

Baston House School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Greg Sorrell

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Baston House is an independent day special school situated in Hayes, near Bromley in Kent. It opened in December 2010 and is registered to provide co-educational education for 30 pupils between the ages of five and 11 with autistic spectrum conditions, Asperger's syndrome and associated communication and behavioural difficulties. There are currently six pupils on roll, all of whom are boys aged between nine and 11 years of age. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs and most have had significantly disrupted previous schooling.

The proprietor is Moorcroft Manor Limited, which is part of Hillcrest Autism Services. The school's published mission statement is: 'Baston House School will strive to provide effective specialist education and support to pupils on the Autism Spectrum and to their families, enabling pupils to achieve their full potential in education and in life outside school.' This is the school's first inspection.

The school applied to the Department for Education for a material change to the age range and number of pupils for which it is registered. The school proposes to admit an additional 30 pupils of secondary school age. This application was considered as part of the inspection.

Evaluation of the school

This new school is making satisfactory progress towards meeting its aims. The quality of education is satisfactory. The curriculum, teaching and pupils' progress are satisfactory overall. The requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met and the school meets all but one of the regulations for registration. The request for the material change is recommended for approval when the school provides evidence of improvement in relation to the proposed additional accommodation, as detailed below.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and is supported by appropriate policies and schemes of work. The curriculum is divided into three key areas: the core, enrichment and specialist curriculum. The core, in this school, refers to all subjects of the National Curriculum which are taught as required by the pupils' statements of special educational needs. The enrichment aspects of the curriculum are designed to promote the pupils' personal development. Much of this content is taught through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. The programme for PSHE is satisfactory; it draws activities from the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) national guidance as well as teaching the pupils to stay safe and healthy. The specialist curriculum is designed to remove barriers to their learning by providing access to a wide range of therapies. Currently, the pupils only have access to speech and language therapy and occupational therapy as required in their statements.

The taught day typically has a morning focus on literacy and numeracy; the afternoon has a more practical character and offers subjects such as art, physical education and design and technology. There are also daily opportunities for pupils to earn 'choosing time' based on their behaviour and effort in lessons. The week culminates in 'golden time' when the pupils take part in fun activities designed to be a reward for good behaviour. All of these sessions are effective in improving the pupils' behaviour. There are currently no extra-curricular activities, and visits to the wider community to enrich the curriculum are limited.

The curriculum prepared to meet the needs of the proposed secondary age group is satisfactory. All subjects of the National Curriculum have suitable schemes of work and teachers are aware of the need to personalise the programmes of study further in light of pupils' emerging needs once they are enrolled. There is appropriate provision for careers education and guidance in addition to access to a wide range of accreditation in academic and vocational studies. These include GCSE courses in English, mathematics and science as well as awards in independent living.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the short time since the school opened, the class teachers and their assistants have developed good relationships with the pupils. The staff have relevant experience for the needs and ages of the pupils, including the proposed increase in the age range. The quality of lesson planning is satisfactory overall. The most effective and thorough plans contain clear expectations of what the pupils are expected to learn in relation to their abilities and how the teaching assistants are to be deployed. Some lesson plans lack this precision and lessons are less effective as a result. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology. For example, they use interactive whiteboards in literacy and numeracy lessons to engage the pupils, who clearly enjoy the experience when given sufficient time to use the board. Additional opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills are provided in topic work. For example, the pupils used their design and

technology skills to produce model houses using different materials to accompany the story of the Three Little Pigs. At the time of the recent Royal wedding, the pupils designed and wrote wedding breakfast menus and estimated the number of people attending a street party before counting them. Opportunities to inform and motivate pupils by displaying their work are missed by some teachers. The management of pupils' behaviour by staff is good. Consistent use is made of the rewards and sanctions system whereby merits are awarded for effort, behaviour and citizenship. Sanctions may include the pupils missing 'choosing time' or 'golden time'.

The teachers' use of assessment outcomes to plan lessons is satisfactory. Considerable attention has been given to establishing a baseline from which to measure pupils' progress. The school is evaluating a number of systems, supported by recent national guidance for assessing pupils' progress. Teachers track pupils' progress at termly intervals and the school is in the process of collating this data to improve its overview of whole-school effectiveness. Pupils' academic progress and personal development are satisfactory. There are some good examples of clearly annotated marking of pupils' work. These include comments related to the amount of support pupils had to complete the set tasks. However, the practice is not consistent throughout the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. The school has been successful in helping the pupils to settle in. On arrival, the pupils show they are eager to attend as they rush from the gate to their classrooms. Their attendance is good and informal discussions with pupils and their replies to the questionnaire confirm that they like school. The pupils' individual education and behaviour plans have a strong focus on their personal development and behavioural needs. The current targets are drawn to the attention of pupils and displayed in classrooms, although some are written in language too complex for the pupils. Pupils understand the school's system of rewards and sanctions and try to follow the rules. Relationships between pupils and towards staff are mostly cordial and occasional upsets are managed effectively. Records of incidents and staff interventions show that behaviour is improving. It is now satisfactory as the pupils feel increasingly secure in their new school. There is significant time given to snack and relaxation periods where the pupils are assisted in their transfer from playtimes back to lessons.

