

Alternative Education for Looked After Young People in Milton Keynes



Bridge Academy the Context

The Bridge Academy came into being on 1 October 2013, having previously been four separate Pupil Referral Units, known locally as Personalised Education Centres [PECs]. It is one academy dispersed across four geographically sites.

Referrals are made via a monthly Alternative Education Panel, or in some cases on an emergency placement between Panel meetings. Each of the secondary schools in Milton Keynes, plus Milton Keynes Local Authority and Milton Keynes College are represented on the Alternative Education Panel.

- Bridge Academy South, based in the south of Bletchley provides education and support for up to 50 students at Key Stage 3.
- Bridge Academy Central is based in Coffee Hall and Bridge Academy North is based in Stantonbury; cumulatively they support up to 105 students at Key Stage 4.
- Bridge Academy West is based in West Bletchley and caters for up to 40 students at Key Stage 3 and 4. It provides education for students with emotional and medical needs.

Bridge Academy the Curriculum

At Key Stage 3

- The curriculum is very much focused on a mainstream with additional time for working on social skills

At Key stage 4

The aim at Key Stage 4 is for students to exceed their mainstream predicted grades so as to ensure that few, if any, become NEET.

- The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is broad and balanced with six subjects studied at Level 1 and 2 ,English, mathematics, science, ICT, humanities and catering. There is a pathways approach so there are multiple choices around the level of qualification that can be studied and also the way in which the course is delivered. For example, in mathematics and English there are both GCSE and Functional Skills pathways that can be studied at Level 1 or 2. Optional subjects, studied at both Level 1 and 2, include motor vehicle, construction, hair and beauty, art, health and social care, sport, music and animal care.

Bridge Academy Provision

Teaching is in small groups with a usual ratio of six students with two adults. In addition a range of interventions, notably literacy, are offered where necessary. All Bridge Academy students have access to a therapeutic team which includes two psychological therapists, and Educational Psychologist, School Counsellor and a Family Support Worker.

Ofsted (2015) said...The Bridge Academy is a good school because:

- Teaching is consistently good. There has been steady improvement in the quality of teaching since the academy opened.
- The students achieve well, often from starting points which are lower than those typical for their age. A growing minority of students in Key Stage 3 successfully return to mainstream schools.
- The most able students make good progress because of teachers' high expectations of their achievement.
- Teachers know their students well and provide activities which are at the right level. Students enjoy school and what they are expected to learn.

Bridge Academy Outcomes

2015

Region/ Local Authority	Number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4	Percentage of pupils entered for 5+ GCSEs or equivalent	Percentage of pupils at the end of key stage 4 achieving					Average GCSE and equivalents point score per pupil at the end of Key Stage 4	
			5+ GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent	5+ A*-C including English and Maths GCSEs	5+ GCSEs at A*-G or equivalent	A*-C in English and Maths GCSE or equivalent	A*-G in English and Maths GCSE or equivalent		A pass in any qualification
Bridge Academy	53	32.1	3.7	1.9	31.5	3.7	60.4	83	87.8
Milton Keynes	64	26.6	0	0	26.6	0	45.3	65.6	71.5
Buckinghamshire	33	30.3	0	0	15.2	0	48.5	75.8	69.9
Slough	68	25	0	0	19.1	0	4.4	79.4	66.5
Northamptonshire	97	29.9	0	0	24.7	0	41.2	73.2	73.6
Central Bedfordshire	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	54.2	31.6
Luton	28	0	0	0	0	0	25	42.9	33.9
Peterborough	83	3.6	0	0	3.6	0	8.4	53	37.7
South East Average	928	17.9	0.9	0.5	13.4	1.2	17.5	61.1	52.5
National Average	8845	15.1	1.5	1	12.3	2.2	18.9	57.7	52
Bridge Predicted 2016	71	50.7	1.4	1.4	39.4	4.2	64.8	91.5	

CLA attending the Bridge Academy

18 students attended the Bridge Academy during a period of care between 2014-2016 (June 2016)

- 83% of this group came into care during key stage 3 and key stage 4 i.e. between the ages of 12 and 16.
- 11% were in care for more than 3 years
- 11% were in care for at least a year
- 78% were in care for less than 1 year
- 22% moved to placements out of authority
- 50% had 3 or more placements moves
- 11% were remanded in custody for a period of time
- 60% are NEET and 40% are in education and training

The focus group for this report is 6 young people of statutory school age

Focus Group Statistics

- 50% improved their attendance
- 100% had significantly reduced exclusion rates including 50% with no exclusions.
- 66% achieved or are predicted to achieve in line with predicted grades from the secondary school
- 33% received personalised timetables with alternative opportunities offered off site.

Year 11 in the focus group

- 75% are predicted to achieve 8 awards including a combination of GCSEs, functional skills and BTECs.
- 25% have achieved 4 awards .

Case Studies

- Case study A
- Case Study B

Current ways forward and next steps

The Executive Principal of the Bridge Academy and the Virtual School Head Teacher (VSHT) are keen to support the MKC CLA through partnership working between the two organisations.

For example

- The VSHT now attends the alternative education panel, which will allow the VSHT to further challenge for schools, with regards to CLA provision at the point of referral to the Bridge Academy for CLA.
- Recently a professionals meeting between the Bridge Academy Central and the Virtual School and CSC regarding a key stage 3 student has resulted in a clear plan of how this student may be best supported by both organisations.
- An education planning meeting between the VSHT, Social Worker and SLT from the Bridge Academy devised a plan to reintegrate a student on their return to Milton Keynes.