

The Bridge Education Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115838
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	335189
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Emma Ing HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tanya Bailey
Headteacher	Ms Sue Wright
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
School address	Cherbourg Road Eastleigh SO50 5EL
Telephone number	02380 629306
Fax number	02380 629340
Email address	office.bridge@hants.gov.uk

Age group	5–16
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2010
Inspection number	335189

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

When The Bridge Education Centre was last inspected in May 2008, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to provide an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. Subsequently, Her Majesty's Inspectors have made three visits to monitor the progress made by the centre.

This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and held meetings with staff, pupils and representatives from the management committee and local authority. They observed the work of the pupil referral unit and looked at the centre's self-evaluation, action plan and their records demonstrating the progress made by pupils and the pastoral care given by staff. They also considered the responses made by both pupils and parents and carers to questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the centre's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the academic progress and personal, social and emotional development of pupils
- the effectiveness with which the centre engages with parents, carers, schools, colleges, welfare and medical agencies in order to support pupils' learning and development
- pupils' attendance, punctuality and the extent to which the pupil referral unit helps them return to school or gain work or college placements.

Information about the school

The Bridge Education Centre educates pupils whose needs, for various reasons, cannot be met by mainstream schools. These include pupils who:

- have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools
- are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream schools
- are medically unwell
- are emotionally vulnerable.

In addition, a small group of pupils are supported by the centre as a supplement to their mainstream provision and others are supported as they move between mainstream providers.

At present, the centre is located on three sites, two of which are to be relocated to a permanent purpose-built site in Eastleigh town centre shortly. The third site, which is currently being line managed directly by the local authority, is based at Leigh House Hospital.

Most pupils are from White British families. Many of the older pupils have an offending profile and a significant proportion have identified mental health issues. For those pupils attending Leigh House School, these are severe and acute. Many pupils at the centre have experience of economic deprivation and of educational and social exclusion.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the centre no longer requires special measures. The centre now provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education.

Not all the problems that pupils bring to the centre can be resolved, but for some, the life line offered by the centre has proved significant in helping them find their feet and make a new start. Pupils are expertly helped to manage their behaviour and emotions more effectively through lessons and through day-to-day interaction with the centre's staff. Most gain confidence and develop important skills which help them rejoin the mainstream community.

The improvements in provision are a result of the determined and methodical leadership of the education centre manager, who has been well supported by the local authority. Together, they have forged a vision for the future of the centre which is now shared by local schools. Members of the extended leadership team, too, have played their part in implementing changes but their strategic and leadership roles are not yet fully developed. All parties now have a keen understanding of the centre's strengths and their next steps. The centre manager monitors the progress of the centre rigorously. The leadership provided by the teacher in charge at Leigh House is vigorous and insightful.

A major strength of the centre, which is true of the provision for all the different groups of pupils, is the way in which staff identify and meet the particular needs of individuals. For example, staff liaise with predecessor or home schools in order to build on previous learning and, where possible, use coursework that has already been completed. When necessary, they work closely with medical staff, social care staff or the youth offending team, to ensure that the additional needs of their pupils are well met.

The centre offers a very diverse curriculum including accredited examination courses at different levels and also college placements and work experience. In addition, cultural activities are offered and the interests of individual pupils are built upon.

Parents are very happy with the provision for reasons summed up by one parent who responded to a centre questionnaire with the comment that 'My son's attitude to life and learning has changed (for the better).'

Pupils who attend the centre have all experienced significant interruptions to their learning. As a result, their attainment overall is low. However, some really shine at the centre and make good progress. This is true particularly of those who attend the centre on a long-term basis in Key Stage 4 and those at Leigh House. Overall, however, the progress of pupils is satisfactory because not all the teaching is as good as it is for these pupils and also because, while improving, pupils' attendance is well below the national

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

average.