The pupils are constantly encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour, although there are few opportunities for them to carry out helpful roles around the school. The school council has yet to be established, although pupils' views are invited at assemblies. The curriculum, especially the PSHE programme, supports the pupils' emotional development well. Topics on staying safe and healthy, such as one emphasising the importance of dental hygiene, are effective in enabling the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. The pupils play socially and safely together when outside

and using the large play equipment, although an opportunity for social development is missed by not sitting down together to eat lunch. Work in humanities and religious education satisfactorily supports pupils' learning about different faiths and cultural traditions.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The proprietor has provided relevant policies and procedures to keep the pupils safe. There is also a comprehensive induction procedure for new staff which addresses child protection, fire safety, food hygiene and health and safety. The intention is that this training takes place within four working days of commencing employment, although this is not always fully achieved. Basic child protection training is completed appropriately by all staff and those named as designated child protection officers undertake advanced training at appropriate levels. Safeguarding procedures are good and fully compliant with national guidance for child protection and safe recruitment of staff. The pupils say they are able to talk to staff if they have concerns.

The policies to promote pupils' safety off the school site and to address bullying meet requirements. The school's early focus on establishing appropriate behaviour in school and preparing full risk assessments for off-site activities have limited the number of trips to the wider community. A senior member of staff has secured additional training to improve the provision of educational visits. First aid procedures are effective and are well known by all staff. The school has a satisfactory fire report from the appropriate authority. The recommendation to complete tests on portable electrical equipment has yet to be undertaken. There are also several exposed cables on the exterior of the administration building that have not been rehoused in their protective casing.

Recent attention to the admission register ensures that it now meets requirements. Registers of attendance and records of incidents and accidents are appropriately kept. The school has a plan to improve access which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has clear and rigorous procedures for checking the suitability of all staff. All the required checks have been appropriately completed and are recorded in a single central register as required.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school premises and accommodation, a former school, are suitable for safe and effective learning. The four classrooms for primary-aged pupils are spacious and well equipped and all have interactive whiteboards. The premises also include a hall fitted

with gym equipment and a stage suitable for drama. The facility for pupils who might become ill during the school day is good. The provision for safe outdoor play is very good with extensive grounds for recreation, horticultural studies and sport.

In relation to the request to admit up to 30 secondary-aged pupils, the school has refurbished four classrooms to a high standard and there are sufficient washrooms for the additional number of pupils to be registered. The school also wishes to bring into use a set of specialist rooms for science, art and food technology. These rooms are well equipped and will be appropriate to support GCSE studies in these subjects. However, they have not been occupied since their last use by the previous school; some rooms are currently used for storage and require cleaning prior to use. Furthermore, the exterior paintwork requires attention. The proprietor recognises this deficiency and has commissioned remedial work to be undertaken during the summer holiday. In the longer term, firm plans have been made to remove all disused temporary buildings from the school site.

Provision of information

The provision of information meets all but one requirement. The school does not provide referring local authorities with a statement of how income received on behalf of their pupils has been spent. The school website contains much useful information and recent revisions to its hard-copy prospectus are appropriate. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that parents and carers are satisfied with the school's provision and appreciate the home-school diaries and regular access to staff. One local authority completed a questionnaire and reported that it was content with the information it received from the school apart from the financial reports. The school fulfils the requirements to provide reports on pupils' progress in relation to the annual reviews of pupils' statements of special education needs. The school also plans to provide end-of-year progress reports to parents and carers.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has appropriate policies and procedures that fully meet requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- in relation to portable electrical appliance testing and exposed cabling, ensure that there are effective measures to ensure pupils' health and safety which have regard to the DfES guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (DfES 0803/2001) (paragraph 11).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- where a pupil who is registered at the school is wholly or partly funded by the local authority, submit an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 24(1)(h)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- as planned, collate the teachers' assessments of pupils' progress to develop a clearer evaluation of the school's effectiveness
- monitor and improve lesson plans so that they are of the same good quality as the best examples in the school
- improve the provision for pupils' social development by providing more opportunities for responsibility and increased access to the local community.

In relation to the request for the material change, the school should:

- ensure all areas of the school proposed for use by the new group of pupils are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state
- ensure there is a satisfactory standard of decoration of the intended specialist subject accommodation.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			✓	
The behaviour of pupils			✓	

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special day school for pupils with autistic spectrum conditions, Asperger's syndrome and associated communication and behavioural difficulties		
Date school opened	September 2010		
Age range of pupils	9–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 6	Girls: 0	Total: 6
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 6	Girls: 0	Total: 6
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,400		
Address of school	Baston Road Hayes Bromley Kent BR2 7AB		
Telephone number	020 8462 1010		
Email address	Steve.vincent@bastonhouseschool.org.uk		
Headteacher	Steve Vincent		
Proprietor	Moorcroft Manor Limited, Hillcrest Autism Services		