

# 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 young people aged 11 to 19 who have autistic spectrum disorder. Sixteen young people use the residential provision. Young people stay from Monday to Friday and return home each weekend. Baskerville residential provision comprises four residential family units. Each unit has a particular focus and aim, according to young people's needs, including therapeutic care and education and supporting young people through adolescence into adulthood. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2017.

**Inspection dates:** 5 to 7 March 2018

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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:** 7 March 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- Young people make excellent progress in many areas of their lives, and especially with their independence skills, confidence, and social and communication skills.
- Young people enjoy exceptionally warm and positive relationships with staff.
- Staff are knowledgeable about young people and work hard to improve young people's outcomes in areas of their academic learning, social development and emotional resilience.
- Creative training, guest speakers and research-based practice help to strengthen staff practice.
- Staff are creative about offering a wonderful range of activities that enable young people to have a sense of achievement and to take part in different types of community engagement.
- Staff ensure that the voice of the young person is always prioritised.
- The feedback from young people, their parents and other professionals is excellent.
- Partnership working is a strength of this school.
- Staff practice keeps young people safe.
- There is a stable, inspirational and motivated management team.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Management oversight of incidents and restraints is not always consistent.
- One member of staff has not obtained a level 3 qualification, despite working at the school for a number of years.

## **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 standard(s) for residential special schools:

- All children and staff should be given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) within 24 hours of incidents of restraint, including reasonable force, they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by.
- All existing care staff should attain a relevant minimum level 3 qualification or have qualifications which demonstrate the same competencies. All new staff engaged from the commencement of these standards hold these qualifications or begin working towards them within 3 months of confirmation of employment.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that the management team has sufficient oversight of all incidents.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Young people hold their residential experience in high regard. Each young person is making exceptional progress across all aspects of welfare. For example, they make excellent progress in many areas of their lives, especially with their confidence and their independence, social and communication skills, because of their residential experience. They are able to see the progress that they make. For example, one young person commented, 'The best thing about being here is that I have learned to cook. I can now cook lasagne.' A parent commented, 'I was concerned before (my son) went to residential, but now I'm really glad, as he's gained lots more skills.'

Young people enjoy exceptionally warm and positive relationships with staff. Staff are knowledgeable about young people and aspire to improve outcomes. The residential and teaching staff work closely together. This partnership means that, together, they are able to identify when additional help is required for a particular young person. Young people have access to 'combi workers', who support them both in the residential service and in the school. This helps young people to achieve smooth transitions between their residential experience and participation in the school day. This has had a positive impact on reducing the number of incidents.

Staff are creative in the way that they interact with young people and obtain their views. Young people not only take part in young people's meetings, they also chair these meetings and take the minutes. Young people take part in regular questionnaires and social stories, and are involved in showing new young people and their parents around the residential service. A parent commented, 'My son is initiating conversations with his peers. He would only ever speak to adults before.' Consequently, young people grow in confidence, and are able to express their views and be involved in meaningful decisions about their school experience.

There is a wonderful range of activities available to young people. Staff are imaginative, and this enables a wide range of activities to be available to help to improve young people's lives. Activities include pottery, attending 'forest school', the Special Olympics and youth groups, shopping and going out for meals. Parents are invited to attend themed nights, such as a recent Greek night, when everyone dressed up and enjoyed tasting Greek foods. A member of staff told the inspector, 'We are creative and not afraid to haggle on the prices of things, such as tickets for activities.' As a result, young people get to experience a real sense of community engagement.

The arrangements for dealing with medication are safely managed. Staff implement positive behaviour strategies to support young people to develop skills to manage their emotions and to work in partnership with designated practitioners, so that a holistic approach of care is secured. Staff pay particular attention to young people's emotional and mental health. For example, managers have been involved in research

around improving mental health. Participation in this research has helped the managers to adopt practices that have had an improving impact on young people's overall mental well-being.

New young people and their parents have the opportunity to visit the school, walking round the different residential houses, meeting the staff and talking with other young people who already access the residential provision.

Staff make sure that the residential accommodation is maintained to a high standard and that the young people play a key role in choosing the overall decor. As a result, young people feel relaxed, warm and comfortable.

Young people's care plans are up to date, and in most cases provide staff with all the necessary information on how to care for and support each young person. However, in one isolated case a young person's file did not include the information to the effect that they were a child looked after. Nonetheless, staff are knowledgeable about this detail and the information was available in school files. The leaders and management team took quick action during the inspection to update the records to reflect the young person's legal status.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Staff are alert to the dangers that young people can face from going missing from school and around child sexual exploitation, self-harm and radicalisation, as well as aware of the risks surrounding using social media. For example, staff have completed some excellent work to help one young person to learn how to use the internet safely. This has included installing additional software to computers so that the young person is protected from online risks.

Staff ensure that young people are able to access a range of additional services that they might require to improve their outcomes. For example, staff will refer young people to occupational therapists. When concerns are raised over child sexual exploitation, leaders are quick to ensure that the correct level of care and support is secured. However, on one isolated occasion there was a delay in leaders pursuing early help for a young person.

Staff look for positive ways to manage young people's behaviour. As a result, physical restraint is rarely required. Staff promote a strong, positive culture, which means that young people feel listened to and respected. However, there has not been consistent management oversight to ensure that records hold all the required information. This has led to some young people not having their views captured in these records.

Senior managers ensure that safe recruitment practice is adhered to. This means that only those staff who have been assessed as suitable to work with young people are employed.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

Leaders and managers are inspirational, confident and motivated to change the lives of young people on roll at the school. School leaders and the head of care work together, with a shared aim to make sure that the residential service continues to make a positive difference to the lives of young people and their families. This is achieved by basing all new developments on research-based practice. There are various projects underway, one being the development of a completely new behaviour management system for the whole school. This is going to be trialled in the residential provision.

Residential staff are skilled, enthusiastic and dedicated to the young people whom they care for. The training offered to staff is an ongoing process, and staff receive training every Friday afternoon. Training includes guest speakers, such as a speaker who has autism spectrum disorder, to help the staff to understand the barriers that young people with autism spectrum disorder can face.

The vast majority of care staff have completed the level 3 residential childcare qualification. However, one member of staff who has worked at the school for a number of years has not achieved the required award.

Staff benefit from having regular supervision and appraisals where they can discuss individual young people, research and ideas, as well as their own development needs. One member of staff told the inspector, 'There is lots of support and lots of meetings. There is always a member of management or a speech and language therapist available to support us if we have any issues.'

There is excellent partnership work with the occupational therapist and the speech and language therapists. They are extremely enthusiastic about outcomes for young people and have a clear plan to help them to achieve their full potential. The therapists spend time in residential houses with staff and young people. They help to devise clear action plans linked to young people's targets. As a result of their positive experiences at the school, young people blossom and make outstanding progress.

Governors receive regular and comprehensive information about the school and the residential provision. They have a clear oversight of the impact that the school has had on the outcomes for young people. The independent visitor's termly monitoring reports add value to the school's internal quality assurance processes.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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:** Rosemary Adams

**Type of school:** residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Louise Battersby, social care inspector (lead)

Lisa Walsh, social care inspector



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