

Serenity School

88–90 South End, CR0 1DQ

Inspection dates

14 December 2021

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1)–2A(2)

- The school has a written policy on the curriculum which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. It has been updated to include information about the proposed curriculum for pupils in the sixth form. Leaders aim that by being able to keep pupils at the school beyond the age of 16, pupils will be able to experience more success. This is because they will have longer to gain qualifications and skills that will support their planned next stages.
- The curriculum meets the requirements of full-time supervised education and will give pupils experience of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. The curriculum that pupils follow will be determined by their special educational needs and starting points. Pupils following the formal curriculum will be primarily classroom based and study towards academic and vocational qualifications at Level 1, 2 or 3. Pupils following a nurture curriculum will learn through a more therapeutic approach. Some pupils will follow a curriculum which combines the two approaches.
- Reading is prioritised. Pupils who need it follow a phonics catch-up programme. Others are encouraged to read regularly and widely and to increase their comprehension when reading.
- The school employs a range of therapists to provide support for pupils and to meet the requirements of pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. Pupils also have access to behaviour and mentoring support as part of their curriculum.
- The curriculum has been adapted to suit an intake of girls. In particular, the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum includes provision for teaching about sex and relationships to girls as well as boys. Teaching about consent, sexual harassment and puberty is prioritised. Opportunities to study hair and beauty have been added to the curriculum as there is a recognition this course is popular with girls. Boys and girls will be able to choose from all the courses offered by the school.

- The school actively promotes fundamental British values. Teachers receive advice and guidance on how to ensure these are taught throughout all the subjects in the curriculum.
- The school has made provision for pupils to receive impartial careers guidance. Pupils discuss their aspirations with a careers adviser who is independent from the school. They also learn employability skills as part of the curriculum. Pupils undertake work experience to increase their knowledge of the world of work. Currently, due to the pandemic, work experience is done within the boundaries of the school community. Pupils also have the opportunity to attend alternative provision at a local college to study courses such as mechanics and hair and beauty, if these are linked to their career ambitions.

Paragraphs 3–4

- The school aims to primarily employ qualified teachers, or those who aim to become qualified, to lead classes. Teachers have specialisms in the subjects they teach. All teachers are expected to break down learning into components that are sequenced so that pupils build their knowledge over time. Teaching is monitored on a regular cycle.
- Pupils' performance is assessed and evaluated throughout their time at school. Leaders use published programmes to baseline pupils' starting points. They track what pupils know and understand about different subjects throughout their time in school. The curriculum that each pupil follows is adapted based on these assessments. In addition, pupils track their 'zones of regulation' which helps them to monitor, regulate and improve their behaviour and well-being.
- The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards in this part if the material change is implemented.

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

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- Leaders' plans include provision for pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is threaded through the curriculum, but particularly evident in PSHE and the personal development curriculum. Leaders follow a published scheme to organise the PSHE curriculum. This covers three core themes of health and well-being, relationships, and living in the wider world. Leaders have considered pupils' backgrounds, context, safety and well-being needs when deciding what to include in the curriculum. When necessary to help keep pupils safe, pupils receive extra targeted provision from outside providers in topics such as domestic violence, consent, and sexual abuse.
- Pupils are encouraged to become independent, responsible and self-confident. For example, they are encouraged to champion causes such as anti-bullying. They lead assemblies to inform their peers on such issues.
- The school aims for pupils to make a positive contribution to society. Employability lessons promote this, although opportunities to contribute to the community beyond the school have been limited due to the pandemic. When the pandemic is over, leaders intend for pupils to visit a care home, hold coffee mornings and to organise a

sports day. In school pupils take a 'we look after' approach to considering their own and others' well-being.

