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Mr Christopher Bayliss
Headteacher
The Bridge Education Centre
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Dear Mr Bayliss

Short inspection of The Bridge Education Centre

Following my visit to the school on 18 September 2018 with Julie Sackett, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and other leaders continue to foster a calm, friendly and safe school. The high expectations and respect the staff have for all pupils can clearly be seen. In the words of one of your pupils, 'Teachers believe in you.' As a result of this, pupils try hard and are keen to learn. On the whole, they remain engaged during their lessons and are proud of their achievements.

You and other leaders are passionate about striving to improve the outcomes and future life chances of all pupils. You have successfully tackled issues raised in the last inspection. You have successfully improved teaching and raised the expectations of what students can achieve. Along with other leaders, you have successfully ensured that all pupils continue to make good progress.

You have an accurate view of the effectiveness of the school and ambitious plans for further developments. Along with your other leaders, you have enabled a vastly increased number of pupils to move successfully back to their mainstream school. You recognise that there is still more work to be done to enable even more pupils to achieve this.

Your staff have a very strong understanding of the individual and overall needs of pupils and are committed to preparing them fully for their next stage in life. You have successfully introduced a collaborative style of working, with staff teams focusing on the educational and therapeutic input for pupils. The effective work of these teams, along with the educational psychologist and the personal support worker, has a positive impact on pupils' social, emotional and behavioural development.

The school's management committee is well informed. It has a good level of understanding and knowledge of the school and shares your commitment to improve the life chances of pupils. Parents and carers recognise the hard work you put in to help their children succeed.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements in the school are fit for purpose. Records are well maintained and are detailed and thorough. You have effective communication systems within school, as well as between your school and the pupils' mainstream schools and outside agencies. These systems help to make sure that any concerns are identified and acted upon quickly so that pupils remain safe.

This is a caring, understanding school. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of individual pupils' circumstances and a good awareness of any potential risks they may encounter. Pupils feel safe and secure, and have a good level of awareness of how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Inspection findings

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection. Teachers develop positive relationships with pupils. They make good use of praise and humour to keep pupils engaged in their learning. Teachers ensure that activities closely match what pupils know and understand. This is leading to strong progress being made in lessons.
- The curriculum you offer to pupils is broad and varied, and is tailored to meet their individual needs. Activities offered as part of your active curriculum include football, dry-slope skiing, indoor climbing, canoeing and bush-craft. Pupils appreciate these activities and being able to suggest which activities they can do. The opportunity to take GCSEs, combined with the wide range of other qualifications offered to pupils, helps to prepare pupils well for their future life. Staff work effectively together to ensure that all pupils have access to a completely bespoke curriculum. When devising these curriculums, the emotional, social and learning needs of each pupil are considered fully. As a result, pupils are keen to come to school. They can access all aspects of the curriculum easily, and consequently engage positively in their learning. Your flexible approach ensures that they leave the school with increased resilience and self-confidence.
- Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. Along with other leaders, you make sure that lessons are interesting and are planned to meet the individual needs of pupils. Almost all pupils leave with a healthy range of qualifications. The relevant qualifications they gain help them to proceed successfully to the next stage in their education, employment or training. Last year, every pupil who finished Year 11 at the school went on to either college or work.
- Leaders are insightful and reflective. They closely monitor the progress of each pupil and put in place appropriate additional support when needed to enable pupils to progress well. As a result, pupils make excellent progress with their

behaviour, attendance and attitudes towards learning, as well as making good academic progress.

- The behaviour of pupils is generally good. Behaviour strategies are positive and used consistently across the school. Pupils understand these strategies and learn to use them to manage their own behaviour well. Staff are skilled at dealing effectively with any challenging behaviour, and as a result any incidents of misbehaviour are kept to a minimum.
- Leaders recognise the need to continue to increase the number of pupils who successfully return to mainstream school. Leaders are aware that this important work is most effective when the school provides earlier help to pupils and partner schools.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school develops further the support and advice it gives to partner schools, in order to more fully support those schools' most vulnerable pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Maxine McDonald-Taylor
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

My colleague and I met with you and other leaders. We visited lessons with the academic team leader and one of your assistant headteachers. We met with your school council. We also spoke to some pupils in class and looked through their work. We held meetings with key staff about the progress of pupils, the curriculum, behaviour and safeguarding. We met with one of your governors and spoke with a representative from the local authority. We considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, Parent View, including free-text comments, and we spoke to a parent on the phone. We scrutinised a range of the school's documentation and a selection of pupils' work.