

Serenity School Eltham

70 Court Road, London, SE9 5NP

Inspection date

25 May 2023

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii), 3, 3(a)–(j), 4

- Concerns were raised about the quality of education at the school.
- Leaders have an established curriculum that enables pupils to learn in a wide range of subjects that matches the ambition of the national curriculum. There is a bespoke curriculum for each pupil that combines therapeutic support and teaching adapted to meet individual needs.
- Staff receive training and information so that they know and use specific strategies and subject-specific resources to support individual pupils to settle and learn well in class.
- Pupils learn within one of a range of pathways appropriate for their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils achieve qualifications and develop increasing independence. They become more confident and their communication skills improve.
- Leaders have ensured these independent school standards (the standards) are met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32 (1)(c)

- The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and reflects up-to-date guidance.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training. Staff know the signs that might indicate that a pupil may be at risk and the processes to follow if they have any safeguarding concerns.
- Staff are aware of the specific vulnerabilities of their pupils. Leaders liaise with outside agencies to help pupils gain the support they need.
- Leaders are alert to local safeguarding risks for pupils. Relevant content is included in personal, social and health education and assemblies. Pupils are safe in school. Pupils said their teachers protect them. Leaders' daily use of a metal detector to check for

any metal items brought into school helps pupils to feel safe.

Paragraph 9, 9(a)–(c)

- Concerns were raised about the management of pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders' behaviour-for-learning policy sets out clearly the procedures they expect staff to follow in supporting pupils' positive engagement with each other and adults in the school. Leaders provide training so that staff know leaders' expectations and so that the policy is implemented effectively.
- Leaders ensure that staff keep detailed records of behaviour, including positive behaviour points awarded and sanctions. Leaders analyse records and identify any trends or patterns. Pupils receive individual support and guidance, often combined with therapeutic interventions, to help them to manage their own behaviour and emotions and feel settled.
- Pupils are confident that staff are supportive when any pupil is having difficulty managing their behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to achieve well at school by the frequent rewards and prizes.

Paragraph 15

- Concerns were raised about the school's maintenance of the admissions and attendance registers.
- Leaders record pupils' daily attendance. Staff use the correct reference codes so that, for example, absences are clearly recorded, whether authorised or unauthorised, and when pupils are educated off site. Leaders provide accurate lists of all pupils present at different times of the day, allowing for agreed times of arrival for individual pupils, and when pupils are on educational outings.
- Leaders record all required information when a pupil starts at the school. Leaders maintain close communications with external agencies before a pupil leaves the school and is removed from the school roll.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Concerns were raised about the school's policy and practice for risk assessments.
- The risk assessment policy includes appropriate detail on leaders' expectations of staff identifying and responding to potential and actual risks to pupils' safety. Leaders ensure that there are up-to-date and well-organised risk assessments in place relating to the needs of individual pupils, special events and the safety of the premises. The risk assessment policy is implemented effectively.
- Leaders have ensured these standards are met.

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

Paragraphs 18, 19, 20

- Concerns were raised about the school's pre-employment checks of staff.
- Leaders ensure that the required pre-employment checks of staff are completed and recorded accurately on the single central record. Leaders understand and access the information needed to make safeguarding checks of all staff, including section 128 checks for those in leadership positions and prohibition checks for staff employed in

regulated activities. Staff verify required documentation.

- Leaders have ensured these standards are met.

Part 6. Provision of information

All paragraphs

- Concerns were raised about leaders' provision of information to all stakeholders.
- The school publishes a wide range of policies on the school's website, including those required in this standard such as those relating to admissions, behaviour, complaints and provision for pupils with education, health and care plans.
- Leaders communicate regularly with parents and carers and provide reports on their child's progress and attainment at least annually.
- Leaders maintain appropriate accounts relating to the funding arrangements for each child's provision at the school.
- Leaders have ensured these standards are met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

All paragraphs

- Concerns were raised about leaders' policy and procedures regarding complaints.
- The school's complaints policy is compliant with requirements, including setting out appropriate time scales for leaders' responses to any complaints received and the different stages in the process that a complainant may follow.
- Leaders keep a log of all complaints received which details relevant information, including a summary of the complaint, leaders' actions and the outcome.
- Leaders have ensured these standards are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

All paragraphs

- The proprietor body is familiar with the standards and ensures that policies and practices meet requirements.
- The proprietor body maintains oversight of the work of the school to ensure that their expectations continue to be fulfilled when there are changes to the school's senior leadership. New school leaders receive support from the proprietor body as they adjust to new routines and systems to ensure that standards continue to be met.
- Leaders have ensured these standards are met.

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 that were checked during this inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

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|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 147991 |
| DfE registration number | 203/6009 |
| Inspection number | 10287334 |

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.

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| Type of school | Independent school |
| School status | Other independent special school |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 150 |
| Number of part-time pupils | None |
| Proprietor | Serenity School Eltham Ltd |
| Chair | Ebere Emezie |
| Headteacher | Millicent Koza |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £41,000 to £59,000 |
| Telephone number | 020 4529 1960 |
| Website | www.serenityschool.org.uk |
| Email address | office@serenityschool.org.uk |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 26 to 28 April 2022 |

Information about this school

- Serenity School Eltham is an independent special day school in the London Borough of Greenwich.
- The school provides for pupils with autism spectrum disorder and pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have education, health and care plans and are placed by local authorities.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place in April 2022.

- The school uses a range of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to consider wider issues related to complaints they had received. The inspector was asked to look specifically at the independent school standards in parts 1, 3 and 4 relating to the quality of education, including appropriate provision to meet the needs of all pupils and the management of pupils' behaviour, safeguarding, the maintenance of admission and attendance registers and health and safety. The inspector was also asked to consider independent school standards in parts 6 and 7 relating to provision of information and handling of complaints. The inspector was also asked to check the school's compliance with part 8 of the independent school standards.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- The inspector held meetings with school leaders, including the headteacher, other senior leaders and the chief executive officer representing the proprietor body.
- The inspector visited all classrooms accompanied by a senior leader.
- The inspector met with a group of staff and a group of pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of school documentation, including policies and procedures relating to attendance, admissions and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspection of safeguarding included meeting with the leader with responsibility for safeguarding, review of documents relating to safer recruitment of staff, review of leaders' work with outside agencies and consideration of relevant aspects of the curriculum.

Inspection team

Amanda Carter-Fraser, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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