

Youth Challenge pru

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 132255 |
| Local Authority | Bolton |
| Inspection number | 315993 |
| Inspection dates | 12–13 March 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Sue Hunt |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Pupil referral unit |
| School category | Pupil referral unit |
| Age range of pupils | 14–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 35 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Cllr Phil Ashcroft |
| Headteacher | Mr P Hodgkinson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 April 2005 |
| School address | 124 Newport Street Taylor St entrance Bolton Lancashire BL3 6AB |
| Telephone number | 01204 333872 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The unit, which is located on two sites, provides for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools or those attending part time because they are in danger of being excluded. All pupils are White British. Boys greatly outnumber girls. The attainment of most pupils on entry is below that expected for their age as they have missed significant amounts of schooling because of their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A small number have statements of special educational need. The unit recently received the 'Leading Aspect' award for the quality of its vocational programme. It has been highlighted as an example of good practice in alternative provision by the Department of Children, Schools and Families in one of their publications.

Key for inspection grades

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of this unit is outstanding. Pupils praise it very highly saying that, since coming to Youth Challenge, 'we attend better, work harder and achieve more'.

Achievement is excellent. The great majority of pupils, whatever their starting points, make consistent progress and rapidly make up lost ground. By the end of Year 11 their standards are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Pupils successfully follow externally accredited courses. They pass between three and six examinations including, in a majority of cases, GCSE English and mathematics. They perform very well in vocational courses.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers know their pupils well and manage them very effectively. Lessons are peaceful havens of learning where discussion between staff and pupils is a strength.

The curriculum is exceptionally good. It provides excellent alternative learning opportunities that are tailored to the needs of each pupil. Provision for work related and vocational learning is particularly strong for all, including those from mainstream schools and other placements who attend the unit part time. The alternative learning programme provides learners with relevant vocational and academic challenges and progression routes into employment or further education. The unit makes excellent use of its positive relationship with mainstream schools to acquire the specialist teaching and facilities that are needed to ensure that pupils complete courses, such as GCSE science, that they have started at their former schools. Pupils who spend lunchtime in the unit have satisfactory provision and access to some leisure facilities. More effective use could be made of the opportunity for personal development during this time.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent. Through praise and positive reinforcement pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. They begin to make very good progress in managing their own behaviour. Pupils start to think about others and they are supportive and caring towards their peers. Their contribution to the community is excellent. They readily help local charities, including a hospice. Pupils report that there is no bullying or harassment and that when the rare incidences of unacceptable behaviour do occur these are firmly dealt with by their teachers. Pupils show their developing independence as learners by assessing their own progress against the targets set for them. Attendance is good. Individual pupils significantly improve on their own previous attendance. Pupils make excellent progress in learning to be healthy and are aware of the importance of eating sensibly and keeping active.

Care, guidance and support are excellent. Strong links to a wide range of outside agencies enable the unit to ensure the well-being of its pupils. All pupils have very positive relationships with the staff who, remarkably, make themselves available to support them every day of the year. Pupils' academic and personal progress is carefully assessed. Well established procedures for child protection are in place and these are reviewed regularly.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The teacher in charge and his staff are deeply committed to inclusion and to providing their pupils with opportunities. They share a common vision of how the unit can best benefit its pupils and they work around the clock to bring this about. The unit carefully monitors the performance of pupils. Self-evaluation is rigorous. The unit's view of pupils' achievement and provision is, however, too modest. Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Parents are thrilled with the work the unit does for their children. One mother wrote to the Inspector to say, 'I feel that if my son had not attended Youth Challenge he would be in prison now.' The unit is considered exemplary by the local

authority and it works closely with a local university to provide its students with the opportunity to study successful practice in managing behaviour and motivating disaffected learners. The management committee contributes well to the strategic planning and smooth running of the unit. Resources are used very efficiently and to full effect. Youth Challenge was judged very good when it was inspected in April 2005 and it has continued to maintain standards and improve further. It is excellently placed to carry on doing this. It provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more effective use of lunchtimes to enrich the curriculum and promote pupils' personal development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

When they first come to the unit the standards of attainment of most pupils are below those expected for their age. However, they respond very well to exceptional teaching and excellent care, guidance and support, and progress extremely well. They gain confidence as learners and they meet the challenging targets set for them. They successfully follow externally accredited courses at the level that best suits their capabilities. All gain creditable grades in their GCSE courses or passes in adult literacy and numeracy examinations. Pupils do very well in the pre-vocational courses that they follow. Boys gain useful qualifications in construction trades that include bricklaying, roofing, joinery and plastering. These qualifications enable them to study for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at a higher level at the local college when they leave school. Girls are similarly successful in the accredited hairdressing, animal husbandry, and childcare courses that they follow. As a result of their excellent achievement, many pupils go on to secure full-time employment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

