment. This lack of expertise is compounded by the dearth of suitable resources. As a result, these pupils are not grasping the key



literacy skills they need to be successful in school as well as everyday life quickly enough.

- The school's lack of communication with pupils' placing schools is limiting the exchange of information about pupils' learning. Consequently, there is no alignment between what the pupils are learning at TLG Bolton and in their placing school. The lack of a joined-up approach is potentially further hindering pupils' progress over time.
- For many pupils, it has been a long time since they stepped into a classroom and took part in a lesson. Almost all have resigned themselves to failure in education. For some, TLG Bolton gives them the opportunity to make a fresh start. Case studies testify to the school's success in reintegrating pupils into their placing schools or helping them to move onto appropriate post-16 provision.
- The school makes sure that, despite its small size, the most able pupils are able to continue with their GCSE studies. The school works in partnership with the pupils' placing school to ensure that sufficient time is given to cover the coursework.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils return to their placing school so few pupils are entered for external examinations. For the very small number of pupils who have been entered, the overwhelming majority achieved at least one recognised qualification.

## School details

Unique reference number	142535
DfE registration number	350/6003
Inspection number	10034040

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietor	Farnworth Baptist Church
Chair	Reverend John Bradbury
Executive Headteacher	Mr Dave Gilkerson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,808
Telephone number	01204 770797
Website	<a href="http://www.tlgbolton.org.uk">www.tlgbolton.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:bolton@tlg.org.uk">bolton@tlg.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- TLG Bolton is operated by Farnworth Baptist Church, in partnership with TLG, The Education Charity. Senior leaders from TLG, the executive headteacher, representatives of the proprietor, and the church's minister make up the management committee. The school's senior leadership team comprises the executive headteacher and senior colleagues from TLG.
- There has been considerable turbulence in the school's leadership. The substantive headteacher resigned in the autumn term of 2016. An interim headteacher was seconded by TLG to run the school while the proprietor appointed a permanent headteacher. The proprietor has not been successful in appointing a new headteacher. In the meantime,

TLG have replaced the interim headteacher. The current interim headteacher took up post at the start of the summer term 2017.

- The school is located in the town of Farnworth, near Bolton. The school is housed in converted commercial premises owned by the church; the school has exclusive use of the premises.
- The school is an alternative provider admitting pupils by commission only from placing mainstream schools, pupil referral units or local authorities. It provides part-time education for boys and girls aged between 11 and 16 who remain dually registered on the roll of their mainstream school.
- Pupils attend for either two or four days a week. Pupils attend this school for an average of six months. The placing school, pupil-referral unit or local authority is responsible for ensuring that the pupils' full-time education is fulfilled and making sure they receive their entitlement to the curriculum.
- At present there are four pupils on the school roll. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities in relation to social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The majority of pupils who attend the school are disadvantaged. This is well above the national average.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils who attend the school are of White British heritage.
- Pupils receive four hours of tuition per day. The school focuses on teaching English, mathematics, computing and personal, social and health education.
- The school aims to 'offer pupils ways of progressing that are unique to each individual, within relationships that provide intensive and meaningful support'.
- The headteacher and other staff are appointed and employed by Farnworth Baptist Church.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including observations of pupils, both in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. The inspector also looked at pupils' work with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders responsible for the school; the interim headteacher, the executive headteacher and senior leaders from TLG and the chair of the management committee who represents the proprietor.
- The inspector met with the teacher/learning mentor. Account was taken of the response to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- The inspector spoke to representatives from two of the schools which have placed pupils at TLG Bolton.
- The inspector spoke with pupils formally in meetings and during lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector considered a range of documentation related to the school's work, the school's view of its performance, and information concerning pupils' attainment, progress and attendance.
- The inspector scrutinised documents and records concerning safeguarding, health and safety and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector considered parents' and carers' responses to surveys conducted by the school.
- The inspector reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.
- The inspector undertook a tour of the premises.

## Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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