

Baskerville School

Fellows Lane, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 9TS

Inspection dates 06–07 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress in all subjects. Some make excellent progress, especially in developing social communication, mathematics and science skills.
- Teaching is usually good. In some lessons it is outstanding because work is very well adapted to suit each individual, and the atmosphere is calm so students can concentrate and learn.
- Both day and residential staff have excellent, respectful relationships with students. This is because they are well informed and understand the students' individual needs.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress and have plenty of opportunity to practise their skills in a variety of situations, including in the community.
- Students behave well. They receive excellent personalised support which helps them learn to behave in socially acceptable ways and to manage their own emotions positively.
- The leaders and governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have made sure that teaching and achievement continue to improve, particularly as new staff are appointed.
- Learning is supported very well by the residential staff. As a result, boarding students become much more independent.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers provide enough opportunities for students to develop and improve their reading and writing skills.
- In some lessons, students are given work that is too easy or too hard.
- Leaders and governors do not always check whether students in the sixth form are making as much progress as possible. As a result, some of the courses they follow are not demanding enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons including four that were joint observations with senior leaders. Additional information was gathered from short joint observations with senior leaders across four lessons and from observations during informal times of the school day. Observations were made in the residential provision.
- Inspectors held meetings with students, staff, and two representatives and the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised progress information, assessment records, the minutes of the meetings of the governing body, the school development plans and evaluations, and analysed students' work.
- The inspectors took account of 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Janet Thompson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David King

Additional Inspector

Joanne Vyas

Social Care Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The majority of students attend the school from across Birmingham with some from adjoining local authorities.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs for autistic spectrum disorder. Most have additional difficulties including moderate or severe learning difficulties or mental health difficulties, including difficulties in managing their own behaviour.
- A larger proportion of students than average are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for certain groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- A very small proportion of students are girls and a larger proportion than average are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Not all students start at the school in Year 7 and a few who have been admitted recently have been out of education for up to a year.
- Just over one third of students in the sixth form spend part of their week following courses at Bourneville College.
- Sixteen students use the school's residential provision on week days during the school terms. Each boarder has a personalised package of time and support in the residential provision.
- The school has achieved a number of awards including awards for safeguarding and the Eco Schools award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' learning and achievement by increasing the proportion of good and better teaching by:
 - making sure all staff use the information available about students' skills and understanding so that work set is not too hard or too easy
 - providing students with the opportunity to try for themselves before giving them help.
- Ensure more students make outstanding progress in reading and writing by making sure teachers provide:
 - good examples and models of writing in all lessons
 - more opportunities for students to read and write for different purposes in a variety of situations.
- Improve students' progress and levels of independence by providing suitably demanding courses and activities, particularly in the sixth form. These should be determined on an individual basis by using the full range of information available, including students' work, lesson observations, assessment information and the progress students make in the residential provision.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all students make good progress in all subjects. Students start at the school with a wide range of levels of understanding. Taking into account their starting points, students make good progress compared with others starting at similar levels nationally.
- Students often make outstanding progress in their speaking, listening and early communication skills because of the staff's expertise in developing these aspects.
- Progress in reading and writing is not strong in all lessons because teachers sometimes do not expect enough of the students.
- Some of the students who have the most difficulty with learning have moved from having very limited communication to communicating reliably using symbols. They make similarly good progress in early mathematical skills and learn to use very early problem solving skills in a logical way.
- Other students are working at levels closer to those expected for their age. For example, those who are studying for examinations in Key Stage 4 are making good or better progress towards gaining good grades in GCSE mathematics and science. Progress in English has improved recently. More students are now making expected and better than expected progress.
- There are particular strengths in the progress made by students who receive the pupil premium, almost all of whom are those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. A range of support has been introduced including additional learning support, counselling and occupational therapy. This has helped these students to take full part in lessons more easily and frequently. Their rate of progress is now in line with, or more rapid than, other students at the school and students nationally, when their starting points are taken into account.
- There are no apparent differences in the progress of students from different ethnic backgrounds. The small minority of girls do well at the school and make progress in line with the boys.
- Students in the sixth form, including those attending college, gain a wide range of qualifications which vary according to their needs. Some are studying for Entry level qualifications while others are working towards vocational qualifications equivalent to GCSEs. The progress students make in lessons is good and they usually use their skills well in other situations, such as when shopping. However, students do not always make as much progress as they could in the activities provided to prepare them for life after school as they are not always demanding enough.
- Boarders make excellent progress in their independent living skills. For example, they learn to cook meals by repeating the same meal over a number of weeks until they know how to cook it without help. They also learn to dress and travel independently.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good. Some teaching is outstanding but there is some which is not good enough. Relationships between staff and students are usually excellent. This encourages a calm, purposeful atmosphere and also allows students to have fun. The way in which staff work with students to improve their behaviour, self-esteem and cooperation makes a significant

