

The Bridge Education Centre

2C Newton Road, Eastleigh, SO50 9BD

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and leadership team work effectively to ensure that the education provided for students continues to improve. They are fully supported by a good staff team.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons which interest students and help them to make good progress.
- Students are positive about the centre and say they feel safe there. They generally behave well and make the most of their time at the centre.
- Students achieve well. They make better progress than previously, partly because of marked improvements in their attendance and punctuality.
- In 2014, all students who completed their secondary education at The Bridge moved on to a college course, an apprenticeship or into employment.
- At the end of their placement at The Bridge, almost all students in Key Stage 3 move successfully either back to mainstream schools or to an appropriate special school.
- The management committee is experienced and knowledgeable about the centre. It understands its strengths and weaknesses well and provides very effective challenge and support.
- The leadership team regularly checks the quality of teaching. It works closely with staff to make sure that they receive the right training and support to help them improve their skills.
- The curriculum is well matched to students' individual needs, particularly in the range of vocational courses offered by the centre and through partner organisations.
- Teaching and pastoral staff work very well together to provide high quality support for individual students and their families.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not give students enough opportunities to use and improve their reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Lesson objectives do not always explain clearly enough what students are expected to achieve.
- Students do not routinely have time to respond to the feedback they receive.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.
- The inspectors visited 13 lessons taught by 10 teachers. Most lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- One visit was made to alternative provision.
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, to be considered, but inspectors took account of the centre's own records of contact with parents and a survey completed by the centre in January 2015.
- Inspectors held meetings with the centre's leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, several students, the management committee and a representative from the local authority.
- Documents reviewed included the centre's self-evaluation and development plans, financial records, teachers' planning and assessment files, samples of students' work, policies and procedures, management committee minutes and attendance records.

Inspection team

Grace Marriott, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Una Stevens	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The centre provides an education for students who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion, are medically unwell or are emotionally vulnerable.
- Students join the centre at different times during the year and for varying periods of time. There are currently 104 students on roll. Almost all of them are dual registered at the centre and their home school.
- The centre also provides an outreach service to support some students in Years 7 to 9 in secondary schools. In addition, the centre hosts a part-time nurture group for students in Years 7 to 9 and after-hours sessions for those who are unable to attend school or the centre as a result of their individual mental health needs.
- The centre uses a range of alternative providers, mainly for vocational courses. These include Eastleigh College, Sparsholt College and Youth Options.
- The centre usually has more boys than girls. Most students are from White British backgrounds, although there are occasionally a very small number from other ethnic groups. A small number of students are looked after by their local authorities.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the additional government funding for disadvantaged students is above average. Most of these students are dual registered and the funding remains with the mainstream school. All students have special educational needs.
- Since the previous inspection, the management committee has taken over full responsibility for The Bridge and has the same responsibilities as the governing bodies of other maintained schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding and raise the expectations of students of what they can achieve by:
 - ensuring that lesson objectives give students better information on the knowledge and skills teachers are expecting them to acquire and the criteria against which their work will be marked
 - consistently giving students specific time to respond to the feedback they receive, widening the range of opportunities to use and develop reading skills, and increasing the emphasis on writing for different purposes in other subjects
 - giving students as many opportunities as possible to use their knowledge and skills in mathematics in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and leadership team focus strongly on ensuring that the centre provides a good education for its students. They have raised staff expectations for what students can achieve.
 - Subject leaders in English and mathematics work closely with the senior team to develop the use of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. This is a fairly recent development which is starting to have an impact on students' achievement but is not yet fully embedded.
 - The leaders and managers, together with the staff, make the welfare of students a high priority. They work hard as a team to enable students to work in a supportive environment where they are challenged to do their best.
 - The team of support staff is well managed to ensure that it provides students and their families with effective and well-targeted support. Students spoke very positively about the way in which they are helped. Parents and students are fully involved in decisions about their future. Parents who responded to a survey in January 2015 were positive about the centre and the way in which it provides an education for their children.
 - Senior staff check teaching systematically and thoroughly in the centre. They also check carefully the quality of teaching on the courses provided by partner organisations to ensure that students on these courses make good progress.
 - Teachers know that they are accountable for their students' progress and that they will receive help to improve their skills through well-targeted training, either individually or for the staff as a whole.
 - School leaders and the management committee use the information from performance management effectively to help them make decisions about staffing and other centre priorities.
 - The centre's arrangements for safeguarding students are good. Safeguarding checks and policies are in place for on- and off-site working and all staff have received appropriate training.
 - Relationships with students' other schools are good. Students' academic progress, behaviour and attendance are carefully monitored and the centre makes sure that the full- and part-time provision meets students' needs. This flexible approach and excellent communication help to ensure that a very high proportion of students return to mainstream school.
 - The curriculum is effective in meeting students' needs. In Key Stage 3 the students, whether attending full or part time, take much the same subjects as in mainstream schools, so that they can move back into school easily.
 - In Key Stage 4, students take English, mathematics and science, and in addition they can take a range of academic and vocational subjects at the centre or with alternative providers. These may vary from year to year according to the needs of different students, but usually include construction, sport, hair and beauty, and motor vehicle studies. The centre does not use early entry to GCSE.
 - The school prepares students well for life in modern Britain through personal, social and health education, careers education and assemblies. Students show a sound understanding of issues around the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. They know that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
 - Equality of opportunity is promoted well. British values, including tolerance and respect, are implicit in the centre's ethos and are also made explicit in the way in which students are expected to relate to others.
 - Students spoke very positively about the quality of the individual guidance which they felt helped them to choose the right courses, training or apprenticeships. In 2014, all students went on to appropriate further education, employment or apprenticeships.
 - The local authority provides a good level of challenge and support for the centre. This is contributing well to its continued improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The management committee has adjusted very well to its additional responsibilities. Members bring a very good range of skills and experience to their work and willingly use their expertise to support the leadership team. For example, they have worked with staff on improving assessment and the analysis of data, which give the committee very good information about students' achievement.
 - They know the strengths and relative weaknesses in teaching and have been supportive of the leadership team when difficult decisions have had to be taken. The committee knows how performance management and training are used to improve teaching and how this relates to students' achievement and issues around the pay and promotion of teachers.
 - The committee takes its responsibility for safeguarding seriously and ensures that all required

safeguarding checks and policies are in place.

