

Baskerville School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{1,2}

Information about the school

Baskerville School is a maintained day and residential school for students of both genders aged 11 to 19 with autistic spectrum disorder. There are currently 96 students, of whom 12 use the residential service. Students have a wide range of abilities from severe learning difficulties, to average, and above average ability. Many have behaviour which presents a challenge within a residential environment. Children stay Monday to Friday and return home each weekend. The school also offers extra curricular activities two days a week.

Baskerville promotes a 24 hour curriculum and can accommodate children in four residential family units, although only three are in operation currently. Each unit has a particular focus and aim, according to children's needs, providing therapeutic care and education, supporting students through adolescence into adulthood. The school is located in Harbourne, a residential area close to the Birmingham City Centre. The residential provision was last inspected in November 2010.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boardingschools.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for residential pupils	outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	outstanding
Residential pupils' safety	outstanding
Leadership and management of the residential provision	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is outstanding. Residential pupils receive an exceptional level of individualised care and education and make very good progress during their time at the school. Equality and diversity is well promoted throughout the residential provision.
- Residential pupils benefit from excellent relationships with staff which help pupils make considerable progress in their social, emotional and educational development.
- Staff across all disciplines within the school work closely together creating a seamless and innovative service which helps pupils thrive and make real progress during their time in school and the residential units.
- Safeguarding is at the forefront of practice within the whole school while at the same time enabling residential pupils to take assessed risks in preparation for adulthood. As a result, residential pupils feel safe and are able to thrive in a nurturing environment. Pupils are further protected by the excellent management of health and safety in the school and the robust and effective recruitment of staff.
- Residential pupils are very happy with the care they receive. Achievement is highly celebrated which helps build up pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Parents and carers feel that the care and education provided for their children is exceptional.
- Pupils enjoy accommodation which is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. The residential provision has undergone recent major

refurbishment. This has made the units more homely and facilities such as the new kitchens are more akin to domestic style living. Pupils are now able to use facilities such as the kitchen to prepare for adulthood in a more realistic environment.

- The management of pupils' behaviour is very good and pupils make good progress in changing poor behaviours and developing socially acceptable behaviours. This helps pupils become more accepted members of the wider community.
- Leadership and management of the residential provision is very good. Pupils benefit from care and support from a dedicated and highly skilled staff team. Staff work tirelessly to improve the lives of pupils and to prepare them for adulthood as much as possible.
- The school's quality assurance and monitoring systems are outstanding. Monitoring takes place at many different levels. This helps to ensure pupils are safe; receive the care and support they need; are happy and live healthy and enjoyable lifestyles; and that they are given every opportunity to develop skills, confidence and become accepted and valued members of society.
- All national minimum standards are met.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Pupils benefit greatly from their residential experiences which they fully enjoy. They receive an excellent level of care and education based on their individual needs and make very good progress. Pupils benefit from an environment where staff have high hopes and aspirations for all pupils to reach their full potential. Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities and experiences which are based on individual's assessed needs and risks which ensure pupils can develop in a safe environment. This helps to increase pupils' confidence and self-esteem and become active members of society. For example, pupils learn to plan menus, shop and cook meals. They also learn about budgeting and how to use public transport. Pupils are proud of their achievements.

The school's culture of respect for each other helps create a happy environment where pupils learn about difference and how their actions and behaviours may impact on others. The residential provision has a strong community spirit based on respecting and helping each other. Pupils of all ages, cultures, backgrounds and abilities integrate well and many pupils develop friendships which continue outside of school time.

Empowerment of pupils is embedded in day to day practice within all areas of the school. Staff are highly skilled in communicating with pupils and use a range of communication methods based on individual needs. This ensures pupils are able to make choices and decisions about their daily lives wherever possible and ensures all

pupils have equality of opportunity to exercise their rights. Systems and practices enable pupils take an active part in the running of the school including the residential provision. These include the school council, pupil surveys and weekly residential unit meetings. Pupils' suggestions are listened to and acted upon where appropriate. This helps them feel valued and increases their self-esteem.

Pupils are further safeguarded as there is an accessible complaints procedure which is on display throughout the school and takes into account the different communication needs of pupils. Pupils also have access to an independent visitor who visits the residential units regularly. Records of these visits show that any concerns or suggestions raised by pupils are dealt with promptly. There is a large display with the contact details and photographs of the independent visitor and the Children's Rights Director and what they do. Pupils who showed the Inspector around clearly knew the independent visitor and what their role is. There are also details of different help lines on display for pupils to access should they need to.

Staff firmly believe that pupils should be given every opportunity and different experiences to reach their full potential and be able to contribute to society. Staff recognise the importance of, and are committed to, working in partnership with pupils, their families and carers and other agencies which complement their educational needs. Pupils are actively supported academically, socially and emotionally to move on to further education, training or employment.

Comments from parents and carers are full of praise and appreciation for the care, education and support not only their children receive from staff but the support they themselves as families receive. Comments include: 'my child is extremely well looked after and is making fantastic progress'; my child 'has made amazing progress both in his independence and social development'; 'The staff are so supportive we feel we're not alone and help is always at hand' and 'my child has progressed very well during their time at Baskerville, helping to make up for two years they were out of education.'

