

Inspection of Bridge School Malvern

Unit 2, Hanley Workshops, Hanley Road, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire WR8 0DX

Inspection dates: 20 to 22 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
--------------------------	-------------

Behaviour and attitudes	Good
-------------------------	-------------

Personal development	Outstanding
----------------------	--------------------

Leadership and management	Good
---------------------------	-------------

Sixth-form provision	Good
----------------------	-------------

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
--	------

Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
--	------------

What is it like to attend this school?

At the Bridge School Malvern, pupils are safe and well cared for. Leaders have high expectations that all pupils will be able to experience success. Staff go to great lengths to ensure that they do. They tap into pupils' interests. This helps pupils to trust adults and to re-engage with learning. Daily routines help pupils to settle in and behave well.

For many pupils, attending school regularly and engaging in learning can be a challenge. However, over time, pupils' attendance improves and they participate in lessons with increasing enthusiasm. Pupils' resilience grows in response to teachers' encouragement and coaching.

The school is a calm haven where pupils can be themselves. They are polite and respect others. Bullying is rare. If it happens, staff sort it out quickly. Activities outside lessons help to prepare pupils for independent living, including trips to colleges, country shows and the city library. Sports teams compete against other local schools.

Parents express joy at finding a school where their children can be happy and achieve success. The school's caring, nurturing ethos shines through all aspects of school life.

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

Leaders, governors and staff are all committed to the school's values of caring and nurturing every pupil's potential. Leaders have designed a varied curriculum that offers pupils a broad range of subjects, including catering, horticulture, manufacturing and animal care, as well as academic subjects. Pupils learn how to care for animals on the on-site small holding. At lunchtimes, pupils prepare healthy meals made with home-grown vegetables and home-baked bread. This teaches pupils about healthy eating, as well as how to live independently. The carefully planned curriculum develops pupils' independence and their employability skills.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships and life in modern Britain through assemblies and discussions. Educational visits enrich the curriculum, ranging from visits to local businesses to educational places of interest. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures through the curriculum and from visiting speakers. Parents and pupils enjoy half-termly Saturday morning family cooking sessions, where they cook low-cost, nutritious food. Parents see how their children interact with other adults and how their independence grows week by week.

The quality of careers guidance pupils receive is second to none. Careers advisers work tirelessly with employers to create placements, training and employment opportunities for pupils. Many pupils have gained employment in local restaurants and companies. Apprenticeships have been created specifically for individual pupils.

As a result of this exemplary aspect of the school's work, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

Pupils work towards City and Guilds qualifications in a range of subjects. Teachers continually observe, assess and record pupils' progress. They make sure that pupils produce and submit quality work. Consequently, pupils experience success. Leaders have designed a suitably ambitious curriculum that meets pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively.

Parents are fully informed about their children's progress through termly reports and regular phone calls home. Teachers send praise emails home recognising pupils' achievements. Staff take every opportunity to celebrate pupils' successes.

In many subjects, teachers have identified clearly what they want pupils to achieve, and they assess pupils' progress effectively. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' starting points. They usually adapt teaching appropriately and pupils make strong progress. However, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum is not so clearly sequenced and teachers do not adapt teaching or assess progress as well as they might. This means that in some instances pupils do not do as well as they might. Leaders have provided appropriate training and guidance for teachers. In daily briefing sessions, for example, helpful teaching strategies are shared. However, the impact of this guidance is not yet consistently evident in all classrooms.

Students in the sixth form study one of three main pathways: retail, manufacturing or catering. Pupils do work experience in one of the three small businesses run on site. Students also attend work experience placements in a variety of settings. As a result, the majority of students progress on to successful employment or training.

In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' mental health, leaders established an alternative post-16 pathway, Bridge the Gap. This is a remote provision for students who need intensive support to re-engage with learning. Although these students are registered at the Bridge School Malvern, currently leaders do not report to governors about the quality of this provision.

The proprietor, Bridge School Malvern Governing Board, has ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards. The school buildings and surroundings are well maintained. Pupils take care of the environment and value the facilities they have, including a well-resourced music room, art studio, workshop and professional standard catering kitchen. Staff feel well supported by leaders to manage their workload.

Governors bring a range of professional expertise to the governing body. They constantly review their processes to ensure that they fulfil their roles. They ensure that the school complies with the Equality Act 2010 and statutory guidance for relationships education. They are fully committed to the school's inclusive ethos. Although they hold leaders to account with increasing challenge, leaders do not currently report to governors in sufficient detail about the quality of remote learning provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are safe here and staff know them well. Staff spot any changes in pupils' behaviour quickly and report concerns via a secure online system. Leaders check records regularly to identify patterns. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to ensure pupils receive the support they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, both in school and the community. Leaders work closely with parents to help them protect their children from risks, including those online.

All of the necessary pre-employment checks are carried out when new staff are appointed. The school's safeguarding policy reflects the government's most recent guidance and is available on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some cases, teachers do not assess pupils' starting points adequately or adapt their teaching effectively, which hinders pupils' progress. Leaders have provided training for all teachers on how to do this but have not checked that teachers are applying this consistently in their practice. Leaders should check that guidance from training is implemented consistently and has the desired impact on teachers' practice and pupils' progress.
- Governors do not have sufficient information about the alternative post-16 pathway. This means that governors are unable to hold leaders to account for the quality of this provision. Leaders should ensure that governors are fully informed about the alternative post-16 pathway, including what leaders are aiming to achieve. They should do this so that governors can hold leaders to account more effectively for the impact of this provision.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	142833
DfE registration number	885/6044
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10267681
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 24
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	14 onsite and 14 remote learners.
Number of part-time pupils	14
Proprietor	Bridge School Malvern Board of Governors
Chair	Helen Attree
Headteacher	Susan Hornby
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,950
Telephone number	01684 311632
Website	www.bridgeschoolmalvern.org
Email address	enquiries@bridgeschoolmalvern.org
Dates of previous inspection	19 to 21 November 2019

Information about this school

- The Bridge School Malvern was formerly known as Bridge Training and Development. It consists of three separate provisions: The Bridge School Malvern, Unit 2 Hanley Workshops, Hanley Road, Hanley Swan, Malvern, Worcestershire WR8 0DX, which caters for pupils aged 11 to 16; the Bridge Business Centre (BBC), Unit 10, Sixways industrial centre, Barnards Green, Malvern WR14 3NB, which caters for post-16 students; and Bridge The Gap Malvern Limited, Open Space, Willow End Park, Malvern WR13 6NN, which provides remote education for post-16 pupils who are unable to attend on-site provision.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and those with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school has a Christian ethos.
- The school's previous standard inspection by Ofsted took place in November 2020.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as other published information about the school. The lead inspector spoke to the headteacher prior to the inspection to discuss the curriculum.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders of The Bridge School, the Business Centre (sixth form) and the leader of Bridge the Gap remote provision to discuss the curriculum.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: functional skills mathematics and English, and construction. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss attendance, behaviour, personal development, SEND provision, careers guidance and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector checked the school's safer recruitment checks and records of staff training.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons and at informal times such as breaktimes and lunchtimes. An adult was present with pupils when the inspectors met with pupils.
- Inspectors observed routines such as assemblies and pupils' behaviour during transitions between lessons.
- The lead inspector checked the school's compliance against the independent school standards, including buildings, health and safety, curriculum, safer recruitment and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Chris Field

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