- The centre receives relatively little funding for disadvantaged students and the management committee monitors how well this is spent to provide support for students who need it.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Most students arrive at the centre with a history of poor behaviour and negative attitudes towards school. They usually respond well to the support they receive and learn to control their behaviour better and improve their attitudes to learning.
- Students say that behaviour is generally good and that staff work very hard to prevent individual issues affecting the education of others. They know that they will be supported if they are having difficulties and that staff do not give up, even if students are reluctant to cooperate.
- During conversations with inspectors, students were very positive about what the staff were doing to help them. As one pupil said, 'I've learnt more here in a few months than I did all the time I was at my old school.'
- Parents responding to the school survey were positive about the way in which the school deals with issues. They did not express any concerns about students' behaviour or safety.
- The family outreach worker and other specialist staff work very closely with a range of different agencies, and with parents, to support students with different needs, whether these relate to self-esteem, emotional vulnerability, health or behavioural needs. This helps the centre make sure that students receive the specialist support they need so that they can gain the maximum benefit from the time they spend at The Bridge.
- Students' attitudes to learning are generally good, whether being taught in the centre or off site. The students attending a motor vehicle maintenance course showed good levels of concentration and willingness to work.
- The centre is thorough in its approach to managing attendance and staff quickly follow up absence from the centre or from alternative provision. Attendance is still below most mainstream schools, but almost all students improve their attendance and punctuality during their time at the centre.

Safety

- The centre's work to keep students safe is good. In discussion, students said that they feel safe in the centre and that the work they do on issues such as alcohol, drugs and sexual health help them to stay safe outside the centre.
- Students made it clear that they believe that any bullying would be very swiftly dealt with. Students know about the dangers of different types of bullying, including homophobic, racist and cyber bullying. The centre's own monitoring records of behaviour incidents show that bullying is rare.
- The premises are secure and the students are well supervised. The centre takes off-site safety very seriously. Regular checks, risk assessments and careful supervision mean that students are safe when being taught off-site.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff are good at identifying the barriers which are hindering students' learning and helping students to overcome these. Lessons are planned well to take account of students' individual learning needs.
- Teachers provide a range of academic and practical activities designed to stimulate interest and engage students, many of whom have previously disliked school. Most students gain in confidence and start to realise that they can succeed, although some still have fairly low expectations and need to be convinced that they can do well.
- Teachers question students to check their understanding; where teaching is best, they do this very effectively to extend and deepen students' knowledge and understanding. This was seen to very good effect in an English lesson on different types of writing.
- Disadvantaged students and those with particular needs are well supported in class or through individual sessions. This enables them to make progress at a similar rate to their peer group.
- Staff are also very aware of the need to cater for the most able students and plan accordingly. A typical

example was a mathematics lesson in Year 10, where the work was well matched to different abilities and, in particular, provided very good challenge for the most able students.

- Teachers use lesson objectives in all lessons to help students understand what they will be learning. When used to best effect, the objectives show students exactly what they are expected to achieve and, where relevant, how this relates to the way in which their work will be marked. This is, though, not done consistently enough.
- While the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good, it was evident from students' work over time that students are not always given enough opportunities to use and practise their skills in other subjects. The school has now identified this as a priority and has made a good start on addressing it, but staff are aware that there is more to do.
- Teachers and leaders assess students' attainment and progress regularly and accurately. The implementation of the new marking policy has resulted in more useful marking. Staff make positive and helpful comments, and students are encouraged to respond. Where this is most effective, teachers build in time for students to act on the feedback, but this is not routine.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students usually join the school with knowledge and skills that are below those of their peer group in mainstream schools. This is because their achievement has been affected by poor attendance or exclusions.
- In Key Stage 3, the work is carefully matched to students' individual needs. They make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics, and start to catch up rapidly. Almost all students are able to return successfully to school and cope with the demands of the mainstream curriculum or move successfully to a suitable special school placement.
- Most students who join the school in Key Stage 4 have made comparatively little progress in Key Stage 3. They, too, start to make good progress, and many of them are able to return to school to resume their GCSE courses.
- Those students who stay at The Bridge for Key Stage 4, including those who take part-time courses at alternative providers, do better than students in similar schools nationally. Almost all leave with recognised qualifications in English and mathematics and vocational qualifications in subjects such as sport, construction, hair and beauty, and motor vehicle maintenance.
- Challenging targets for the most able students are based on a thorough assessment of their potential. Their progress is carefully checked and the most able students achieve the qualifications they need to enable them to apply for higher-level qualifications when they leave the centre.
- GCSE attainment is below the national average, but results in the work-related courses are broadly in line with national outcomes.
- There is relatively little variation in the rates of progress of different groups of students. Boys and girls, those with particular learning difficulties, disadvantaged students and those looked after by local authorities achieve equally well, and as well as other students. In 2014, disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs actually made better progress than others.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115838
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	449471

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Alastair Angwin
Headteacher	Sue Wright
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 January 2012
Telephone number	02380629306
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