

The Bridge AP Academy

Finlay Street, London SW6 6HB

Inspection dates

2–3 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher, supported by the head of school, chief executive officer and directors, enables pupils to behave and achieve well. Pupils feel valued and are interested in their learning.
- From low starting points, pupils make good progress, including in English and mathematics, because of good teaching.
- Results have risen this year and all Year 11 pupils gain appropriate qualifications, including work-related ones.
- Therapy is playing an increasingly positive role in helping pupils to control their emotions so that they can learn well.
- Pupils' behaviour improves the longer they stay at The Bridge and they generally behave well. They feel safe and secure in school.
- Safeguarding is effective. All staff receive regular training and updates to ensure that they are up to date with the latest guidance.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. They gain a good understanding of how people from different cultures contribute to life in modern Britain.
- Governance is strong. Directors visit the school often and have a good grasp of its work. They ask leaders increasingly challenging questions to hold them to account for pupils' progress.
- The school does not currently collect and hold centrally full enough information on each pupil's progress. A new system is currently in the process of being implemented, but it is too early to judge its effectiveness.
- Some pupils are over-reliant on adults to support their learning and behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance improves while they remain at The Bridge, and for most it is significantly better than at their previous schools. However, a minority of pupils do not attend regularly enough.
- Staff benefit greatly from the trust's extensive training and development programme to improve their practice. However, the programme providing coaching for individual teachers is not fully developed.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve leadership and management and the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - the school's new assessment system is fully established
 - the school's coaching programme for teachers is intensified so that more pupils are enabled to make good or better progress
 - pupils who are now persistently absent attend school more regularly
 - pupils become less reliant on adults to support their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- With the support of the chief executive officer and trust directors, the new senior leadership team has established a culture of high expectations and success for every pupil. Through the school's guiding principles, coupled with effective teaching, pupils who were previously disillusioned with their schooling are helped to behave and achieve well.
- Staff at all levels provide good role models for pupils, helping them to develop more positive attitudes to learning and to manage their behaviour appropriately. This is despite the significant personal challenges in pupils' lives.
- The curriculum is continually reviewed and revised so that it is relevant to the pupils. Since the last inspection, many new GCSE and work-related courses have been added. In September 2016, key stage 3 was reorganised so that pupils are now taught in a nurture class to provide extra support and guidance. Early indications show that pupils' behaviour and academic progress are improving at a faster rate than in previous schools. Pupils enjoy attending the many enrichment activities, such as chess, rugby and debating.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through visits to places of interest in London and locally. These outings, together with an interesting range of subjects, enable pupils to understand how people from different cultures and backgrounds contribute to life in modern Britain.
- Pupils receive helpful and effective careers guidance and advice. All Years 10 and 11 pupils take part in interesting work-experience placements, ranging from the local pet shop to a hair and beauty salon.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The use of additional staffing, new reading resources and an increase in appropriate courses are helping pupils to concentrate on their learning and improve their behaviour and self-confidence.
- Staff at all levels are very positive about the many training opportunities available to them, including the annual five-day, trust-wide conference. Leaders have been particularly successful in developing their own staff so that they gain promotions, both in the school and beyond. For example, since the last inspection, 21 staff members have achieved qualified teacher status through the Teaching School Alliance.
- Effective performance management arrangements are used to set challenging targets for staff to improve the quality of their teaching. Leaders are increasingly effective in monitoring the quality of teaching. However, they have not yet made the best use of the staff-coaching programme to ensure that teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress.
- The school's own surveys show that most parents are very supportive of its work. Parents believe that their children are safe and they would be happy to recommend the school to other parents.
- Local authority officers have worked effectively with school leaders to ensure that there is close working between the different organisations to support the most vulnerable

pupils. They hold the school's work in high esteem which gives them confidence to refer pupils with increasingly complex needs and difficulties.

