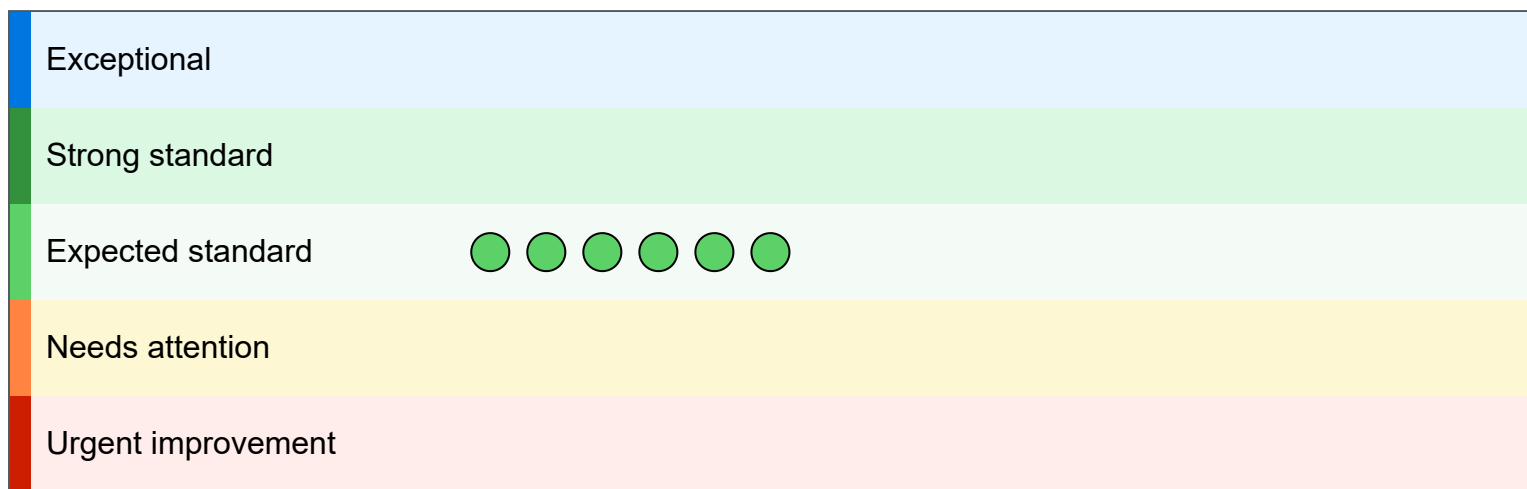


# Begdale House School

**Address:** Begdale Road, Elm, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE14 0AZ

**Unique reference number (URN):** 136236

## Inspection report: 2 June 2026



### ✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

#### **How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils arrive with significant gaps in their knowledge. For some, this includes gaps in their reading ability. However, leaders have put in place an effective approach to support pupils at the early stages of learning to read. Many pupils develop both their confidence and fluency when reading. This helps them to read well across subjects.

Pupils generally secure their understanding across subjects. They improve their writing and secure important mathematical knowledge for future learning. Pupils also achieve specific outcomes as set out in their education, health and care (EHC) plans. Sometimes, staff do not adapt the curriculum or match work as precisely to pupils' starting points. When this happens pupils' learning can be slowed. However, overall, pupils progress appropriately through the curriculum. They acquire the knowledge they need for future learning. This helps them to gain useful qualifications. They are well prepared to successfully transition to their next stages.

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have established appropriate ways to manage pupil absence. Pupils arrive with very inconsistent attendance at previous settings. For many, they have been absent from school for several years. Staff are relentless in helping pupils and families to reduce the barriers that pupils face to attending. They have success with much of this work. Overall, pupils improve their attendance. Leaders have begun to establish new initiatives to further help to remove the barriers pupils face. They understand the need to ensure that they help pupils to continue to improve their attendance once they have successfully settled at school.

