

The Constance Bridgeman Centre

Redbridge College Site, Barley Lane, Romford, RM6 4XT

Inspection dates 20–21 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The centre makes good provision for students and helps them to achieve well. By the time they leave, the vast majority have secured appropriate placements to continue their education or training for work and future life.
- Students are taught well and develop secure basic skills in literacy and numeracy before they leave the centre. Staff provide considerable support and guidance to students to help them with their learning.
- An outstanding feature of the centre is the way in which students are helped to change their behaviour, their attitudes to learning and the way in which they react to authority figures. Consequently, students learn to become less confrontational, listen more to others and manage their own behaviour in a much more positive way than when they first arrive.
- The secure and caring environment ensures students are kept safe and feel safe at the centre.
- The centre is well led and managed. The head of the centre sets a very positive tone which creates a good working atmosphere and provides staff with a clear sense of purpose. He is very well supported by the deputy head of centre and the executive headteacher.
- A close eye is kept on the quality of teaching and provision. Staff training and support, linked closely to identified areas for development, ensure teaching improves.
- The management committee, which is relatively new due to recent reorganisation, is provided with good information to enable it to have an effective oversight of how well the centre is performing. It, together with the local authority, ensures that the centre meets legal requirements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking and checks of students' ongoing progress are not consistent across the centre.
- Links with mental health services are a gap in otherwise outstanding partnerships with other agencies.
- The local authority has not secured stable staffing or entire clarity in the centre's budget.
- Members of the management committee do not visit the centre enough to gain first-hand experience of the provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons, and these were seen jointly with the head of the centre. In addition, a few shorter visits were made to lessons to focus on specific aspects such as the quality of learning or development of basic skills in literacy.
- The inspector observed the afternoon activities, including an off-site activity.
- A school council meeting was observed and the inspector talked to students informally about their work and experiences at the centre.
- Meetings were held with the head of the centre, deputy head of centre, the Chair of the Management Committee, who is also the local authority representative, and the executive headteacher. A phone call was made to the business manager of the federation running the centre.
- The inspector held additional discussions, either by telephone or face to face with representatives of a range of partner organisations, including Redbridge College, the police, the education welfare service, the youth offending service, a local secondary school and the careers service.
- Although the inspector checked the online questionnaire for parents and carers, Parent View, for responses from parents throughout the inspection, not enough parents had logged on to provide an analysis.
- A range of documentation was examined. This included: information on students' performance; the school's own analysis of its strengths and weaknesses; improvement plans; safeguarding and behaviour policies and records; reports and minutes for meetings of the management committee, and records and documents relating to the performance of teachers.

Inspection team

Gulshanbir Kayembe, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The centre is part of a larger federation called the New Rush Hall Group, which comprises a group of settings that cater for the needs of pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The group includes a special school, a behaviour support outreach team, three pupil support centres, of which the Constance Bridgeman Centre is one, an adolescent psychiatric unit and an Early Years unit.
- The New Rush Hall Group has an executive headteacher who has oversight of all the settings in the provision, including the Constance Bridgeman Centre. There is a centre-based head who manages the day-to-day running of the unit. He has been in post since November 2012.
- Governance arrangements include a recently reorganised management committee and a governing body whose members were formerly part of the management committee. Both the management committee and the governing body work across the federation.
- The centre makes provision for students in Key Stage 4, catering for up to 40 students. There are significantly more boys than girls at the centre.
- A very small number of students are dual-registered i.e. on the roll of the centre and the roll of the school they have come from. Most students are on the roll of the centre only.
- Students represent a wide range of ethnic groups, including minority ethnic groups. None are beginners in English.
- The proportion of students entitled to additional support through the pupil premium (the extra government funding given to the school on the basis of the numbers known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after, or whose parents serve in the armed forces) is well above average.
- All students have special educational needs for behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. About 10% have a statement of special educational needs.
- Just over a third of students have involvement with the youth offending service.
- The school makes arrangements for a small number of students to attend alternative provision; this includes the Redbridge Tuition Centre, placements at local colleges such as Barking and Dagenham College and with the Youth Offending Service.
- The centre underwent significant reorganisation last year. It was on two sites, with Year 10 students based on one site and Year 11 on the other. Renovations to the Redbridge College site were undertaken so that it could accommodate both groups from the start of September 2012. Teachers working on fixed term contracts following this reorganisation have not had these ratified. About half the teachers are on fixed-term contracts currently.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and accelerate achievement by:
 - ensuring that when students' work is marked, comments from all teachers and in all subjects provide clear guidance to students on what they need to do to improve their work
 - developing the use of information on students' ongoing progress to set work at the right level of difficulty and to actively engage students in lessons
 - establishing consistent systems for tracking students' progress over time across all subjects so that it is easier to compare how well they are doing in different areas.
- Improve the leadership and management of the centre by ensuring the local authority:
 - makes teaching posts and the post of head of centre substantive as soon as possible
 - makes funding arrangements more transparent, especially in terms of identifying clearly the amount of pupil premium money that the centre is receiving

