



BASTON HOUSE SCHOOL

DEVELOPING LEARNERS' SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE



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Baston House School is a specialist provision in education and development for children and young people aged 5 and upwards who have been diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC).

Foreword: Chris Kistan, Principal, Baston House School



It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to Baston House School, an independent specialist school for children and young people, whose Special Educational Need is described as being on the Autism Spectrum.

Breaking down barriers

Our goal is to break down the barriers to learning that our students encounter and to support them by equipping them with the skills needed for an independent life beyond school.

Learning and well-being

We support learners in achieving their full potential by putting learning and well-being at the heart of everything that we do.

We promote learning by encouraging:

- enquiring and curious minds to research independently
- learning in diverse and contemporary fields of interest
- the learner's special interest areas and strengths

- the security and freedom to make mistakes and learn from them....as this is how we all improve!

We promote well-being by encouraging learners to:

- have fun and be happy
- be resilient and use their coping strategies when they are anxious
- participate in activities that promote self-esteem and self-confidence.

Dedicated staff

Essential to any child's learning and well-being is the teacher, and we have highly experienced, skilled, dedicated and committed teaching teams and support staff. These teams work together to provide flexibility in meeting the needs of all learners. Our teams work together to provide a safe and engaging environment within which the needs of the learner are met.

Parent partnership

We know that our partnership with parents is a key factor in a young person's success. So, we promote, encourage and create opportunities for parental involvement in every step of a learner's education and well-being. Our termly celebration days are testament to our open door approach to encourage partnerships with parents.

Thank you

Finally, I hope that you enjoy reading this prospectus, and I invite you to visit and look around our fantastic school. I am confident that you will be impressed by the quality of education, understanding and care we can offer to children and young people.

To make an appointment to visit, or to simply ask a question, please call the school office on 020 8462 1010.

Rachelle despaired of finding the right school for her son until she discovered Baston House

"There has been a dramatic change. He used to go to school because he had to, now he actively enjoys it"



Rachelle lives in Lewisham with her three children, the eldest of whom, Raeshaun, is twelve years old.

Sink or swim?

When choosing a school for a child there are many things to take into account, but for a parent with a child on the autistic spectrum the decisions can be much more difficult. Whilst some children with the condition may flourish in a mainstream setting, others will struggle and some may fall between the two categories. This was the situation in which Rachelle found herself with her son, Raeshaun.

Secondary school

Raeshaun attend a mainstream primary school, but it was at secondary level that Rachelle began to realise that something would have to change. "I was still convinced that Raeshaun would be fine in the mainstream as long as he had

appropriate one-to-one support like any child with learning difficulties, but school after school turned us down. I did hours of research trying to find an answer, but had no help from anywhere and it was like a big grey cloud was hanging over me."

Fitting in at last

Rachelle found a mainstream school for Raeshaun, but it didn't work out, and he was bullied there. Rachelle then approached Baston House which agreed to offer Raeshaun a place. "We went to visit and loved the warm welcome and the fact that they understood exactly what we needed."

Having completed a three-day trial period at Baston, Raeshaun pleaded to be allowed to go there. "He liked it straightaway and felt that he fitted in," says Rachelle. "The school was brilliant and managed the transfer very quickly so there was minimal disruption, and for the first time in many months I felt able to relax."

Small steps, big progress

Although Raeshaun has only been at Baston for a few weeks, family and friends have noted a marked difference in him. "There has been a dramatic change," explains Rachelle. "He used to go to school because he had to, now he actively enjoys it. He understands his lessons whereas before he often shut himself off and he is taking a real interest in what he is learning. At home he is much happier, sleeps better and is more affectionate, so the move to Baston has had a very positive effect on us all."

Lifting the pressure

Raeshaun has some catching up to do but Rachelle is confident that with his new interest in his lessons and the gentle approach of his teachers, he will do well. "He is not put under too much pressure and they won't push him too far until they have assessed his capabilities and I'm happy with that. Now that he is more comfortable in his school environment his self-esteem is increasing under a less intense system and my stress levels have decreased, too!"

