

Baston House School

Baston Road, Hayes, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7AB

Inspection dates 14–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school because

- Students make good progress in reading, writing, and mathematics, and in other subjects, because they are taught well.
- Staff ensure that each student’s learning activities are matched accurately to their level of development and academic ability.
- The new leadership and management are good. They have established a culture of high expectations of learning for all. They provide a good standard of education for students with a diverse range of learning difficulties.
- The arrangements for safeguarding the students are rigorous and the school is a safe place for them.
- Students are well cared for. They make good progress in managing their behaviour and improving their attitudes to learning. Staff develop positive and supportive relationships with students and understand their needs.
- Parents and carers hold the school in high regard.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although there are good school systems in place to assess students’ progress, there are no additional procedures for an external moderation on their progress, apart from the measure of GCSE results.
- Not all teaching is of the highest standard as some records of students' achievements are limited.

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

- This inspection was undertaken with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons, all jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the school's leaders, teaching staff and students. A range of documentation was examined, including policies, behaviour logs, assessment records, the curriculum and teachers' plans and procedures for keeping students safe. The inspector heard students read and looked at their written and other work. The inspector observed them at break times.
- The views expressed by 26 members of staff through survey questionnaires were considered. There were 13 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey. A number of parents and carers contacted the inspector about the impact the school has had on their children.
- The school has recently applied to the Department of Education for an increase in numbers from 60 to 96 students. They have now decided to postpone this proposed change until their new buildings are ready for occupation in 2015 when the increase in numbers could also be taken into consideration as part of the material change inspection.

Inspection team

Jill Bainton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Baston House School was registered in 2010 to provide co-educational schooling for up to 60 students between the ages of five to 19 years with autistic spectrum conditions, Asperger's syndrome, and associated communication and behavioural disorders. There are currently 39 students on roll between six and 16 years of age. The headteacher took up his post in January 2014.
- All the students have a statement of special educational needs and most have had significantly disrupted previous schooling. No students are looked after children. All the students are placed at the school by their local authority.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision,
- The school aims to 'develop learner skills for the future'.
- The proprietors, Moorcroft Manor Limited, are the governing body.
- The school was last inspected in May 2011 when it met all the regulations. It received an emergency inspection in October 2013, which focused on the regulatory requirements for students' welfare, health and safety. A progress monitoring inspection was carried out in March 2014. At this inspection, the school was found to have made good progress in implementing its action plan.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is all of the highest standard by ensuring that:
 - students' achievements are recorded in a variety of ways, such as with photographic evidence, to more accurately reflect the range of what they can do
 - efforts are made to appoint additional highly qualified and experienced staff.
- Make leadership and management more effective by:
 - ensuring that the school's evaluation of its performance includes an independent, external check on the accuracy of the school's records on students' progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good and enable the students to learn and achieve well.
- Under the inspirational leadership of the new headteacher, the senior leadership team, which includes both senior and middle leaders, have devised a detailed school development plan and identified the areas in need of improvement. The school's view about its own performance is accurate with a clear focus on ways to drive the school forward. All staff who responded to the questionnaire were very positive and are proud to be working at the school. Those parents and carers who contacted the inspector were overwhelmingly positive about the school and its impact on their children's lives.
- Leaders ensure that teaching and learning are good. As a result, students achieve well and their personal development is good. The curriculum is effective and meets the specific learning needs of the students. Therapists have a positive impact on the learning of the students.
- A system for the management of staff performance to raise the quality of teaching has been implemented by the new headteacher. The headteacher and senior leaders have worked successfully in making checks on the quality of teaching and supporting its improvement. Checks on teaching and assessment are sufficiently frequent to ensure there is consistently good teaching. Leaders have identified that to improve the quality of teaching to the highest standard they need to recruit additional high-quality teaching staff.
- Students' achievement of accreditations, such as GCSE and Entry Level work, is ratified externally, and the school has a good understanding of how students' progress and attainment compare with national averages. There are good school systems in place to assess students' progress but no additional procedures in place for an external moderation of assessments and records of their progress.
- Parents, carers and placing authorities receive the full range of required information and feel very well informed about each student's progress. A number of placing authorities spoken to confirm that their students have settled well at the school and that the school communicates with them very well. The complaints procedure fully meets requirements. The premises provide a safe and effective learning environment.
- **The governance of the school:**

The proprietors, who are the governing body, Moorcroft Manor Limited, take an active role in the governance of the school. The headteacher communicates with, and meets very regularly with, the regional education manager who holds him to account for the administration of the school. Through this close liaison, the proprietors have a clear understanding of the school, its strengths including the quality of teaching, and how well students are doing and areas of development.

