

SC443009

Registered provider: Barnardiston Hall Preparatory School Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care and education for up to six children with moderate to severe learning difficulties and/or autism.

At the time of the inspection, five children were living at the home.

The manager registered in February 2020.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 October 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 7 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/01/2025	Full	Good
22/08/2023	Full	Good
01/11/2022	Full	Good
09/06/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

At the time of the inspection, five children were living at the home. Four children contributed to the inspection.

Children have made exceptional progress from their individual starting points.

One child has been supported to develop their communication skills. The child was previously unable to communicate their needs. They are now using push buttons to indicate if they need a drink, snack, shower or if they would like to watch television or go out in the car. This progress means the child can communicate their basic needs for the first time. Due to the level of progress, the child's professionals are in the process of exploring further communication technology.

Staff are highly skilled at reading children's non-verbal communication and using this to understand their needs, things that they are or are not enjoying and understanding.

One child moved into the home since the last inspection. The preparation for the move was exceptional. The planning was child led, with the child choosing when they would like to visit the home and when they were ready to move in. This child had previously found transitions extremely challenging. However, the support that this child received allowed them to move into the home in a positive way. The manager ensured that the initial support strategies, and individual targets for this child, were in line with the school setting. This helped to ensure continuity of care and expectations for this child and reduced the child's anxiety about the move.

The home has been adjusted and designed to meet the needs of individual children. This includes an accessible kitchen and laundry room, with accessible cooking and washing appliances. These provisions have supported one child to be able to continue to develop their independence skills. The manager ensures that all children receive excellent support to develop independence skills that will support them for the rest of their lives.

Children's birthdays and achievements are highly celebrated and rewarded. One child who loves to sing and dance enjoyed a birthday party that included a live disc-jockey and their friends and staff from home and school. Children with significant and complex needs have enjoyed trips to theme parks, the forest and camping holidays. Staff meticulously plan outings and trips to ensure that children are fully able to participate and that they are not restricted due to their additional needs.

One child attended hospital for a planned overnight stay. This child was supported sensitively with the use of social stories to help them understand what to expect. The deputy manager developed an activity book for this child to do while they were in hospital, which included information about the stay. This support allowed this child to manage the hospital admission and enjoy the new experience.

All children attend full-time education with very good levels of attendance.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Children experience stability and continuity in their lives. Four of the children have lived at the home for over three years and one for over five years. The low staff turnover means that many of the staff have been supporting children for the entire time that they have lived at the home.

Staff build trusting, long-lasting relationships with children. Staff are innovative, creative and observant in obtaining the views of children, including those with complex communication needs. This ensures that all children contribute to their care and the running of the home. The manager recognises that children with disabilities may have less opportunities to make choices. The staff support children to make ample choices using pictures, communication aids and objects of reference.

Children are kept safe. There are very few incidents. When incidents do occur, staff follow children's clear and informative care plans. Staff are highly skilled in recognising children triggers and signs that they are becoming anxious. Staff are proactive and adept at supporting children to ensure that their frustrations do not escalate into unsafe behaviours. Staff support children with breathing exercises, positive and reassuring touch, and the use of calming sensory items. This support has been highly successful in preventing one child from harming themselves.

None of the children have gone missing from the home since the last inspection. The use of restraints is minimal. Any restraints have been necessary, proportionate and for the least amount of time.

One child has previously had significant challenges in relation to returning after family time. The manager recognised the need for a change in routine for this child in relation to family time. This has led to this child being able to manage coming back from family time without incident. This has led to reduced anxiety for this child, and the increase in enjoyable, meaningful family time. The routine has also been implemented at school. Due to this, this child's parent has been able to watch school football matches and attend parents' evenings for the first time.

All children are learning how to keep safe as they approach adulthood and independence. Children are supported to gain life skills such cooking, washing and budgeting. Staff support children to learn about road safety, internet safety and appropriate and safe personal boundaries. All children are being supported to complete their education before moving into adult care.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is managed by a highly experienced and skilled manager who has been in post for over 6 years. The manager has outstanding oversight of the home and the care that the children receive.

The manager is exceptionally committed to the home and the children. The manager leads by positive example. As a result, the staff are committed and skilled.

The manager shares her exceptional management skills as a mentor to a new manager in the organisation. The manager leads the continued development and support for other children's homes in the organisation. The manager and the deputy manager have worked meticulously to ensure that staff are fully supported to complete their qualifications. There are a high number of staff who have the relevant childcare qualification. Other staff are working towards this qualification within the required time frame.

The manager is highly knowledgeable about the care system and moving-on support. She ensures that all professionals are working together at an early stage to reduce delays as children move towards adulthood.

The manager and deputy manager recognise the benefits of a stable staff team in being able to build lasting relationships with children. They work exceptionally hard to support the well-being of staff and this has resulted in an exceptionally low staff turnover. Staff said that they are supported to deliver the best possible care to children.

The manager has developed a model of supporting children that involves smaller teams of staff with varied skills. The staff teams meet weekly to discuss children's progress and plan further support. This model draws on various theoretical approaches. This approach has led to difficulties being recognised and support being put in place for children at an earlier opportunity. This model has been so successful that it is now being used at other homes in the service.

Feedback from professionals and families is optimum. One parent described their child's progress as 'phenomenal' and said, 'They are a lot happier; they feel a lot safer.'

There are no requirements or recommendations following this inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspector has looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC443009

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Barnardiston Hall Preparatory School Limited

Registered provider address: Greenwood House, Greenwood Court, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 7GY

Responsible individual: Keith Boulter

Registered manager: Melanie West

Inspector

Andrea Bounden, Social Care Inspector

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