

# Baskerville School

The Baskerville School, Fellows Lane, BIRMINGHAM, B17 9TS

## Inspection dates

10/11/2014 to 12/11/2014

## Overall effectiveness

Outcomes for residential pupils

**Outstanding**

**1**

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

1

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

1

Leadership and management of the residential provision

Outstanding

1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is outstanding because

- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is outstanding. Residential pupils experience high quality care that consistently promotes their personal development and growth.
- Committed and motivated staff have high expectations of each residential pupil in terms of what they can achieve now and in the future. This positively influences the quality of pupils' lives as their potential for greater independence increases.
- Staff view residential pupils very positively and there is an excellent community atmosphere in the school.
- Residential pupils' safety and welfare is soundly managed. They feel safe and comfortable in the school and with the team of staff who look after them. The school's strong ethos and purpose around safeguarding is reflected in practice.
- Stimulating and varied activities tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils help to enhance and enjoy their residential experience.
- Extremely effective partnerships and arrangements between school and the residential provision results in high levels of consistent care and academic support.
- Residential pupils' behaviour and communication improves significantly because of the highly effective and closely monitored behaviour management and communication plans. They learn to take greater responsibility for their actions and are exceptionally well supported so they can express their feelings and emotions.
- The residential provision is well organised and managed effectively for the benefit of all residential pupils. Professional relationships and partnerships with parents are very successful resulting in residential pupils being placed at the centre of everything the school does.
- Parents, staff and professionals are uniformly positive about the service and the impact

the residential provision has on pupils' lives within the school and at home. One professional stating, 'the communication is excellent, it really supports the professional partnerships and relationships with other services which ultimately benefits pupils and their families.'

- Managers are well informed about the strengths and weakness of the residential provision because of significantly improved quality assurance and monitoring arrangements. This development has enhanced the forward thinking leadership, strengthening the commitment to further improve the residential service.
- The school meets all the national minimum standards.

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools**

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was completed by one inspector following a 3-hour notice period. A tour of the residential accommodation was undertaken. Two evenings were spent in the company of staff and pupils. Eleven pupils were resident on each night. Several pupils were spoken to and nearly all residential pupils were observed during the inspection. One evening meal and several breakfasts were observed. A range of records were examined relating to the care provided. Discussions were held with members of the management team, care staff, visiting professionals, governors and parents. Documentation examined included health and safety and recruitment records, behaviour management records, care and health plans, independent visitor reports and management monitoring information.

## Inspection team

Julian Mason

Lead social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

Baskerville School is a maintained day and residential school for students of both genders aged 11 to 19 with autistic spectrum disorder. There are currently 105 students, of whom 18 use the residential service. Students have a wide range of abilities from severe learning difficulties, to average, and above average ability. Many have behaviour which presents a challenge within a residential environment. Students stay Monday to Friday and return home each weekend.

Baskerville promotes a 24 hour curriculum and can accommodate students in four residential family units. Each unit has a particular focus and aim, according to student's needs, providing therapeutic care and education, supporting students through adolescence into adulthood. The school is located in Harbourne, a residential area close to the Birmingham City Centre. The residential provision was last inspected in June 2014.

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

- Update the school's website to ensure key information displayed reflects revised, current and accurate information about the service.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. They make great progress because the residential environment is highly enabling and exceptionally nurturing. Pupils, families and a broad range of professionals have an extremely positive view of the residential provision and the impact the school has on pupils' lives. They say that pupils learn to be more independent; develop socially and emotionally; learn to be more tolerant and regularly experience many successes and achievements. One parent summarising what many say about the school, 'It's an amazing place, they achieve so much with many of the pupils.' Another parent stating, 'I think they are fantastic, he's doing so well.'

Personal goals and targets are set to be challenging and this approach helps each individual achieve their full potential. Where residential pupils experience setbacks and further challenges, there is a tenacious and committed approach to finding ways of helping pupils overcome these difficulties. For example, the use of the school's mentoring scheme, which has been strengthened further to help residential pupils sustain the progress they make. One pupil stating, 'some of the help I've had from individual staff has been great.'

Pupils' experience a residential environment where staff successfully encourage consideration and understanding, and where differences are appreciated and accepted. Pupils learn to live with each other and engage with the wider community because respectful values are consistently promoted. Social inclusion is at the forefront of staff practice and this approach effectively combats any isolation or discrimination. One professional stating, 'they provide the foundations for all pupils to flourish.'

