

Bridge Training & Development

A Message from Lord Pickles and Lord Blunkett, followed by Bridge Training & Development's best practice article

The ability to listen and learn from one another has always been vital in parliament, in business and in most aspects of daily life. But at this particular moment in time, as national and global events continue to reiterate, it is uncommonly crucial that we forge new channels of communication and reinforce existing ones. The following article from Bridge Training & Development is an attempt to do just that.

We would welcome your thoughts on this or any other Parliamentary Review article.



Rt Hon The Lord David Blunkett

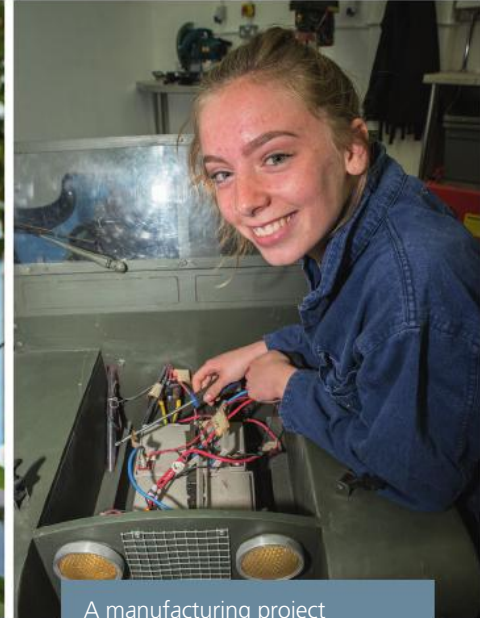


Rt Hon The Lord Eric Pickles

Bridge Training & Development



Headteacher Sue Hornby and Managing Director Neil Hornby



A manufacturing project enabling cross-curricular learning

Bridge Training and Development is an independent special secondary school established in 2007. Starting with two staff and five post-16 trainees on an allotment, the school now has 29 staff on two sites, and in June 2017 was graded “outstanding” in all areas by Ofsted. The majority of its intake have challenging learning needs, many from the care system and some with ASD. As less than half of the staff team come from a teaching background, they naturally think out of the box and have learnt to be unafraid of following our instincts. Managing Director Neil Hornby and Headteacher Sue Hornby say the journey from a small charity to independent school has been challenging, but that evolving in this way has allowed time to establish a school that doesn’t look or feel like any other.

Emotional wellbeing before education

Our way of working has always been rather back to front. Educational attainment is always secondary to emotional wellbeing and development.

Our primary aim is for our young people to develop faith in themselves, hope for a more positive future and, most of all, to learn to love themselves and those around them. Any educational qualifications they achieve are always secondary to these aims.

FACTS ABOUT BRIDGE TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- » Headteacher: Sue Hornby
- » Managing Director: Neil Hornby
- » Established in 2007, attained independent school status in 2016
- » Located in Hanley Swan, Worcestershire and Malvern, Worcestershire
- » Services: Independent special school for students aged 11 to 19
- » No. of students: 40, 10 part-time
- » No. of staff: 29
- » Pupils with EHCPs: 100 per cent
- » Ofsted: “Outstanding” in all areas, June 2017
- » bridgetraininganddevelopment.org.uk

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A practical curriculum

Having started as a provider of City & Guilds land-based qualifications, the Bridge has remained rooted in a practical curriculum. Pupils are more engaged when they can see the practical outworking of their learning. They also thrive on being given responsibility such as caring for animals or driving the tractor.

The curriculum also includes social learning and personal development. Students are individually mentored and can opt in to CBT sessions, anger management or communication skills. A range of art, craft and music activities are used to develop emotional literacy and safe expression.

Ofsted remarked that “without exception, the inspector saw outstanding teaching, learning and assessment throughout the inspection which reflect the quality of teaching and learning over time. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress, academically and socially, from their starting points.”

The most significant learning takes place outside of the classroom

Most children at the Bridge experience extremely high levels of anxiety. Anxiety, and the sense of not coping or of not being “good enough”, can cause a great deal of suffering and shame. In an attempt to minimise this, the school day is as predictable as possible; unstructured times are kept short and are heavily supervised; and it is made acceptable for a child to leave their lesson if they need to. Indeed, it is outside of the classroom that the really important learning takes place. Support staff will attune to a child’s emotional state, validate their feelings and together find a way to reflect on the problem and learn from it. Children are supported to develop coping strategies that reduce their anxiety and help them to regulate their emotional state. We believe giving young people the emotional language to understand and communicate their struggles is foundational to success, not just at school but in the workplace and in wider relationships.

