

# Serene House School

C/O Cambian Education, 4th Floor Waterfront, Chancellors Road, London W6 9RU

## Inspection dates

15–17 May 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The proprietor, managers and leaders know their school extremely well and have maintained the good standards of education since the previous inspection. All of the independent school standards are met.
- Staff have developed positive, nurturing relationships with the pupils. Pupils develop their confidence and resilience at school.
- A strong and effective culture of safeguarding weaves through every aspect of the school's work.
- Pupils' attendance has improved considerably from very low starting points. Most pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils are provided with a curriculum that is engaging, broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs.
- Staff use assessment information to good effect, addressing gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders are refining their systems to enable them to track pupils' progress in a wider range of subjects.
- Teaching and learning is well planned and activities are well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Leaders have fostered strong working relationships with a range of agencies. Pupils are well supported in all aspects of their wider development.
- Pupils behave well in the school. Disruption is rare, and if it does occur it is managed well by staff. Pupils understand expectations of behaviour and value the school's reward system.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- Pupils are now able to take GCSEs in English and mathematics but have fewer opportunities to gain accreditation in some option subjects.
- While leaders frequently check standards of teaching and learning, they do not use this information well enough to inform staff's professional development.
- Leaders recognise the need to develop links with the local community for the benefit of pupils.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching, learning and assessment so that:
  - assessment systems are further refined so that pupils' progress in all subjects can be tracked closely
  - pupils are challenged to extend their writing in non-core subjects.
- Ensure that leaders use their monitoring information about standards in teaching and learning to further develop staff's skills.
- Continue to develop community links so that:
  - pupils understand how their positive contribution to developing and supporting the local area can make a difference to those living and working in the locality
  - pupils are provided with opportunities to participate in work experience.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The dedication and commitment of leaders and staff permeates the work of Serene House School. Together they have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The new proprietor and headteacher work collaboratively to ensure that pupils are well supported in all aspects of their education and personal development. Serene House makes a significant difference to the lives of pupils who have experienced difficulties over time. Pupils' comments, such as 'Cambian has really helped me' and 'This school is ten times better than my last one', were typical of views they expressed.
- The strong culture of safeguarding threads through every aspect of the school's work. It is evident that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Leaders take care to make sure that the curriculum is not only broad and balanced, but is well matched to the needs and interests of individual pupils. Pupils who show an interest in employment in areas such as health and social care or sport are supported to access suitable qualifications to help them follow their career path. Good use is made of alternative provision to support pupils in their career aspirations.
- Even though most pupils join the school in key stage 4, and are only able to benefit from the school's provision for a short period of time, they are supported to aspire to high standards in all aspects of their learning. Pupils are expected to take GCSE examinations in English and mathematics, as well as a selection of functional skills or BTEC qualifications, to better prepare them for their next stage of education, employment and training.
- Leaders recognise that pupils are not able to achieve external accreditation in some of their timetabled subjects, including science, personal, social, health and economic education and religious education. Leaders plan to address this in the next academic year so that pupils are able to gain additional qualifications in a wider range of subjects.
- Leaders have developed an effective framework for assessing pupils' work. Information about gaps in pupils' learning on entry to the school is used to plan the provision of specific support in English and mathematics. Leaders track pupils' progress in English and mathematics on a half-termly basis, but they are not yet tracking progress in other subjects.
- Leaders provide a useful formal report about academic progress every term to parents and carers. As well as the reports they receive, parents also value the regular, less formal contact they have with school staff. They told the inspector that they are kept well informed about all aspects of their child's progress.
- Leaders have ensured that fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development thread through the wider curriculum. Pupils also enjoy additional themed 'diversity' days, where they have opportunities to learn about other countries' cultures and practices and consider equality of opportunity.
- Leaders have established systematic and frequent monitoring of all aspects of teaching and learning. While leaders have gathered detailed information about the strengths and weaknesses that exist in this area, they are not analysing it sufficiently well. As a result,

they are not able to identify where additional support or training for staff may be required.

- The headteacher recognises the challenges that leading a small school brings, and is working well with other schools in the area to share expertise and skills. As a result, pupils are able to access a wide range of curriculum subjects by specialist teachers.
- Leaders recognise that due to the short time pupils attend this school they have not been able to establish strong links with the local community. Leaders plan to address this through activities such as volunteering and extending opportunities for work experience. This will enable pupils to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality.
- The school does not have a website but provides comprehensive information for parents on request, including a fit-for-purpose safeguarding policy.

