

# Inspection of Elysian, Liss

Janche Stables, Andlers Ash Road, Liss, Hampshire GU33 7LU

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Inspection dates: 25 to 27 June 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**No**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Elysian provides a positive and supportive environment, which helps many of its pupils re-engage with learning. Most pupils who enrol here have not attended school for some time and have struggled to engage with formal education. Elysian aims to help pupils to 'heal emotionally and rebuild their resilience'. Pupils who attend the school regularly enjoy the daily routines of a farm-based setting. They benefit from opportunities to connect with the animals, whether this is through feeding the chickens or showering the emu.

Pupils develop their social and emotional skills, but they do not learn as much as they could in academic subjects. These parts of the curriculum are not as well planned and delivered. Tasks set for pupils are often not appropriate to their age or prior learning. Many pupils do not benefit fully from the curriculum because they do not attend school regularly.

The strength of this school is the warm relationships pupils build with each other as well as adults. Pupils feel safe here. They are encouraged to be polite and respect the views of others. Although there is sometimes unkind behaviour, leaders are effective at resolving this.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The school has a vision to provide a broad curriculum that is personalised to the needs of each pupil. This has not been realised in practice. Although successful at re-engaging many pupils in education, the school is not ambitious enough for pupils academically.

The curriculum being delivered to pupils is not coherent or well sequenced. Learning activities are often more focused on engaging pupils than developing their knowledge. It is common for lessons to be shaped around pupils' questions and interests. This helps to engage pupils and to address some gaps in their understanding, but it does not ensure that they learn the most important knowledge set out in the curriculum. The intention behind planned learning activities is not always evident. Sometimes, the same learning materials are used across the school and are not made appropriate to pupils' ages and abilities.

Although they have strengthened their scrutiny recently, the governing body has not provided effective enough challenge on the impact of the curriculum. Some parts of the independent school standards (the standards) relating to the planning and delivery of the curriculum have not been met.

Teachers get to know each pupil's personality and what motivates them. Regular meetings between staff ensure that important information is shared about pupils' welfare and engagement in learning. Pupils' readiness to learn is tracked and this information is used to direct the work of staff in school, including any necessary therapeutic work. There is less understanding of pupils' academic ability. Although

there are some assessment systems, these are not used well by teachers to adapt the delivery of the curriculum.

The impact of the curriculum is limited further because some pupils do not attend school often enough. Many pupils are on temporary part-time timetables, which means they are not benefitting fully from this provision. In addition, the number of school days lost to suspension during this academic year is too high.

When pupils are in school, they are generally polite and friendly towards each other as well as staff. The school places an emphasis on the value of manners and building respectful relationships. Pupils are taught about equalities and the importance of listening to different perspectives. This work has had a positive impact, particularly in reducing the number of unkind incidents between pupils. However, in lessons, pupils do not always engage with the intended learning and this is not challenged as effectively as it could be by staff.

The curriculum in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is planned and delivered more effectively than in other subjects. Pupils learn about a wide range of topics, with opportunities planned to make best use of the environment. For example, pupils begin their learning about pregnancy and childbirth by observing the gestation period of goats. Pupils at this school have a range of social, emotional and mental health needs. The PSHE curriculum is adapted well to meet these needs by placing greater emphasis on mental health, communication and staying safe online.

The school has put in place some opportunities for pupils to learn about careers and prepare for their next steps. This includes planned opportunities for all pupils to receive impartial advice and guidance, although this has not yet taken place. Although there are a number of opportunities for pupils to learn about different careers, the school is in the process of bringing these together into a more coherent programme.

Leaders and the proprietor body are driven by a strong moral purpose to provide an education for pupils who have struggled to attend school in the past. However, they have not been sufficiently ambitious about the quality of education the school should provide. They have not ensured that the school meets all of the standards relating to the curriculum and its delivery. There have been recent changes to the governing body to bring in more educational expertise. This has resulted in a greater level of challenge in governor meetings and visits. However, the impact of these changes on pupils' education is not yet evident. Governors and the proprietor body carry out their statutory duties in relation to the 2010 equalities act, including the publication of an appropriate accessibility plan. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel well supported by the leadership team.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- The school's curriculum is not sufficiently coherent. Learning activities do not consistently help pupils to build on their learning over time. Leaders should review their curriculum plans and make sure it is clearer how they expect pupils to develop their knowledge in each subject area.
- The delivery of the academic curriculum is not always appropriate to pupils' age and ability. Teachers do not have a detailed enough understanding of what pupils already know and what they find difficult. Leaders should ensure that teachers have a precise understanding of pupils' academic ability and how to adapt teaching materials to meet their needs.
- Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This limits the impact of the planned curriculum on pupils. Leaders should strengthen their approach to managing attendance and part-time timetables. This will help to ensure that more pupils are in school to benefit from the education and therapeutic input provided.
- The proprietor body has not ensured that the standards are met. Working with leaders, the proprietor body should ensure that they have robust oversight of the quality of education provided by the school. They should challenge and support leaders to make sure that the standards are met and that weaknesses in the school's curriculum are addressed.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

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## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	149862
<b>DfE registration number</b>	850/6110
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322080
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 17
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	27
<b>Proprietor</b>	Elysian Animal Assisted Therapy and Learning
<b>Chair</b>	Charlotte Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanna Mumford
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£48,869
<b>Telephone number</b>	07588 905 591
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.elysianuk.org">www.elysianuk.org</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:liss.admin@elysianuk.org">liss.admin@elysianuk.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This was the school's first standard inspection since it was registered on 27 July 2023.
- Elysian, Liss is a special school catering for pupils with a variety of social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan and their places are funded by the local authority. It is registered to take up to 45 pupils.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

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

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with a range of school leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the head of education and learning for Elysian schools. The lead inspector also met with the chair of the proprietor body and representatives of the Elysian advisory board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication, reading, personal development and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work in other subjects, including mathematics and art.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors checked whether the school meets the independent school standards. This included looking at the school's premises and other relevant information, such as policies, risk assessment and documents relating to health and safety.

## **Inspection team**

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school failed to meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
  - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
  - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
  - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
  - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;

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

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and



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