

Short inspection of Bridge College

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 May 2023

Outcome

Bridge College continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Bridge College is an independent specialist college of further education for young people aged 16 to 25 with autism spectrum disorder and challenging behaviours. The students at Bridge College have a range of learning difficulties, from severe to profound, and some have complex medical needs. At the time of the inspection, 89 students were working towards a study programme aimed at preparing them for adulthood. Students study English, mathematics, personal, social and health education, work-related learning and enrichment. Therapeutic input supports students to access the curriculum. At the previous full inspection, in March 2017, the college was graded as good.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students are supported well to access the curriculum. They participate in a wide range of learning and enrichment activities relevant to their needs and interests. These experiences develop students' communication skills and confidence, preparing them well to advocate for themselves in their local communities.

Students benefit from specialist support, which is integrated well into their curriculum. This includes speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and behaviour support, which optimises students' communication skills and physical abilities, allowing them to engage fully with the curriculum.

Students work well together. They offer peer support and encourage each other to do their very best and celebrate each other's success. Many students demonstrate good behaviour and respect for each other and staff, and they take pride in their work. For example, students wait patiently for peers to respond to questioning when they need to process information or use communication devices to participate.

Students access a wide range of appropriate support, including assistive technologies, to fully access all aspects of college life. Staff provide students with appropriate levels of support to increase their independent working. They use strategies such as 'now and next' to reduce anxiety and enable students to remain calm and engage fully with their learning.

Students are supported well to understand the world of work, and they receive specialist careers advice and guidance. They access work-based learning in the college café and print room, as well as trips to local museums, cinemas, markets and the local football stadium. Students are encouraged to campaign to improve access to local facilities. For example, a local cinema has improved its understanding of inclusion through sound, seating and toilet accessibility.

Students learn essential new knowledge and skills on health and well-being, which prepares them well for being more independent in their lives. They enjoy participating in topical celebrations at college, which promotes their understanding of life in modern Britain. For example, they participate in events including International Women's Day, Eid, the King's Coronation and LGBTQIA+ week.

Students say they feel safe at college. They know who to talk to if they have any concerns.

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

Leaders and managers have planned the curriculum well to meet the changing needs of students. They have created a range of pathways, albeit complex in structure, to develop individualised programmes that prepare students well for adulthood.

Leaders have rightly invested in a specialist therapy team to support students to fully access the curriculum. The therapy team works closely with tutors and support staff and contributes to initial and ongoing assessment of need. The team also provides staff training to develop staff understanding of how to plan learning and implement strategies to improve outcomes for students with complex needs.

Most teachers have a good understanding of the curriculum intent and plan learning well. Staff are well qualified and have experience in working with students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They benefit from specific training, such as in autism spectrum disorder, the moving and handling of people, epilepsy, and administering medication. However, teachers would benefit from further training on teaching and assessment strategies to support them in sequencing learning to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Staff monitor and track students' progress and achievement well. They use the college tracking system to evidence students' progress against targets and planned outcomes. Some students complete their own evidence, which helps students to understand what new knowledge, skills and behaviours they have gained. However, a minority of students are not clear on why they are following their programme or how they are going to learn the skills they need for employment.

Staff meet frequently as a multidisciplinary team to review the progress of each group of students. This can result in changes to the curriculum for different

pathways and individuals. Where appropriate, leaders use this information to plan training for staff. For example, leaders have implemented training for teaching staff on long-term and sequential planning to improve teaching.

Leaders have implemented a robust quality improvement cycle. This includes deep dive activities to monitor the learner journey. Recent actions include changes to morning briefings, enabling teachers to spend time with support staff at the start of the day to plan learning. Although there are clear improvement plans in place, the impact of these new initiatives is not yet clear.

Experienced governors support and challenge managers effectively. They understand the areas of strength and improvement in the college and work with leaders to monitor the implementation of improvement plans. Trust leaders support college leaders and governors with plans to extend the college to meet the growing demands on places by students in the area.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Students say they feel safe and can articulate how to report concerns about their welfare and safety in college.

Staff complete mandatory safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training. They have a good understanding of the safeguarding process for the college, including how to identify concerns and the reporting procedures. However, staff are not aware of localised risks and are therefore not able to provide effective and robust information and training to develop students' understanding and resilience to the dangers of radicalisation.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should provide further training for those teachers and support staff who need to improve their planning and implementation of the curriculum so that their teaching practice improves to the same good standard of most staff.
- Leaders must increase staff understanding of the localised risks in accordance with the 'Prevent' duty guidance, to increase students' understanding and resilience to the risks of radicalisation.
- Leaders should review the curriculum pathways, consider simplifying them and communicate the outcomes clearly to staff and students.

Provider details

Unique reference number	134143
Address	Openshaw Campus Whitworth Street Manchester M11 2GR
Contact number	01614874293
Website	www.togethertrust.org.uk/bridge-college
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Jeremy Swinn
Provider type	Independent Specialist College
Date of previous inspection	1 and 2 March 2017
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Bridge College was judged to be good in March 2017.

The inspection team was assisted by the principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising students' work, seeking the views of students, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Tina Pagett, lead inspector

Angie Fisher

Kay Hedges

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, 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.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023