contribution to their spiritual and social development.

- Parents are pleased with the quality of teaching and the support given so that their children can make good progress.
- English and mathematics are taught well most of the time. However, some teaching in other subjects does not make sure students practise and apply their literacy and numeracy skills often enough.
- Teachers plan their lessons carefully but occasionally focus on what students will do rather than what they want them to learn. This occurs in practical subjects as well as the more academic subjects. When this happens, work is not matched well to students' understanding and is too easy or too hard for some in the group. Sometimes staff can be over-helpful and do not give students the opportunity to try things for themselves before they are given help.
- Students' learning is excellent when teachers spend time at the start of a lesson checking what students know, and then adapt their teaching accordingly. This was observed in an outstanding physical education lesson where the teacher filmed the students and then used careful questioning to help them analyse their own skills. All improved on their next attempt at the activity.
- There is a great emphasis on consistency between the school's work and activities in the residential provision. Residential staff are skilled at making sure students use skills learnt in school during the evenings, such as managing money. This supports students' progress very effectively. Some staff have a shared role between school and the residential provision which promotes a consistent approach to teaching, developing communication skills and preparing for future independence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of the students is excellent during informal times of the school day and when they are boarding. During lessons, students behave well but do not always rise to the challenges they are set or persevere without adult support.
 - The excellent approaches used by staff result in a generally calm atmosphere. Students learn to deal with their emotions and to accept the views of others in a positive way. Students who struggle with their behaviour are given highly effective support by the multi-professional team. They make considerable improvements in their ability to manage a variety of situations appropriately.
 - Parents are pleased with the support their children receive to help them manage their emotions, and improve their behaviour and social skills.
 - Students treat each other with respect most of the time. For example, in a meeting of residential students, they listened to each other, valued what each other said and made sure everyone had their say.
 - Bullying is rare, but at times students struggle with friendships. Staff support students exceptionally well when they have these difficulties, and many students manage to sort matters out for themselves with this support.
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- Students have a good understanding of how to keep safe, as appropriate to their difficulties and age. This includes understanding the risks of social networking and using the internet safely. They learn how to deal with situations which might occur outside school with people who do not understand their needs. Students' views are taken seriously and support is put in place quickly when they are facing difficulties.
- There are very well developed procedures to keep students safe in school and when they are boarding. Governors responsible for this area have a very good understanding of the additional needs and vulnerability of the students. They are well informed about the work of the school through their frequent visits to the day and residential provision.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders provide excellent role models that help to create a positive atmosphere in the school and residential provision. This is based on equality and excellent relationships between all. Students are treated with dignity and respect, including when they are finding behaving appropriately difficult.
- All leaders, including the governing body, are ambitious for all students to have equal opportunities to succeed regardless of their individual needs and circumstances, and to be well prepared for their futures lives. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where improvements are needed to achieve their aims.
- Leaders are successful in ensuring that teaching and achievement are usually good or outstanding. However, senior and subject leaders have not systematically brought together information about teaching and learning observations, students' work and assessments to make sure that each student is making as much progress as possible. This is particularly the case in the sixth form, where expectations of progress are not always as high as they could be for all students.
- The school has good systems to check on how well teachers are teaching. All teachers have targets to bring about improvements and these are linked to students' progress. Teachers feel well supported and are given additional help to improve their teaching and to fulfil their roles if necessary. New and trainee teachers are given good training and effective support.
- Recent changes to the timetable have enabled school and residential staff to have more training together. This has helped to ensure the consistent approach to students' progress, personal development and behaviour management. The lessons and activities during the extended school day, and additional opportunities given to boarders, help students effectively to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding
- The school works effectively with other special schools in Birmingham to compare students' progress and the quality of teaching. The local authority does not routinely visit or support the school as it recognises Baskerville is highly effective.
- Information is shared well across the large staff team so that staff have a good understanding of the students' needs. The pupil premium has been used well to support students who need additional help with learning. The gap between the achievement of these students and that of others at the school is now narrow or has gone. The use of these funds is reported on the school's website for parents and carers as well as to the governing body.