Across the school, pupils behave well. Pupils value making new friends. They enjoy being together during social times. Pupils are respectful towards staff. They value the positive relationships they develop with staff. They trust staff to help them when they need it. Bullying is rare. Should it happen, staff deal with it effectively. Leaders carefully monitor behaviour incidents. They use this monitoring to identify trends. This helps leaders to adapt the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum effectively. As a result, pupils learn effective strategies to manage their feelings and emotions.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed the curriculum since the previous inspection. Across subjects, they have identified the important knowledge pupils need to learn. They have also identified the qualifications they want pupils to achieve. Leaders understand where the curriculum is having the greatest impact and where they wish to further develop it.

Leaders provide useful staff training. This helps them to typically have the subject knowledge they need. This includes how to teach pupils who have gaps in their reading, writing or mathematical knowledge. Overall, staff help pupils to secure these important building blocks of knowledge.

Leaders have trained staff in how to make adaptations to their teaching. For example, staff often break tasks down into manageable chunks. Staff typically check how well pupils have learned the curriculum. When this is done well, staff make useful changes to their lessons and match work precisely to pupils' prior knowledge. This helps pupils to learn effectively. For example, staff ensure pupils have a secure understanding of written arithmetic before they ask them to solve more complex mathematical problems. Sometimes, this is not done as consistently well. There are times where staff do not adapt the curriculum or set work for pupils that is as well matched to pupils' prior knowledge.

## **Inclusion**

**Expected standard** ●

Pupils arrive at school having previously experienced significant turbulence to their education. Most have been absent from school for a significant period. Leaders have established well-considered processes to ensure that they support pupils to smoothly transition into school. This helps them to quickly feel like they belong.

Leaders use information contained in each pupil's education, health and care (EHC) plan to identify how to remove the many barriers pupils face to their achievement and wellbeing. Leaders train staff in how to best implement this support. Leaders use other professionals to further strengthen the training staff receive. For example, the proprietor body uses the clinical team to train staff effectively to support pupils' specific social, emotional and mental health needs. This helps staff to typically put in place the right support for pupils.

Leaders have established new ways to monitor how well pupils' achieve. They typically use this information well to help staff make appropriate changes to the support they provide. They also use this information to identify where to seek support from external agencies. Leaders work effectively with the providers of alternative provision. This further helps to reduce the barriers to success pupils face.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** ●

Leaders understand what the school does well and where to target future improvements. They ensure they check what happens in school in a range of ways. Leaders use this information to support them to adjust their priorities. They have success with much of this work. For example, leaders have introduced new ways to pull together information about pupils' academic progress and personal development. This helps them to have a useful overview of how well pupils achieve. Sometimes, leaders' methods for analysing the information they gather is not as systematic as they could be. Leaders understand the importance of using the information they collect more precisely. This is to better help them to skilfully adjust the support the school provides to pupils.

The proprietor keeps a close eye on the school. The governing body further supports the proprietor to do this. There are clear systems in place to enable the proprietor to effectively challenge and support leaders. These systems also ensure that the school consistently meets the independent school standards.

Leaders engage very well with other professionals, staff and parents and carers. Staff are immensely proud to work at the school. They value the way leaders support them to develop professionally. They also appreciate the way leaders support them to manage their own

workload and wellbeing. This all helps staff to put in place the effective support pupils need to achieve well. Parents are equally positive about the support the school offers their child. They are grateful for the way leaders help their child to re-engage with education and be prepared for their next steps.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

Expected standard 

Leaders have thoughtfully designed the wider offer. They have considered the additional events that help pupils to build important knowledge. Trips in the local and wider community and visitors to school help to bring the curriculum to life for pupils. They also teach pupils important values. For example, workshops on the dangers of substance abuse help pupils to understand the rule of law and how to keep themselves safe. Running alongside this wider offer is carefully considered pastoral support. Leaders have trained staff effectively in how to meet pupils' specific pastoral needs. Pupils value greatly the way staff take the time to help them to become more confident and resilient.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is a core part of the work of the school. Leaders have designed a PSHE curriculum that teaches pupils important content. Staff know how to adapt this curriculum well to meet pupils' specific and changing needs. Pupils secure their understanding of important knowledge. This includes content related to relationships and sex education. Pupils understand how to build healthy relationships. They know what the signs are of unhealthy ones. Pupils learn important strategies to manage the risks they could face both in the community and when online. They know the potential risks associated with using social media, for example.

