

The Bridge At Hadley Learning Community

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123635
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	340383
Inspection dates	24–25 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Jeffery Plumb

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Bell
Headteacher	Heather Davies
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2006
School address	Waterloo Road Hadley Telford
Telephone number	01952 387 108
Fax number	01952 388 504
Email address	heather.davies@taw.org.uk

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

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors spent twelve hours observing 25 teachers teach lessons. They held meetings with the Chair of Governors, pupils and staff focus groups. They looked at a wide range of evidence, including data on pupils' progress, attendance data, curriculum planning, individual education plans, safeguarding policies, the school's development plan, two case studies of pupils in vulnerable circumstances and 85 questionnaires from parents and carers. They observed the transport arrangements at the end of the day.

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

- the progress made by groups of pupils with different special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the use of assessment data to plan specific and relevant learning outcomes for pupils in lessons
- the school's use of its specialist status to benefit both pupils within the school and other pupils within the community beyond its own walls.

Information about the school

The Bridge At Hadley Learning Community provides for pupils with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. It has an assessment nursery with 40 places for children undergoing assessment. All of the pupils in the main school have a statement of special educational needs. Boys outnumber girls. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is the number from families where English is not the home language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. There are nine looked after children on roll. The school is co-located with a mainstream school in purpose-built premises and has specialist business and enterprise status.

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

1

Main findings

The Bridge provides an outstanding quality of education. Each pupil is viewed not as a person with a disability, but as an individual with a valuable difference who is able to learn and succeed. Inspirational leadership from a passionate headteacher supported by a dedicated staff team ensures every barrier to learning for pupils with disabilities is removed. The use of technology, amazingly effective joined up working between therapists and education staff, and dynamic personalised curriculum plans for each pupil lie at the heart of successfully removing barriers to learning. Consequently, pupils' achievements are outstanding. Parents and carers are thrilled with what this school achieves for their children.

Specialist programmes enable pupils to become more independent in their movement, feeding and toileting. A dynamic curriculum driven by enterprise projects and supported by consistently high quality teaching, which sparkles and engages pupils' interest, develops pupils' job readiness and life skills exceptionally well. In a 'total communication' environment pupils learn to express themselves with confidence using symbols, pictures, signs and speech as appropriate to them. As they develop excellent communication skills their anxieties fade and they become confident young people. Focusing on the development of pupils' most important skills for independence and communication alongside their academic targets ensures that the needs of each pupil are exceptionally well met.

Through its innovative outreach work the school supports the community exceptionally well in improving its understanding of working with pupils with a disability. For example, it provides training for a local dentistry surgery on effective communication for pupils with disabilities. Inclusion opportunities for pupils have brought enormous academic and social benefits for them, but also changed the attitude of mainstream pupils towards disability. As mainstream and disabled pupils learn and play together they blend as one harmonious community, enriching and supporting each other to grow as mature young people.

In this deeply reflective school, analysis of performance in every aspect of its work is thorough. The headteacher ensures that the views of pupils, parents/carers, governors and all staff feed the actions for improvement. Decisive actions following accurate self-evaluation result in very significant improvements. Given the success of actions to raise pupils' achievement through the use of assessment in all areas of their lives since the last inspection, the capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding, as is the value for money provided by the school.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the school's leadership continues to challenge all staff to sustain pupils' outstanding achievement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

