

# Baycroft School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116617
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312347
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Greg Sorrell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	176
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Browning
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Chris Toner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Gosport Road Stubbington Fareham PO14 2AE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01329 664151
<b>Fax number</b>	01329 668601

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Baycroft School is a large special school for secondary aged students all of whom have statements of special educational needs. Approximately half have needs related to moderate learning difficulties, approximately one quarter to autistic spectrum disorder, and the remainder to communication, behaviour and sensory impairment needs. The range of need represented in the school is becoming more complex.

There are nearly four times as many boys as girls and the number of students who are looked after children is seven. The school works in partnership with a number of local schools and was awarded Healthy Schools status in 2007. It is in the early stages of applying for specialist school status. The headteacher has been in post for 18 months.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Baycroft School provides a good education for its students and provides well for their personal development and well-being. They make good progress in a wide range of subjects and gain accreditation that prepares them well for leaving school.

The students' behaviour is good as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The good curriculum enables the students to demonstrate well their knowledge about staying safe and healthy in an environment where they enjoy lessons. The teachers and teaching assistants know the students well and most lessons are well planned, reflecting the good specialist subject knowledge held by staff. Relationships with all staff are good. Teachers' use of assessment to plan lessons is good overall.

Vocational programmes, work experience and attendance at local colleges of further education prepare older students well for leaving school. The curriculum is enriched by enterprise activities, after-school clubs and a residential trip. This provision has a significant impact on the students' personal development and well-being.

The overall quality of care, guidance and support provided for students is good. School procedures ensure their well-being is appropriately safeguarded. Students receive good support for their special educational needs, particularly from specialist staff. Academic targets are set, although sometimes these are insufficiently precise and not well known or easily understood by students.

Leadership and management are good. In a short time, the relatively recently appointed headteacher has gained a good overview of the school's effectiveness. Subject development planning is good, although not all departments make sufficient use of achievement data to gauge the impact of teaching on learning. Although the students' academic achievement is good, the school does not yet sufficiently track the progress of all groups of students to ensure they are doing as well they can. The governing body gives good support on personnel, premises and finance issues although their role in evaluating students' achievement is underdeveloped. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school although a significant minority feel communications between home and school could be improved. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and its capacity to improve further is also good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the tracking of progress by all staff and governors to ensure that all groups are achieving as well as they can.
- Improve the quality of targets set for students so that success is more easily measured and understood by the students themselves.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The achievement by students is good. Standards on entry are well below those expected for students' ages. Many students are at 'P' levels - levels that are below the standard National Curriculum levels in schools. Although in comparison to mainstream schools standards are very low, by the end of Year 11, all students make good progress in relation to their starting points. Just under half achieve particularly well, attaining 5 or more A\* to G grade GCSE passes in subjects including English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology,

art, design and technology and drama. A similar range of accreditation is achieved at Entry Level. Recognised achievements are also gained at bronze and silver levels in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). Those with language and communication difficulties grow in confidence and also make good progress. Good progress is made towards targets set in students' individual education plans (IEP's), which are reviewed on a regular basis. Targets set in some academic subjects are not always known or easily understood by students.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students greatly enjoy school and are always pleased to be there. On arrival, they readily exchange greetings with peers and staff. Their attendance is good and absenteeism has fallen over time. During lessons, breaks and trips off-site their behaviour is good. The vast majority of students have responded very well to the inconvenience posed by essential building works. For example, several classrooms have been severely reduced in size yet the good quality of relationships is not unduly strained. Both the students and their parents report that the school is a safe place to be, and where rare incidents are properly recorded and fully investigated to everyone's satisfaction. There are many evident friendships in class and in the playground. Through experiencing the music, cultures and faiths of others, students develop good spiritual and cultural understanding. They make a good contribution to the community through music and drama performances. Membership of the school council is taken very seriously and student councillors understand the importance of collective decision making. Students enjoy success in local and national competitions such as 'Future Schools'. They support national charities and understand moral issues such as the importance of conservation. Through work-related learning and a variety of mini-enterprise activities they gain a good awareness of the world of work. Students readily take up opportunities for exercise and understand the importance of a healthy diet and the need to stay away from drugs.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The vast majority of teachers and all teaching assistants have a good knowledge of students' different needs and reflect this in their planning. Appropriate account is given to prior attainment when setting up learning groups and involving students in assessing their work. Teachers and assistants work well together as a team, often with assistants taking on specialist roles, for example in the Youth Award, and in a programme to develop the social use of language. Most lessons involve practical and purposeful activities that engage the students fully. For example, in physical education, high priority is placed on participation, and innovative use is made of video technology to enable students to immediately review their performances in order to improve them. In English, in an example of an outstanding lesson, the teacher used a wide array of teaching styles and resources to enable the students to have a good understanding of Shakespeare's 'Tempest' and the role of specific characters. Effective use is made of praise, and behaviour management is good. Occasionally, the content of lessons does not fully match the students' abilities and some lessons lack the pace evident where teaching is better. Effective use is made of interactive whiteboards. In order to meet the increasingly complex needs of the students, staff have embarked upon learning alternative methods of communication with students. They recognise the need for additional training in this area, for example, signing and

technological aids. The teachers' use of assessment to plan lessons is good overall, but subject leaders have yet to undertake a thorough analysis of students' progress according to need.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