Individual likes and dislikes are very well known by the residential team. This knowledge is used productively to plan activities that pupils enjoy doing on an individual or group basis. Pupils make the most of their time at the school because they have an extensive range of on-site and off-site activities to choose from. For example, school facilities are available to use outside of school hours such as the sports gym and outdoor recreational areas, pupils go to a number of local youth clubs and use many of the local leisure facilities and services. Pupils enjoy themselves immensely and this is evidenced and celebrated by an extensive range of picture displays around the school.

Pupils benefit from the services they need to positively promote their health, emotional and psychological well-being. Their communication is strongly prioritised and effectively promoted because staff are very knowledgeable about how each individual communicates. This includes the interpretation of behaviours, gestures and sounds as well as the use of more established methods of language, signs, symbols and pictures. Pupils' communication develops and improves because of the collaborative approaches the school has with families, teachers and supporting professionals.

Pupils gain significantly from highly effective support and training when learning and developing the skills they need as they get older and pursue greater independence. One parent stating, 'pupils learn the skills to become more independent and this helps them at home as well.' They benefit from a structured, comprehensive learning and skills training programme that is closely monitored and evaluated. This ensures that transition plans are individually tailored and reflect pupils' abilities and potential in preparation for moving on.

### Quality of residential provision and care

### Outstanding

The quality of the residential provision is outstanding. Arrival and departure routines are

exceptional. Pupils settle and enjoy their residential stays because these are facilitated with individually planned and tailored practices. Most pupils are able to settle quickly because they experience high quality care. This takes into account the sometimes significant anxieties and challenges pupils and their families face when changes to living arrangements occur. Social stories are used to good effect in preparation for transitions.

Attentive staff and enjoyable experiences enable pupils to overcome their anxieties about being away from their families. The dedicated and extremely competent staff team have extensive knowledge about all residential pupils. Understanding and responding to pupil's communication needs is a key strength throughout the school. The residential provision is very inclusive and needs led. For example, domestic and daily routines are planned in way that takes account of everyone's potential to engage and participate individually and as a group. Movement around the school is well organised to take account of individual pupil's sensitivities to environmental factors such as noise and crowds. Excellent combinations of verbal, symbol, object referencing and signing processes ensure all pupils are reached and can contribute to their residential experiences and routines.

Pastoral care is of outstanding quality. Excellent insight coupled with effective partnerships between care, education staff and other school based professionals provides a seamless and extremely responsive service to residential pupils. Pupils are able to express themselves using their own personality and preferred communication methods, they have a say and staff readily adapt their responses to aid understanding and further interactions. Consultation and understanding pupils' wishes and feelings are a key strength of the residential provision's operation.

The school pays particular attention to planning and coordinating pupil's care and support, ensuring needs are comprehensively met. Detailed plans are devised in conjunction with families and professionals. Risks are assessed regularly and are reflected in written information that staff use to guide the way they work each day. Staff are able to adapt and change their practice quickly to ensure risks are managed effectively. The service is excellent at tailoring its routines to ensure pupils' needs are carefully met and risks are managed safely.

Staff practice is very effective at capturing and celebrating the progress and achievements of residential pupils. They make excellent progress because they work towards meaningful and achievable targets that help develop confidence and skills for independence. The purposeful communication with parents, teachers and professionals results in a highly effective and integrated approach to care which promotes better outcomes for pupils. One parent stating, 'I'm kept informed and up-to-date about everything, I can't fault them with their communication.'

Pupils' good health is fully promoted by excellent catering arrangements. Meals are balanced and cooked from scratch in order to meet diverse dietary needs and requirements. Pupils are also helped to access the necessary services when needed to ensure their ongoing health needs are met. Medication is managed safely to ensure pupils benefit fully from taking their prescribed medicines. Pupils learn about healthy life-styles and are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own health according to their individual abilities and levels of independence.

The residential accommodation is clean, tidy and comfortable. Areas throughout the residential accommodation have been personalised to promote a more homely atmosphere and to counter the dated architecture of the building. Some parts of the residential accommodation have been upgraded and decorated such as showers, bathrooms, toilets and communal rooms. The staff team effectively manage the accommodation on offer despite the limitations of the building's design and layout.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

**Outstanding**

Residential pupils' safety and protection is given a very high priority by the residential team that results in an excellent contribution to safeguarding and welfare practices. Staff approach their role and responsibilities in a conscientious and professional manner. They embrace the values of the school by placing residential pupils' safety and well-being at the centre of their practice. A pupil stated, 'it's safe because the staff are always around to make sure we're okay.'

The school has a very clear procedure for responding to child protection concerns and have staff who link together to ensure any safeguarding issues are appropriately addressed. Staff are professional and responsible in their approach to any concerns and their knowledge clearly reflects the school's expectations in relation to safeguarding practices. Training for staff in matters that relate to child protection is kept up-to-date and reflects important learning around safeguarding matters. For example, vulnerability to exploitation and radicalisation as well as the risks and benefits of using social media.

