

# The Bridge Education Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	115838
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379150
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	James Bowden

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<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	28
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Colin Diaper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Wright
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2–3 February 2010
<b>School address</b>	2c Newton Road Eastleigh SO50 9DD
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<b>Fax number</b>	02380 629340
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## Introduction

Inspection team

James Bowden

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Five lessons were observed, featuring five different teachers and one tutor. Throughout one lesson, the inspector visited three learning groups, focusing on pupils' behaviour and their progress, in terms of both academic and personal development. On the first day, the inspector spent lunchtime with the pupils. Discussions were held with pupils, the chair of the management committee, the centre manager, the deputy centre managers, and teachers with responsibility for literacy and numeracy. The inspector observed the centre's work, and looked at pupils' files, curriculum plans, tracking data showing pupils' progress and attainment, and pupils' work, including the displays in classrooms and corridors. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection; in addition, questionnaire responses from three parents/carers, 16 staff and 12 pupils were analysed and their views taken into account.

## Information about the school

The centre provides for pupils in central Hampshire whose needs cannot be met in full-time mainstream schools. These include pupils who:

- have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion
- are medically unwell
- are emotionally vulnerable
- need small group/one-to-one intervention and/or support before moving to an alternative school.

Full-time pupils are registered at the centre whereas those attending part time are dual-registered at the centre and their home school. Currently only pupils in years 9,10 and 11 attend full-time. Those in years 7 and 8 spend part of their time at their home school. Although the centre has catered for primary aged pupils in the past it currently supports them in their schools. The centre also provides an outreach service to support some pupils in Years 7 to 9 in secondary schools. In addition, the centre hosts a part-time nurture group for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and after-hours twilight sessions for those who are unable to attend school or the centre as a result of their individual mental health needs.

Pupils join the unit at different times during the year. Currently, numbers of boys and girls are similar. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, though there are occasionally a very small number from other ethnic groups. Seven pupils are looked after by their local authorities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, most commonly special educational needs associated with behaviour, emotional and social needs. None has a statement of special educational needs. The centre does not meet the current floor standards for secondary schools.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- The centre provides a good quality of education. It has improved its effectiveness since its previous inspection and is continuing to do so.
- Achievement is good over time, and improving because pupils’ interest in learning is rekindled. Older pupils, in particular, are keen to improve their learning and to gain accreditation in the courses they follow in order to move on to further education or training.
- Because of pupils’ previous educational histories, attainment on entry is low. However, because the centre places due emphasis on developing skills in literacy and numeracy to improve learning across the curriculum, progress is good overall.
- Teaching has improved and is good. In the main, pupils are set challenging tasks, know what is expected of them and make good progress towards the learning intentions explained at the start of lessons. In a few instances observed during the inspection, teaching did not always ensure that the more-able pupils were challenged sufficiently.
- Although teachers mark pupils’ work, this is not done effectively enough to explain to pupils what they need to do to move on to the next steps in learning.
- Typical behaviour over time has improved and, in lessons and around the centre, is good overall. Attendance has also improved over time although it remains below average. Overall, unauthorised absence is falling but less so for dual-registered pupils.
- The centre provides a safe place for pupils to work and socialise throughout the day. Safeguarding arrangements are strong, including those for work experience placements. Most pupils say that they feel safe when there.
- Leadership and management of the centre are good. The headteacher’s high expectations for what every pupil and teacher can achieve have led to rapid improvements. Staff are dedicated and morale is high.

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

- Raise attendance by:
  - reducing further the proportion of pupils, particularly dual-registered, whose absence is unauthorised.
- Improve teaching by:

- ensuring that the level of challenge for all pupils, and in particular the more able, is sufficiently high in all subjects
- honing marking procedures so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Pupils' low attainment when starting at the centre is usually a result of their negative experiences of mainstream education. In some cases, it is because of considerable gaps in schooling as a result of pupils' emotional and social needs. Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have ensured the quality of teaching has improved and is more consistent. This has led to improved achievement and an increase in pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning, as well as improvements in aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Careful assessment of pupils' capability on entry informs the centre as to the range of support and learning focus best suited to pupils. Overall, in relation to their starting points, there are no significant differences in the progress and achievement of different groups of pupils, including those whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable and those that attend full or part-time. The centre's tracking data also show that those pupils looked after by their local authorities make progress commensurate with their peers. A steady rise in attainment overall is helping to narrow the gaps with their mainstream peers and better prepare pupils for the next stage of their lives when they leave. Many achieve GCSE qualifications and most move on to education, employment or training. Many of those who are dual-registered return to mainstream school.

Overall, progress in English and mathematics is good and improving as a result of subject provision and a cross-curricular approach to support for pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to the development of key skills; for example, in an English lesson, Year 8 pupils readily volunteered to read aloud from the set text being used, demonstrating their eagerness to learn. Work seen in lessons, in pupils' folders and displays round the centre shows good progress is also being made in personal, social and health education and aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In a lesson exploring issues related to parenting, pupils were developing their knowledge and understanding of the complexities of issues through role-play activities. Improved and effective assessment and tracking procedures support pupils' learning well in ensuring that tasks are better matched to pupils' needs.

Although few parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire, all responses about their children's progress were positive. One commented, 'The staff have been extremely helpful in all areas. My child likes this school and is making good progress because she is happy.' Pupils' responses also showed they felt they were making progress in literacy and numeracy since attending the centre.