- encourages members of the management committee to visit the centre to develop first-hand knowledge of its work
- helps the centre to establish the right partnerships with the health service to secure better mental health support, counselling and therapies for students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students arrive at the centre with very low levels of attainment. Students are on average three to four years behind in their learning, including in English and mathematics, when they join. While at the centre, they begin to narrow the gap between their attainment and that of students nationally because of the good support they receive.
- By the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 4, students' standards of work are still below average. However, most have achieved credible results in GCSEs and other alternative vocational qualifications. These enable them to find suitable placements to continue their education or training successfully after the age of 16.
- Students make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, gaining a sound foundation in both. The use of computers helps them to further develop skills for work and their future lives. In addition, when students are writing using a word processor, the quality of their work improves considerably and some students show real creativity and imagination in their writing in English.
- Students also make good progress in other areas. Standards of work are often better in subjects such as art, and close to national averages.
- The activities in the afternoons usually provide students with good opportunities to develop life skills and extend their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, students develop skills such as cooking meals, which they do in the food technology rooms of the special school that is part of the same federation.
- Students also benefit from the federation in that if they have difficulty settling into the centre, they are provided with an alternative placement at another facility in the federation such as the Redbridge Tuition Service. Those students currently working at alternative sites, such as Barking and Dagenham College and with the Youth Offending Service, are making good progress in their work.
- Students with statements of special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants so that they make similar progress as others. The centre also uses its extensive and strong partnerships with a wide range of external organisations to support individual students.
- The one area where partnerships are not as strong is in the area of mental health and, consequently, the centre is not always able to easily access mental health services such as counselling or therapeutic interventions as and when needed.
- The school's data, and observations of lessons, indicate that students who are eligible for free school meals or in local authority care are attaining as well as others, including in English and mathematics. This is due to the inclusive nature of the centre and the good amount of individual support and tuition that students receive. It is also because the centre has established an effective one-to-one literacy programme which targets reading skills and is taken by a skilled practitioner.
- There are no significant differences in the performance or progress of students from different ethnic groups or on the basis of gender.

The quality of teaching is good

- Strong relationships underpin the good teaching. Consequently students cooperate well with teachers and participate willingly during lessons. Most students want to do well for their teachers.
- Teachers plan lessons effectively and prepare materials with care. Lesson objectives are clear so that students know what they are learning. Some of the outstanding features of teaching include skilful coaching of individual students, which supports learning very effectively.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge is used well in most lessons to deepen students' understanding. Using their knowledge to break down complex ideas into simple, more

manageable ones is an outstanding feature of the best teaching. For example, in one lesson, the teacher provided students with very simple definitions for the terms 'moral', 'ethical' and 'legal'. Consequently, students used these terms exceptionally well, and with understanding, when debating moral and ethical dilemmas from a film they were watching.