School day



School hours

Primary School

School starts/registration:	9.00am
Lessons start:	9.05am
Break:	11.10am – 11.30am
Lunch:	12.30pm – 1.15pm
School ends:	3.30pm

Secondary School

School starts/registration:	9.00am
Clubs:	9.05am
Lessons start:	9.20am
Break:	11.20am – 11.35am
Lunch:	12.35pm – 1.15pm
School ends:	3.30pm

Uniform

Primary school uniform is a yellow badged polo shirt, with a royal blue badged sweatshirt. Secondary school uniform is a white badged polo shirt, with a navy badged sweatshirt. Trousers or skirt are grey or black.

School lunch

All learners bring in a packed lunch, and we encourage parents to provide healthy food, snacks and drinks.

Ponies and class pets

Baston House School runs a pony club for learners, with ponies on site. Some classes also have pets, and the school is working towards offering vocational animal husbandry qualifications.

Communication

Close liaison and co-operation with parents is seen as essential in providing continuity and consistency of approach for our learners. We have new starter meetings when a learner first starts. We also hold

celebration evenings where parents are invited to learn about the growth of the school and speak with class teachers. Parents are invited by the learners to attend a celebration of learning and achievement, the school also uses these evenings as an opportunity to communicate and socialise with parents and the community.

Home/School contact books

Home/School contact books are used for parents and school to communicate with each other, and staff are always free to speak with parents over the phone or via e-mail. Home/school books are offered to parents as a way to keep in contact. Communication with parents is personalised to include e-mails, telephone calls and text/instant messaging. The school operates a personalised approach to parental visits to the school. Visits are encouraged, welcomed and individualised to each learner.

Marie's son has achieved more than she ever thought possible under the dedicated support of Baston House School

"...anything which Tristan achieves between the ability to tie his own laces to going to university is a milestone which makes me happy, and I will always be grateful that Baston House has helped him to reach those milestones"

Marie and Michael Pace live in Croydon with their son, Tristan, who is 16.

Tristan was diagnosed when he was six but it was only two years ago that Marie finally succeeded in her fight to win a place at Baston House.

Expect the unexpected

Having spent so long out of education, Tristan's confidence was very low and his fear of failure meant that he was unwilling to attempt something he felt he might not be able to achieve. However, within weeks of starting at Baston House he had gone from struggling with simple children's books to reading complicated adult literature, something

Marie finds almost incomprehensible.

"I think that because his teachers knew he was capable of doing more he was able to believe it himself and so was willing to allow himself to try," says Marie. "Their faith in him seemed to give him faith in himself and he has succeeded spectacularly." Tristan has also taken and passed exams which Marie and Michael had never remotely expected would ever happen.

Overcoming fears

Apart from Tristan's academic achievements, Marie has noticed a great improvement in his social skills. "The staff at Baston House have gone to a lot of effort to help him to overcome some of his fears, taking him out and about to

shops and cafes in the town, for example, and finding ways to help him cope if he becomes distressed. Perhaps one of the best outcomes of this approach is that people who are not aware of Tristan's condition can meet him without realising that he is autistic."

New points of reference

"When your child is born it is tempting to map out their life in terms of exams, career and marriage but when you get a diagnosis like this you lose all points of reference. Now, anything which Tristan achieves between the ability to tie his own laces to going to university is a milestone which makes me happy, and I will always be grateful that Baston House has helped him to reach those milestones."

Curriculum

Our unique approach is called ‘The Baston Way’ and is an ever evolving approach that is a combination of research proven autism-specific strategies, systems and techniques, incorporating individualised learner education plans, which give a clear focus on improving communication and interaction skills through identifying learners strengths in areas of special interest.

Bespoke learning

Baston House School offers a specialist education, that includes the National Curriculum, to learners aged from 5-11 years. Key Stage 1-2 subjects include:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Design and technology
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- History
- Geography
- Performing and Expressive Arts
- Music
- Physical Education.

Visual learning

Our curriculum delivery is supported by a range of prominent

visual strategies, including highly structured work-systems; predictable changes and phase timings and engaging and appealing learning environments.

Baston House uses the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) as it is a comprehensive, thematic, creative curriculum with a clear process of learning and with specific learning goals for every subject, for international mindedness and for personal learning. Baston House uses the IPC as it has been designed to ensure rigorous learning but also to help teachers make all learning exciting, active and meaningful for children. Learning with the IPC takes a global approach; helping children to connect their learning to where they are living now as well as looking at the learning from the perspective of other people in other countries. By using the IPC, Baston House joins the community of thousands of schools in more than 65 countries around the world.

