

Inspection of a good school: Baskerville School

Fellows Lane, Harborne, Birmingham, West Midlands B17 9TS

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Outcome

Baskerville School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Baskerville School promotes positive relationships between staff and pupils really well. Staff know their pupils well and pupils feel safe in their care. Pupils are confident and, because they trust staff to look after them well, they become confident enough to challenge themselves in their learning. This helps to prepare them for adulthood.

Staff are ambitious for every pupil. They have designed learning pathways that allow all pupils to develop their independence and to take qualifications in subjects that match their aspirations and ambitions where appropriate. As a result, all pupils leave school to progress to positive destinations.

Behaviour in lessons and in social times is purposeful and calm. Many pupils have learned to identify when they are feeling unsettled, and they are often able to manage their own behaviour well. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens, and they are confident that staff will help them if they need it.

Pupils take part in an extensive range of enrichment activities, such as remote-control car club, gardening, piano tuition and 'rock stars'. These experiences help pupils to develop their talents and interests.

Pupils use communication strategies that best suit their needs. However, there is not a consistent use of communication strategies across the school. This means that some pupils do not develop their communication skills as well as they could.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a clear vision for the curriculum. They want to make sure that all pupils are prepared well for adulthood and can move from school to meaningful education, training or employment. Leaders plan the curriculum effectively in order to make sure that pupils revisit the important knowledge that they need to remember. At its best, this is very effective. For example, leaders have identified that pupils need to know how to keep

themselves safe from exploitation, and so in personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils learn about this. In different 'pathways', pupils learn about how good friends behave, how to say no, and how to spot online exploitation. As a result of this carefully sequenced information, pupils can remember the risks that they may face and know how to stay safe online. Some curriculum areas are not as advanced, and in the 'discovery' base, the curriculum has undergone some significant recent changes, which are still being embedded.

Students in the sixth form enjoy a curriculum that prepares them for adulthood. They study academic courses and learn how to look after themselves so that they can be as independent as they can. Leaders work closely with students and parents to make sure that the qualifications that students study prepare them for their next step.

Pupils who are at the early stages of reading are not taught to read well enough. There is a phonics scheme in place. However, teachers lack the expertise to deliver this well and the assessment of phonics knowledge is weak. This means that pupils have too few opportunities to practise reading using books that match their current ability. This limits their ability to learn well across the curriculum.

Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to make choices and to express their opinions. Pupils use a range of appropriate methods to communicate. However, staff do not use these planned strategies consistently well and there is not a clear communication strategy in place across the school. This means that staff do not always encourage pupils to use the communication methods that could work best for them.

Leaders make the most of every opportunity to enhance pupils' development. They have thought carefully about the learning experiences they provide for pupils, including how they arrive on school transport and eating lunch together. Leaders have introduced the 'Baskerville Pledge'. This is a series of experiences that all pupils will take part in during their time at school. These include having a drink in a cafe, a day at the beach, camping and eating at a restaurant. Subject leaders run trips and visits as part of the curriculum. Recent trips include going to the supermarket, visiting a local farm and a local museum.

There is an ambitious careers programme for pupils. All pupils in key stage 4 and 5 take part in some form of work experience. They engage in work that is carefully related to their current courses and future ambitions. All pupils receive independent careers advice and pupils in all pathways can go to careers fairs attended by local colleges, employers and supported settings. As a result of this good work, all students leaving school last year went on to their first-choice destination.

Staff speak positively about the changes that leaders are making to improve the quality of education for pupils. They say that leaders are approachable and supportive. Leaders of the school and residential setting communicate well. They share the same systems for recording any concerns. Some staff work with residential pupils in both the school and the home and this means that pupils receive continuity of care. Governors know the school well. They provide challenge and support for leaders and conduct external reviews of provision to check their understanding of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders are well qualified. They have made sure that all staff receive regular training on the issues that pose the biggest risks to their pupils. As a result, staff recognise and report a wide range of concerns about their pupils. Leaders are tenacious about getting the right help for their pupils. They have developed extensive partnerships to make sure that this happens. There is daily communication between the school and the residential provision. This ensures that any safeguarding concerns are acted on quickly. Leaders manage any safeguarding concerns about staff effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have begun to implement a new curriculum in 'Discovery' and in other subject areas. The new curriculums are not yet fully developed, and this means that leaders are not able to make links between the 'Discovery' curriculum and other areas of the school, nor to make sure that curriculum links are clearly planned across all subjects. This limits pupils' ability to remember important information, and pupils who move pathways find the transition more difficult. Leaders should make sure that the planning and sequencing of the curriculum is fully developed and that it includes all pathways in the school.
- There is not a consistent approach to communication in place across the school. This means that pupils do not develop their communication and interaction skills as well as they could. Leaders should identify, introduce, and embed a consistent communication strategy in the school.
- The teaching of early reading is not as good as it needs to be. This means that pupils at the early stages of reading do not learn to read fluently as well as they should. Leaders should make sure that all staff who deliver phonics receive the right training to develop their expertise in this area.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	103606
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10226980
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Binnie
Headteacher	Jackie Smith
Website	www.baskvill.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school has a residential provision on site for up to 16 pupils from the school. This operates in term time only.
- 18 sixth-form students attend a supported provision at Bournville College. This provision is staffed by school staff.
- The school meets the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training available to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about the pathways open to them.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, including curriculum and pastoral leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with teachers and representatives of governors.
- Inspectors held discussions with leaders of the residential provision.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English and communication, mathematics, and personal, social and health and education. For each of these subjects, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups and spoke to pupils at various points during the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Claire Price, lead inspector

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