Staff teach pupils to become more aspirational. Pupils are inspired to work hard to win 'student of the week'. Pupils benefit from structured careers advice and guidance. Staff are tenacious in helping pupils to engage with visits to colleges and careers fairs. This helps to open up pupils' eyes to potential next steps after school. They are well supported to transition effectively to their next destinations.

## **What it's like to be a pupil at this school**

Pupils arrive at Begdale House with previously negative experiences of education. Many start here having not attended school for a significant period. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan linked to their social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils value staff understanding them as individuals and what their needs are. This includes understanding the barriers they face to attending school. Well-matched support helps pupils to successfully re-engage with education.

Pupils appreciate being greeted in the morning by caring and attentive staff. This helps them to settle into their form rooms for breakfast, ready for the day ahead. Pupils rebuild their interest in learning different subjects. They particularly enjoy honing their culinary skills during cookery lessons or learning how to code during robotics sessions. These help to start to identify potential aspirations for pupils' lives after school.

Pupils behave well during the day. They enjoy making new friends while playing football on the playground or games inside. Pupils treat each other with respect. They also show respect towards staff. Typically, pupils stick with work in lessons and want to achieve well. They want to secure the qualifications they need for their next steps in education.

Pupils benefit from the many opportunities leaders provide to enrich the curriculum. Additional sessions linked to personal, social, health and economic education teach pupils important content on keeping safe. Getting out into the community is important to pupils. Pupils grasp the many opportunities they have to do this. This helps to develop pupils' confidence. It also helps them to learn more about topics they study in class. Whether learning about mathematics at the Imperial War Museum Duxford, or about the impact of plastic pollution while conducting a beach clean, the visits pupils go on are a highlight of their time at school.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure their monitoring and quality assurance enables them to systematically evaluate the impact of their work. This is so they can more skilfully adjust their approaches as needed.
  - Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment more precisely to adapt their teaching, and the work they set pupils, to better match pupils' prior knowledge.
  - Leaders should ensure the support they offer results in pupils continuing to improve their attendance once they have successfully settled at school.
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## About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the chair of the proprietor body, the chair of the governing body, the regional director, the headteacher, other school leaders, staff, pupils, parents, a provider of alternative provision and a representative of a local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

Begdale House School is registered with the Department for Education (DfE) to admit up to 36 pupils. The school offers a small number of places to pupils to stay on after year 11 to complete their qualifications.

The school operates from Begdale Road, Elm, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE14 0AZ.

Begdale House School provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils are funded by their local authority. Most pupils join having missed long periods of education.

The school does not currently use agency staff.

The school uses three unregistered alternative providers.

The proprietor is Keys Direct Care Limited. The chair of the proprietor body is David Manson. There is a governing body to oversee the work of the school.

The fees currently charged are between £49,725 and £60,060.

The email address for the school is: [admin.begdalschool@keys-group.co.uk](mailto:admin.begdalschool@keys-group.co.uk)

Headteacher: Mrs Jo Murray

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## Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

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### 1. Quality of education provided

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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### 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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### 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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### 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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## 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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## 6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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## 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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## 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

### Lead inspector:

Michael Williams, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspector:

Sara Boyce, His Majesty's Inspector

## Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 2 June 2026

### Total pupils

**32**

### School capacity

**Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

**Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

## Our grades explained

### Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

### Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

### Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

### Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

### Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

### Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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