Speech and language

Our Speech & Language Team, along with other specialists, will support the development of learners’ communication and interaction skills, as they experience the Key Stage 1-2 curriculum.

Positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement and celebration of achievement is embedded in our school culture and includes individually

meaningful and high value reward systems that motivate our learners to participate in activities, helping them to take responsibility for their own learning.

Primary and Secondary Transition

We acknowledge that the transition from primary to secondary may be a challenge to most learners. We make the progression from primary to secondary as structured and predictable as possible. The school has embedded opportunities for primary and secondary phase interaction such as the integrated lunchtimes and termly performing arts productions. This interaction reduces the anxieties of learners as they progress to secondary as primary children move into an environment where they will be interacting with familiar faces and often, good friends.

The last term of Year 6 involves planned interactions between Year 6 and Secondary classes. Primary teachers introduce short visits to the Secondary building. Secondary teachers start teaching primary children in their primary classes and gradually move them into specialist rooms. A gradual timetable is phased in so that by the end of the academic year, Year 6 has two full weeks of their predicted Year 7 timetable. This approach has proven hugely successful at Baston House.

All Mary wanted was a school that understood not just autism, but her son’s own needs as well, and Baston House has come up trumps

“I have high hopes that he will be able to live with a measure of independence because of the remarkable support he is receiving from a remarkable school”



From left to right: Jasmine (Jazz) McNerney, Jasper McNerney and Mary McNerney.

Mary McNerney lives in Lewisham with her two children. Jasper, 11, has been attending Baston House School for 18 months.

Desperate for an alternative

Mary says: “My son Jasper was diagnosed with autism at the age of four. Unfortunately, he was unable to manage mainstream school and by the time he was nine he was extremely distressed and his attendance very poor.”

A positive response

It took many months, a great deal of effort and a significant amount of money before Jasper was allocated funding for a place at Baston House.

“At long last, having struggled so hard for so long in the wrong setting for a child like him, he is able to engage effectively with his education, in a setting he can understand, and where he is understood. His confidence and self-esteem have soared and he is learning much more than he ever has before; because his needs are being addressed so well he is responding very positively and his teachers have high expectations of his academic achievement, as well as his overall well-being.”

Understanding the child

“Just because all the learners are on the autistic spectrum, it does not follow that they should all be treated the same. In Jasper’s case, amongst other things he struggled with concentrating for long periods and has certain sensory issues, so he is allowed to take short breaks from his work, his

assignments are broken into smaller ‘bite-sized’ sections, and even the classroom lighting was changed as the fluorescent striplights were upsetting to him.

“This proves to me that Baston fully understands not just my son’s condition, but my son himself, and is prepared to respond in the way which will best serve his needs.”

Forward to the future

“His teachers are very pleased with his progress, and they are excellent at keeping me in touch with everything so that I know what has been going on each day. I genuinely believe that Baston House is helping him to move forward rather than stigmatising him and holding him back because he has autism. I have high hopes that he will be able to live with a measure of independence because of the remarkable support he is receiving from a remarkable school.”

Secondary Education

Baston House School offers a specialist education that includes the National Curriculum to learners aged from 11 years upwards. Key Stage 3-4 subjects include:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Design and technology
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- History
- Geography
- Modern Foreign Languages
- Performing and Expressive Arts
- Music
- Citizenship
- Physical Education
- RS.

Specialist subject teachers

Specialist subject teachers lead and support the teaching and learning at this stage. Experience of specialist subject areas, resources and equipment is an integral part of each school day.

Transition and Independence



Courses at Key Stage 4 provide pathways to nationally recognised accreditation including GCSEs. We continually revise our provision of access to a range of practical and vocational curriculum areas depending on learners' areas of interest and the economic demand for the skills gained from these areas. In all cases, students are supported in reaching their full potential and in acquiring skills that will enable them to live as independently as possible.

We ensure that basic independence skills are taught: personal hygiene, accessing healthcare, domestic management, engaging with emergency services, safe

travel, healthy eating, active lifestyles and financial planning.

In addition to this we include well-being promotion by teaching anxiety reduction and stress relief strategies to cope with sudden change and unpredictability. The importance of schedules and structures is reinforced. Social development input is focused on supporting learners in developing and maintaining safe social groups outside of school.

Lastly, we do offer in-house sex and relationship education, work experience in an area of learner interest and integration days at a local school or college.

