

Constance Bridgeman Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102794
Local Authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	335970
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Stuart Charlton

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	14–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Mervyn Jennings
Headteacher	Ms Elizabeth Hales
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2006
School address	Redbridge College Site Barley Lane Romford RM6 4XT
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited eight lessons, and held meetings with members of the management group, staff, groups of students, parents and carers, and a representative of the local authority. The inspector observed the centre at work and scrutinised the improvement plan, minutes of senior management and the management group meetings, a range of other documentation and six parent questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- the centre's systems to set challenging targets for all students to determine if these are sufficiently rigorous and robust
- the centre's systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning
- the impact of care, guidance and support on the outcomes for students so that the improvements in students' personal development and their attitudes to learning can be measured
- the roles and responsibilities of leaders, particularly the management group, to determine their effectiveness in ensuring that the centre is performing as well as it can.

Information about the school

The Constance Bridgeman Centre is a pupil support centre (PSC) that serves up to 42 students in Years 10 and 11 who have been permanently excluded from a mainstream school or who have had a managed transfer to avoid permanent exclusion. It is part of Redbridge Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) provision and is also part of a confederation known as the New Rush Hall Group. This is based around the New Rush Hall School, a day special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Constance Bridgeman is one of two PSCs serving Key Stage 4 students in Redbridge and takes those capable of benefiting from study at GCSE level. It operates on two sites, one for Year 10 students based on the Redbridge College campus and another for Year 11 students based in two units on an industrial estate close to the centre of Ilford. All students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The ethnic mix reflects that of Redbridge, being mainly White British, Black British, Black Caribbean and Asian. Many students come from homes where English is not spoken or is not the first language, but none speaks English as an additional language. The gender mix is predominantly male in the ratio of roughly 3:1 male to female, but the referral of girls has increased substantially in recent years, as has the number of looked after children. A new head of centre, who also acts as the EOTAS coordinator for Redbridge, took up post in January 2007.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The Constance Bridgeman Centre provides excellent education for its students. The school's core work of supporting and improving students' behaviour and personal development is excellent and enables them to make excellent progress in developing their confidence and self-esteem. This in turn enables them to gain qualifications which prepare them extremely well for their future. The centre's recent GCSE results show that attainment is broadly average. Given the students' low starting points on entry, this represents excellent progress and good overall achievement. Students' behaviour and attendance improve rapidly from when they first enter the centre. During the inspection this could be seen clearly when comparing the performances of the Year 10 students who have only been in the centre for a short period of time and those in Year 11 who have been there considerably longer. This term, the attendance of Year 11 students has been good and during the two days of the inspection was over 95%. Most students have missed considerable proportions of their education through exclusion; they arrive at the centre with negative attitudes to learning and many show complex behavioural problems. Through the excellent relationships developed with all staff, students learn to manage their own behaviour very effectively so that it is never less than good and for Year 11 it is exemplary. Consequently, students' attitudes to learning are radically improved. Students insist that there have been no incidents of bullying or racial tension in their time at the centre. There were no exclusions in the last academic year which is a significant improvement since the last inspection; as one student said, 'It's like being in a real family; we all help each other.'

The vast majority of parents and carers are extremely pleased with Constance Bridgeman and all speak very positively about the improvements it has made to their children's school work, and more importantly to their lives at home. Support and work in lessons are very carefully tailored to meet the needs of each individual. This ensures that all have equal opportunities for success in school and for a better, more productive future. Through the links with other PSCs in the borough and the EOTAS provision, Constance Bridgeman offers an excellent curriculum. This is based on a wide range of GCSE subjects which can be supplemented, if appropriate, by more vocational and work-related provision within a local college. If student aspirations change they can transfer to more appropriate provision within the other PSCs or EOTAS. These partnerships contribute very effectively in helping students to re-engage in education. The curriculum is further enhanced by a wide-ranging programme of visits and visitors to the centre.