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the residential provision and care is outstanding. Admissions are planned and tailored to individual pupils. Staff work very closely with parents, carers and other relevant professionals to ensure relevant information is obtained about individuals prior to admission. The induction process is based on individual needs and staff work hard to ensure admission to the residential provision is as smooth as possible for new pupils.

Excellent placement plans and associated care records such as behaviour management plans and risk assessments fully inform staff about the pupil's needs and how to meet them. These records take into account individual's levels of abilities and disabilities, age, gender, race, religion, culture and communication and language needs. Each pupil also has a second placement plan called 'All about me'. Pupils

actively contribute to producing their plans as much as possible. These plans are produced in the appropriate forms to meet the individual communication needs of pupils. For example, some pupils' plans includes photographs and symbols. Records are regularly reviewed which ensures pupils receive care and support based on their current needs.

Residential pupils live with their parents and carers, who have overall responsibility for their child's health needs. However, staff are totally committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle ensuring the physical and emotional health needs of pupils are met during their stays in residential. This is achieved by working in close partnership with parents and other relevant professionals and agencies such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. The school also employs an occupational therapist and speech and language therapist who work closely with residential staff.

Communication plans and strategies are produced where needed. As a result, pupils are able to increase their communication and daily living skills. The school has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures which include intimate and personal care guidance for staff working with the pupils. Pupils' health needs are met and further protected by highly effective medication policies, procedures and practice guidance which are implemented extremely well. Staff receive training in the administration of medication and are also provided with training for specific medical needs, for example, the management of epilepsy. Medication which is securely stored and administered by designated staff. Robust and meticulous monitoring systems are in place which helps to promote the health and wellbeing of pupils.

Pupils are able to retain contact with their families and can make and receive telephone calls in private. Where pupils are unable to verbally communicate, staff keep in regular contact with parents and carers.

Pupils stay in accommodation which is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. Each of the units is organised to take into account individual's levels of abilities, disabilities and behaviours. Pupils are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and are able to choose the décor which truly reflects their individual personalities and interests. There is additional space in some units for private study if pupils do not wish to study in their bedrooms. Facilities enable pupils to learn independence skills such as cooking and day- to-day tasks which pupils clearly enjoy.

The provision of meals and the promotion of healthy eating is excellent. The school holds the Healthy Schools award and continues to develop initiatives around healthy eating and looking after the environment where pupils take an active role. For example, pupils continue to grow and eat their own vegetables which they enjoy and feel a sense of achievement. Pupils enjoy healthy meals which are varied, nutritional and based on likes, dislikes and specific dietary needs. Parents are consulted about pupil's likes and dislikes. Catering staff are fully aware of pupils' specific dietary needs. Meal times are a relaxed occasion. Every opportunity is given to enable residential pupils develop their cooking skills and knowledge of healthy eating. The residential provision provides domestic style kitchens which enables pupils to learn

how to prepare meals in a safe and realistic environment.

Pupils are provided with a range of activities based on individual needs which takes into account interests, age, gender, abilities and disabilities, language and communication needs, race and culture. Pupils engage in purposeful activities within school and the local community. This helps children to have fun as well as learn and build up their skills and self-confidence. Furthermore, as part of their development pupils learn how to relate socially to others around them and how to develop positive and respectful relationships. Pupils also actively engage in activities which helps them develop an awareness of different cultures and celebrate different religious festivals. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and are reviewed when necessary.

Residential pupils' safety

The arrangements for ensuring residential pupils' welfare and safety are outstanding. Safeguarding is at the forefront of practice in the school while at the same time pupils are able to develop skills and take risks in a safe and nurturing environment in preparation for adulthood. Pupils are unanimous they feel safe and are well looked after. Parents and carers confirm that the school keeps their child safe. Pupils are very well protected from the risk of harm and abuse. This can be attributed to the following: a range of safeguarding policies and procedures including child protection; behaviour management and health and safety which staff fully understand and implement effectively; staff receive a range of training and, robust and effective recruitment practices.

Staff are clear about their responsibilities and accountability in safeguarding pupils. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of pupil's needs which helps to promote pupils' welfare and protects them from the risk of harm and abuse. Bullying is not tolerated and is not identified as a problem at the school. Pupils are confident that staff will listen and deal with any issues well.

The management of behaviour is excellent and pupils make real progress during their time at school. The emphasis is on recognising and rewarding positive behaviour. Staff present as positive role models and work hard to ensure pupils understand how their behaviour may impact on others. Behaviour management plans are in place for each pupil. Pupils benefit from the effective multi-disciplinary team work within the school and close working with other professionals. This enables pupils to develop socially acceptable behaviours and helps to prepare pupils for their future lives and be fully included in the wider community. Sanctions are very rarely used. Appropriate records are kept as required. Records show that there has been a continuous reduction in the number of serious incidents and physical interventions since the last inspection which is testament to the skills and commitment of the staff team. Robust monitoring systems help to ensure that behaviour is being managed appropriately and safely and therefore pupils are protected from the risk of harm. One of the Assistant Head Teachers reviews and monitors all incident report forms and incidents of physical intervention. Information is transferred to a data base which helps with

the monitoring of behaviour including racist and bullying behaviour and identifies any patterns and triggers. Additionally, the school has an Autism Support team who meet weekly to review incidents, to discuss individual pupil's behaviour where there are concerns and to give advice and support to care and education staff.