## **Governance**

- The school is well supported by the proprietary body. The regional education lead is a frequent visitor to the school and provides effective oversight and support on behalf of the proprietor. The well-planned monitoring cycle ensures that systematic checks are made on all aspects of the school's work.
- The proprietary body representatives have comprehensive knowledge and training in safeguarding and check this area of the school's work frequently.
- The headteacher provides half-termly reports to the proprietary body about the work of the school, which ensures that they are kept well informed.
- Leaders are beginning to work with leaders from other settings, checking on standards of work in the school and the quality of teaching and learning.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- It is clear that safeguarding is taken seriously at the school, from initial employment checks, staff's commitment to keeping pupils safe, and pupils' recognition of the importance of safeguarding. Staff manage the safety of the pupils on the site in an unobtrusive but effective way.
- The proprietary body has established robust recruitment checks, which ensure that all staff are suited to work in the school.
- Staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training on wide-ranging and relevant topics such as child sexual exploitation, gang and youth violence, and hate crime. Staff participate in child exploitation and online protection training on an annual basis.
- Leaders have developed detailed risk assessments for a range of activities. Staff recognise that some activities, for some pupils, bring additional risks and require thoughtful actions to reduce those risks.
- Leaders have carried out thorough checks on the alternative provision used to support pupils' curriculum options.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The strong, nurturing relationships that are evident between pupils and staff, in and beyond lessons, enable pupils to build their resilience to the demands of work. Staff support pupils well in their learning, providing additional support where it is needed, and help pupils to rebuild their confidence in their abilities. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons, make strong progress and over time develop the confidence to work independently.
- The headteacher, who is also the lead teacher, is a skilled practitioner. She has created an engaging learning environment, which pupils treat with respect.
- Staff use their subject knowledge to good effect to challenge pupils in their learning. In mathematics, a teacher skilfully focused pupils on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary. Further links were made in literacy, with a focus on the correct spellings of the same mathematical words.
- Staff use assessment information well to identify any gaps in pupils' learning on entry to school. They then ensure that pupils receive focused support to address the gaps in their knowledge and accelerate progress. The regional special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides additional support to develop targets for pupils and direct teaching to close the gaps identified.
- Pupils are clear about their targets for learning. In addition, they have set their own personal targets linked to their academic and wider personal development and display these proudly on their individual display board.
- The headteacher has ensured that pupils are developing the necessary skills to enable them to live independently. A detailed assessment of pupils' skills relating to independent living is completed when a pupil joins the school. This information is used to provide additional help and support for pupils in areas where they have less knowledge. The inspector saw pupils learning about the steps which need to be taken to open a bank account. Another pupil was demonstrating the importance of budgeting, and how she was able to save money by finding cheaper equivalent products, or taking advantage of 'three for two' offers.
- Pupils are being well prepared for the challenge and pressure of external examinations. They learn how to tackle examination questions using strategies that they find helpful, such as 'point, evidence and explain' in English tasks.
- Pupils' writing in literacy shows a growing development in both quality and amount of writing, ensuring that pupils are better prepared for the challenge of GCSE English examinations. However, these writing standards are not reflected in other subjects.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff know the pupils extremely well and have created a learning environment where mutual trust and respect underpin relationships between staff and pupils. The

camaraderie that exists is well balanced, with clear boundaries and expectations for all pupils.

