



The Constance Bridgeman Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102794
Local Authority Redbridge
Inspection number 286496
Inspection date 11 December 2006
Reporting inspector Bill Stoneham

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Redbridge College
School category	Pupil referral unit		Little Heath, Barley Lane
Age range of pupils	14-16		Romford RM6 4XT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8599 2972
Number on roll (school)	36	Fax number	020 8597 6532
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr K Robson
		Headteacher	Mrs E D'Ath (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
14-16	11 December 2006	286496

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Constance Bridgeman Centre is a pupil referral unit (PRU) for students aged 14 to 16 and is part of the New Rush Hall group, a selection of five different units offering specialist education provision within the Redbridge Education Authority. The unit operates on two sites, with one site specialising in vocational education. There are approximately four times as many boys on roll than there are girls. Fifteen students have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools and, though most of the students are from White British backgrounds, six are from homes where English is not their first language. Six students have statements of educational need and four are looked-after children. Many have regular access to other professional support services and all experience a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

There have been recent difficulties with staff recruitment and there has been a delay in appointing a new headteacher. At the time of the inspection, there was an acting headteacher. Other staffing positions have been difficult to fill and some of the accommodation is neither of good quality nor convenient, with one site being located a significant distance from the main site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The Constance Bridgeman Centre provides a satisfactory standard of education. The centre is improving the life chances for its students, especially for those who attend regularly. The centre does not aim to reintegrate its students into mainstream education; its objective is to prepare students for the next step beyond Year 11 into further education or the world of work. This is done with some success, with about 70 per cent of youngsters annually making this transition. Those who do not make the transition usually do not succeed for reasons beyond the centre's control. Some students have very poor attendance records, for example, and fail to make any significant improvements despite the efforts made on their behalf by their staff. Others may have problems with substance, drug or alcohol abuse, or may be in trouble with the authorities. In such cases their ability to progress to a settled life in a college, or a place of work, is drastically reduced. The staff work hard and liaise satisfactorily with external agencies to provide the students with a sense of purpose and direction. The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory, which contributes to the students' satisfactory personal development. The students feel safe and appreciate the guidance and support provided. The few parents who completed the inspection questionnaire were supportive and appreciative of the work being done. One commented, 'When my son returns home he always has something positive to report. The style of teaching sustains his interest and promotes learning.'

Achievement and progress are satisfactory, though standards overall are well below average. Students can complete accredited courses, including GCSEs in English and mathematics and up to seven other subjects including a range of vocational options. Though the students' behaviour is satisfactory and improving, the overall attendance rate is unsatisfactory and this adversely affects the progress made by a significant minority. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are some good features. Teachers know the students well and plan lessons to meet their needs. There are, however, inconsistencies in the use of data to set challenging targets and in the monitoring of progress against such targets. Efforts to improve the students' literacy skills show too much variation. The curriculum is satisfactory. It has been revised in response to student requests for sport and, as far as possible, the centre attempts to meet needs. However, given the prevailing accommodation and staffing issues, staff have not been able to offer all they would like. Further improvements are planned but a key weakness is the lack of provision for science. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources are good and used effectively to support teaching and learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher has worked very hard to maintain the centre's work and she has been well supported by her colleagues. She is aware of what the centre's strengths are and where improvements are needed. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and there is a satisfactory capacity to improve. Assessment data is collected but its analysis and use to check on the centre's performance and further improve standards is unsatisfactory. The management committee is supportive of the acting headteacher but they are not robust in acting