- Effective performance management arrangements are used to set challenging targets for staff to improve the quality of their teaching. Leaders are increasingly effective in monitoring the quality of teaching. However, they have not yet made the best use of the staff-coaching programme to ensure that teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress.
- In September 2016, leaders introduced a new assessment system designed to track the progress of pupils across a full range of their studies and personal development. It includes information on attendance, behaviour, academic progress and the impact of therapies. Leaders are currently relying on staff comments rather than on information that is collected and stored centrally. Consequently, not all staff have access to it. The system is in the early stages of implementation but it is too early to judge its overall effectiveness.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Directors are passionate about improving the lives of the most vulnerable pupils in the borough. They visit regularly and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve. Board members bring considerable expertise and experience to their role. They have a good grasp of pupils' performance data and are able to ask leaders increasingly challenging questions about pupils' achievement.
- Directors keep a watchful eye on the performance management arrangements for all staff. They have a good understanding of the process and check the evidence of teachers' performance to see whether or not it appropriately supports any salary increases.
- The school's finances are carefully monitored through rigorous internal checks that are externally audited to ensure that the best value is achieved. Directors have ensured that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely and is having a positive impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others. However, they and the senior leaders acknowledge that they have not ensured that the most recent information about this funding is published on the school's website.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safety of pupils is a high priority for the school. High levels of staff supervision – around the school site, on trips and visits, at work placements and when attending sport and leisure venues – help to keep pupils safe.
- The school's comprehensive safeguarding policy reflects the Secretary of State's most recent guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016). It contains references to, and contact details for, the local authority safeguarding officers. All staff training, including that for the designated and deputy safeguarding leads, is up to date. Staff were able to demonstrate the impact of training. For example, in discussion with an inspector, they described how they would spot the signs that pupils may need early help.

- Staff are tenacious in their reporting and following-up of any concerns with external agencies. This is to ensure that the best outcomes are secured for the most vulnerable pupils and their families so that they receive the help they need in a timely manner.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The school's information shows that effective teaching over time has enabled pupils to fill in the gaps in their learning and to acquire new skills.
- Pupils receive helpful advice, tailored to the requirements of each subject and to their individual needs. This is in line with the school's current assessment policy.
- Overall, pupils' improving attitudes to their studies generally result in lessons running smoothly. When pupils do not behave well, staff are skilled at calming tense situations so that lessons can carry on as planned.
- Staff know pupils' needs, abilities and skills well. Skilled learning support professionals provide effective one-to-one support to enable pupils to concentrate on and benefit from their individual activities. Pupils are very appreciative of this support. One told the inspectors that all staff in the school 'always want you to do your best and they won't give up on you.'
- English lessons make a strong contribution to extending pupils' understanding of grammar and vocabulary. For example, Year 11 pupils watched and listened to a television documentary. They then confidently read and discussed their answers after finding suitable alternative similes and metaphors.
- The teaching of mathematics makes a strong contribution to developing pupils' skills in the subject, which are readily applied to their work-related learning, for example in construction and cooking.
- Teaching is not outstanding because the new assessment system has not yet collected and stored centrally the full range of information about each pupil's progress, so that all staff have access to it. This new system is currently being implemented, but it is too early to judge its effectiveness.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Respectful and warm relationships between pupils and staff are the foundation on which the pupils make good personal and academic progress. Pupils feel valued and are interested in their learning.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors reported that 'no one bullies here'. This is because staff regard the school as 'one big family', where pupils are well supervised at all times. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and how to stay safe while using the internet and travelling in the local community. As a result, pupils feel very safe in school.

- Staff work effectively with external agencies to help keep pupils safe, so that they in turn learn how to keep themselves safe. The recently appointed lead therapist for the trust is clear about the role and impact of therapeutic services. The school's information shows that therapy is playing an increasingly positive role in helping pupils to control their emotions so that they can learn well.
- Pupils reported that staff are available to help them to calm down when they feel angry or upset and are always ready to listen to their problems. One pupil summarised this by saying: 'This school is better than mainstream because teachers help you more and give us the time and attention we need.'
- Pupils' attendance improves the longer they remain at The Bridge, and is significantly better than at their previous schools. Although attendance is monitored effectively, the school's records show that there is a significant minority of pupils who find it difficult to attend school and are absent too often. The school has already implemented measures to tackle this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils often join the school with negative attitudes to school and learning. Once they have accepted the school's expectations, they steadily acquire the necessary skills for dealing with their anger and emotions so that they are able to approach their studies more positively.
- The school's records show that the longer pupils are at The Bridge, the better their behaviour generally becomes. Staff manage any unacceptable behaviour in a calm and skilled way so that pupils can resume their learning quickly.
- All staff receive suitable training in physical intervention techniques. The school's effective monitoring records of these actions show that they are used very sparingly and only when all other strategies have been tried. Similarly, fixed-term exclusions are also used as a last resort and have declined this year. For those pupils who attend training away from the school site, there are effective arrangements for checking their attendance, punctuality, behaviour and safety.
- Overall, relationships are positive between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves. One pupil reported that they 'like their teachers because they are more understanding than teachers at our previous schools, and because they care about you'. Nevertheless, pupils are sometimes over-reliant on staff to guide and support their learning. This is why behaviour is not outstanding.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter The Bridge with gaps in their learning because of erratic patterns of attendance, negative experience of school and poor attitudes to learning. When they arrive, their skills and aptitudes in a range of subjects are checked by staff. Attainment is generally low.
- Teaching-group sizes are small and many pupils join and leave the school at different times of the year. For these reasons, data needs to be interpreted with care, as

analyses of trends or comparisons with national results can be misleading.

