

Baskerville School

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

Inspection dates

12/01/2016 to 14/01/2016

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Children and young people thoroughly enjoy and look forward to being in residence. The care they receive is outstanding. Parents are uniformly positive about what the school provides and what is achieved for their child.
- As they journey through the school towards greater independence, they benefit greatly from their experiences. They are able to make sustained progress personally, educationally and socially.
- Children and young people are cared for in an environment where they feel safe and are kept safe. They develop strong, trusting relationships with the staff who care for them.
- Children and young people live in an inclusive environment where disability is not accepted as a barrier to them experiencing a full and enriching lifestyle. Aspirations for them are high.
- As children and young people mature and grow, they develop practical skills which as well as aiding them on a personal level, gives them opportunities to achieve in a range of academic and vocational areas.
- The friendships they are able to develop with their peers' aids their socialisation, relationships and interactions.
- Regular consultation takes place which captures the views, thoughts and opinions of children and young people. This provides them with opportunities to make genuine choices and contribute positively to residential life.
- A dedicated, stable staff team who have worked together for some time have the knowledge and skills to deliver high quality, individualised and sensitive care.

- The school and the residential provision are well integrated. The management team work together in their shared desire for continued improvement.
- Improvements and developments to care and service delivery are focused on areas of published research and professionally verified social care frameworks. As a result, changes and developments made are with the sole intention of achieving improved outcomes for the school's children and young people.

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 welfare only inspection was completed by two social care inspectors following the appropriate notice period for this type of visit. A tour of the residential accommodation was undertaken. Two afternoons and early evenings were spent in the company of staff, children and young people. Several children and young people were spoken to and all children and young people were observed during the inspection. Two evening meals and one breakfast were also observed. A range of records and documents were examined relating to the care provided. Discussions were held with members of the senior leadership team, managers, care staff, parents and carers.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| Julian Mason | Lead social care inspector |
| Julia Wright | Social care inspector |

Full Report

Information about this school

Baskerville School is a maintained day and residential school for children and young people of both genders aged 11 to 19 with autistic spectrum disorder. There are currently 101 students, of whom 18 use the residential service. Children and young people 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. They stay Monday to Friday and return home each weekend. Baskerville promotes a 24-hour curriculum and can accommodate children and young people in four residential family units. Each unit has a particular focus and aim, according to individual needs, providing therapeutic care and education, supporting them through adolescence into adulthood. The school is located in Harborne, a residential area close to Birmingham City Centre. The residential provision was last inspected in November 2014.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

Children and young people make excellent progress from their individual starting points. They experience exceptionally well organised residential care that impacts positively on their lives. The residential environment is highly supportive and extremely nurturing. It is organised effectively to form an important component of the school's 24-hour curriculum. Children, young people and their families can readily identify the benefits gained from residential stays. Sustained improvements to relationships and behaviour as well as growing confidence and building independence are all areas where the school excels and makes a real difference.

Parents say that their children enjoy themselves, they are enabled to participate in many stimulating and challenging activities, they learn to be more independent and develop socially and emotionally. Parents' state, 'it's a special place, my son has done really well', 'the staff are great, they know him so well' and 'he's a different boy to the one that started school, more confident and responsible.'

There is an excellent range of stimulating, interesting and rewarding activities available to children and young people. They are fully occupied from the time they finish school to the end of the day. Children and young people with varying needs in relation to ability and communication experience the right help and support to fully participate in every aspect of school life. Many on-site indoor and outdoor activities are on offer as well as accessing community based services such as youth clubs and local leisure facilities. Staff are very good at using fun activities as an opportunity for learning new skills. These opportunities positively enhance personal growth and development, which is an integral part of the residential experience.

Staff place children and young people at the heart of everything the school does. They are encouraged and empowered to put forward suggestions for the development of the residential community through individual and group discussions as well as more formal surveys and questionnaires. As a result, children and young people show a great deal of investment in their school community as they know and feel that their views and opinions are valued and respected.

Personal goals and targets are set to be challenging and this approach helps each individual achieve their full potential. Where setbacks are experienced, there is a determined and committed approach to finding ways of helping children and young people overcome their difficulties. One parent stating, 'he is treated as an individual and the school's approach to helping him has been very successful.'

Children and young people gain significantly from highly effective support, coaching and training when learning and developing the skills they need as they get older. They benefit from a structured, comprehensive learning and skills programme that is closely monitored and evaluated. This ensures that plans are individually tailored and reflect children and young people's abilities and potential in preparing to move on. Parents are unanimously positive about the impact the residential provision has on the lives of their children.