Giving students responsibility grows self-esteem



Workplace-based sixth form

We have transferred our 16-19 provision to a workplace-based model. Our purpose-developed business centre is staffed by successful business people who have brought their businesses under our roof, supported by a team of careers tutors.

In year 12, the students work in their chosen business area, be it catering, manufacturing or retail. This offers an excellent opportunity to acquire work-relevant skills. The careers tutors work alongside the students, giving them the opportunity to reflect on their practice and supporting them with the softer skills such as communication and travel training. In year 13, the trainees will be on work-based experience in the local community, supported as required.

Changing the working culture locally

We aim to be a vehicle for changing the working culture locally. The National Autistic Society records that just 16 per cent of adults with autism are in full-time work. We recognise the skills and attributes our young people have to offer in the workplace; however, the biggest barrier to employment is understanding and acceptance. Our two-year programme aims to give the young people the opportunity to learn to cope in these situations as well as offering training and support for employers who take them on for work experience or as employees.

In our early days as a charity, we were grateful for the generous support of volunteers. Twelve years later we still value the contributions our volunteers make. The wider community wants to be a part of something that is changing their town for the better. Several local churches in particular



Catering for the local community develops work-relevant skills

have offered generous financial support for projects we deliver.

Future plans

Ofsted said: "Leaders believe their mission to be 'changing people's lives'. This is exactly what happens at the school."

We are keen to change lives and attitudes, not just at the school but at home, in our local communities and workplaces. Supporting the young people after they leave is important to us, and many drop in to see us several years after leaving to share their successes in life or ask for support. We would like to see a youth café in our local town, partnering with the community: a place at which young people can safely meet, receive support and guidance and gain work experience. Through the café a youth counsellor could offer help to the wider youth of the town as well as our school. If we believe learning is lifelong, shouldn't support go beyond school too?

“The wider community want to be part of something that is changing their town for the better”

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The Rt Hon Theresa May MP's Foreword For The Parliamentary Review

By The Rt Hon Theresa May MP

This foreword from the then Prime Minister appeared in the 2018/19 Parliamentary Review.

British politics provides ample material for analysis in the pages of The Parliamentary Review. For Her Majesty's Government, our task in the year ahead is clear: to achieve the best Brexit deal for Britain and to carry on our work to build a more prosperous and united country – one that truly works for everyone.

The right Brexit deal will not be sufficient on its own to secure a more prosperous future for Britain. We also need to ensure that our economy is ready for what tomorrow will bring. Our Modern Industrial Strategy is our plan to do that. It means Government stepping up to secure the foundations of our productivity: providing an education system that delivers the skills our economy needs, improving school standards and transforming technical education; delivering infrastructure for growth; ensuring people have the homes they need in the places they want to live. It is all about taking action for the long-term that will pay dividends in the future.

But it also goes beyond that. Government, the private sector and academia working together as strategic partners achieve far more than we could separately. That is why we have set an ambitious goal of lifting UK public and private research and development investment to 2.4 per cent of GDP by 2027. It is why we are developing four Grand Challenges, the big drivers of social and economic change in the world today: harnessing artificial intelligence and the data revolution; leading in changes to the future of mobility; meeting the challenges of our ageing society; and driving ahead the revolution in clean growth. By focusing our efforts on making the most of these areas of enormous potential, we can develop new exports, grow new industries and create more good jobs in every part of our country.

Years of hard work and sacrifice from the British people have got our deficit down by over three quarters. We are building on this success by taking a balanced approach to public spending. We are continuing to deal with our debts, so that our economy can remain strong and we can protect people's jobs, and at the same time we are investing in vital public services, like our NHS. We have set out plans to increase NHS funding annually by an average by 3.4 percent in real terms: that is £394 million a week more. In return, the NHS will produce a ten-year plan, led by doctors and nurses, to eliminate waste and improve patient care.

I believe that Britain can look to the future with confidence. We are leaving the EU and setting a new course for prosperity as a global trading nation. We have a Modern Industrial Strategy that is strengthening the foundations of our economy and helping us to seize the opportunities of the future. We are investing in the public services we all rely on and helping them to grow and improve. Building on our country's great strengths – our world-class universities and researchers, our excellent services sector, our cutting edge manufacturers, our vibrant creative industries, our dedicated public servants – we can look towards a new decade that is ripe with possibility. The government I lead is doing all it can to make that brighter future a reality for everyone in our country.

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