



# Bridgwater Tuition Group

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 134758  
**LEA** Somerset  
**Inspection number** 282677  
**Inspection dates** 20 March 2006 to 20 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Alan Dobbins AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	c/o YMCA
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit		Bridgwater
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 16		Someset TA6 3RF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01278 726043
<b>Number on roll</b>	50	<b>Fax number</b>	01278 726043
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Ms Gloria Cawood
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kirsty Baker

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 20 March 2006 - 20 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282677
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This pupil referral unit (PRU) primarily caters for pupils with medical and health-related conditions that prevent them attending their mainstream schools, but also takes a small number of permanently excluded pupils. The number of pupils on roll regularly changes as they enter the PRU and return to their other schools, or to new settings. They spend varying periods of time at the PRU, from three weeks to more than two years depending on the severity of their conditions. Permanently excluded pupils spend up to ten weeks at the PRU, waiting for another placement. Pupils' capabilities are wide-ranging but for most they are closely linked to the severity of their health difficulties. They receive a minimum of five hours of tuition each week, either in their homes or at the teaching base, located in the Bridgwater YMCA. Some gain additional hours through being taught at home in the virtual classroom. Almost all pupils are White British. Bridgwater Tuition Group was registered as a PRU in 2004.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Bridgwater Tuition Group is a good PRU that provides good value for money, a judgement that reflects the PRU's view of itself. The team leader leads and manages well and is very well supported by professional officers and the linked advisor. They form a strong group with a good capacity for continuing to improve the work of the PRU. Nevertheless, the procedures for judging how good the PRU is in its work need to be sharper. The PRU's strength is in the way it helps pupils find themselves again as young people who are then able to move confidently and successfully back into their other schools or to the next stage of their education. This is routinely achieved because pupils are cared for and supported outstandingly well, as a first step to helping them continue with their learning. Teaching is good, in pupils' homes and at the teaching base, despite the inadequate accommodation that limits what can be taught and how teaching can occur. Most pupils are making good progress. The curriculum appropriately focuses on pupils' primary needs, but weekly teaching time is too short for some pupils, including the excluded pupils who gain less from being at the PRU. The management committee is beginning to meet its remit, but needs to ensure that only those pupils whose needs can be met should be admitted.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

The management committee should ensure that:

- only those pupils whose learning and additional needs can be met by the PRU should be admitted
- the accommodation is fit for purpose.

The team leader should:

- continue to develop the procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the PRU.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils referred to the PRU for medical reasons achieve well. The small number of excluded pupils who are at the PRU waiting for a placement achieve satisfactorily. Their weekly teaching time is less than they should have and this limits the progress they make in their learning.

Most pupils make outstanding progress in dealing with their personal, social and emotional issues. They gain in self-confidence as they take greater control of their emotions and behaviour. They, and their parents, talk easily of how being at the PRU is helping them become more mature and responsible and better able to cope with the demands and expectations of the next stage of their education. Younger pupils invariably return successfully to their other schools. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do much better than they thought possible in the GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, science and geography and in the other subjects, such as art and design and French that they were studying before joining the PRU. Almost all of these pupils leave the PRU to continue their learning at colleges, either in preparation for work or for a university place.

Pupils enter the PRU with broadly average standards and at least maintain those standards over the subjects they study. They make good progress overall, meeting or exceeding their targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent overall, with particular strengths in the moral and social development of the majority of the pupils. Those referred for medical reasons make great strides toward enjoying their lives again because of the outstanding development in their personal and social skills and the better control they gain of their emotions. They quickly develop very strong relationships with staff and they learn to relate to each other very well. They feel safe and comfortable at the tuition base. Almost daily, they show visible improvement in self-esteem and self-confidence and staff are excited when they see their real personalities emerge from the hiding places formed by their difficulties. Parents talk of their children 'blooming' and 'thriving' at the PRU, and they do, as they become better balanced young people again. They work hard at their learning and in cementing friendships. Excluded pupils do less well in their personal development. Although they make good strides in the lessons they get, they do not gain sufficient planned experiences with other pupils to improve their behaviour as well as they might.

Spiritual and cultural development are good. The importance of leading healthy lifestyles is made clear in lessons and when pupils speak with staff. Older pupils are being prepared especially well to take a full role in ensuring their economic well-being because they move to the next stage of their education confident that they can be successful. Attendance is satisfactory. Almost all pupils attend more regularly than was the case in their other schools.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. At the tuition base, most lessons are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge. Those who teach in the pupils' homes are very experienced and adept at interesting pupils in their learning again, as an important first step in helping them return to their other schools. Early analysis suggests that pupils like taking lessons in the virtual classroom, are beginning to master the skills of learning as part of a disparate group and benefit, both socially and academically, from the experience.