In all subjects there is a suitable focus upon literacy and numeracy. In Key Stage 4, in addition to the provision of a wide range of accredited subjects such as GCSE, Entry Level and Youth Awards, there are well-planned vocational programmes. Relevant activities include work experience, mini-enterprises and part-time attendance at local colleges of further education that make a significant contribution to the students' personal development. For a minority of students, personalised programmes are drawn up that include access to off-site provision which is closely monitored. The school is also seeking to have its work in horticulture accredited. The school's management have recently begun a review of the curriculum to ensure it remains responsive to the changing needs of some students admitted to the school.

There is good extra-curricular provision, including at least two activities on offer every week and an annual residential trip. At lunchtimes, activities are limited due to the short amount of time available. Opportunities for competitive sport are regularly provided and breakfast club has a good impact on the students' well-being and understanding of health-related matters. Good use is also made of the local community, for example, through visits to local museums and places of interest.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care guidance and support for students is good, with particular strengths in pastoral aspects. This ensures students feel safe. It also promotes their personal development very effectively and helps them achieve well. Students benefit from the caring and dedicated staff in the school as well as from staff from other professional agencies who visit the school on a regular basis. Students who are looked after by the local authority, and other vulnerable students, are also very well cared for. Annual reviews of statements of special educational needs keep parents very well informed of the progress their children are making in relation to the targets set for them. Academic support and guidance is good for most students, although in a minority of cases, some targets and feedback are very weak. For example, comments such as 'keep working hard' and 'keep reading' offer little useful guidance to help students make progress. In some subjects and IEP's, students' targets for improvement are easily understood, but in some cases they lack precision and are unknown by the students. The quality and consistency of marking is variable across the school. This means that students are not always being told what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher has shown outstanding leadership since appointment. She took up the post in difficult circumstances and rapidly gained the respect of parents, colleagues and the local authority. One parent wrote, 'she has been a breath of fresh air.' She has worked well with senior managers to identify and implement improvements to management procedures and delegated responsibilities. These include

re-establishing systematic performance management for teachers, a curriculum review, and improving self-evaluation procedures to enable all staff to have a clearer view of overall effectiveness.

Staff re-structuring is nearing completion and all senior managers share the headteacher's vision for the future. Subject leadership is good overall due to high levels of specialist knowledge, for example, in addressing challenges presented by the autistic spectrum, and this has a positive impact on achievement. The routine gathering of evidence and analysis of progress data to inform subject planning is underdeveloped in some subjects and the school is yet to fully track the academic progress of all identified groups in the school. The school has good systems to induct new staff and effective support is given when appropriate. Monitoring procedures are effective in enabling the school's senior management to have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and planning. The school's commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity is good. The deployment of teaching assistants, especially those with specialist roles, is particularly effective in supporting students with additional communication and behavioural needs. The governors' role is satisfactory overall, although they do not yet routinely survey parents to get their views about how well the school is doing. Their relevant expertise in personnel, premises and finance is used to good effect, yet their overview of students' achievement is only at an early stage. Recent training and newly recruited governors are positive developments. Financial matters are well managed and appropriately audited.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Baycroft School, Fareham, PO14 2AE

Thank you for helping me and my colleague to get to know your school last week and for giving us such a warm welcome. We found that you make good progress while at the school and this prepares you well for life after school.

Your headteacher gives outstanding leadership to the school and has been busy working with your teachers to see how the school can be even better in the future. The teaching you receive from the staff is good, and sometimes outstanding. The additional support to help you all communicate and enjoy lessons is good. You clearly become more confident as you get older.

We enjoyed seeing how hard you work in lessons, especially where you had practical things to do, such as in gymnastics, football, food technology and design technology. The range of lessons and other activities you get to do is good. I know you enjoy after-school clubs as well as the residential trips. These experiences and your time on work experience and at college prepare you well for leaving school. You get on well with the staff and allow your fellow students to get on and learn in class. We were very impressed by your good behaviour in lessons, especially where classrooms have been made smaller during the building works.

The school works hard to keep you fit and healthy. The breakfast club gives you a good start to the day and your physical education lessons help you a lot. The wall displays of recent work in art and technology show that you achieve well in these subjects. In order to improve the school further, we are asking the headteacher to improve the systems that are used to check on the progress you are making and to enable you to have a better understanding of how you can improve your work.

We wish you lots of luck in the future.

Greg Sorrell

Lead Inspector