### **Quality of teaching**

A particular strength of teaching is the consistent way in which teachers and adults manage pupils' behaviour in lessons. This is underpinned by the centre's consistent approach to ensuring learning intentions and expected outcomes are clear. Behaviour is assessed and shared with pupils at the end of every lesson. In some information

and communication technology (ICT) lessons, learning intentions are emailed to pupils prior to the lesson. Effective working relationships between staff and pupils result in a positive learning atmosphere. Staff know their pupils well and their flexible, yet firm, approach enables the learning and behavioural needs of all to be met. This was particularly effective in a lesson where pupils were completing a task individually, prior to working as a small group to decide which items were the most important for survival on the moon based on an 'accident' scenario. In another lesson, the same group of pupils explored how choice of language can affect and reflect attitudes to physical disfigurement. In both lessons, good, focused questioning led to many opportunities for pupils to offer their own ideas and develop well their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, as well as their writing and note-taking skills, which are a central focus in the well-planned curriculum.

Sometimes, the more-able pupils are not always making the progress they are capable of because of a lack of challenge and pace while they wait for others to complete the set tasks. Notwithstanding this, one pupil in an ICT lesson volunteered to help another who was working at a slower pace. The range of resources is matched well to the range of capabilities in groups and, where appropriate, is enlivened by the effective use of new technologies. Although pupils' work is generally marked consistently, the quality is inconsistent. This is particularly so in the use of supporting comments to tell pupils what they need to do to improve the quality of their work, and the steps needed to accelerate their progress. The few parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were all happy with the quality of teaching, as were pupils, a view endorsed by inspection evidence.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Typical behaviour over time is good and improving, as evidenced by the overall decline in fixed-term exclusions, with fewer numbers of pupils being involved. Incidents of bullying or harassment, including those based on race, gender or sexuality, are rare, and, as confirmed in discussion with pupils, are dealt with quickly and effectively if they do occur. Indicative of pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour is how well they care for the unit, including the outdoor garden area. Displays of work are respected and appreciated. All benefit from a secure and safe learning environment. High expectations and clear parameters for behaviour are appreciated by pupils and result in a calm atmosphere in lessons. Pupils got on well with one another and their teachers and other adults during the inspection.

Pupils' behaviour is carefully monitored against the specific behaviour targets set for them in their individual education plans and behaviour improves accordingly. Pupils are aware of the centre's benchmarks for both good behaviour and misbehaviour and respond well to these expectations. Many particularly appreciate the positive phone calls from the centre to parents and carers. Although a few parents and carers, pupils and staff had reservations about standards of behaviour, they were more positive about how well the school dealt with behaviour and how well the school keeps pupils safe. This was confirmed during the inspection when staff managed pupils' behaviour very well; no instances were seen of learning being disrupted by untoward behaviour. Attendance and improving punctuality are also an effective focus of the centre's work. Data show that attendance, although below the national average, has improved slowly and, for some individuals, has improved rapidly compared to their attendance prior to joining the centre. However, there are a small

number of pupils, mainly dual-registered, who are persistently absent without authorisation and this has a negative impact on their achievement. The centre is working hard to resolve this issue and the overall proportion of pupils persistently absent is now on a downward trend.

### **Leadership and management**

The ambition of the head of centre, and of her senior leadership team, and a culture of high expectations of pupils have resulted in improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. Staff at all levels share this vision and ensure the centre is one where every pupil really does matter. All are provided with the necessary support and guidance needed, including one-to-one teaching where appropriate for the emotionally vulnerable. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively, and any discrimination tackled immediately. The effective focus on improving achievement has resulted in good improvements, as shown by year-on-year analysis of school data. Almost all full-time pupils now leave the centre destined for further education, employment or training. This has been underpinned by support from other specialist staff and the management committee, an experienced body with a good understanding of the complexities of the centre's provision. It acts effectively as a critical, yet supportive, friend. The leadership team has recognised there is further work to be done to ensure an upward trajectory, such as the sharper focus on further improving teaching and attendance. Accurate self-evaluation and the centre's work with others to support ongoing development demonstrate a good capacity for further and sustained improvement.

Essential systems and procedures that ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the centre are in place, including good safeguarding arrangements. Regular staff meetings, including for those with posts of responsibility, and whole-staff debriefings at the end of each day have resulted in a clear and consistent programme to ensure almost all pupils achieve their potential. When appropriate, older emotionally vulnerable pupils can remain at the centre full time to continue their education. This ensures their personal needs are met and, as a result of the good curriculum tailored to their aspirations, improves their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Of the few parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire, all are positive about their children's experiences at the centre.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



31 January 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of The Bridge Education Centre, Eastleigh SO50 9DD**

Not so long ago, I came to the centre to see how you are getting on. I also wanted to know whether I could suggest anything to make things even better for you. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the centre, meeting and talking with you, both informally and formally with a small group of you on the second day of my visit. Most of you who responded to the inspection questionnaire said that you felt safe at the centre, adults explained to you how to improve your work and that the school helped you to do as well as you could. My visit confirmed this and I decided that The Bridge provides you all with a good quality of education.

Here are some of the other good things I found:

- You are making good progress in learning and are being prepared well for the next stage of your life when you leave or reintegrate into mainstream school.
- The quality of teaching is good and teachers ensure you know what is expected of you by the end of lessons.
- Your behaviour is good and you get on well with all the adults you work with.
- The good curriculum supports well your personal development as well as your academic progress.
- The head of the centre and her staff have plans to make things even better for you.

I found the centre could make some changes to improve your learning and achievement even further. I have therefore asked the head of centre to ensure all teachers provide more challenge for the most-able pupils and make sure all of you know exactly what you have to do to improve your learning.

You, too, can help by continuing to work hard but some of you need to improve your attendance if you are to benefit fully from the good education the centre provides. I would like to wish you all the best for your future education.

Yours sincerely  
James Bowden  
Lead inspector

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