All groups of pupils, except for those in regression because of their severe medical conditions, make outstanding small stepped gains in learning in lessons. From very low starting points, pupils make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. As pupils communicate their needs with increased independence they make rapid gains in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils with autism become increasingly equipped with readiness to learn skills. This is a mountainous achievement for these pupils. Achievements in mathematics are outstanding. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties experience a straight line as they track lights with their eyes in the sensory room. By the end of Key Stage 4, the vast majority of pupils with severe learning difficulties and autism can shop using money and wait for the cashier to give them change. Exceptionally well developed information and communication technology skills support pupils in communicating choices and controlling their learning across a wide range of subjects. For example, in drama pupils with severe learning difficulties use multiple switches to shape the direction of a story as one moment they bring in a thunder sound and later a rain sound. Overwhelmingly, pupils enjoy school and have a positive attitude to learning as evidenced by their keenness to attend. Authorised absence is due to some pupils requiring long stays in hospital. Behaviour is outstanding. This is a credit to the school's skilful behaviour management strategies, as provision is made for some pupils with very challenging behaviours associated with their autism. Outstanding enterprise projects equip pupils with important work-related skills. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community. They exercise their voice through the democratically elected school council, which in turn confidently makes suggestions on how to bring about improvements within the school. Pupils, by their smiling faces, indicate that they feel safe within school. The pupils who met with the inspection team stated clearly that they all have an adult whom they trust in school and with whom they talk through any difficulties they experience. Those who spoke with inspectors also said they value healthy snacks and understand the importance of taking regular exercise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are very considerate of each other's views and beliefs, and have a finely-tuned sense of what is right and what is wrong and care for each other.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
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	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is lively and engages pupils' interest. It very successfully accelerates pupils' development and learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work together very effectively to ensure that every pupil is engaged in activities relevant to their needs. For some pupils activities are planned to elicit a flicker of the eye to demonstrate a response. For others, activities are planned to support them in solving problems that occur in setting up and running a business. Within each inclusive class the needs of all pupils are met. Sensitive positioning, modifications to furniture and equipment, along with access to a wide range of electronic switches to effect independent communication and choice-making remove barriers to learning for pupils. Each pupil is challenged to reach his or her full potential. In an outstanding horticulture lesson one pupil with a sparkle in his eye answered questions about the importance of compost in growing plants and the tools needed for the task in hand; another gradually worked through her hesitancy to touch mucky soil; and yet another using a touch screen manipulated a computer program to discover what is needed to help a plant grow. Assessments on pupils' achievements in lessons are used immediately and very effectively to plan the next important small steps of learning for them.

Flexibly planned, personalised and tailor-made curriculum programmes meet the needs of pupils exceptionally well. Excellent use of a wide range of technological aids and

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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innovative curriculum programmes enable pupils to develop independence and important life skills. For example, by using suitably modified switches some pupils who were completely dependent on adult support for mobility on entry to the school now steer their wheelchairs confidently and independently. Others using communication passports and electronic devices confidently shop at the supermarket. Interesting and relevant enterprise projects equip pupils with job readiness skills. Accreditation opportunities in Key Stage 4 are very good and all pupils throughout the school have many opportunities to be fully included with their mainstream peers. This accelerates their learning, for example on the catering course, and also supports mainstream pupils in developing a very positive attitude towards disability.

Very effective communication between health professionals, the school's social worker and educational staff ensures that the care needs of pupils are fully met. An extensive range of workshops for parents and carers helps families to support their children's development and learning in the home environment. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the support they receive. Their views are summed up by the parent who says, 'I value the support given to our family that the Bridge gives us, without this wonderful school our lives would be very difficult.' Outstanding intimate care plans ensure that pupils' medical and toileting needs are met with dignity. Pupils are involved, using gesture and signs, in voicing whom they wish to meet their care needs. Teachers and assistants are trained in handling techniques so that pupils are kept safe, for example when lifted in and out of the pool. Induction procedures, including home visits, are outstanding, as are transition arrangements for sixth form students when they leave school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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 and other members of the senior management team, supported by a highly skilled and dedicated staff team, promote a shared and clear vision which focuses on ceaselessly striving to remove obstacles to learning for pupils with very complex special educational needs. In a 'can do culture' pupils are enabled to reach out with confidence and achieve their full potential. Rigorous monitoring of teaching is used effectively to manage change, which benefits pupils. Equality of opportunity for every pupil is a core value which lies at the heart of this school. Inclusion in community activities such as sport and with peers in mainstream colleges and schools is a very

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strong feature of the school's provision. Senior and middle managers are very clear about their roles and responsibilities and work collaboratively to successfully raise pupils' achievement. Very effective management systems and procedures are in place to ensure pupils are safe and secure. At the time of the inspection, child protection procedures fully met government requirements. Risk assessments, including those for pupils' behavioural and medical needs, are detailed and thorough.

Partnerships with local schools and businesses significantly enhance the curriculum opportunities pupils experience and raise their achievement. Important medical clinics held within the school support families effectively and help maintain good attendance. The school successfully supports parents and carers in helping their children to learn. Provision for community cohesion is outstanding. A thorough audit has been carried out and a detailed action plan focuses on raising awareness of disability locally, nationally and globally. The school is at the cutting edge of some pioneering work for pupils with disability with local religious communities and businesses, resulting in changed attitudes towards young people with disabilities. Governance is outstanding. Highly skilled governors provide both very effective challenge and support to the school.