In lessons, pupils generally work steadily and try hard. The centre manager also recognises that, while the centre's tracking of academic progress is now satisfactory, it needs further refinement. Staff at all levels do not yet use the data that emerges robustly enough to identify pupils who are not making the progress they should.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of pupils who are not medically unwell by:
 - refining the use of assessment to enable swift intervention for pupils who are falling behind
 - using attendance data more carefully to target areas where pupils attendance is poor
 - improving the consistency of teaching by making sure that all lessons are well planned, well structured and appropriately paced, that explanations are clear and that teachers assess and respond to the level of understanding reached by different pupils.
- Strengthen the strategic and quality assurance roles of the extended leadership team.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Many of the pupils at the centre have had great difficulties at other educational settings and have been excluded. Others are medically unwell and nearly all have low self-esteem and poor self-belief. Nevertheless, with the exception of those who are newly arrived at the centre, all pupils attending do so prepared to settle down, concentrate and work. Learning in lessons for those in Key Stage 4, those who are emotionally vulnerable and those who are at Leigh House is of a high quality. Pupils appreciate the close attention that they are given and the fact that the work they are expected to complete is closely matched to their needs. They are developing independence, and at Leigh House in particular, learning to assess their own work and determine their next steps. As a consequence, their progress in lessons is good. However, the attendance of too many pupils at the centre is erratic and low so that their progress overall is no better than satisfactory.

Younger pupils and those who are newly arrived at the centre are making satisfactory progress partly because they are less settled and partly because the teaching is less good in this part of the centre. Over the last two years, the attainment of pupils on publicly accredited courses has improved significantly, although it remains below the national average.

Pupils' behaviour provides a secure platform for them to make progress. They feel safe and well cared for and they are proud of the centre. They are learning to be more confident and they respond courteously and with interest to visitors. They are supportive of each other and have good and respectful relationships with staff. They are punctual

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

to lessons and their organisational and self-management skills are improving well. Staff are successful in helping pupils develop their awareness of others and of the consequences of their actions. Their cultural development is satisfactory, reinforced particularly through English and, at Leigh House, art.

Key Stage 4 pupils, in particular, are developing a good understanding of life and workplace skills, both because many lessons make clear reference to these and because many pupils have access to vocational courses and placements on work experience.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

There is some good teaching at the centre, particularly at Leigh House and for the emotionally vulnerable and long-term Key Stage 4 pupils. These lessons contain appropriate levels of challenge for each individual pupil and are well constructed to allow variety and pace. The teachers have good subject knowledge and the activities that pupils are asked to do contribute well to both their learning and their enjoyment. Careful questioning helps staff assess pupils' understanding and tailor their teaching to meet needs. However, there remain some lessons in which explanations are muddled. In

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

some, the structure of the lesson is not built on incremental steps and does not therefore support learning. Some teachers do not check whether the pupils have understood the learning and move on to new ideas too soon, while others dwell too long on basics.

The centre has developed a very flexible curriculum that enables individual pupils in all groups to follow courses that specifically meet their needs, aspirations and interests. The range of provision is wide, including accredited courses at different levels, some of which offer good vocational learning. This is supplemented by a sharp focus on helping pupils catch up on basic skills and by opportunities to attend college courses and undertake work placements. Non-medical full-time pupils have experience of a wide range of sporting activities through Youth Options and those studying at Leigh House have regular tuition at an outdoor centre.

