

# Bridge College

## Focused monitoring visit report

---

**Unique reference number:** 134143

**Name of lead inspector:** Sue Harrison HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 26 April 2012

**Type of provider:** Independent specialist college

**Address:** Curzon Road  
Stockport  
Cheshire  
SK2 5DG

**Telephone number:** 0161 487 4293

## Focused Monitoring Visit: Main Findings

Bridge College provides day provision for students with severe and complex learning difficulties, physical disabilities, communication disorders and autistic spectrum conditions. The college works under the auspices of the charity 'Together Trust'. The college recruits from special schools within the Greater Manchester area. There are currently 83 students on roll who are all aged nineteen years or over. The college mission is to create a learning environment that is inclusive and where young people make a successful transition into adulthood by increasing their self-esteem, independence and skills for life.

The college was inspected in 2008 and was judged to be good across all aspects of provision. Monitoring visits in 2009 and 2010 found the college to be making significant or reasonable progress in all the areas for improvement identified at the inspection. This visit focuses on the themes outlined below.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

**To what extent has the college maintained rigour and effectiveness in its self-assessment processes?**

**Significant progress**

The college continues to use self-assessment processes very effectively to inform its quality improvement plan. It uses data well to inform the judgements made in its self-assessment report. Since the last monitoring visit, it has taken steps to further strengthen the monitoring of actions in the plan, in order to identify clearly the extent to which actions are improving the quality of provision for students. The self-assessment and quality improvement processes have focussed well on the increasing complexity in the range of needs of students recruited to the college. As a result of this, there has been extensive training for staff, for example in the use of therapies as part of a learner's programme, behaviour management strategies, and in the use of communication strategies. Students benefit from the emphasis in the quality improvement plan on the continuous updating of the use of technology as part of the communication strategies. Self-assessment continues to be well informed by the outcomes from the college's system for observing the quality of its teaching and learning. Joint observations with college staff during the visit showed a broad agreement between judgements made by the inspector and those of the college observers.

#### Outcomes for learners

**To what extent has the college maintained good levels of progress for students noted at the last monitoring visit?**

**Significant progress**

Students continue to make good progress in developing their confidence and independence. Those with very complex needs increase their independence in mobility skills, the extent to which they can carry out everyday living tasks with

reduced support, and their ability to communicate. Students with autism are making good progress in developing their ability to interact appropriately with others. Students enjoy participating in community activities, such as a music festival, and showcasing their work on DVDs they have made. They have gained awards for their enterprise work, and for extensive volunteering activities. Where appropriate, students gain external accreditation. In 2010/11 all learners entered for accreditation in communication gained either a City and Guilds or an English Speaking Board award. Other qualifications gained include OCR awards for creative arts. Almost all the entry level learners who left the college in 2010/11 progressed to courses at further education colleges and five out of seven achieved success in gaining supported work placements in their home area.

### Quality of Provision

**What progress has the college made to ensure the curriculum continues to meet the needs of students?**

**Reasonable progress**

The college continuously reviews its curriculum in the context of the changing needs of students. It has restructured the timetable to allow for more opportunities for individualised learning. Students benefit from the move away from teaching in year groups to a more flexible approach. Full days are now timetabled for health, leisure and well-being, enterprise and vocational skills. This enables students to develop their skills more effectively. It also allows for greater integration of therapy work within sessions, rather than learners having to be withdrawn for this purpose. The tutorial programme has been revised to increase its effectiveness, but it is too early to judge the full impact of the changes. The college works well with external partners to develop its curriculum; for example, it makes good use of excellent media facilities at a partner school. Since the last monitoring visit, it has opened an enterprise unit at facilities leased by the Trust and this enables learners to practise work-related skills in a more realistic environment. A partnership with The Manchester College benefits students, for example via a joint horticultural project, and there are plans to extend this to other vocational areas in the future.

### Leadership and management

**What further progress has the college made since the last monitoring visit to bring about improvements to its accommodation?**

**Significant progress**

The college has continued to make significant improvements to its current site, while at the same time planning a major move to new accommodation. Adaptations to the existing site, in response to increasing learner numbers and more complex needs, include the provision of more and improved space for teaching and for personal care needs. Links with external agencies have also been used well to address the pressures on accommodation. Plans for the move to new accommodation, co-located

with one of The Manchester College's sites, are now at an advanced stage. The release of further funding from the Trust has ensured that all of the provision can be transferred in a single phase, with the new campus due to be operational from September 2012. Plans for the move are very thorough. In particular, an impressive amount of work has taken place between staff and students of Bridge and The Manchester College on projects to assist transition.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231 or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012