
CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	The Bridge Academy
School Address:	Finlay Road

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Unique Reference Number:	100320
Local Authority:	Hammersmith and Fulham
Type of School:	Pupil referral unit
School Category:	Academy
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Number on roll:	135
Executive Headteacher:	Seamus Oates
Head of School:	Andre Bailey
Chair of Governors:	Maria Thomas

Date of last OfSTED inspection:	June 2010
Grade at last OfSTED inspection:	1

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	13-14 December 2012
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

Achievement:	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching:	Outstanding
School Improvement Strategies:	Outstanding
Area of Excellent Practice: Behaviour Management	Confirmed
Impact on Challenge Partnership:	Outstanding

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that The Bridge Academy appears to be firmly within the Outstanding grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report in June 2010.

Information about the school

The Bridge Academy is an alternative secondary school based on three sites. It is part of the Tri-borough partnership (TBAP) working with learners from across the three boroughs who experience difficulty with mainstream school. It provides for learners who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools, those on 'managed moves' to prevent exclusion, and those out of school. All learners have special educational needs and/or disabilities, with a significantly above-average number having a statement of their special educational needs. Most learners are educated at the main Bridge Academy site. Up to 20 are educated at The Childerley, where intensive support is provided for learners on fixed-term exclusions, managed moves and those on the induction programme into The Bridge. Education is also provided at Cobbs Hall for up to 15 learners who require specialized and intensive one-to-one tuition.

Most learners receive free school meals. Six out of ten learners are boys. The ethnic background of learners is mixed and reflects that of the local community. There are well-above average numbers of learners looked after by the local authority. There is a fluctuating population with referrals coming throughout the year. The Bridge Academy has been awarded the national Healthy Schools Award, a national award for information and communication technology (ICT), Investors in People status and is a National Support School. The school is well placed to now become a Teaching School.

Pupil Performance

Achievement is outstanding. Students join The Bridge with low levels of attainment due to the impact of their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many students then make good or outstanding progress and in 2012, 97% of students achieved at least 1 GCSE or equivalent. When compared with FFT data, it is clear that significant numbers of students achieve in line, or above their predicted grades at GCSE. Where the attendance of students is good, these numbers rise markedly. The APS is much higher than that for similar schools.

The 'Opening Minds' cross curricular approach which is complementing the discrete subject approach in KS3 is proving very popular with students, as evidenced by their good attendance to these classes and the excellent achievement of students in KS3. The 2012 results show that these students are on track to achieve well by the end of KS4. The school should now consider extending 'Opening Minds' into KS4 as students respond well to the highly contextual learning that it provides.

CAT scores are used to provide accurate baseline information for each student when they join. There are excellent tracking systems to then monitor their progress and interventions are quickly put in place to support each student in the way they need. The school's very personalised approach to student learning is contributing well to their outstanding achievement. School leaders recognise the need now to track the achievement of groups even more rigorously over time.

Provision for students with statements is very strong and there are very effective links with external agencies. A good range of therapeutic services give students good support and are seen as supporting academic progress as well as personal development.

The Bridge Academy provides the highest quality alternative provision and many students stay until the end of KS4, rather than re-join mainstream. However, where students do return to a mainstream school, their success after reintegration is very well tracked. The dual registration agreement between the school and the PRU around 'ownership' of exam success is highly supportive of the student and ensures that students do not suffer further disadvantage to their education.

The school is now exploring ways to provide additional opportunities for students to be successful in BTEC courses, to reduce the proportions achieving very low GCSE grades.

Academic mentoring in Year 11 is very well planned, has a clear policy and is very well received by students who feel that it provides essential support and networks that may otherwise not be available.

Quality of teaching

During the review 15 lessons were observed across the school. Of these, 12 were at least good, with 8 being outstanding. In all cases, the school and the review team agreed the judgement. This validates the school's own judgement that the quality of teaching at The Bridge is outstanding overall. This is a clear improvement since the previous Ofsted inspection and even since last year's Challenge Partner review and is the result of a highly focussed drive by school leaders. There are many strengths to the teaching, including:

- An outstanding use of data to inform teachers' planning. This is resulting in activities being exceptionally well matched to meet the needs of each student. Teachers draw on previous learning to engage students right from the start of the lesson and provide real-life contexts to which learners can relate.
- Very clear learning objectives so that teachers and students know precisely what the learning in each lesson will be.
- Excellent relationships, based on a good understanding by the teacher of each student. Adults are very good role models and students know exactly what is expected in terms of behaviour and attitude.
- Highly skilled approaches to managing the behaviour of students. Tactical ignoring of some behaviours and skilful questioning and re-focussing of students result in poor behaviour often being quickly turned around. An intelligent use of humour also supports this behaviour management approach.
- Teachers are very resilient and experts at re-focussing students who find concentrating difficult and who are adept at finding ways not to work.
- Good opportunities for students to reflect on their learning – they self-evaluate their work and assess the work of others' when they feel confident to do so.

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge as well as a good understanding about how to use ICT effectively. For example, i-pads are used well and for specific, worthwhile purposes.
- Effective questioning leads students' learning on and encourages students' responses, even when they are reluctant.
- Marking is effective. Students' work is well presented and shows pride in their work.

To further increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, the school should now ensure that:

- mathematical skills and vocabulary are emphasised in lessons as strongly as are English skills and vocabulary.
- marking is consistently formative across every subject.
- learning is more often structured into smaller parts to increase independent learning and limit the amount of time for teacher talk.

School Improvement Strategies

There are exceptionally strong management systems in place across the school. ICT is very well used to ensure all aspects link strongly together, through the clever use of SIMS and Bluewave Swift. School improvement planning across the three boroughs is consistent and shared. As one centre within the TBAP, The Bridge Academy also has its individual programme for school improvement which is monitored both by the school and the management committee. The Executive Headteacher provides very strong leadership of the TBAP and the Head of School has very successfully continued the outstanding leadership of The Bridge. The strong leadership team share a vision for the Bridge as well as for the TBAP and all policies and practice support the articulated ethos. The very evident improvement in the quality of teaching is testament to the highly effective leadership of The Bridge.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

Behaviour Management

This is a key strength of the school. It is very well managed through the use of ICT to record each and every incident. The induction of students includes a sharing with them and their parents of the school's guiding principles of behaviour management and learning entitlement. All staff follow the procedures where behaviour is not appropriate and this supports a safe environment. The close analysis of behaviour provides a comprehensive profile for each student, linked to their achievement and attendance. This then informs interventions. In this way, the academic and personal development of each student is closely tracked and supported. This is clearly an area of excellence which will support schools within the TBAP as well as within Challenge Partners.

Quality of Impact on Challenge Partnership

The quality of the school's impact on the provision for vulnerable youngsters continues to be significant and extensive through the sharing of the expertise of its highly skilled staff. The Executive Head has a high profile as a leader of PRUs and helps shape national policy. Incredibly open to sharing its own practice, including through review, the school strongly reflects the moral commitment to partnership working for the benefit of all students, and a complete lack of any complacency.

This Review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.

*OLEVI
June 2011*