Teaching and learning are excellent because staff know each student, including their needs and backgrounds, extremely well and have high quality assessment information

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on each individual in all subjects. Clear targets are used extremely well by staff and students to drive forward each student's personal and academic progress. The daily staff debrief, when students' performance is reviewed and linked to other aspects of their lives both inside and outside the centre, is particularly effective in ensuring that students get the support they need. The centre has rigorous and robust systems in place which ensure that students' behaviour, attendance and self-esteem and their academic work improve rapidly from a very low base. Throughout the centre, this results in a calm and purposeful working atmosphere which has a very positive impact on raising students' confidence. Systems for ensuring the safeguarding of students are outstanding, being thorough and meticulous.

There have been very significant improvements since the last inspection. The leaders and managers have high aspirations for the centre, and have set a clear path for improvement based on accurate and honest self-evaluation. The centre is highly successful in meeting its rationale of providing students in Year 10 with the personal and academic skills they need to pursue an intensive one-year GCSE programme in Year 11. As a result of this good practice promoted by the new headteacher, the students now attain standards which are very close to those expected nationally. The management group is highly effective in supporting the strategic development of areas that are under its direct control. For example, it ensures that students are safe and secure, that the centre fulfils its statutory requirements and that the curriculum is developed so that it fully meets the needs of all students. In these areas, the centre has clearly demonstrated that it has excellent capacity to improve. However, the management group does not have full delegated budgetary control and the local authority does not always act on its recommendations. This compromises the overall capacity to improve. Although there have been improvements in the accommodation, the Ilford site it is still below the standard expected. There are no windows and the situation on a busy enterprise zone is inappropriate because students can only be allowed outside for short periods of time under very strict supervision by staff. This undermines the centre's efforts to improve the self-esteem of students and is a real concern to staff and students. The relationships with outside agencies, particularly the police, social services and the youth offending teams, are exemplary. As a result, students get the support they need and are helped to change their negative views which have been built up over time. Through the work of the staff, the centre plays a very influential role in promoting the needs of students in pupil referral units in a national and international context. This helps students to appreciate that they can make a difference to their own lives and those of others. The centre does not always use the information from its highly sophisticated management information system to best advantage to ensure that all stakeholders, particularly the local authority, are fully aware of how successful it is.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the centre's efforts to raise students' confidence and self-esteem are fully supported by:

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- improving the situation and quality of the accommodation at the Ilford site
- using information from the management information system more effectively so that all stakeholders are aware of how successful it is.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Since the last inspection the centre has increased significantly the proportion of its students whose interest in learning and participation in education has been rekindled. Standards have improved year on year and for the last two years the number of students obtaining five or more GCSE passes at grade A* to C is very close to that expected nationally. This represents good achievement and excellent progress. The inspection findings show that the present students, particularly those in Year 11, are on course to attain at a similar level.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This is based on the high expectations established by all staff and the role models they present to students. Despite the issues concerning the situation of the Ilford site, students feel safe. Students develop a healthy lifestyle and keep fit through timetabled physical education lessons and out-of-school activities, which involve a high proportion of students. They have responded very well to the healthy food options available at lunchtime and break. A good number have taken advantage of information about tobacco and drug abuse to change their lifestyle. All students have made significant improvements in their attendance and attitudes to school. Parents and carers are keen to point out that the interest of their children in education has successfully reawakened so that they now enjoy coming to school. Students confirmed this, saying that 'lessons are fun' and 'this place rocks'. Students make a positive contribution to their immediate community through fund raising activities and peer mentoring. They gain literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) qualifications, as well as other skills, which are an excellent preparation for life after they leave the centre.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2

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

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Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are radically improved since the last inspection. A particularly good example was an excellent English lesson where the teacher very successfully challenged a group of Year 11 students to read and analyse a poem about the First World War. All staff develop excellent relationships with the students in their classes. These are strengthened through individual mentoring and tutorial sessions and form the basis upon which staff are able to challenge students successfully to manage their own learning and behaviour. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and set high expectations. Teachers' planning is thorough and clearly indicates the targets that are set for behaviour, attitudes and attendance and how these will be met. Excellent written feedback is given to students about how to gain the next grade. Within Constance Bridgeman, the GCSE subjects are very carefully tailored to students' needs and aspirations and the limitations imposed by the accommodation. For example, despite having no specialist science provision, the centre provides opportunities to study single- and double-award science and students gain good grades. The wide range of out-of-school activities and visits, as well as visitors into the centre, enables students to extend their interests and become involved in new ventures.