Thoroughly planned, regularly reviewed, personalised provision is at the heart of the success that the centre is now experiencing. On all three sites, staff reflect carefully about the needs of each pupil and how best to address them. If pupils need extra support and care, the centre is able to offer drama and play therapy, and staff are quick to engage the services of other agencies and institutions as appropriate for individuals. Lots of good work is done to ensure that pupils move back to mainstream schools or to college, jobs or special schools according to their needs and aspirations. At Leigh House, daily meetings with medical staff enable teachers to have a detailed understanding of the changing emotional and physical state of their pupils and can adapt their expectations, demands and support accordingly. On all sites, the personal and emotional development of pupils is carefully monitored over time.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The centre manager has been dogged in articulating a vision for the centre and driving improvement towards the achievement of the vision. Her methods are systematic and she monitors progress against targets well. She is supportive and encouraging of her staff. At an operational level, her leadership team have put in place a curriculum which is now good and developed good systems for ensuring high quality care and guidance of pupils. However, leaders at this level and at middle leadership level have not yet developed their leadership and quality assurance roles sufficiently. This has meant that the centre has not yet been able to secure consistently good teaching and use of

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

assessment.

Both the management committee and local authority are supportive and challenging of centre leaders. They have done well to formalise partnerships with schools in order to meet the diverse needs of pupils. However, while they are aware of issues concerning the extended leadership team, they have not yet found a way to resolve them.

The teacher in charge at Leigh House has developed excellent partnership arrangements with medical staff at the hospital. She analyses different aspects of her service carefully and has used this to improve further the good quality provision, for example in determining where loopholes in the arrangements between medical and education staff at the hospital were affecting the attendance of pupils at the hospital school. As a consequence, this good provision is strongly improving.

Proper procedures are in place to ensure the safety of pupils. Staff are trained and alert to safeguarding issues across the centre. They are able to respond fast and effectively if needed and they keep and review carefully their records in relation to such issues.

As a result of the close attention to individual pupils' needs, the centre ensures that equality is promoted. Nearly all pupils attending the centre have improved their attendance and progress. The work of the centre contributes strongly to many pupils' reintegration into mainstream education or employment and for those that are unwell enables them to maintain their education during their difficulties. Staff have a clear understanding of the diverse nature of the local community and the provision makes a satisfactory contribution to its cohesion. The centre has very positive relationships with most parents and carers and is very supportive of their needs in helping their children.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Views of parents and carers

This inspection was unannounced and there was no time for the school to canvass the views of parents in the usual way. However, the school had undertaken two surveys of parents' views in January, one of which used the template for Ofsted inspection questionnaires to parents. Parents who responded to these were overwhelmingly positive about the centre and the difference that it had made to their children. Their views are summed up by the words of one parent who wrote 'My daughter thoroughly enjoys the experience of attending the unit.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

22 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Bridge Education Centre, Eastleigh, SO50 5EL

I am sure by now that you will have heard the good news that your centre is no longer in special measures. Congratulations! When I visited with my colleague, we were impressed by all the improvements that had taken place and judged that the quality of education is now satisfactory. Satisfactory, that is, with some good bits.

The really special thing about the centre is the way in which staff make sure that each of you, individually, gets just the right support and care, just the right courses to attend, and just the right level of work in lessons. This means that many of you are making good progress and all of you are making satisfactory progress in your learning and emotional and social development. But it is not just the staff who are making the difference. Your behaviour is good, you are prepared to learn and keen to do well. You are respectful of each other and have good relationships. Well done! There is one important thing that some of you now need to work on: attendance. By and large, the attendance at the centre is not good enough. You must all make every effort to attend, whether at the centre or at college or on work placements. You simply cannot make good enough progress if you do not turn up.

Your centre leader has worked very hard to secure improvements. She has been well supported by staff but they now need to develop further their leadership roles. Apart from making sure that your attendance improves, they need to make sure that all the teaching is as good as the best in the centre and that teachers use assessment to enable them to spot if any of you start to fall behind and help you get back on track.

Those of you at Leigh House may be wondering what I am talking about. The provision there has been good since the last inspection and continues to improve. The particular strengths here are the personalised teaching and care that each of you receives. Your teachers work very closely with medical staff and your home schools to ensure that they can offer you the best possible support.

Thank you all for the welcome that you extended to me on my visits to the centre and for answering my questions patiently. I hope that those of you moving shortly to a new building enjoy the experience.

With best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Emma Ing

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.