

Baskerville School

The Baskerville School, Fellows Lane, Birmingham B17 9TS

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Baskerville School is a maintained day and residential school for children and young people aged 11 to 19 who have autism spectrum disorder. Up to 16 children and young people use the residential provision. Children and young people stay from Monday to Friday and return home each weekend.

Baskerville's residential provision comprises three residential family units. Each unit has a particular focus and aim, based on children and young people's needs, including therapeutic care and education and supporting young people through adolescence into adulthood. The residential provision was last inspected in February 2019. Fifteen children and young people access placements at present.

The head of care is suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 26 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children and young people with highly complex needs love staying in the residential provision. They form warm and trusting relationships with dedicated, child-focused staff. Children and young people benefit hugely from an exceptional staff team which provides consistent care and enables them to make sustained and significant progress.

Staff have an excellent understanding of the individual ways in which children and young people communicate. They use this understanding to develop positive relationships with children and young people and empower them. Staff know if children and young people are happy or if they are anxious or distressed. Staff respond positively to children and young people's emotional and physical needs, providing clear structure and routines to make them feel secure.

Morning routines are calm. Children and young people choose their own breakfast and how they want to start their day. This might include taking a walk around the grounds. Staff treat children and young people with dignity and respect. Personal care is undertaken sensitively, and children and young people's health needs are well identified and met. Staff value and celebrate difference and ensure that children and young people can engage in all activities, regardless of their age or ability.

The nurturing atmosphere in the residential provision provides children and young people with the opportunity to relax. They also benefit from a fantastic range of activities that staff organise for them. These include swimming and other Paralympic events. Some children and young people attend pottery classes. They make fun ornaments, which are proudly displayed, and other items that they can use including mugs.

Children and young people make exceptional progress beyond expectations and develop skills that make a real difference to their lives. For example, children and young people learn to cook, attend to their personal hygiene and significantly improve their communication. One young person is learning to drive, which will provide him with an invaluable skill for his adult life. Parents praise staff highly and also highlight the progress that children and young people make.

Staff are aspirational for children and young people. They focus on developing their independence skills in order to equip them to have positive futures. Some young people are given electronic door passes (subject to risk assessment). This enables them to develop their independence, go for walks and do tasks around the site. This also increases their self-esteem and confidence.

When it is time for young people to leave the service, staff sensitively support their transitions. They are creative in how they support children and young people at these

times, skilfully using tools such as social stories.

Children and young people's individual achievements are rewarded and celebrated daily. The annual awards ceremony is very popular and enables children and young people to shine.

Children and young people benefit enormously from the research that staff use to inform and develop their practice. For example, staff read research about the experiences of parenting children and young people who have autism spectrum disorder. They are also engaged in a project with families and school staff about improving children and young people's mental health. This work enhances their understanding of children and young people's needs and their ability to meet them.

When children and young people start to use the residential provision, their school attendance often improves. Staff accompany them to school on the same site and work with them during the day. This has a direct, positive impact on their progress. It enables children and young people to be less anxious and more receptive to learning, and to enjoy positive social interactions. Consequently, children and young people become better at regulating their emotions and behaviours. Since the last inspection, staff have provided additional support to help children and young people with their homework. This has helped children and young people improve their attainment at school. The skills that children and young people develop in the residential provision also transfer to their family homes, which benefits their whole family.

Staff empower children and young people to make choices. This is central to their positive experience in the residential provision. Perceptive staff skilfully use a wide range of communication methods which include verbal communication, signing, symbols and body language to understand each child and young person's wishes and feelings and ensure that they are appropriately addressed. Children and young people engage in young people's meetings, the school council, the sports council and key-work sessions where they confidently express themselves. Children and young people feel that these forums give them a voice and that they can influence changes in the school. Children and young people have access to information in a format that they can understand. They know how to make a complaint. The independent person who visits children and young people regularly has autism spectrum disorder himself. He is therefore uniquely placed to communicate with and understand the children and young people. Whenever they raise questions or issues with him, he ensures that these are relayed to staff who take appropriate action.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Staff are highly trained in safeguarding and keep extremely vulnerable children and young people safe. Training in topics such as sexual exploitation, e-safety, missing and radicalisation enables staff to fully understand the risks that children and young people may face. Staff use this knowledge to help children and young people to

understand how to keep themselves safe.