- Teachers mark students' work regularly and make corrections in a sensitive but effective way. However, the extent to which teachers draw out the next steps in learning is variable. As a result, some lessons tend to begin with extensive question and answer sessions to find out what students know rather than building on work in books and providing practical tasks that match individual students' levels of learning and help them to progress smoothly and quickly to the next level.
- Teachers organise resources well for students and make good use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning. Activities provided are usually well developed and help students to understand the work successfully. In the best lessons, the activities are interesting and creative and add to students' enjoyment.
- Staff, including teaching assistants, manage behaviour well and are quietly firm with students. For example, in one lesson where a student was unwilling to move seats to sit at a desk, the teacher took the desk to him. The student consequently got on with the work set with the minimum of fuss and no disruption to learning.
- Teachers model speaking skills to encourage students to express their ideas clearly but also to speak in the right tone to others. Subjects provide good opportunities for students to develop and extend their writing skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The centre creates an extremely positive atmosphere which enables students to settle in quickly and to engender a strong sense of belonging. For many students, this is something they have rarely experienced before in a school setting. It enables students to become ready for learning and to establish good attitudes towards their education.
- Excellent role modelling from staff and a calm atmosphere, where staff manage behaviour exceptionally well, mean that the behaviour of individual students improves significantly once they begin attending the centre.
- Behaviour is good in the centre, in lessons and when students go out to other institutions or the afternoon activities. Students know the centre rules and the sanctions that are in place if they do not behave. Incidents of poor behaviour are going down and behaviour is improving. There are relatively few fixed-term exclusions.
- Students grow in confidence in their own abilities during their time at the centre. They readily ask for help when they do not understand work and many show curiosity, asking questions of teachers and other adults. Students enjoy the afternoon activities sessions and work well with one another when given the opportunities to do so.
- Activities such as stable management provide meaningful and memorable experiences. Two students who have been learning to look after a couple of horses in a stable a few miles from the centre have stuck to this over the winter despite difficult weather conditions.
- The centre is safe and students feel safe there. Bullying and other issues of harassment are not significant and are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Where there might be tensions between any two students, either dating back to their mainstream schools or related to issues outside in the community, the centre is able to separate them by using placements elsewhere, such as the Redbridge Tuition Service.
- In the main, though, students from different backgrounds and previous schools get on well with one another. They develop good levels of respect for one another and centre staff. Most have formed a strong relationship with visiting professionals such as the police officer who works with the centre and visits frequently. This has helped them to learn how to keep themselves safer on the streets and also on the right side of the law.
- The centre works very hard on attendance and while this remains low overall, the attendance of

all students improves and, for most, it improves significantly once they join.

The leadership and management are good

- The centre has a clear purpose which is understood by the staff, who work effectively to common goals, the most overarching of which is to ensure students are well prepared for their next steps in education and future life. The centre makes a strong contribution towards keeping the numbers of young people who are unemployed or not in education or training down to a very low level in the local area.
- The head of the centre provides good leadership and, despite the transient nature of his post, is helping to improve the centre and the quality of teaching. There is good feedback to staff on how well they are doing, and insightful advice and guidance on how to make their teaching better. The performance of staff is checked carefully and supported effectively through well-focused training and development.
- Students' performance in examinations is analysed well and the progress of those who are currently in the centre is checked closely. However, different systems are used to track progress in different subjects and strands of learning. This results in some lack of clarity about the progress across different groups and areas. Nonetheless, the centre is clear about how well different students and groups are performing and takes action to support the progress of those who are doing less well. The centre also receives clear information about the progress, behaviour and attendance of students in alternative provision.
- A sound range of subjects are taught at the centre and these are supplemented well by a wide range of worthwhile activities that support students' personal development and life skills.
- The executive headteacher has robust oversight of the work of the centre and provides good support to its senior leaders. He manages their performance and reports to the local authority.
- The strong commitment from staff to the centre's work and the good leadership and management by the interim head of centre and the executive headteacher have ensured that standards have not slipped despite the uncertainty of posts. Indeed, teaching has continued to improve. However, the uncertainty created by fixed term contracts is not conducive to continued improvement. It also makes it difficult to share responsibilities, such as subject leadership, more widely.
- The centre has strong partnerships with a wide range of agencies and other educational institutions. These are less well established when it comes to support for mental health. The local authority has not provided sufficient help to the centre in making links with the local health service to secure better mental health provision for students who need it.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee has been re-constituted to ensure it has representatives from the organisations that are required to work with pupil referral units, though it has yet to secure parent representation. Members receive detailed information about the work of the centre and the performance of staff and students, including data on attendance and behaviour, so they are able to check and challenge its effectiveness. Members of the governing body continue to visit the centre regularly. Visits are made with a clear purpose in mind, for example to check on progress and learning. This enables governors to have good first-hand knowledge of the centre's work. Members of the management committee have yet to develop their first-hand knowledge of the centre and staff, especially senior leaders. While members of both the governing body and the management committee are kept aware of work with students who are eligible for support through pupil premium funding and how well they are doing, the budget allocated lacks transparency about how much of it is pupil premium funding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	102794
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	403770

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	38
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Ronke Martins–Taylor
Headteacher	Tony Clayton
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2009
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