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19 December 2008

Ms Sue Wright  
Education Centre Manager  
The Bridge Education Centre  
Cherbourg Road  
Eastleigh  
SO50 5EL

Dear Ms Wright

Special measures: monitoring inspection of The Bridge Education Centre

Following my visit to your school on 10 and 11 December 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in May 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Emma Ing  
H M Inspector

## Special measures: monitoring of The Bridge Education Centre

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 9 and 10 December 2008  
Evidence

Inspectors observed the centre's work, scrutinised documents and met with the head of centre, staff, a member of the management committee and representatives of the local authority. They spoke to students at the different centres.

### Context

The centre currently educates students aged 9–16 whose needs, for a range of reasons, cannot currently be met by a mainstream education provider. There are three different sites, two of which offer temporary accommodation only. On one of these, newcomers are assessed and lessons are provided for emotionally vulnerable students and the single Key Stage 2 child who attends. Courses are also run here to support students who are at risk of exclusion but are still attending mainstream schools. On the second site, lessons are provided for students who are attending the centre on a more permanent arrangement. The third site is in a secure hospital unit and seeks to meet the needs of students in care there.

Two members of staff, a mathematics teacher and an assistant head of centre are absent on long-term sick leave. One of the joint teachers- in-charge on the hospital site is retiring very shortly and arrangements are being put in place to ensure that there is a smooth transition to an alternative leadership arrangement.

The head of centre is being supported by a consultant who is an experienced secondary headteacher. The centre's School Improvement Partner (SIP) has recently retired. A new SIP will work alongside the centre in the new year. Since the last inspection, a management committee has been established and has held its first meeting.

### Achievement and standards

Students at the centre make at least satisfactory progress in lessons. Some students in some lessons across the centre are making good progress because teachers are good at ensuring that the work students do is very closely matched to their need.

Because the centre is not yet receiving accurate tracking and forecasting data from their students' originating schools, it is difficult for them to gauge accurately how much progress students have made. It is clear, however, that progress overall is inadequate because the centre does not offer entitled students an appropriate full-time education. This means that they are simply not learning enough.

The attainment of students varies widely. As a result of the disruption to their education, it is below average overall, but there have been students, both in the

emotionally vulnerable group and at Leigh House Hospital, whose examination results are well above average.

### Personal development and well-being

This is an area where the recent work of the centre manager and staff has really made a difference. Students who attend the centre, even those who have experienced permanent exclusion from school, come intending to learn. They are developing a sense of pride in the centre and of self-respect. The atmosphere at all three sites is pleasant and purposeful. Relationships between staff and students and between individual students are strong and generally supportive. All students are now growing in confidence and experiencing success in their lives. The attendance of most students has improved, but is hampered by the restricted hours offered. The number of exclusions from the centre has reduced significantly.

### Quality of provision

Teachers have very good relationships with their students and focus their teaching around clear learning objectives. Their behaviour management is excellent. They use the resources at their disposal well to make lessons as interesting as possible. As a result, students enjoy their experiences. Good links are often made between the work done in lessons and the students' lives. However, teachers do not yet routinely plan to support the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

The centre has recently introduced systems for setting challenging behavioural targets and tracking students' progress lesson by lesson towards these. The significant improvement in behaviour indicates that this is working well. There is now scope to extend individuals' targets to encompass long-term goals so that students understand the nature of the journey that they are on. The centre manager is aware that, while academic progress in English is tracked well, the centre's systems for setting challenging academic targets and for tracking students' progress towards them requires further development. This needs to be linked to consistent approaches for ensuring that students understand how they might make improvements to their work.

The centre is introducing a new Level 1 ASDAN course, but has had limited success in developing the range of work-related learning opportunities that are available to students. Further, and crucially, too many students are not accessing a full-time education as is their right.

The centre cares for all its students well. Systems to ensure their safety are robust.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that all pupils receive full-time education, especially by broadening the range of opportunities for work-related learning – inadequate
- set, and consistently review, challenging targets for pupils' academic achievement, behaviour and personal development – satisfactory

- implement strategies for managing and improving pupils' behaviour that are consistently used by all staff – good

## Leadership and management

The head of centre worked with the previous School Improvement Partner to create a robust development plan which is sharply focused on ambitious, measurable targets and identifies appropriately how the progress of the centre will be monitored and evaluated. This is cross-referenced with the local authority action plan and provides a strong basis for improvement. The head of centre is committed to ensuring that the centre provides well for students. She monitors the centre's work carefully. This enables her to be very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the current provision. She has prioritised appropriately and set a clear direction so that the staff work together as a team.

A management committee has been established and has begun to ask challenging questions of the centre's leadership and of the local authority.

The proportion of students reintegrated into mainstream schools has improved. Further, the centre has ensured that statements are in place for those that need them. However, the local authority has not yet established protocols across the two areas that the centre serves to ensure a shared understanding of the arrangements for admitting students or for ensuring their reintegration into mainstream school. Neither has it ensured that protocols are in place to ensure that students' performance data are automatically made available to the centre in a way that facilitates setting appropriate targets for individuals.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- establish clear procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the centre – outstanding
- improve arrangements for excluded pupils to return successfully to mainstream education – inadequate

## External support

The local authority's original statement of action lacked some important key features but, once revised, it has become a serviceable document which underpins the support to be given to the centre. In many respects, this support is satisfactory. The local authority has now ensured that a management committee is in place and that appropriate people have been appointed to it. The School Improvement Partner supported the centre manager in writing a very effective school development plan, and a consultant headteacher is working to help the centre manager in developing distributed leadership throughout the centre. Although subject consultants have had to learn about the particular provision offered by the centre in order to tailor their advice, teachers have found their help useful and more of their tailored support is planned. Both the local authority Special Educational Needs Inspector and the

Inclusion Manager have offered critical advice which has helped the centre manager reflect on the important next steps to be taken within the centre.

However, there are a number of important issues that lie beyond the centre and which must be resolved. The local authority has taken an insufficiently proactive leadership role in ensuring that these are tackled. In particular, the local authority has not:

- ensured that the centre is in a position to offer a full-time curriculum to all non-medical students and that work-related learning and college placements are available and managed
- developed shared agreements and protocols about its role and the admission and reintegration of students across the two areas that the centre serves
- ensured that individual students' performance data are maintained and made accessible to the centre.