

Serenity School

70 Court Road, Eltham, London SE9 5AH

Inspection dates

4–5 August 2020

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

All paragraphs

- Leaders have planned a curriculum which will combine academic learning and therapeutic services. The curriculum policy sets out the five core principles of the school and supports leaders' ambitions for pupils.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and based on the national curriculum. Pupils will be assessed on entry and placed on a 'flight path' appropriate to their age and ability. Leaders have planned a robust assessment system, using 'I can' statements to assess pupils' understanding and set targets.
- The development of literacy and numeracy skills is mapped out across the curriculum. Curriculum plans include the teaching of phonics and early reading skills. Older pupils will have ample opportunities to obtain both academic and vocational qualifications.
- The development of pupils' social, emotional and mental health is an integral part of the curriculum. Each pupil will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and the school will specialise in catering for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. Leaders aim to provide a bespoke curriculum based on pupils' individual needs.
- Careers guidance will be delivered through the 'Personal Development' programme. Secondary-aged pupils will complete qualifications in employability and attend work experience.
- Pupils will have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Physical education (PE) lessons will be delivered weekly by a qualified sports teacher. A variety of educational trips and visits have also been planned.
- Leaders have detailed plans to promote pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education effectively. These plans show that equalities and fundamental British values will be actively promoted.
- Leaders have appointed experienced and qualified teaching staff for both the primary and secondary phases of the school. A comprehensive staff training programme is in place. This is likely to help staff to understand the specific needs of pupils and be able to adapt and use different resources. Staff will also undertake training to ensure that

there is a consistent approach to managing behaviour. Systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

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

All paragraphs

- The school's policies show that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a core aspect of the curriculum and the ethos of the school. There is a strong focus on building relationships based on trust and respect. Leaders aim to increase pupils' self-esteem and help them to express and manage their emotions.
- Pupils will receive 'life coaching' and PSHE education through the well-structured 'Personal Development' programme. Pupils will have opportunities to discuss wide-ranging topics and explore other points of view.
- Plans show that pupils will learn about British values across the curriculum. Pupils will have themed days to learn about aspects such as democracy and the British parliament.
- Pupils will have a range of opportunities to learn about religious and cultural events throughout the school year. The 'creative curriculum' includes community-based service, charity work and programmes to develop pupils' leadership skills.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

All paragraphs

- There are a number of policies in place to ensure pupils' health and safety, including first aid, risk assessment, admissions, behaviour and safeguarding. These are all in accordance with statutory guidance.
- The safeguarding and child protection policy is clear and detailed. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff and sets out the procedures staff should follow if they have any concerns about pupils. Designated safeguarding leaders have already received appropriate training and suitably qualified first aiders will be available on site at all times.
- The behaviour policy explains how staff will promote positive behaviour and use the whole-school rewards and consequences system. Types of behaviour specific to autism spectrum disorder are listed, with appropriate guidance and strategies for staff. The school will operate an anti-bullying charter so that any form of bullying will not be tolerated.
- The admissions and attendance registers contain all of the required information. Plans for the effective supervision of pupils are in place.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of relevant health and safety regulations to ensure that pupils will be safe on the school premises. The site complies with fire safety regulations. An additional fire risk assessment will be carried out in August

2020 to check fire safety equipment in the new kitchen area. A cycle of regular checks will help to maintain all aspects of safety.

- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

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

All paragraphs

- The single central register is in place and contains information on appointed staff. All the statutory checks to ensure the suitability of staff have been carried out. This includes checks on the proprietors and governors. Strong systems are in place to ensure that the single central register is kept up to date as the school expands.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

All paragraphs

- Since purchasing the site, the proprietors have carried out a refurbishment of the school buildings in readiness for the school opening. There have been some delays due to COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions, but all work is due for completion by the end of August 2020.
- The premises provide ample space to accommodate the proposed number of pupils. Classrooms have all been fitted to a high standard. Heating, lighting and acoustics in rooms and internal spaces are all suitable. Pupils have access to outdoor space and a newly fitted canteen. Pupils will receive PE lessons off site at local sports centres.
- New toilets and washing facilities have been installed for pupils and staff. There is a dedicated medical room with appropriate equipment. Drinking water is available at various points in the school.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

All paragraphs

- The school's website is currently being revised. It will be a joint site for the proposed school and the proprietors' other school, Serenity School Croydon.
- All the required policies are currently in place and available on request.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

All paragraphs

- The complaints policy clearly sets out the procedures to follow and the different stages of managing and responding to a complaint, including timescales. The policy also includes arrangements for an independent person to form part of a panel that will hear any complaints.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

All paragraphs

- All the independent school standards are likely to be met. The proprietors already run a well-established independent special school in Croydon for secondary-aged pupils. At least two local authorities have expressed to them a need for more school places to cater for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The proposed school will be led and managed using the same structures in place at the original school.
- The newly appointed headteacher and head of the primary phase are both experienced primary school leaders. This will help leaders to implement the primary phase of this all-through school.
- The proprietors and the school's consultant will support the headteacher. There are clear lines of accountability in place to monitor and quality assure all aspects of the provision.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- Leaders have an appropriate accessibility plan. The school site has suitable facilities and adaptations for disabled staff and pupils. Leaders are able to demonstrate how the curriculum will be adapted for the different needs of pupils.
- The school is likely to meet the relevant requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Proposed school details

Unique reference number	147991
DfE registration number	203/6009
Inspection number	10154467

This inspection was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards that are required for registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Day special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Serenity School Eltham Ltd
Chair of Governors	Linda Brown
Headteacher	Samantha Hoyer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000 to £58,000
Telephone number	020 8850 3366
Website	www.serenityschool.org.uk
Email address	office@serenityschool.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	Not previously inspected

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	Not applicable	5 to 18	5 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	150	150

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Not applicable	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	Not applicable	150
Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	None
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	All pupils
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	All pupils
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	All pupils

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	23
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	Up to 8
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	40

Information about this proposed school

- Serenity School Eltham intends to register as an independent special day school in the London Borough of Greenwich.
- The school will cater for boys and girls aged from five to 18 with a range of SEND. The school will specialise in catering for pupils with autism spectrum disorder, as well as social, emotional and mental health needs.
- All pupils will be placed by local authorities and will have an EHC plan.
- The school intends to open on 14 September 2020.
- Leaders do not intend to make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Some of the inspection was conducted remotely. This was due to restrictions placed on non-essential travel.
- The purpose of the inspection was to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Schools must comply with these standards to be registered.
- The inspector reviewed documents provided by the school, including curriculum and assessment information, safeguarding policies and health and safety arrangements.
- The on-site inspection involved a tour of the premises and discussions with leaders, including one of the proprietors. The inspector also reviewed the single central record.

Inspection team

Jude Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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