

Inspection of Forwards Centre

Roscow Fold Centre, Stephens Street, Brightmet, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 5DX

Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Forwards Centre is a calm, friendly and welcoming school where pupils develop a love of learning. Pupils often arrive in school with previous negative experiences of education. This is soon forgotten as pupils develop confidence in themselves and trust in the staff and the school.

Staff get to know every pupil very well. Staff have high expectations for every pupil in school. They take the time to understand and support pupils to succeed personally and academically. They work closely with parents and carers to ensure that all pupils achieve well.

Pupils are very happy in school. Their enthusiasm and joy of learning are visible around the school. Pupils we spoke with told us how proud they were of the badges, certificates and awards they had received.

The school helps pupils to learn to respect each other, and to be a good friend and help each other. This ensures that pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils and staff eat lunch together. At playtime, staff help pupils to enjoy team games and learn how to take turns. This close supervision keeps pupils safe. Staff manage any disagreements between pupils quickly. This ensures there is very little bullying in school.

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

The vast majority of pupils start school with gaps in their knowledge, especially in English and mathematics. Teachers carefully assess all pupils during the first four weeks in school. They provide well for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They plan learning to allow pupils to build the knowledge they need in these subjects to close any gaps. Pupils quickly catch up with their reading, writing and mathematics. The school curriculum has expanded over the last few years. Pupils now enjoy a wider range of subjects, including science, history and geography. The way teachers plan and sequence learning in these subjects is not as well developed as in English and mathematics. Leaders are doing something about this.

Every pupil has their own set of targets. These reflect their social, emotional and mental health needs. They help pupils to learn well as they progress through the curriculum, especially in English and mathematics. Parents talked about how their children's behaviour and learning had improved since starting at Forwards Centre.

Pupils achieve well in school. A very large number of them successfully move back into mainstream school or specialist provision. A well-structured transition plan with the new school makes sure that pupils continue to thrive and achieve well after they move on.

Reading is very important across the school. Teachers have chosen fiction and non-fiction books that will hook pupils in and inspire a love of reading. Teachers assess every pupil so that they know exactly how to improve pupils' knowledge of reading and comprehension. Younger pupils learn phonics in a planned programme. There are lots of opportunities to read. All this has strongly improved pupils' reading ability.

The school's work to enhance pupils' wider experiences is exceptional. Skilled staff plan activities and use resources to help and support pupils' personal development. Activities include visits to museums, theatres and places of worship. Parents who spoke with us were overwhelmingly positive about the opportunities the school provides.

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are outstanding. Staff are very good at spotting the reason behind a pupil's specific behaviour. This allows them to make any changes they need to, so that pupils' anxieties reduce. Pupils can then join in with the learning that is taking place and enjoy it.

Leaders provide opportunities for staff to undertake different types of training to enable them to support pupils' emotional and mental health needs. They also help staff to improve as leaders in their subjects. The staff who spoke with us all agreed that they enjoyed working at the school. They said that they are very well supported by school leaders, trustees and governors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff training is thorough and up to date. Staff are highly vigilant and quick to notice any changes in pupils' behaviour or emotions that may indicate a cause for concern.

The safeguarding team is quick to respond to any concerns, including referrals to agencies outside school if needed. Pupils and families are also very well supported through the early help process. Leaders work closely with all partner schools and agencies to ensure that pupils continue to be safe when they move to their new school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are establishing an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum, but this is not fully in place. The new subjects that have been introduced into the curriculum are still in the early stages of development. Subject leaders are receiving support through the multi-academy trust because they do not have strong enough subject knowledge. Consequently, pupils do not know as much as they should across all subjects. Leaders need to ensure that they plan and sequence all subjects across the school to allow pupils to know more, remember more and achieve well.

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan next year's curriculum and train staff in how to deliver it that they are in the process of bringing this about.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	142702
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10122018
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	6 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Keith Davies
Headteacher	Christopher Fielding
Website	www.boltonimpacttrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2019

Information about this school

- The school provides short-term provision for pupils who are not in school due to permanent exclusion or for social, emotional and mental health reasons. Some pupils are dual rolled with a mainstream school.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held discussions with the executive principal, headteacher, subject leaders, teachers, other members of staff and members of the governing body, including the chair. We met with two representatives of the local authority and two representatives of local referring schools. These discussions considered the quality of education, the wider experiences of pupils at the school (including personal development, aspects of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning) and leadership and management. We met with five parents.
- In considering the quality of education, we concentrated on reading, science and mathematics in depth. We also looked at history, geography, English and music.

We discussed the arrangements for the curriculum and teaching with the executive principal, headteacher, subject leaders, teachers and learning mentors. We visited lessons and talked with pupils about what they had been learning. We looked at pupils' workbooks and evidence of learning in these subjects.

- We spoke to staff, governors, parents and pupils about how the school keeps pupils safe. We examined the single central record of the checks undertaken to make sure that staff are suitable to work in school. We reviewed the school's safeguarding policy and looked at safeguarding records.
- We spoke to pupils, parents and staff about the wider curriculum, including the school's work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. We also spoke to them about the school's work to support pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs.

Inspection team

Julie Bather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jane Holmes

Ofsted Inspector

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