- Some pupils have missed significant periods of their education, but are supported to rebuild their confidence and resilience. Pupils told the inspector that they felt very well supported, and made comments such as, 'I'm glad I came here – I didn't think I would change but I have.'
- Pupils receive well-tailored support to help them recognise risky behaviour and how to keep themselves safe. They told the inspector that they were now more aware of the risks of using the internet, and how they could keep themselves safe online. Pupils told the inspector that they felt safe at school.
- Staff have developed strong relationships with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need for their social and emotional development. Pupils receive frequent therapeutic support on an individual and group basis. Leaders work closely with the police community support officer to make sure that they are well informed about risks in the local area.
- Leaders have ensured that systems for communication between home, school and external agencies are strong. As a consequence, there is a strong, shared understanding of the needs of the pupils, and a commitment to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress in all aspects of their personal, emotional and social development.
- The additional support pupils receive for their emotional health and well-being helps them to reflect on previous choices they have made in different settings. As one pupil, who spoke for others said, 'We knew what we were doing wrong – we made wrong choices. We've learned now, having come here.'
- Pupils participate in weekly activities which promote their physical health and well-being. Activities such as tennis, swimming and ice skating are built into the weekly timetable. Pupils are able to enjoy freshly prepared healthy meals every day.
- Pupils are well supported by staff when attending alternative provision. They make strong progress and behave well. The leader of the alternative provision is appreciative of the additional support pupils receive with their work back at school, which reinforces the learning which has taken place off site.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school because of the strong relationships that exist, and the clear understanding of expectations of behaviour in school. Pupils value the reward system which is in place and talk about how they find it motivating.
- All staff are trained in the de-escalation of behaviour and the use of physical intervention. However, incidents of physical intervention are rare. If they do happen, they are reflected on well, to understand the reasons for the intervention
- Incidents of inappropriate behaviour and exclusions are negligible because pupils are well supported in lessons. Pupils have completed comprehensive work about bullying, and have achieved training certificates from the anti-bullying alliance. There are no recorded incidents of bullying in the school.

- From very low starting points, pupils' attendance has improved significantly. Prior to attending Serene House, some pupils had experienced significant gaps in their schooling and a disrupted home life. As a result of the support that pupils receive, the current attendance of the majority of pupils is broadly in line with the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Despite having missed significant time in education, pupils are supported well to accelerate their progress. All year 11 pupils will be taking GCSE examinations in English and mathematics and have already achieved some additional functional skills and entry-level qualifications.
- The school's assessment information accurately shows that pupils' rates of progress have improved over time, and are above the expected standard set by leaders.
- Leaders also track pupils' progress in their emotional development and resilience. Information rightly shows that there have been significant gains in these areas for all pupils since attending Serene House.
- Pupils are able to articulate their next steps of learning and future career plans. Their individual display boards in the classroom map clearly their aspirations and targets as they progress through their education. One view expressed by a pupil was, 'I learn about good things, helping me to get to where I need.'
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Pupils are able to access a range of careers advice and opportunities, including impartial careers advice from advisers in the locality. Pupils told the inspector about how they had been supported with their college applications and interview practice.
- All the pupils in Year 11 have secured a place at colleges of further education from September 2018. The school's destinations information shows that all of last year's pupils were successful in securing education, employment or training. Leaders' checks later in the year revealed that they had sustained these placements successfully.
- Pupils currently have limited opportunities to participate in work experience.

## School details

Unique reference number	139220
DfE registration number	893/6031
Inspection number	10012919

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	C/O Cambian Education
Headteacher	Jade Dennis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,500
Telephone number	01948 663947
Email address	<a href="mailto:education@Cambiagroup.com">education@Cambiagroup.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	23–24 October 2013

## Information about this school

- Serene House School is a small school which supports girls who have emotional and social difficulties linked to prior life experiences.
- Pupils have experienced significant gaps in their schooling and are placed at the school for a short period of time and usually for no longer than a year.
- The school does not currently have any pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- All pupils are currently in Year 10 and Year 11.
- The number of children looked after who attend the school is higher than the national average.
- For the purpose of reporting, the lead teacher is referred to as the headteacher.



- Since the last inspection in October 2013, there has been a change in proprietor. The school has changed its name from Brown Moss School. The Department for Education has been notified.
- The school uses one alternative provider: Renu Hair, Beauty and Training Academy.
- The inspection was aligned with a social care inspection of the residential premises.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, representatives of the proprietor, parents and carers, the regional SENCo and other external agencies who support the pupils. She spoke informally to other members of staff and spoke to the proprietor of the alternative provision by telephone.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation including policies, planning, progress information and leaders' monitoring of the school. She looked at documents relating to pupils' safeguarding and welfare, and the checks on staff's suitability to work with children and young people. The inspector used the range of information gathered to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspector met with pupils formally to gather their views, and talked to them in lessons. She observed teaching and learning activities and less formal times during the school day. She looked at all pupils' work in books across a range of subjects.
- There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- The inspector considered the small number of responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- A separate inspection of the children's home took place at the same time as this inspection.

## Inspection team

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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