- From low starting points, pupils from different backgrounds make good progress in their learning because they are well taught. Once they have accepted the school's high expectations, they form positive relations with each other and their teachers, and generally value each other's contributions in class.
- Inspectors' observations of learning, and evidence gathered from reading of workbooks, show that pupils make good progress across a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- During their time at The Bridge AP Academy, pupils improve their skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Those who are falling behind are given extra help to catch up and to improve their literacy skills.
- Almost all pupils gain GCSE and work-related qualifications. Pupils have many real-life opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in their work-related courses. Those who attend off-site training make good progress in their courses. Their progress and achievement are carefully checked so that they gain external qualifications. Some of them proceed to apprenticeships or extended work placements in areas related to the courses they have taken.
- In 2016, the provisional results for Year 11 pupils show that almost all pupils gained five or more GCSE passes at A* to G grades, with one in four pupils gaining five or more higher GCSE grades. This represents a significant improvement on the previous year's results, particularly for the most able pupils.
- The most able pupils, including the most able who are disadvantaged, as well as other groups of pupils, benefit greatly from the school's strong focus on developing their reading skills. The less able readers develop their phonics skills well so that they become more confident in using sounds to read new words. The most able readers read with fluency and intonation which reflect their good understanding of the text. Leaders and governors have ensured that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' positive experiences of the world of work, together with the school's excellent partnerships with local businesses and colleges, ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. In 2016, almost all pupils proceeded to further education, training or apprenticeships.
- The attendance of a significant minority of pupils who find it difficult to attend school regularly has had a negative impact on their progress and achievement.

School details

Unique reference number	139509
Local authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	10005561

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Paul Dix
Executive headteacher	Krishna Purbhoo
Telephone number	0207 610 8340
Website	www.tbap.org.uk/bridge
Email address	bridgeadmin@tbap.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 May 2013

Information about this school

- The Bridge AP (TBAP) Academy caters for up to 150 boys and girls aged between 11 and 16 who have a range of complex needs, including social, emotional and mental health difficulties and behaviour difficulties. There are more boys than girls.
- TBAP is a national support school and was the founder school of TBAP Multi-Academy Trust and TBAP Teaching School Alliance.
- Almost one third of all pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, with most pupils having additional special educational needs.
- The school provides a range of services to local schools to help prevent exclusion and manage pupils' behaviour.
- Just over two thirds of pupils are supported by the pupil premium funding, which is almost three times the national average.

- Two thirds of all pupils are from minority ethnic groups. This is well above the national average, with the largest groups being from other mixed backgrounds and Black Caribbean heritage. A third of pupils are White British.
- Additional alternative provision is made available for pupils to study appropriate courses at:
 - Westside School, Hammersmith
 - Epic Learning, Ladbroke Grove
 - PPP Community School, Ladbroke Grove
 - TLG West London, Hammersmith.
- Off-site training is made available for pupils to extend their learning experience. The school offers the following activities:
 - horse riding at Littlebourne Equestrian Farm, Harefield
 - assault course training at Nuts Challenge Events, Surrey and Hillingdon Activity Centre
 - motivation and self-confidence at Jamie’s Farm, Hereford
 - wall climbing at Westway sports centre, Ladbroke Grove
 - canoeing at Canalside Activity Centre, Ladbroke Grove
 - swimming at Putney Leisure Centre
 - trampolining at Flip-out, Wandsworth
 - go-karting at Teamsport Go, Acton
 - ice skating and ten pin bowling at Queens Ice Rink & Ten Pin Bowling Alley, Queensway
 - skiing at Snow Zone, Milton Keynes.
- A third of pupils across the school are involved with the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) because of their social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Pupils are not entered early for examinations.
- The school does not receive Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum and additional government funding on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education (DfE) guidance on what academies should publish about the curriculum and additional government funding on its website.
- Since the last inspection in May 2013, there have been a number of new staff appointments. The executive headteacher, the interim headteacher and the interim director of learning took up their appointments in September 2016.
- There are firm plans in place for the refurbishment of the school site to begin in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. They made 22 visits to classrooms, all of them jointly with senior leaders. They held informal discussions with pupils and listened to them reading in class.
- There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View) to make analysis meaningful. Inspectors took into account the school's own analysis of the views of pupils and parents.
- There were no responses to the questionnaires for staff or pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the executive headteacher, the head of school, the chair of the board of directors, trust and school staff and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed key documents and policies, including those related to safeguarding, and scrutinised pupils' workbooks and learning files and the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection team

David Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

James Waite

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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