as a critical friend and do not have a clear enough vision about how improvements might be secured. Thus the overall capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring greater consistency in teaching, particularly in literacy.
- Set challenging academic and personal targets for all students and develop robust systems to monitor their progress.
- Improve students' attendance rates.
- Increase choice by ensuring the provision of suitable science courses.
- Improve monitoring arrangements including the role of the management committee.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards on entry are variable but most start with attainment that is below, or well below, average. This is mainly because of poor attendance and negative attitudes towards education. Whilst at the centre students make satisfactory progress in their learning and many successfully progress to further education or the world of work. Some successfully complete GCSE courses and other qualifications, however, by the end of Year 11 standards remain well below average overall. Target setting is inadequate. Too little emphasis is placed on setting students challenging targets for their academic work and ensuring that their progress is regularly and thoroughly monitored.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development is satisfactory. The students are developing some of their basic personal skills at an acceptable rate as the staff with whom they work are dedicated and committed to improving their motivation and raising their self-esteem. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural education is satisfactory overall, but social development is good because of the time and effort staff spending helping the students. Behaviour is satisfactory and students get along well together and with their teachers. As one girl remarked, 'They like you here and give you respect'. Attendance, however, is unsatisfactory and this impedes the levels of improvement made. Some students can show significant improvements in their attendance and their attitudes, but a significant minority fail to attend regularly and the responsibility they show for their own actions is too casual. The students feel safe and say that they enjoy their education at the PRU more than they did previously. Most students are appreciative of the support they receive; some Year 11 students commented on how grateful they are to take subjects such as graphics and photography at GCSE. Opportunities to participate in sport are improving and the personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) and the breakfast club are enhancing the students' awareness of healthy eating. The students' views are sought and good efforts are made to encourage the youngsters to assume responsibility and make decisions. The school council and the citizenship

programme foster such skills. Vocational education, the careers programme and some work with outside agencies is developing economic well-being appropriately.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory; indeed some of the teaching seen was good. Teachers are sensitive to the students' needs and are enthusiastic in their approach. All lessons seen contained some good features but there were inconsistencies. Most of the students have poor literacy skills, but the teachers are not tackling this issue with consistency. For example, in some lessons there were missed opportunities to encourage the students to read. Staff did not always check that key, or unusual, words were understood. There are variations in the quality of marking; spelling and grammatical errors are not always highlighted, though other aspects of marking are good. Such inconsistencies mean that for most students their achievements are satisfactory rather than good. Care is taken to match the work to the needs of the students. This was aptly demonstrated at the centre's vocational unit where the activities were suitable to enable each individual to make at least acceptable progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and provides a suitable framework for the students to progress to further education or the world of work. Evidence shows that the curriculum has developed well since the previous inspection and that vocational provision has improved. Students can study as many as nine GCSEs and there are also courses specifically designed to help the youngsters prepare for working life. PSHE and citizenship, for example, help to develop personal skills and raise awareness of issues related to lifestyles and general behaviour. The leadership team plan to develop the curriculum further but the existing accommodation, allied to issues about recruiting suitably skilled and qualified staff, impede the scope for development. Some parents want science to be offered. Staff are aware of this and also want to develop vocational education. Plans are in place to tackle these issues.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The centre provides a safe and supportive environment where learners can develop their personal qualities. The centre works closely with specialist outside agencies and this enhances the effectiveness of the support offered. Provision for health and safety is satisfactory. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are securely in place and all staff are aware of their responsibilities.

Assessment data from 'home' schools is not always available. On their arrival all learners are assessed and their academic and developmental needs are established, though

target setting and recording the students' progress are inconsistent. The students' individual education plans are too descriptive and do not always clearly state targets or show what progress has been made.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders are aware of the strengths and areas for development. The acting headteacher has managed the centre very well during a difficult period of transition and has succeeded in establishing a happy and friendly working environment. Some planning has also been undertaken that should help to improve the quality of provision. Although assessment data is collected, the analysis and use of this to improve their achievement is unsatisfactory. There is a good ethos of fairness and equality of opportunity in which every student matters. Recent staffing difficulties have hindered progress. The management committee are supportive and keen to help, but their function has not been adequately defined. Thus the centre is lacking the services of a critical friend who can objectively evaluate the work being undertaken and set challenges necessary for improvement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me recently to your centre. I enjoyed my visit and I would like to thank you for telling me about the things you liked and what you would like to see improved. I know most of you enjoy coming to the centre and you told me that you feel safe and are treated well. I agree with you and, overall, I have concluded that you are receiving a satisfactory standard of education. I was pleased to learn that some of you are doing well in your work and that some of the Year 11 students have already made definite plans for next year. I list below some ideas for improvement, but one thing that some of you could do to help your staff is to ensure that your attendance improves. The staff are all committed to helping you; it is only fair that you help them more.

The other improvements I have suggested are:

- That you should be set targets for your work, personal conduct and attendance and that staff should regularly measure your performance against these targets.
- Staff should be more consistent in their approach to helping you develop your literacy skills.
- They should offer you science courses. This is something that some parents said they would like to see.
- A closer check should be made on how well you are doing and the management committee should be more involved.

I would like to finish by wishing you every success in your future work at the centre.

Bill Stoneham Lead inspector