

Inspection of The Bridge at HLC

Waterloo Road, Hadley, Telford, Shropshire TF1 5NQ

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 July 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

The Bridge school is always 'striving for excellence, valuing achievement'. The high ambition from this motto is realised in all the school's work. This school is life-changing for pupils. Pupils who attend the school face significant challenges with learning and in their daily lives. The school enables them to have a voice and develop important life skills. The dignity of the child is always maintained. Pupils make exceptional progress educationally, personally and socially. Parents agree. One comment summed up the views of many when they stated, 'My child is doing things that I never thought possible.'

From the early years onwards, relationships are strong. Pupils love school and develop many friendships. The school is an orderly and often tranquil environment. There are effective routines and high expectations of pupil behaviour. Playtimes, lunchtimes and social times are a further extension of learning. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary.

Pupils' wider development is considered with care and precision. Throughout their time in school, pupils have opportunities to support their local community such as running a horticultural business. Pupils are extremely well prepared for later life. Because of the school's success, some pupils move on to other settings that can support their increasing independence and progress.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, the school has worked tirelessly to strengthen and further develop its offer. The school's curriculum is now extraordinary. It is extremely well thought out. It has a strong foundation in the early years. Core learning is regularly repeated and practised across the curriculum. For example, in design and technology, pupils learn how to use a range of tools. They then practise using these skills in subjects such as art and design.

Highly skilled, well-trained staff deliver the curriculum with precision. Learning links inextricably to pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans and is seamlessly adapted. Staff constantly check on pupils' learning to make sure any gaps are addressed. This consistent approach ensures that pupils thrive in their learning.

Children in the early years make a fantastic start to school. The school provides a 'rainbow of possibilities' for them. Staff ensure that they have the information they need so that children's needs are well met from the start. This enables them to communicate and interact with children from the moment they start school. Children are very well prepared for later school life.

Developing pupils' communication and interaction is the 'golden thread' to learning and life. As soon as possible, pupils learn to use different forms of communication confidently. Pupils develop their use of communication very well over time. For example, they use pictures, symbols, signing and technology at just the right level for their ability. Staff are

highly proficient in teaching pupils to use these approaches. As a result, pupils are able to express their preferences and feelings successfully.

The school promotes pupils' love of reading by immersing them in stories, rhymes and poems. Pupils love sensory stories. For pupils who are not ready to learn phonics, adults help them to recognise and respond to sounds. When pupils are ready, they access a structured phonics approach which staff adapt to meet their individual needs. As a result, pupils develop their understanding of phonics well. Over time, pupils become increasingly confident and fluent readers.

The school has a sharp focus on pupils' attendance. The school ensures that it looks for any patterns in pupils' attendance. It takes appropriate and effective action to ensure that pupils attend school as often as possible.

Pupils behave very well in school because their individual needs are very well understood and met. This enables them to sustain their interest and focus on learning. On the rare occasions pupils struggle to manage their emotions or behaviour, staff are adept in ensuring that they return to learning as soon as possible.

Pupils' personal development is a central pillar of the school. They have many opportunities that go beyond the core curriculum. For example, they go horse riding, fishing and play crazy golf. Experiences enrich the curriculum such as visits from a mobile farm, choirs and a drumming workshop. Pupils learn about careers and the different life options open to them when they are older. All of this gives pupils a valuable set of experiences that they often struggle to access outside of school.

Governors fulfil their responsibility effectively. They support the school well as it continues to refine and improve its provision. Staff say that it is a privilege to work at the school. They are very positive about the support they receive from leaders for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	123635
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10343863
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	4
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Hyner
Headteachers	Emily Tracey and Nicola Davis (Interim co-headteachers)
Website	www.thebridgeschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 September 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The school provides for a very small number of nursery-age children and students in the sixth form.
- The school has a key stage 1 class situated on an additional site.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Since the previous inspection the headteacher has left the school and there are currently two interim co-headteachers in place.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and interaction, reading, PSHE and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the co-headteachers and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with other staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation.
- Inspectors met with representatives of governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils at social times and in formal meetings.
- Inspectors met with staff and took account of the online staff survey.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

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Russell Hinton

Ofsted Inspector

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