A key strength of the residential provision is how staff and school colleagues understand the complexities of pupil's disabilities, behaviours and communication needs. This insight informs effective organisation and operation of daily residential routines. High levels of supervision and vigilance promotes the safety and welfare of residential pupils. There are practical interventions and arrangements to support all aspects of a pupil's residency because of informed and effective risk assessment practices. Strategies to manage risks are focused on safety but also promote opportunities for pupils to take acceptable risks as part of their life skills training.

Many residential pupils experience exceptional improvement in their behaviour and relationships with others. Care planning is very individualised and is supported by excellent behaviour management plans. Pupils are helped to manage their anxieties, challenges and behaviours and this positively influences their relationships in school and at home.

Behaviour is managed very effectively because all behaviours are seen as a form of expression and communication. Staff are insightful and they actively seek to explore behaviours that facilitate improved communication and understanding. Residential pupils thrive and learn how to manage their anxieties. They grow in confidence, their skills improve, they benefit significantly because staff are exceptionally patient, committed and proactive.

Staff consistently explore ways to encourage and reinforce positive behaviours and the use of praise and rewards is imbedded into daily practices and routines. The use of physical intervention and sanctions are kept to a minimum and are proportionate to the circumstances and the individual pupils involved. Extensive management information is collected and evaluated around the management of behaviour and related events. Managers and leaders are very well informed about the effectiveness of the school's approaches to behaviour management and can quickly pick-up on any concerning patterns or trends.

The recruitment, selection and vetting of staff is effective and promotes residential pupils' safety. There is a rigorous approach to health and safety matters which is underpinned by a comprehensive health and safety policy. There are ongoing environmental safety checks, regular health and safety audits, practice fire drills as well as regular servicing of fire safety equipment and utilities. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken to minimise risks to pupils both on and off site. Any matters relating to safety and maintenance are promptly addressed. This results in the accommodation and grounds being safely maintained for everyone's benefit.

## **Leadership and management of the residential provision** **Outstanding**

The management and organisation of the school's welfare and residential provision is

outstanding. Managers ensure that the welfare of residential pupils is given first consideration and the school communicates this approach clearly to staff and residential pupils. There are more than enough staff available for residential pupils and they are well trained and supported to deliver a consistent, high quality residential service. The style of management ensures that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Parents and professionals are very positive about the residential provision and feel that the school is run with the welfare, safety and progress of pupils as its primary focus. One parent stating, 'it's like having a second family, it does feel like home from home.'

The school provides a very clear and detailed statement of purpose and function, which is readily accessible to parents, professionals and staff. A version of this document is also available to residential pupils, which is produced in a number of different formats to aid their understanding about the school. There are excellent policies, procedures and guidance, which are kept under review and underpin the philosophy and ethos of the school. The school's website also provides an array of useful information about life at the school but does not keep all of the displayed information up-to-date.

Residential pupils are looked after by skilled, knowledgeable and extremely competent residential staff. The commitment, enthusiasm and drive of the team filters through and across the whole school. This is because many of the residential workers also fulfil roles within the school during the day and in the classroom setting. This overlap brings significant benefits in terms of continuity and consistency of care and learning. The configuration of peer groups is also given high importance in residential and classrooms to maintain familiar and positive relationships.

Residential staff are led by a conscientious and effective head of care who is accountable to the Headteacher and governors. They are also provided with clear guidance about their day-to-day roles from competent and supportive team leaders. The school delivers a professional and effective service because they work in partnership with each other and as a team. One member of staff stating, 'we all work really well together; it's a great to see pupils succeed and be happy, its hard work sometimes but very rewarding.'

Managers have an excellent insight into how well residential pupils are being looked after. The leadership team is extremely good at listening to and taking on feedback. They are approachable and keen to drive improvement and develop the service further. As a result, significant developments have occurred over the last 12-months to strengthen quality assurance and monitoring activities of the school's residential provision. The head of care carries out surveys and regularly seeks feedback from pupils, parents, staff and professionals around a host of operational matters. Governors continue to check how well pupils are doing and are using an improved format to capture this information. Many changes, developments and improvements have taken place because of the school's improved quality assurance processes. These new arrangements are helping to maintain high quality care, develop the service and to continue to improve outcomes for all residential pupils.

## What inspection judgements mean

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103606
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC017168
<b>DfE registration number</b>	330/7016

This inspection 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Rosemary Adams
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	06/06/2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 427 3191
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