During their time at Youth Challenge pupils flourish and gain confidence. They are happy learners who are proud of what they are accomplishing. They show that they are enjoying their learning by improving their attendance. For the very few whose attendance is unsatisfactory, the unit takes every measure to help them improve. Many of the pupils with a severe attendance problem begin to come to school more frequently. Pupils show their consideration for others by excellent behaviour in class that enables all to benefit from lessons. Pupils contribute their views through an elected representative who attends one staff meeting a term. Through this mechanism pupils play a strong part in the development of the unit. As a result, they feel that they belong to the unit and are making a contribution to its success. When asked, pupils say that they feel very safe and are confident that if any oppressive behaviour were to occur it would be swiftly dealt with. They are knowledgeable about the contribution of a healthy diet and regular exercise to a healthy lifestyle. They particularly enjoy the outdoor pursuits they undertake whilst doing their Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Pupils have very positive views and look forward to the next stage of their lives with optimism. They are genuinely concerned for each other and all make a very positive contribution to the local community. To help them understand the importance of living and mixing within a multi-cultural community, football fixtures are planned with a Somali local football team. The importance of aid to ordinary people in underdeveloped countries is well understood.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Overall the quality of the teaching and learning is outstanding. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress and achieve significantly more than might have been expected before they joined the unit. In the great majority of lessons pupils show independence and maturity and evident enjoyment when they achieve well. Lessons are very well planned and challenging. They build strongly on previous learning. Marking is helpful to pupils and clearly shows them how they can improve. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own work and check whether targets have been met. Pupils' behaviour is managed with great skill. Relationships in the classroom are superb and this promotes learning very well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is very well planned to meet the particular needs of pupils. There is a very good balance of academic and practical subjects. A very broad range of accredited courses both academic and vocational is on offer together with activities and opportunities for personal development that are essential to the education of the 'whole pupil.' College links are very strong and the vocational unit provides practical sessions related to the requirements of the work place. The vocational courses offered are of high quality and lead to useful qualifications. Time allocated to learning extends beyond the normal school day. In the weekly night school provision, parents learn alongside their sons and daughters. This is very helpful in motivating pupils to achieve as much as they can. Teachers take part in these sessions voluntarily showing their great dedication to the interests of their pupils. In general, the unit makes very good use of the time available to promote pupils' academic and vocational learning and their personal development. However, the range of activities available during lunchtimes is limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Through continuous and careful monitoring, the academic progress and personal development of each pupil is kept under review. Targets for improvement are set and discussed with each pupil. Pupils are monitored against the 'Every Child Matters agenda' and this provides valuable information to staff about progress and the general well-being of the young person. The centre has worked hard to improve attendance. A named member of staff is dedicated to providing support for the 'looked after' children within the unit. The support offered to all of the pupils is second to none and all staff are dedicated to improving the life chances of each and every one. A programme has been introduced that makes support and guidance available to pupils at any time of day, every day of the year. This is having a very positive effect on both pupils' progress and their general well-being. Excellent links with a wide variety of agencies promote pupils' care and personal development exceptionally well. Parents are very confident about the care and support their children receive. In a letter typical of others, a mother wrote to the Inspector to say that the unit has, 'a very deep sense of caring, my child would be in care now but for the unit, what a wonderful set of staff who have given us such a positive daughter back!'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are exceptional. The leadership has built on the very good practice noted at the last inspection. The teacher in charge and the three key area managers carry out their roles very effectively. They are dedicated to improving the learning provision still further. They continually seek new ways to motivate their pupils. Since the last inspection, achievement has improved and the curriculum has been made even more responsive to pupils' needs. The unit is kept under review and its self-evaluation is broadly accurate. The performance of pupils is continually monitored. Best use is made of resources. Although the accommodation at the main site is restricted, alternative vocational provision enables pupils to follow some of their courses elsewhere and to work in well equipped learning bases made available by other providers. Youth Challenge has a justified high reputation in the local area. Its pupils are involved in a number of community projects such as building a sand pit at a local primary school and training as peer tutors to help young children with their reading. The management committee, which was found wanting at the last inspection, now carries out its role of overseeing the unit well. The committee is supportive and thoroughly scrutinises the leadership's development proposals.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 1 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Youth Challenge PRU, Bolton, BL3 6AB

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I came to your unit recently. I was very impressed with your attitude. Thank you for working so hard. I cannot remember when I saw brick walls built so quickly and so well!

When I talked to you as a group you shared with me what you think about your unit and this was very useful. You told me that you enjoy your lessons and achieve very well. You also said that your attendance has improved to a good level and that you are confident that you will pass the courses that you take.

From my visit I found out that Youth Challenge is an excellent unit. You make outstanding progress because you are taught extremely well and given work to do that is interesting and suits you very well. You are kept safe and given excellent guidance and advice when you need it most. You are becoming very sociable young people who are much more confident and considerate of others than you were when you first came to the unit. Your unit is exceptionally well led and managed.

In order to improve your unit even more, I have asked the teacher-in-charge and the staff to offer more activities during lunchtime that will help your personal development. You can help by making sure you take full advantage of them.

Thank you again for making me so welcome and good luck for the future.