Staff are constantly vigilant. High staffing levels mean that children and young people benefit from exciting activities and trips into the community safely. Parents confirm that children and young people learn how to become increasingly safe when they go out. Consequently, parents who could not safely take their children into the community before can now confidently take them on trips with the rest of their family.

Children and young people do not go missing and are not subject to exploitation. Staff are alert and responsive to any signs of these risks and are fully aware of the procedures that they should follow should they identify any concerns.

Staff skilfully undertake highly effective key-work sessions with children and young people. These sessions help children and young people to think about a wide range of risks including road safety, stranger danger, bullying and e-safety. Risk assessments and behaviour support plans are detailed and highly individualised, providing staff with excellent guidance about how to reduce risks.

When safeguarding incidents occur, the senior leadership team works with other professionals proactively and effectively. They seek advice from an occupational therapist, a speech and language therapist and other external agencies when this is required. Staff also work closely with children and young people's families. This collaborative approach means that staff are aware of any issues that may affect children and young people's safety. When concerns arise, staff take swift, effective action.

Well-coordinated internal safeguarding meetings ensure that information is shared effectively. A system called 'my concern' is active across the whole site. This allows managers, staff, children and young people to share any concerns that they have, no matter how small. There are visual aids around the school reminding both staff and children how to do this. When children and young people raise concerns, managers and staff take prompt and effective action. This has resulted in improved outcomes for children and young people. Children and young people feel part of the wider safeguarding culture of the school and residential provision and are rewarded with stickers when they take action to help another child or young person to stay safe.

Staff are highly skilled in behaviour management. Their approach is underpinned by the very positive relationships that they have with children and young people. Staff have an excellent insight into children and young people's complex communication, emotional and behavioural needs. There is a continuous emphasis on developing communication strategies to ensure that children and young people's voices are heard and that they are safeguarded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The head of care is child-focused. He works hard to drive up standards and improve the quality of care that children and young people receive. He ensures that children and young people benefit from consistent and highly individualised care.

The head of care is inspirational. He encourages staff to be creative and develop new ways of working which better meet children and young people's needs. Staff receive regular, reflective supervision. This provides them with strong personal and professional support. Training is of a high quality and is extremely relevant. Staff love working here.

Children and young people's plans are extremely well written. They are individualised and reflect the close working relationships between staff, children and families. They also link well to education plans. Consequently, individual targets are identified. These help children and young people to make great progress. The head of care ensures that plans are reviewed regularly. Parents and professionals comment very positively about the communication and support that staff provide and the effectiveness of the planning for children and young people.

The head of care uses a range of monitoring tools including peer reviews and external audits. Overall, these are effective. However, the head of care has not had sufficiently robust oversight to ensure that all the national minimum standards are met. Despite the many strengths of the safeguarding practice within the service, staff have not recorded who completed the debrief with a child after a physical intervention, or the date. The head of care has not monitored this aspect of staff practice and has failed to meet this standard for a third time. There has been no identifiable negative impact on children and young people. This is because there are few physical interventions; there have been three since the last inspection and none since April 2019. Although the frequency of the use of restraint is low, this is a missed opportunity for the head of care to ensure that children and young people can communicate their experience of being restrained and any concerns they may have, to an impartial member of staff. Furthermore, the school's policy does not make it clear who should debrief a child after a physical intervention.

The head of care works closely with the governing body. He shares reports with the governors that identify necessary improvements to the provision and ideas for future development. Although the governors take great interest in the residential provision and are very supportive of the head of care, they have relied on him to ensure that all the national minimum standards are met. They have not identified that a national minimum standard regarding the debrief of children and young people after a physical intervention has not been met. Consequently, the governing body has not challenged the head of care to address this shortfall.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:

- 12.5 All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) within 24 hours incidents of restraint, including reasonable force, they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by.
- 13.1 The school's governing body monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school and takes appropriate action where necessary.

Recommendations

- The head of care should monitor that staff clearly record debriefs undertaken with children after a physical intervention, and that the records include the relevant names and dates.
- The head of care should ensure that the care and control policy includes the fact that the debrief with a child following a physical intervention should be undertaken by someone who was not involved.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC017168

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Jackie Smith

Type of school: Residential Special School

Telephone number: 0121 427 3191

Email address: J.Smith@baskvill.bham.sch.uk

Inspectors

Louise Whittle, social care inspector (lead)

Louise Battersby, social care inspector

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