The management of health and safety at the school is very good. There is a designated staff member to oversee the management of health and safety. However, this is another area where the whole school staff team work closely together and share responsibility to ensure a safe and secure environment for pupils and staff. Pupils and staff are kept safe due to the: regular servicing and maintenance of equipment; detailed risk assessments, which are regularly reviewed, and robust and effective monitoring systems. Every effort is made to ensure pupils are familiar with fire safety procedures. Fire evacuation procedures are produced in pictorial form and pupils have received input from local Fire Officers including visiting a local fire station. Premises are secure. Residential accommodation and associated facilities are reserved for the use of those pupils designated to use it.

Pupils are protected from the risk of harm or abuse by comprehensive, robust policies, procedures and guidance for vetting staff, volunteers and visitors which well exceed the minimum requirements set out in legislation. The recruitment of the right individual for the job is always seen as much more important than filling a vacancy.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. Pupils receive an excellent level of care and education based on their assessed needs which takes into account their age, gender, race, religion, culture and levels of abilities and disabilities. The whole school staff team are totally committed to improving the quality of lives for all pupils and their families. The majority of staff employed have worked at the school for many years, many in varying roles and experiencing many changes in legislation, philosophies and practices during this time. It is testament to the dynamic and inspirational senior leadership team that staff remain highly-motivated and innovative. All staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and there is excellent working across all disciplines within the school. Staff feel valued and listened to in an environment where shared ownership is expected and promoted. As a result, pupils are able to learn, develop, have fun and feel safe and secure.

The residential provision has its own Statement of Purpose which informs parents, carers, pupils and other professionals about the services provided and the aims and objectives of the provision. It accurately reflects practice within the units. Each of the three residential units has its own children's guide which is tailored to the different levels of abilities and communication needs of pupils who stay in the units. The guides are produced in symbol and pictorial form giving details of what pupils can

expect, what help they will receive, activities, routines and weekly meetings.

The Head of Care is totally dedicated to improving the lives of pupils and provides clear leadership and direction to the staff team. The Head of Care ensures routines and practices are organised to meet residential pupils needs first and foremost. Staffing arrangements are highly effective in practice and ensure continuity and consistency of care. Pupils are looked after by staff who are extremely competent, experienced, well trained and who fully understand their needs. Pupils are supported by a staff team which is comprised of a good mix of gender, race, age, and experience. This helps young people learn about differences and they benefit from shared experiences such as different cultures and food. Staff feel well supported by the Head of Care and other members of the senior leadership team. Night time cover arrangements are good and always include a member of the senior leadership team sleeping in. Photographs of staff on duty are displayed in the residential units to inform pupils who will be working with them.

There is excellent communication with parents, carers and other professionals. Staff regularly update parents and carers on their child's progress, medical matters and any concerns. Parents and carers really value the level of communication from staff at the school and are always consulted when planning the future care and education for their child.

The quality assurance systems are thorough and exceptionally effective in monitoring standards and identifying areas for improvements. Findings from the quality assurance systems inform future developments for the school. The wide range of methods used to monitor practices and systems enable the senior leadership team to obtain an accurate picture of the quality of care and education provided. These include regular checks by the Head of Care, the Head Teacher, audits by other senior managers of areas such as behaviour management. Questionnaires are also sent out to parents, carers and pupils. Regular visits are also undertaken by Governors and reports produced. These visits are robust and compliment the internal monitoring systems to ensure pupils receive a high standard of care and education in a safe and secure environment.

National minimum standards

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What should the school do to improve further?

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28/09/2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Baskerville School

I really enjoyed visiting your school recently and spending time with you. You were very polite and made me feel very welcome. I thank you for letting me join in your activities and have meals with you.

You told me you really enjoy staying in the residential units. This helps you make new friends and learn new skills which will help you when you become an adult. You also have lots of opportunities to do different activities which you really enjoy. You have very good relationships with staff who look after you very well. Staff give you a lot of praise for good behaviour and achievements you make. You are very proud of the progress you make during your time at the school.

You feel safe in the residential units and staff help you learn about different dangers and how to keep yourselves safe. Staff keep very good records of the work they do with you and share these with you regularly. Staff spend a lot of time listening to what you have to say and your suggestions are mostly acted upon.

Staff encourage you to eat a healthy diet and keep active. You like the food provided and are able to make suggestions to menus and some of you are able to cook your own tea, prepare snacks and supper. You enjoy helping growing different vegetables in the school grounds.

The residential units are nicely decorated and have nice furniture. The units are kept clean and safely run. You know about fire drills and safety in the units. You have your own bedroom which you are able to decorate and make your own. You can contact your family when you want and staff will help you with this.

This is an outstanding school and you are very happy with the care and support you receive.

I really enjoyed meeting you all and visiting your school. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Katarina Djordjevic

Yours sincerely,

Katarina Djordjevic