Being a learner with autism means that your greatest need is be skilled in the ability to socially interact; form safe and meaningful relationships and communicate and express one's emotions in a socially acceptable way.

Sally took a gamble by sending her son to a new and unproven school, but Baston House has paid off for the whole family in many ways

Sally Pettitt has three children, the middle one being 13-year-old Harry who was among the first six students at Baston House School.

Limited choices

Harry was diagnosed with autism (PDD-NOS) when he was four years old. He attended a mainstream primary school.

"His primary school had served him very well but they accepted that Harry needed more than a mainstream school could provide at the next stage," Sally says. "The only option we were given by the LEA was not geared specifically to children with autism and, as a child who is very able on the autistic spectrum, we felt that Harry would plateau academically if he was not given the right opportunities. I had heard that a new school was being started up, one which I subsequently discovered would focus only on children similar to Harry, and when I eventually went to look around I realised that we had found precisely what we needed."

Huge steps forward

"It was a bit of a gamble as the school had only recently opened but I liked the ethos and what they promised, and I was right to take the chance. Not only does Harry have a smile on his face every morning, he is learning, achieving and much more socially adept than before. That in itself is a huge step forward."

A dramatic change

"In common with many autistic children, Harry has sensory processing disorder which affects his ability to maintain normal interaction," Sally explains. "He is extremely sensitive to noise and texture, for example, which means he finds it difficult to function in a supermarket or restaurant... Since being at Baston House, he has learned to try, and enjoy, a much wider range of foods and he is a great deal more confident around people outside his immediate family. The change has been dramatic."

A major impact on learning

"Harry needs speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and the availability of a psychologist, all of whom are always on-site and provide regular input. These resources, along with the small class sizes, have almost certainly had the biggest impact on Harry's learning and achievement, and given him a far greater chance to reach the potential he undoubtedly has."

Addressing the challenges in the most effective way

"All these children have something to offer and should be given the chance to shine. Whether Harry will be able to capitalise on his academic or other achievements in the future we don't know, but at least he has been given the chance to make the most of his abilities. As far as I am concerned, I will know that by enrolling him at Baston House I have done the very best I can as a mother."

"As far as I am concerned, I will know that by enrolling him at Baston House I have done the very best I can as a mother"



Teaching Teams

Small class groups, no larger than six learners per class, are led by Teachers and supported by Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants, who work under the direction of Phase Leaders and Subject Specialists.

Onsite Therapy Input

Our Therapy team comprising Specialist Speech and Language Therapists, Specialist Occupational Therapists and Clinical Psychologists, embeds effective and contemporary practice into the teaching and well-being practices at our school. This shapes the personalised and effective approach that we have in developing a curriculum that offers the learner the best learning experience possible.

Our Therapy team are also integral in the delivery of specialist interventions which directly support learners within classes, varying their focus between improving communication and interaction skills, while increasing emotional development and equipping learners with the ability to cope with anxiety.

Our plan is to steadily increase the provision of a range of specialist interventions.

Activities

Baston House School is also working towards a range of special activities, to include:

- Independence and Life Skills programmes
- Independent Travel training
- Vocational learning
- Sex, relationship and drug related education
- Mainstream participation
- Citizenship (including School Council)
- Healthy eating
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
- Horticulture
- Construction and Engineering Skills



Only Baston House School understood exactly what Heidi's son needed, and was able to offer the right support

"...all staff are approachable, understanding and trustworthy and they have vast knowledge around autism... it has changed our lives completely"

Heidi and Scott Nokes live in Eltham with their son, Shaw, who is 11.

Fighting for assessment

Shaw has only been at Baston House School for six months but is, says Heidi, now presenting as a completely different child. Shaw has an Autistic Spectrum diagnosis, Generalized Anxiety and speech and language difficulties.

As the small, mainstream primary school which Shaw had been attending became increasingly unable to address Shaw's needs, Heidi became concerned and sought the school's support in obtaining a Statement of Special Education Needs for him but, as the teachers felt Shaw appeared to be coping adequately in the classroom, this support was refused by the LEA.

Guidance

Eventually, Heidi and Scott felt they had no choice but to have Shaw assessed privately and after nearly two years and two tribunals at which they were represented by a Barrister specialising in special educational needs, they were issued a Statement and able to send Shaw to Baston House. "When I researched other possible options, it was Baston which appeared to offer what we needed and which subsequently guided me in the right direction in order to get Shaw's Statement."