Care, guidance and support are exemplary and ensure that pupils' personal development is excellent. The cornerstone is the commitment and time that all staff devote to the personal mentoring system which is such a strong feature of the provision. Students are quick to acknowledge the difference this has made, not just to their performance in school, but in their home lives as well. Many are able to explain the challenges they face and their response in trying to implement the ethos promoted by the centre in their life outside. They are given good guidance about careers and opportunities available when they leave the centre. They are very supportive of the centre's rewards system for good behaviour, work and attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
	1

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides clear vision and direction about how provision should develop and has substantially improved all aspects of provision, particularly teaching and learning, since taking up her post. She is very ably supported by the two deputy headteachers and together they have established a very strong team of teachers and support staff to drive forward improvement. This teamwork is a real strength of the centre and enables excellent communications both within and across the two sites. The centre promotes community cohesion extremely well. There are excellent links with local schools and colleges and with the centre's immediate neighbours. Equality of opportunity is promoted through every aspect of the centre's work.

An excellent management information technology system has been developed which gives quick and easy access to a wide range of data about student performance. It is used extremely well within the centre to monitor and evaluate provision, including teaching and learning, and give a clear view of strengths and weaknesses. However, the centre does not always make best use of it to promote how successful it is with all its stakeholders, particularly with the local authority. Support for teachers new to centre is very good and enables all staff to quickly develop their practice and give of their best in identifying and addressing the needs of the students.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Views of parents and carers

Only a small number of parents and carers returned the questionnaire but the views expressed in these confirm those derived from the centre's own parental questionnaires, and those of the inspector. Almost all are completely satisfied with all aspects of the centre's work and the positive effect it has on their children: one parent wrote, 'This is the first school that my daughter has been happy to go to'; and another said, 'Since being at Constance Bridgeman my son has changed greatly for the better.' Parents and carers indicated that they are particularly pleased with the information they receive about their children's progress, the help that the centre gives them to support learning and behaviour at home. They are very happy with the ways in which the centre provides a safe and secure environment in which students are successfully challenged to manage their own behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Constance Bridgeman Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 6 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 34 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	33	3	50	0	0	1	17
The school keeps my child safe	1	17	5	83	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	17	3	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	6	100	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	1	17	4	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	6	100	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	0	0	5	83	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	6	100	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	33	4	67	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	17	5	83	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	17	4	67	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	1	17	5	83	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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.



6 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Constance Bridgeman Centre, Ilford RM6 4XT

Thank you for all the help you gave me when I visited Constance Bridgeman. I very much enjoyed talking to you, sitting in on your lessons and listening to your interesting views on the centre and some of the developments you would like to see.

You all told me that the centre makes a great difference to your behaviour and attitude to education and learning and that this sets you up very well for a more positive future. You said that the centre provides you with excellent education, care, support and guidance and I agree with you. The staff have the highest expectations of you and lay down clear guidelines for you to follow. The atmosphere in the school is very happy, relaxed and productive. You clearly enjoy coming to the centre each day and told me what a difference it has made to your lives. The staff work very hard to keep you safe and healthy, and you are given extremely interesting activities to do in the centre and at the end of the day. The centre's use of community facilities and its partnerships with other schools and colleges help towards this too. Teaching is excellent so that you make outstanding progress and achieve well.

The Centre is extremely well led and managed. The staff are very keen to do their best for you and are always evaluating their work to see how to develop it further. I was pleased to see that so many of you attend regularly. In fact, on the two days I was with you your attendance was over 95% which was excellent. To make Constance Bridgeman even better I have asked that the accommodation at Ilford is improved significantly and that the centre makes it clear to everyone how good it is.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Charlton

Lead inspector

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