

# Education and residential inspection summary for Barndale House School

Howling Lane, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 1DQ

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Inspection dates: 30 April to 2 May 2024

## Outcome

The education overall effectiveness judgement is: good

The judgement for the experiences and progress of children in the residential provision is: good.

## What is it like to attend this school?

- Pupils at Barndale House School arrive at school eager and ready to learn. Staff greet pupils warmly. The school prioritises knowing pupils and their individual needs well. This is a caring place to learn. There is a community feel across the school. Pupils feel safe. They have adults who listen and support them. Adults' patient and careful approach helps meet pupils' wide range of needs.
- Leaders have high ambitions for the pupils who attend. The curriculum ensures that pupils access learning to realise these ambitions. Pupils do well. They learn in classrooms where they focus on their learning. Adults support pupils effectively in order to access each aspect of the school's wide-ranging curriculum offer. The school helps pupils to regulate their behaviour well. This helps pupils to learn and play together effectively.
- The school ensures that pupils learn beyond the academic curriculum. A wide range of further experiences and opportunities help pupils prepare for their next steps in learning. Visits to local facilities like hospitality venues and completing Duke of Edinburgh's Awards help pupils develop a wide range of skills. Work with local employers, including Alnwick Garden, help pupils understand the world of work. Pupils talk with confidence and enthusiasm about these opportunities.

The inspectors made **one** recommendation to help the school improve. This is to further develop the use of assessment to understand the impact of the curriculum.

## **What is it like to stay for residential special school at this school?**

- Children have trusting relationships with the adults who care for them and love staying over at the residential provision. They develop friendships and have new experiences with their peers. The trust that children have in staff gives them confidence to develop their independence skills through the programme of support residential care offers.
- Parents and carers are happy with the experiences their children have during their residential stays. They recognise the positive impact that staying in residence has for their children. Parents and carers commented, '[Name of child] has developed confidence in himself,' 'My child is learning to be more independent,' and 'They have helped [name of child] with their peer relationships.'
- Children and their families benefit from the input of a multi-disciplinary team and the family support worker, who is fully embedded in the school. They help children and their parents with direct support, giving advice about other agencies. This helps to extend the value of the residential provision beyond the children's overnight stays. One parent said, 'Nothing is a problem for [name of family support worker], they are invaluable.'
- Support for children's emotional well-being is prioritised through the school's 'thrive approach'. Established lines of communication between different professionals in school ensures that help for children is responsive, targeted and effective. Children develop their resilience and the confidence to talk about their feelings. This helps to remove some of the barriers to accessing all parts of their school life.
- Well-written health plans are delivered by an effective team of staff who really know the children. This ensures that all children, including those with more complex needs, consistently have their health needs met. Sessional work on healthy eating and fitness strengthens the staff's approach to health and develops the children's awareness about how to live a healthier lifestyle.
- All children are supported daily to actively participate in life at the residential provision, using communication aids when needed. Children meet with staff each half term to give their views, and staff ensure that the children's opinions are fully considered. The children talk about menu options and their preferred activities. This helps children to learn that their voice is important, and they have a say in decisions that affect them.
- The children thoroughly enjoy the activities they do and have fun when they stay over. They have social opportunities they would not experience if they were not part of the residential family at their 'sleepy school'. Children identify being with their peers and the staff as the best things about staying in residence.
- The children's self-esteem flourishes from the learning they undertake through the 24-hour curriculum and the 'steps programme'. The skills they learn include

making their own beds, learning about planting and growing vegetables, shopping and cooking meals to name just a few. As a result, children become more confident and independent.

The school **meets all the national minimum standards**.

The inspectors made **two recommendations** to help the school improve. These are to ensure that the full governing body has oversight and assurance of the residential offer and to ensure that there is a person outside of the school team and governing body that pupils can contact in relation to the provision.

- View the full inspection report for the education provision:  
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/25/122384>

View the full inspection report for residential special schools provision:  
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/10/SC041487>



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