Teachers and pupils do remarkably well in minimising the disadvantages imposed by the teaching room at the tuition base. It is far too small. Over the inspection, three different lessons were being taught at the same time. One was preparing four pupils for the GCSE English examination, one was individual work in English at a lower level and two other pupils were learning science. Teachers and pupils worked hard to ensure

that learning proceeded well despite the continuing distractions caused by others who were legitimately pursuing their own learning.

An important aim of all lessons is to help pupils become more confident and more assured. The outstanding relationships staff have with pupils help because pupils feel comfortable in lessons. They quickly realise the importance of committing themselves again to their learning and most often try hard to do their best.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. The minimum aim of providing five hours of tuition each week to maintain learning in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) is met for all pupils. Most, depending on the severity of their needs, gain additional hours of tuition, either at home through the virtual classroom or at the tuition base, but only up to a maximum of 12 hours of teaching time each week. This is a weakness because some pupils referred for medical reasons make such good progress in dealing with their personal and social issues that they are well capable of learning over a full teaching week. Excluded pupils awaiting a new school place receive only ten hours tuition, even though the difficulties they have in fully controlling their behaviour do not prevent them from attending for a full week.

Otherwise, the curriculum is planned well to meet the needs of each pupil. The primary need of overcoming pupils' personal, social and emotional difficulties is met in all the work of the PRU. By taking GCSE examinations in a good number of subjects and modules of the Diploma in Digital Applications (DIDA), most of the Year 11 pupils show the extent of their learning well enough to gain entrance to local colleges to continue their studies. For a small number, the curriculum is broadened by enrichment sessions at the teaching base and visits to local churches, the museum and trips on the nearby canal.

The curriculum for pupils at home is individually tailored to meet their needs. Close liaison with staff in their other schools helps prioritise the subjects and topics that are taught, and this is working well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are cared for and supported exceptionally well. The arrangements to protect their welfare and safety are rigorous, especially when pupils are taught at home. Staff are trained well and know the procedures to follow if they are concerned about any pupil.

The outstanding relationships staff have with pupils and, for many their parents also, provide a solid platform for advising and counseling pupils. Targets in individual education plans work very well in identifying pupils' learning and additional needs and in steering improvement. Personnel from many relevant agencies provide pupils with specialist support and advice. For example, the linked educational psychologist provides valued information on setting targets for pupils, and the Connexions officer is especially

effective in helping pupils move seamlessly to the next stage of their education and in following them to ensure that they are successful in meeting their new challenge.

The powerful impact of the support and guidance offered to pupils is reflected in the change in one pupil. He reported that he is no longer 'sad' because the PRU is giving 'me the confidence to be me and is helping me realise that I am okay'.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The team leader is supported very well by the linked professional officers and the school development advisor. They ensure that day to day, all aspects of the work are organised well and the base's teaching room is as comfortable and welcoming as is possible. Their knowledge of the strengths of the PRU and what needs to be improved is good. They have integrated the different strands of the PRU together very well, so that most pupils steadily increase their weekly hours of tuition; they now move easily from home tuition only, to taking lessons at the teaching base as a carefully, planned step to returning to mainstream settings. Their capacity for continuing to improve the work of the PRU is good.

Data about pupils' progress is used at an individual level to support pupils, but information from monitoring is not routinely analysed to see how well the PRU as a whole is doing. As a result, the PRU cannot evaluate how effective it is in meeting its aims or judge how it stands against, for example, other equivalent units in the county. It also makes it difficult to assess the success of improvement actions.

The management committee is relatively new, is finding its feet and is beginning to meet its remit to the PRU. For example, it is attending to the admission procedures that currently allow some pupils—the permanently excluded pupils—to be admitted when it is clear that their learning and additional needs cannot be met. It knows the accommodation is unsatisfactory. The committee needs to ensure that the plans already formed to overcome these barriers to improvement are enacted quickly so that the PRU can fully meet the needs of its pupils.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I enjoyed my time with you and would like to thank you for talking with me and for helping me find out about the Bridgwater Tuition Group (the PRU). I was impressed with much of what I saw.

- Most of you like being at the PRU and like the staff very much.
- You feel comfortable at the PRU and this means that you are able to deal with the issues that trouble you and begin again to enjoy your learning.
- You are doing well in your learning and in preparing yourselves for return to your other schools or to the colleges many of you join.
- You are extremely polite in the way in which you deal with each other and with visitors to the PRU.
- Your team leader and your teachers care very much for you and work hard to help you in your learning and in dealing with your other matters. They make sure that you are safe and secure and that you are able to do as well as is possible in all your work.

There are some things that I would like to see improved:

- The teaching room is not good enough.
- The committee that manages the PRU should ensure that only those pupils who would benefit from attending the PRU are admitted to it.
- The procedures for checking how good the PRU is in its work need to be better.