Children and young people's needs in relation to their health and well-being are consistently met. Staff aim to maintain and improve their health and fitness through the promotion of good diets and regular exercise. Staff provide highly effective coaching and mentoring in relation to healthy eating and fitness and try to encourage good habits that will benefit them in the future. Medication is safely administered and closely monitored to ensure children and young people benefit from taking their prescribed medicines. This is especially the case for medication that is

taken for life long health conditions and diagnoses.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

The quality of care and support provided are outstanding. Children and young people experience and receive high standards of care that is consistent with their needs and individual circumstances. Strong leadership provides excellent direction and guidance that helps shape staff practice and routines on a day-to-day basis. One parent stating, 'Can't fault them. The head of care is excellent, really brings the team together.' As a result, children and young people clearly benefit from a service that is flexible and responsive to their needs. The school's routines and approach fully supports each individual in developing personally, socially and academically. They are successfully supported by a professional, well-informed team whose outlook is very child-centred and non-judgemental.

This inclusive approach is achieved through the development of positive and constructive relationships between the staff team, children and young people. Staff set clear boundaries and have high expectations regarding behaviour and conduct. This approach is part of the school's drive to ensure everyone behaves responsibly and learns from their experiences. Children and young people's behaviour improves because of the positive influence and attachments they have with the staff team.

Admission and induction practices are extremely well planned and organised. Children, young people and their families have the opportunity to visit the school and view the residential facilities, meet staff and those living in residential as well as accessing an excellent range of written information. This enables them to make a fully informed choice about using the residential service. One parent stating, 'can't praise the staff enough for all their support in helping him to settle into residential.' Attentive staff and enjoyable experiences enable children and young people to overcome their anxieties about being away from their families.

Links between care and education staff are very strong which helps archive a seamless transition to and from school and to the residential provision. This provides children and young people with continuity and consistency of care in support of their social and educational arrangements. This is helped by the fact that many residential staff also fulfil roles throughout the school day. Academic and social achievements are frequently celebrated by the whole school to help reinforce and promote the positive culture of success and achievement.

Staff promote children and young people good health and support them to lead healthy lifestyles. They work in partnership with families who retain primary responsibility for their child's health. This ensures staff are fully aware of children and young people health needs when they are away from home, including long term health conditions, dietary requirements and medication. Staff provide children and young people with appropriate guidance and information about many health related issues. This means they develop a better understanding of their own health needs and how to take more responsibility for themselves as they get older. For example, developing self-care skills, planning a cooking healthy meals and exercising.

While at school, children and young people are supported to access routine and specialist services such as occupational therapists and medical consultants. The school effectively utilises these links to ensure specific health needs and conditions continue to be monitored and assessed. Visiting professionals are also involved in helping the residential team to continue developing their knowledge and skills around autism and associate needs.

Children and young people live in very safe, clean and tidy accommodation with lots of space inside and outdoors. The school provides a comfortable and homely environment, which is well maintained and decorated. Children and young people are able to personalise their bedrooms

with pictures and photographs if they wish. The accommodation continues to be upgraded and decorated as part of a rolling programme of improvements.

Care is taken to produce nutritional and well balanced menus, with any specific dietary needs being fully catered for. Children and young people's views are gathered when planning menus and they have choices available to them for each meal. They are encouraged to try unfamiliar foods, appreciate different cultures and try international cuisine. Festivals and religious events are celebrated. Feedback regarding the choice, quality and quantity of food served in the individual residential units is very positive.

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

The arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are outstanding. The school has highly effective leadership that consistently promotes an environment where protection and safety are paramount. Managers and the staff team demonstrate a high degree of responsibility and accountability for safeguarding arrangements. Staff are trained in safeguarding and their knowledge is tested through periodic questionnaires. They are alert to indicators that children and young people may be at risk of harm. The school has very clear procedures for responding to child protection concerns. Managers work in partnership with external agencies to ensure any safeguarding issues are appropriately addressed.

All visitors to the school are provided with clear information and instructions about what to do if they have a concern about a child or young person. This newly introduced practice is an example of the school's continuing approach to strengthen safeguarding and child protection practices and arrangements.

Children and young people are clearly benefiting from living in a school that has an excellent focus on safeguarding and protection matters. They are actively encouraged to improve their awareness and understanding about how to keep themselves safe. For instance, children and young people learn about how to improve their safety when in the community and how to use social media safely and appropriately. The staff team's approach is underpinned by child protection training that also reflects current national priorities around safeguarding. For example, staff have recently completed training around the risks relating to radicalisation and the Prevent agenda.

