

# Barton School

<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–4 July 2013	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- Teaching is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs and abilities of pupils and use a good range of methods and resources to challenge them. As a result, pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Behaviour and personal development is good. Pupils' behaviour and levels of engagement improve greatly throughout their time at the school.
- The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and includes many innovative ways to capture pupils' interest so that they can develop knowledge and skills effectively securing good achievement and progress.
- Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding. Staff know pupils very well and provide exceptionally high levels of care.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders communicate ambition and drive to staff. As a result, teaching is good and this secures good achievement and progress. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Systems to monitor and track pupils' achievement and progress are not yet fully embedded.
- Systems for using data on behaviour to minimise any barriers to learning are not fully in place.
- Although senior managers conduct regular lesson observations, the feedback given and the dialogue after lesson observations does not consistently challenge teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- This is an independent school that is dually registered as a children's home. An aligned inspection of the children's home took place at the same time as this inspection. The quality of the care provision is reported on separately.
- The inspector observed 11 lessons taught by 11 different teachers. He looked at pupils' work and held meetings with senior managers, the headteacher, heads of departments, teachers and therapists. He held informal discussions with students.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of students' progress, assessment records and records pertaining to the professional development of staff. He checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed in 15 questionnaires returned by staff and ten school questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

## Inspection team

Chanan Tomlin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Barton School is dually registered, mixed independent special school. It is one of a small number of similar schools owned and run by its parent company, Options Group. The school opened in 2006 to provide residential and day education for pupils aged from eight to 19 years with autism and complex learning difficulties; the majority exhibit challenging behaviours.
- There are currently 16 pupils on the roll; 12 with 52-week placements and with four day pupils. The majority are boys but there are three girls on roll and almost all are of White British heritage. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and are funded by local authorities from across England.
- The school's vision is to provide a safe environment where pupils have the opportunity to develop skills, attitudes and acceptable forms of behaviour through a range of flexible and creative educational and social experiences. It aims to support the development of independence and citizenship appropriate to the needs of each pupil.
- The school was previously inspected in February 2010 and the care provision was inspected in November 2012.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - embedding systems to monitor and track pupils' achievement and progress
  - embedding systems which use information about behaviour to minimise barriers to learning.
- Improve leadership and management by strengthening the systems for the professional development of staff through regular feedback and dialogue following lesson observations that consistently challenges teachers to improve.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Achievement is good. Pupils at the school have varying degrees of autism; most are severely autistic and some have additional complex needs. All pupils have significant communication and language difficulties. Considering their starting points, pupils achieve well and make good progress, especially with regard to behaviour, sociability and communication, as a result of good teaching and a good curriculum. Pupils acquire knowledge in a consistent way and gain an understanding of subjects according to their abilities. They develop and apply a range of life skills well; those that are able reach good competencies in reading, writing, communication and mathematics according to their level of ability. As a result, pupils are well-equipped to learn, communicate and act in ways that are socially acceptable.

Pupils are motivated and interested in a broad range of activities. Pupils are grouped according to key stages. Through each key stage, they build on their strengths and progress from one behavioural or skill competency to another. As a result, all pupils are prepared and equipped to achieve external accreditations through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) within Key Stage 3, 4 and Post 16.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Good**

Pupils' behaviour and personal development is good. Most pupils that join the school display extremely challenging behaviour; throughout their time at the school behaviour improves as pupils learn about what is expected of them and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. As a result, pupils develop good attitudes; learning in lessons is good and seldom disrupted. This is especially the case in group sessions where pupils work well together. The atmosphere is purposeful but relaxed and pupils are engaged. Instances of bullying are rare; pupils are constantly supervised and feel safe at school. Attendance is good and lessons start punctually.

In and around school, there is a calm, happy environment which has a good impact on pupils' achievements and progress. Pupils are encouraged to succeed at what they are good at and are consistently complimented on their achievements. They acquire important life-skills and improve in the ways that they communicate and interact socially. As a result, they grow in self-esteem and confidence. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They gain insights into spirituality through religious education (RE), music, art and through outdoor pursuits where they learn about nature. They learn about morality through personal, social and health education (PSHE) and during assemblies. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions through religious education, art, history, geography, food technology and during Indian and Chinese themed days. During assemblies they are taught about equality and respect for each other and for people of different religious and cultural persuasions. They learn about the British legal system and public services during citizenship and assemblies that are enriched with visits from, for example, army personnel, members of the fire and police services and paramedics. Political views are not presented in an unbalanced way. Pupils learn how to interact with others when they spend time in the community shopping for lunch and visiting a café, libraries, museums and parks.

### Quality of teaching

**Good**

Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well and have a good understanding of their needs and abilities. They plan lessons carefully and ensure that targets are reached and new targets are established resulting in good achievement and progress over time. Teachers expect pupils to achieve well and challenge pupils consistently to reach their potential. Parents and carers recognise this; one parent commented 'the school and care do an excellent job in developing our son's potential even when sometimes that potential is limited'. Teachers use every opportunity to help

pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of study including reading, writing and mathematics when appropriate. They place great emphasis on communication and pupils are encouraged to communicate as best as they can according to their abilities. Teachers are adept at noticing small improvements in behaviour, engagement levels and skill competencies. They usually adjust lessons according to need securing the best possible outcomes for pupils to ensure that they learn well and make good progress over time. Group work is an important feature of pupils' learning where they learn about collaboration and team work. Teachers are very successful in engaging pupils when they work in groups; for example, when a Year 10 class made salt-dough for model teddy bears, pupils were interested and fully focused on the activity.