The proprietors ensure that all the regulations for independent schools are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of the students is good. Most make good progress in managing their own behaviour. The friendly, welcoming atmosphere at the school helps the students to settle in quickly and become part of the community. Their attendance is now good following poor attendance at their previous schools. Most students are enthusiastic about school. They made many comments in discussions with the inspector such as, 'I have settled in very happily...the staff are here to help me in my learning...we are a family here...I've grown in confidence at this school.' These comments reflect the high level of engagement and positive relationships which the students have with the staff, who are very kind and supportive towards them.
- Students make very good progress in many aspects of their personal development. Many show impressive gains in confidence and self-esteem, such that by the time they are in Year 11 they are talking optimistically about their future.
- Students confirmed that they have no concerns about bullying, including cyber-bullying. Parents and carers, as well as staff, confirm this is the case.
- The school is a caring community. Students are treated respectfully, and respond well to the staff, who are very good role models.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is very good. Students confirm that they feel safe at the school and know who to turn to should they need help.
- All staff have been checked for their suitability to work with young people and the school has rigorous appointment procedures which are accurately recorded on the required single central register of staff appointments. The school has thorough procedures to ensure the safeguarding of students with all staff trained in child protection to the appropriate levels. The safeguarding policy meets the latest guidance from the Department for Education (DfE).
- Risk assessments on all aspects of the premises and activities both on and off site are thorough. The procedures for checking the welfare, health and safety of the students are very good. The policies and procedures are clear and effectively implemented.
- Staff ensure that provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. An emphasis on the students' personal development is firmly rooted within the school and its curriculum. The school considers its pastoral care to be pivotal to the students' success. The careful and considered way in which staff help the students to manage their own anxieties and behaviour leads to a calm and orderly environment conducive to learning. This underpins the good quality of teaching and the good progress that students make. Frequent praise for students' work and effort helps to build their self-esteem and develop a positive attitude to learning. The reward system is considered fair by the students, which promotes their good moral development.
- The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is a vital and integral part of the school's work. Students have opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures. They learn about how democracy works through the school council, who recently asked for a school uniform which they now wear with pride.
- The school prepares students well for life in the wider community. Local visitors and visits to places of interest assist in this process and help to integrate the students into the local community.
- The school does not promote any partisan political views and ensures that any controversial issues are addressed in a balanced way.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Students make good progress in lessons because teachers provide them with activities that challenge them to build on what they have learned previously. Learning activities are interesting and engaging for the students. This helps to maintain their interest and promotes good behaviour in lessons. The quality of relationships and interactions that take place are significant features of the good teaching and a key factor in the students' success. Parents and carers informed the inspector that their children enjoy their lessons. One commented, 'My son feels safe at school and this gives him space to learn and grow.' Another said, 'My son is enjoying school for the first time in his life.'
- All staff are very well informed about the students' individual learning characteristics. Therapists, such as speech and language, and occupational, therapists and psychologists, work very closely with the teaching staff and make a valuable contribution to the students' progress. The class teams' knowledge of the students' personal needs and their insight into how they learn most effectively ensure that most lessons are productive. Staff are skilled in helping students to become accustomed to change through very well-established routines. The response by students is mostly positive and they are ready to join in the planned activities. Staff are adept at recognising that some students need additional aids to help them concentrate, such as small toys to hold for reassurance. The day starts with a variety of clubs to engage the students after, for some, a long journey by taxi. These include physical, creative and therapeutic activities.
- Teaching in all subjects incorporates a strong emphasis on developing students' communication skills. This is successful as staff use a variety of techniques to achieve this goal. However, occasionally, worksheets are relied on too much to record students' learning. Too little use of made of other means of recording achievements such as photographic evidence wherever possible, particularly with the younger students.
- Disturbances in lessons are very rare. When they do occur, they are very well managed by staff with minimum disruption to the learning of the other students. Older students are good at removing themselves from lessons for a short time if they feel anxious.
- The curriculum is effective and provides the students with experiences in all the required areas of learning, and is based on the National Curriculum. Each student's learning activities are well planned to meet their specific needs and help them to make good progress.

- Students are assessed carefully when they enter the school to find out what they know and can do. A well-planned transition process ensures that most students settle easily into life at the school. This assessment process enables teachers to provide work at the correct level for each student. One young student, when asked if he was making progress, confirmed that he knew he was as staff told him so. Questions are used well to monitor students' ongoing learning. Students' progress is carefully monitored by staff and reporting procedures to parents, carers and placing authorities are thorough.
- The school has recently reviewed its marking policy. Marking is of a high standard with helpful written feedback given to students on how to improve their work. Resources are good and used effectively to support learning.
- The highly skilled support staff play a vital role in aiding and guiding students, for example in keeping them focused on tasks set and assisting them to move safely around the school. They continually seek ways in which they can acknowledge students' achievements and raise their self-esteem.
- Careers advice is provided for older students through a planned programme. Students are given opportunities for work experience wherever possible.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students' achievement is good. This is shown in the quality of work in their books, observations of their learning in lessons, and through the school's own information about each student's progress. This good progress from their starting points is as a result of good teaching and a carefully matched curriculum that successfully meets the students' needs.
- Typically, students enter the school with levels of attainment which are below average for their age. They have often missed parts of their education for a variety of reasons, including prolonged absence. Once gaps in students' learning have been identified, individual programmes of activities help them to catch up.
- The students' work shows that they make good progress in developing their writing skills. This is alongside their speaking and listening skills. Staff have high expectations and students respond positively in lessons, joining in discussion when they feel sufficiently confident to do so. Students are encouraged to read at every opportunity. Those who can do so read with understanding and those less-confident readers are ably supported by staff, which includes speech and language therapists.
- Students' mathematical skills are developed well. This work is complemented by activities such as food technology where older students, most independently, made a dessert very proficiently.
- Older students go on to gain accreditation in GCSE and Entry Level in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Vocational subjects such as life skills also help the students to make progress.
- Students who have a statement of special educational needs are well served by carefully devised education plans which set realistic targets for them and which are regularly reviewed. Annual reviews are carried out and very well documented.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook*, which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	136265
Inspection number	447202
DfE registration number	305/6082

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted 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.

Type of school	Special day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Moorcroft Manor Limited
Headteacher	Chris Kistan
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,400-£42,800
Telephone number	020 8462 1010
Email address	chris.kistan@bastonhouseschool.org.uk

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