A key strength of the residential provision is how residential and school staff understand the complexities of children and young people's difficulties, behaviours and communication needs. This insight informs effective organisation and operation of daily support routines, which are kept under review. There are practical interventions and arrangements to support all aspects of children and young people's residency because of informed and effective risk assessment practices. Strategies to manage risks are focused on safety but also promote opportunities to take acceptable risks as part of developing life skills and personal responsibility.

Staff consistently encourage and reinforce positive behaviours and personalised incentives are imbedded into daily practices and routines. For example, the use of rewards, verbal praise and congratulations are all very familiar experiences for many children and young people. They are comprehensively helped to manage their anxieties, challenges and behaviours, which positively influences their relationships in school and at home.

The residential team are continually exploring ways to help children and young people manage their behaviours and to safely express their emotions and feelings. One of the many developments that have occurred in the school recently is around children and young people having a greater influence on their own personal development. Improved methods of communication that regularly capture specific feedback about how well individuals think they are

doing is now in place. This results in them having an even greater influence on their personal targets especially around behaviour and how they are helped to make progress.

The use of physical interventions and formal sanctions are kept to a minimum and are proportionate to the circumstances and individuals involved. Extensive management information is collected and evaluated around the management of behaviour and related events. Managers 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 children and young people's safety. There is a rigorous approach to health and safety matters which is underpinned by comprehensive policies and procedures. There are ongoing environmental safety checks, regular health and safety audits, practice fire drills as well as regular servicing of equipment and utilities. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken to minimise risks to children and young people both on and off site. The accommodation, grounds and activities are being safely maintained and managed for everyone's benefit.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

Children and young people benefit from using a residential service that is organised and managed outstandingly well. An experienced, qualified head of care with a child-centred approach provides the staff team with a clear focus on necessary practices and tasks needed to successfully help children and young people develop academically and socially. The head of care is well supported by governors, senior leaders and the residential team who all contribute positively to the culture, ethos and working practices developed within the school.

The established and qualified team have worked together for some time, achieving a consistent focused approach that provides children and young people with outstanding quality of care. They understand their roles and responsibilities and work positively with each other, ensuring children and young people's diverse and individual needs are met.

Managers provide excellent day-to-day support as well as providing more formal supervision and performance appraisals. These are used effectively to promote the professional development of the team and maintain high standards of work practice. Staff regularly participate in core training and learning events to update their knowledge and skills as well as completing specialist training to address any specific areas of need. This means that staff are able to develop their knowledge and skills and to address and meet each child's and young person's needs more effectively.

The head of care is well supported and demonstrates a clear understanding of the strengths of the residential provision and areas for development. This is reflected in the targets set in the school's development plan as well as individual performance and practice targets identified for each member of staff. As a result, the whole staff team are involved and responsible for the development and progress of the residential service.

The system for dealing with complaints is fair and transparent. There have been no complaints from children or young people and only one from a parent which was resolved satisfactorily. All required policies and procedures are in place and are known to those who are required to implement them. These documents are also publicly available on the school's recently updated website which now provides a comprehensive picture of life at the school. All national minimum standards were met at the last inspection and this continues to be the case at this visit.

Managers have an excellent insight into how well children and young people are being looked after and what they are achieving. Quality assurance and monitoring activities are very strong. The head of care regularly carries out surveys and frequently seeks feedback from children and young

people, parents and staff around a host of operational matters. Governors continue to check how well children and young people are doing and provide a helpful level of scrutiny across the school's operation.

Many changes, developments and improvements have taken place over the last year. This is because of the commitment and drive to maintain high quality care and to continue to improve outcomes for all children and young people. Many improvements have either an evidence based in terms of 'what works' or has been researched in order to underpin changes in practice or arrangements. In addition, managers and staff visit other schools to compare and contrast what is provided with their own provision. This has meant that well-established models of care and practice have been researched and used to reinforce what the school provides or to further develop its residential service.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

| Judgement | Description |
|----------------------|---|
| Outstanding | A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced. |
| Good | A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted. |
| Requires improvement | A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good. |
| Inadequate | A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress. |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 103606 |
| Social care unique reference number | SC017168 |
| DfE registration number | |

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.

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| Type of school | Residential Special School |
| Number of boarders on roll | 101 |
| Gender of boarders | Mixed |
| Age range of boarders | 11 to19 |
| Headteacher | Rosemary Adams |
| Date of previous boarding inspection | 10/11/2014 |
| Telephone number | 0121 427 3191 |
| Email address | r.adams@baskvill.bham.sch.uk |

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