

Inspection of Canon Slade School

Bradshaw Brow, Bradshaw, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 3BP

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| Inspection dates: | 15 and 16 October 2024 |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Sixth-form provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement |

The headteacher of this school is Karen Sudworth. This school is part of The Bishop Fraser Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Tuesday Humby, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lesley Durosomo.

What is it like to attend this school?

Positive relationships and mutual respect are at the heart of this school. Friendly exchanges between staff and pupils are common. Despite the large size of the school, pupils feel known and understood as individuals. This helps them to feel happy. Students in the sixth form cited strong pastoral support as a key reason why they chose to continue their studies in the school. This caring culture provides a strong foundation from which pupils flourish.

Pupils learn what it means to be 'SLADIAN'. For example, they understand that success comes from hard work and they develop high aspirations. Pupils engage positively in lessons. Learning is rarely disrupted.

Pupils are enthusiastic participants in the wealth of opportunities that are available each lunchtime. For instance, they can explore new interests such as water polo or chess. Students in the sixth form strive to complete the school's ambassador award by demonstrating their commitment to the wider school community. For example, they lead assemblies and organise clubs for younger pupils.

With trust support, the school has taken effective action to improve the quality of education that it provides. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), meet the school's high expectations for their academic achievement.

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

The school provides a broad, ambitious curriculum and offers a wide range of subjects, including Latin and geology. Although the proportion of pupils who study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is lower than the national average, the school has taken action to address this. For example, to encourage pupils to opt to study a modern foreign language, the school ensures that there are meaningful opportunities for them to learn about the culture and art of the countries in which those languages are spoken.

In each subject, the curriculum is well organised. Pupils' learning builds logically from Year 7 to Year 13. Staff use their strong subject knowledge, together with their enthusiasm for their subjects, to enthuse pupils about their learning. Typically, staff design learning activities that enable pupils to connect new ideas to what they already know. The school has prioritised training for staff so that they are skilled at supporting pupils with SEND to learn the curriculum successfully. This has been effective. Pupils with SEND achieve highly, alongside their peers.

Across subjects, staff consistently follow the school's agreed learning routines. This includes frequently checking what pupils know and remember. However, some staff do not conduct these checks effectively to enable them to pinpoint any gaps in pupils' learning. This includes for students in the sixth form. On occasions, pupils develop misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge that go unaddressed.

The school is quick to identify any additional needs that pupils may have. These pupils, and others who are vulnerable, benefit from the support available in the school's inclusion hub. For example, some pupils particularly appreciate time with Hugo, the school's dog, which helps them to manage their emotional well-being. Such provision helps to ensure that pupils are well equipped to access their learning in mainstream lessons.

The school's approach to helping pupils who struggle with their reading is strong. Pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge are swiftly identified. Pupils benefit from highly effective support to help them to read confidently and fluently. In addition, the school ensures that pupils have frequent opportunities to enjoy high-quality texts both during form time and across the curriculum.

In the main, pupils are courteous and considerate as they move around the school. On those occasions when a minority of pupils do not conduct themselves as well as the school expects, staff are skilled at supporting them to improve their behaviour. Typically, pupils like being in school. Most attend frequently, including the most vulnerable.

The school caters for pupils' personal development very well. Students in the sixth form benefit from a weekly lecture programme covering a wide range of topics and issues. Pupil leaders help their peers to learn important information that prepares them well for life in modern Britain. For example, some pupils recently led an anti-racism assembly.

The school prioritises raising pupils' aspirations, including through a careers programme that is interwoven through their education from Year 7. Older pupils spoke positively of a recent convention that provided them with the opportunity to learn more about a wide range of industries and careers. Pupils receive the information that they need to make well-informed choices about their futures.

Despite a time of much change, staff feel well supported. For example, changes to the feedback policy have helped to reduce staff workload.

Recently, the trust has reviewed the roles of the trust board and the local governing body. It has strengthened the systems in place to ensure that trustees and governors have comprehensive oversight of the school. Leaders at all levels are rightly proud of the improvements made since the last inspection. They have a strong shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and they are committed to further refining the quality of education that the school provides.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, some staff do not use the school's assessment strategies effectively to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, at times, some pupils' understanding is not secure before learning moves on. The school should ensure that staff are supported to use assessment strategies effectively to identify and remedy any missed or forgotten learning.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 144044 |
| Local authority | Bolton |
| Inspection number | 10366669 |
| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,752 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 262 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Lesley Durosomo |
| CEO of the trust | Tuesday Humby |
| Headteacher | Karen Sudworth |
| Website | www.canon-slade.bolton.sch.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 22 and 23 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- This school is part of The Bishop Fraser Trust.
- This Church of England school is in the Diocese of Manchester. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in November 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place between September 2025 and August 2026.
- The school uses one registered and two unregistered alternative provisions for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, geography and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the trust and with representatives of the local governing body.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese. An inspector also spoke with an external consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's policies and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

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