Teachers are skilful in presenting lessons that keep pupils interested and engaged; this creates a positive learning environment where pupils thrive. Teachers assess learning and progress accurately. Achievement and progress is tracked through a whole-school system that charts achievement and sets new targets for pupils; this system was introduced recently and is not yet fully embedded. Teachers use data on behaviour to identify and minimise any triggers that act as barriers to pupils' learning. This process is still evolving and is also not fully in place. Teachers manage behaviour that is often very challenging and unpredictable well; as a result, lessons proceed undisrupted and a productive learning environment always prevails.

### Quality of curriculum

### Good

The curriculum is good; it meets the needs and interests of all pupils and provides them with good opportunities to make good progress. Pupils that are more able enjoy activities and learning sessions that help them develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills. The curriculum is geared to help pupils improve their communication skills resulting in improved communication for all pupils. The curriculum is well-organised; it is supported with detailed schemes of work and planning and provides challenge appropriate to the interests and needs of pupils. Individual learning plans indicate planning for good progression from one competency to another.

Pupils are prepared for their future economic well-being through an awareness of basic literacy and numeracy and through an emphasis on providing them with experiences and skills that will help them in the future. Examples of this provision are a school bistro where older pupils prepare, sell and serve food to their schoolmates and 'Grow and Cook' where pupils grow their own fruit and vegetables and harvest and cook their own food. These activities help pupils to gain practical skills and valuable experiences that promote sociability and life skills while providing them with a practical knowledge of literacy and numeracy.

PSHE is good and the provision is complemented through food technology, horticulture and physical education (PE) when pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and exercise. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of activities that are well-suited to the needs and interests of pupils. These include swimming, ice-skating, canoeing, bowling and skill-related activities in the community such as walking and shopping. Young people that are above compulsory school age take part in a good range of studies and activities that are well-matched to their interests and abilities; most activities are skill-based and give young people opportunities to contribute to the school in meaningful ways. Some of these activities include shredding paper, helping with mailings and putting together the school prospectus. Parents and carers acknowledge the benefits of the activities provided by the school. One parent asserted that 'the wide range of activities both on and off site can only help with our son becoming more socially aware'.

### Pupils' welfare, health and safety

### Outstanding

Pupils' welfare, health and safety are outstanding and all of the independent school standards are met. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for; staff know pupils well and have a keen understanding

of their needs. They are aware of circumstances that might trigger challenging behaviour and employ effective methods of de-escalation. The school is proactive in its approach to safeguarding; a policy for child protection is implemented effectively and all staff are trained in child protection at the appropriate levels and intervals. Arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff are robust; rigorous checks are conducted to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff checks are recorded in a comprehensive single central register. The school has a good level of fire safety; equipment is checked regularly and fire drills are regular recorded events. The school completes comprehensive risk assessments for individual pupils, the premises and activities out of school to ensure that pupils are always safe.

The school has produced robust policies and procedures to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils including policies for eliminating bullying and first aid. All policies and procedures comply fully with government legislation and guidance; they are monitored and reviewed regularly. The school provides all staff with a good range of training opportunities to help them gain new skills and competencies to ensure that pupils are always well cared for; many members of staff are fully qualified in first-aid. Supervision is excellent and pupils are safe at all times; bullying does not happen in school. Pupils enjoy healthy lifestyles by partaking of the healthy food offered, through growing and cooking their own food and through a strong emphasis on physical education and exercise. Pupils are part of an inclusive community and all feel valued and respected. They appear happy and well-adjusted. Parents and carers have great confidence in the school's procedures for welfare, health and safety. One parent commented 'Our son is a changed young man since being at the school. He is settled, happy, learning and having wonderful experiences!'

## Leadership and management

**Good**

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders and managers convey a drive for sustained improvement to staff; they communicate ambition and high expectations for good achievement and progress and high levels of care. As a result, pupils achieve well and make good progress because teaching is consistently good, the curriculum is of a good standard and levels of care are outstanding. Professional development is well-matched to the needs of staff and senior leaders conduct regular lesson observations to monitor teaching and learning. However, feedback to staff after lesson observations is not sufficiently demanding so that expectations are raised resulting in further improvements to teaching and learning. Staff and resources are carefully deployed in order to achieve positive benefits for pupils.

Self-evaluation is robust; senior managers have produced a self-evaluation and a development plan that identify areas that can be improved in realistic timescales. Managers and a school improvement partner provide regular support and challenge school leaders to improve all aspects of the provision. As a result, the school has improved significantly since the last inspection; teaching is good and this helps pupils achieve well and make good progress. School leaders have produced a curriculum that is implemented effectively to ensure that pupils succeed in literacy and all other areas of learning according to their ability. The school ethos promotes good behaviour and personal development for pupils; their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school works well with parents and carers to help pupils succeed in all areas of their learning.

The school's premises and accommodation include an excellent range of facilities that are very well suited to the needs of pupils and support provision of the curriculum well. They include a large dining room, many classrooms, a room designated for information and communication technology (ICT) a massage room, a hydro pool and rooms for art and food technology. The outdoor areas are especially well-equipped and include a greenhouse and planting beds, an 'adventure playground', play areas and a ball court equipped with multi-sensory equipment. All areas of the school are well maintained and do not compromise health and safety. The school meets all of the requirements related to the provision of information to parents and carers and the complaints

procedure includes all of the required details. The proprietor and school managers have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

## What inspection judgements mean

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

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134315
<b>Inspection number</b>	420225
<b>DfE registration number</b>	813/6004

This inspection was carried out 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent special school for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and complex special educational needs
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–19 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	16
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Options Group
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Graham Baker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Eames
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£60,776
<b>Telephone number</b>	01652 631280
<b>Fax number</b>	01652 631299
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