A specific approach to specific needs

"It is partly because the learner/teacher ratio is so high that the teachers are able to connect with each child on a personal level and get to know them well as individuals. Little things which would go unnoticed in a bigger class are more obvious

on a one-to-one level of interaction so that as soon as Shaw starts to show signs of being anxious or overwhelmed, he can go and calm himself down in the Sensory Room or have a Movement Break.

"This approach has made a huge difference; now that Shaw can be himself at school and not have to hide away or pretend, his behaviour has improved at home and he appears much happier in himself."

Complete trust

"At Baston, all staff are approachable, understanding and trustworthy and they have vast knowledge around autism, and that has had a very positive outcome for all of us. I hope that in the future many more families will be able to take advantage of this school, because it has changed our lives completely."

Admissions

Referrals

We accept referrals from local authorities, and are able to give parents information regarding our assessment and admission process.

Joint application

We encourage parents to engage in a dialogue with their local authority and make a joint application.

Assessment

Once a referral has been received, the case will be assessed and considered by the school. If it is felt that Baston House School may be suitable, then our placements manager will arrange an initial observation. If successful, learners will be invited to attend the school for a period of placed suitability assessment. These placements will be evaluated and a final decision on suitability of placement made by the Principal.

Behaviour

Baston House School focuses strongly on the positive aspects of a learner's school life but recognise that at times they may present with challenging behaviour.

The school's Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy outlines in more detail, how we respond to particularly challenges. Copies of which are available from the school upon request.

Complaints

All of our staff recognise the significance of working in partnership with parents/carers and we value the positive relationships we have. However, we recognise that on rare occasions a parent/carer may feel unhappy with an aspect of their child's education. Though most problems and difficulties are usually resolved informally, a school complaints policy and procedures for registering a complaint is in place for more formal circumstances.

A copy of which can be obtained from our website or from the school upon request.



Freedom

Respect

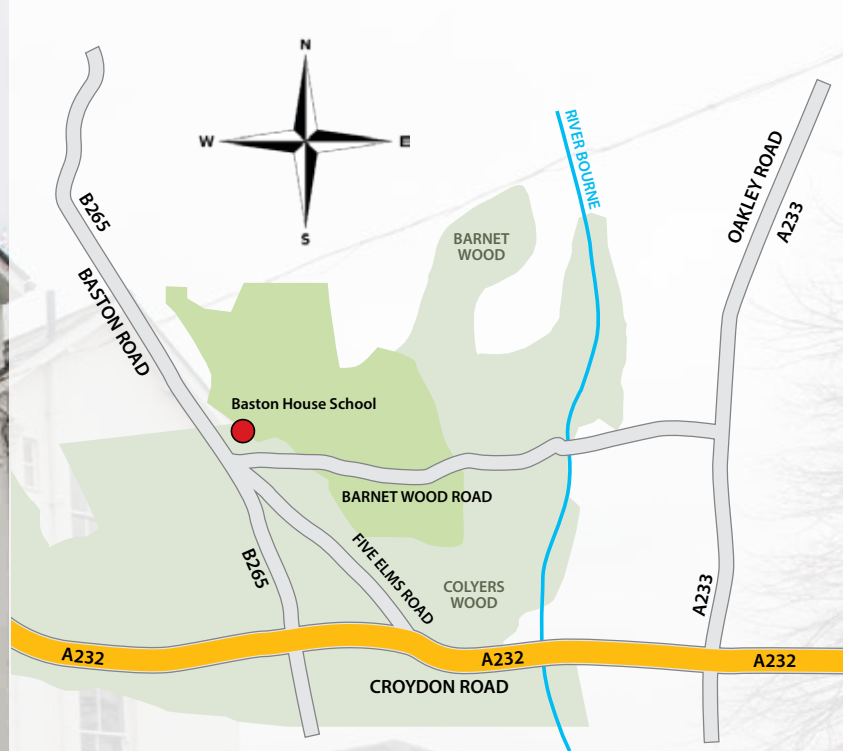
Safety

Encouragement

Learning

We are Baston House School

How to find us



BASTON HOUSE SCHOOL
DEVELOPING LEARNERS' SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

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For a comprehensive list of school policies please visit the school website.