■ The courses students study are varied and adapted to meet their wide-ranging needs and abilities. The range of subjects and courses for students in the sixth form has improved. It is supported well by the partnership with Bourneville college, which extends students’ opportunities for learning and personal development effectively. However, subjects and courses now do not fully match the increasing number and widening ability range of the students. Opportunities for developing students’ life skills, including work experience and voluntary work, are not always challenging enough for some students.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Governance is good. The governing body is well organised so that all governors are involved in checking how well the school is doing. It challenges the school well to make sure funds are spent wisely to fully benefit the students. The governing body checks on teachers’ work and ensures that those teachers who successfully meet their targets are suitably rewarded. Governors analyse information about students’ academic, social and behaviour progress. They check how well different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, those in receipt of the pupil premium and those from different ethnic backgrounds achieve, to make sure that no group does less well than others. However, the analysis of the sixth form students’ progress is too focused on the qualifications they gain rather than checking they have made as much progress as possible. Governors check to make sure that the arrangements for safeguarding students meet all current requirements.

Outcomes for residential pupils	are outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	is outstanding
Residential pupils’ safety	is good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	is good

- Boarders enjoy the residential experience and make the most of the opportunities provided. They make substantial progress in their health, social and independent living skills. They learn to be safe when out in the community and are proud of their achievements. Boarders use new skills in their family home and the community.
- Boarders show consideration and respect for others. They are helped by staff to voice their views and take responsibility for running their residential unit. Boarders chair their student meetings and are encouraged to organise and plan activities and events. For example, some are organising a theme evening for Chinese New Year and Shrove Tuesday, to which parents and carers are invited.
- Boarders are provided with a broad range of activities. A member of staff said ‘it’s learning while having fun.’ Activities include local walks, visits to a youth club, the cinema, laser quest and the library, shopping, and trips to places of worship such as churches, mosques and temples. They complete homework and use school facilities such as computers and the sensory suite. There is also a wide range of board games, toys and books available.
- Each boarder’s placement plan contains detailed information which enables staff to provide effective and consistent care. Staff place boarders at the centre of all practice. Boarders experience a sensitive and well planned induction when they first become resident which is designed around each one as an individual. When boarders leave the residence, they are fully

supported to make the transition to living at home or elsewhere.

- Staff help boarders understand about healthy lifestyles and encourage them to eat healthily. Those who have a limited diet are encouraged, slowly but effectively, to increase the range of foods they will eat. Boarders also have access to on-site health services including mental health professionals, a school nurse, a speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist. Boarders who take medication have this regularly reviewed to ensure its effectiveness. Trained staff follow safe and secure procedures when administering medication.
 - Staff are qualified, competent and caring. They know the boarders well and fully understand their difficulties. They celebrate their achievements and reward appropriate behaviour. Staff know what triggers might cause individuals anxiety or distress, and they manage such situations well. Physical intervention is rarely used due to the skills of the staff team who are able to calm situations successfully.
 - Boarders have regular visits from an independent listener to whom they can express any concerns they may have.
 - The new Head of Care has introduced some good systems to check on the effectiveness of the residential provision. He is currently in the process of working through these with the staff team. The governing body visits the residential units regularly to check on its work first-hand in order to inspire further development.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

Boarding/Residential provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	103606
Social care unique reference number	SC017168
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	402920

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision 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.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	39
Number of boarders on roll	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Hogan
Headteacher	Rosemary Adams
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2008
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