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	1
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are placed in the Early Years Foundation Stage by the local authority. They are all undergoing statutory assessment and leave with a statement. Their special educational needs and/or disabilities and associated challenging behaviours are very complex. The curriculum they experience is exceptionally well planned and the care and

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teaching they receive are outstanding. Consequently, from an extremely low starting point children make outstanding progress, particularly in their development of communication and personal and social development skills. Children on entry with no behavioural boundaries, who engage only in solitary play and with no speech, make rapid improvements. By the time they exit the Nursery the vast majority have reasonable attention spans and are able to access learning with a degree of independence. The outdoor environment is richly resourced with large communication boards and designated areas with fibre optics. This area is used very well to develop children's communication and mathematical skills as well as to promote their physical development.

The dedicated early years' staff team frequently and regularly assess the children and use the assessments to re-align their planning to accelerate the children's development and learning. They encourage the children to run with their interests. For example, a structured adult activity focusing on 'houses for three pigs' was re-directed by a child's interest into making 'Thomas the tank engine', but resulted in very good language development, including mathematical language, for the child.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Partnerships with parents and carers and external agencies are excellent. Parents and carers are fully involved in setting key targets for their children, such as sitting with the family for mealtime and independent toileting. These are often achieved because the nursery staff develop social stories and provide resources such as favourite cups and place mats for the families to use at home with their children to promote these skills. The staff team reflect daily on their practice and manage change very effectively, which benefits the children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

Sixth form students are taught in two classes. Teaching is inspirational, and students make outstanding progress in their development of very important life skills. All students follow a course in everyday living. They go to the local supermarket with shopping lists they have prepared and purchase ingredients to cook their lunch. They learn how to use a washing machine and tumble drier. In their common room they learn about cause and effect as they, with a degree of independence, use a microwave oven. Using signs, symbols and pictures they make choices about the furniture they want in their common room. Excellent use is made of the community to further their life skills and

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independence as they visit the bank and make a signature in a way appropriate to them, and use the library and leisure centre. They access college courses and mix with mainstream peers. Accreditation opportunities are very good. All students are involved in a business and enterprise project. They are involved in decision making and have a clear job role within the business they choose to be part of. They integrate with the public as they sell their products at a market stall.

The quality of care and support is outstanding. Transition arrangements are carefully planned, involving students and their families fully in the process. The leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. There is a strategic plan to extend and improve the business enterprise projects even further and the accreditation opportunities for students are kept under constant review to ensure that they are the very best for the students.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Returns from questionnaires indicate that parents and carers are overwhelmingly delighted with what the school achieves for their children. Their views are exemplified by the comments, 'The staff are absolutely FANTASTIC', and 'The headteacher is a credit to teaching and is always friendly and professional to deal with.' Inspectors agree with parents' and carers' views and evidence confirms that they have every reason to be very proud of this quite exceptional school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Bridge At Hadley Learning Community 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 inspection team received 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 185 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	80	17	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	79	18	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	61	72	24	28	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	65	29	34	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	61	72	24	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	65	30	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	67	23	27	2	2	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)	49	58	28	33	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	66	78	18	21	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	61	28	33	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	69	25	29	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	62	73	22	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	74	22	26	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.



26 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Bridge At Hadley Learning Community, Telford, TF1 5NU

We really enjoyed our recent visit to your outstanding school. Your school is exceptionally caring and a very happy place where you are given, as your parents and carers say, 'fantastic opportunities to learn'. The enterprise projects you take part in are all of very high quality.

Here are the main things we found:

Your lessons are challenging, fun and enable you to communicate effectively.

You are given relevant and very interesting and exciting things to do, all of which help you to learn.

The use of technology takes away barriers to learning for you.

Adults, in particular your headteacher, run your school exceptionally well and ensure that your medical needs are fully met and that you are kept safe.

You love coming to school and engage with an exciting range of activities, and your behaviour is excellent.

We have asked your headteacher to ensure that the school continues to meet your needs and to develop your skills so that you manage your adult lives independently and confidently.

Yours sincerely

Jeffery Plumb

Lead inspector

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