- The school is likely to meet the standard in this part if the material change is implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b), 32(1)(c)

- There is an appropriate child protection and safeguarding policy, which is published on the school's website. This reflects the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- Leaders prioritise safeguarding. Staff undertake regular training in safeguarding. They gain detailed knowledge and are alert to the contextual risks to pupils in the school, such as county lines, criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation. They understand the additional risks faced by children with SEND. They have considered carefully the additional safeguarding risks presented by pupils who are girls and pupils who are older than 16, and included education about those risks in their PSHE curriculum.
- Leaders know how to escalate concerns about children with the local authorities they work with. They are alert to differences between them, and have made sure they are knowledgeable about the thresholds in their new local authority, Surrey. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) keeps informed of current national and local concerns through regular training and by attending meetings with the Surrey DSL safeguarding group.
- Leaders are trained in safer recruitment. They undertake the appropriate pre-employment checks on adults before they start working in the school. The single central record of recruitment checks is well maintained.

Paragraph 11

- The health and safety policy takes account of the proposed new site. Leaders have taken careful note of the potential risks that may be encountered on the new site. They carry out a range of regular checks including those relating to water safety, fire safety, COVID-19 and the general maintenance of the building. Certification is in place for the new site, including for gas and electricity safety.

Paragraph 12

- Leaders have ensured that the building and site have the relevant fire safety certification and checks in place. There are appropriate mitigations in place to reduce the risk of a fire spreading and to allow for escape, including fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire doors and well-lit emergency exits. Doors that are kept secure are automatically opened should the fire alarm go off. There are trained fire marshals in place to help pupils to evacuate should this be necessary. Those pupils who need additional assistance to evacuate have appropriate personal plans in place.

Paragraph 14

- Leaders intend to increase the staffing levels as they take on more pupils. Their intention is for there to be one teacher and one teaching assistant for every six pupils. Some pupils will receive one-to-one provision. There are additional therapists and mentors on site to support the school's focus on meeting the requirements of pupils'

EHC plans and to support pupils' behaviour and well-being. Pupils will be well supervised during lessons, breaks and lunchtimes.

Paragraph 16

- There is an appropriate policy in place to reduce the levels of risk presented by the site, by trips, visits and activities, and by the pupils themselves. Leaders have a strong and secure knowledge of the risks pupils present with. They mitigate for these well, especially those relating to behaviour and safety.
- Leaders have considered the additional risks presented by having older pupils on site, and by being co-educational throughout. They have adapted their provision to meet these risks, including through ensuring PSHE reflects pupils' needs.
- Leaders have taken appropriate steps to ensure that pupils arrive at school safely. There is adequate space for cars to drop pupils off at school in the morning. No pupils will walk or cycle to school, so pupils who do not arrive by car will be collected from a safe meeting place and brought to the site in the school's own transport.
- The school is likely to meet all relevant aspects of this part of the independent school standards if the material change is implemented.

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

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2)–19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6)–21(3)(b), 21(5)–21(6)

- School leaders have ensured that all the required checks are made on staff. The single central record records these checks, along with further checks on members of the proprietorial body, governors, visitors and any supply staff. It is well maintained.
- The school is likely to meet all relevant aspects of this part of the independent school standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2)–29(1)(b)

- The proposed site is in two buildings that have been reconfigured to provide classrooms, leisure and office space for the school. One building is laid out for vocational learning and includes an art room and a well-organised food technology room. The other contains several classrooms for more traditional learning, including a science room and therapy rooms. All classrooms are of adequate size for the proposed maximum of six pupils per class. Collectively, there are enough spaces for 50 pupils to learn.
- The site is well-maintained inside and outside. Both buildings meet all requirements regarding the supply of hot and cold water, drinking water, ventilation, lighting and heating. There is external lighting surrounding the buildings.
- The grounds are laid out with a hard surface and large field for playing and socialising. There is further extensive land attached to the school likely to be used for outdoor learning. This is accessed through a locked gate. The school site is surrounded by fencing to provide a secure site for the school.

- Pupils have a snooker room to relax in during breaktimes. There is a dinner hall that will sit 25 pupils, so the school proposes two sittings for lunchtimes.
- Medical facilities are provided through a door that leads to a medical room and toilet with water supply. The school is classing this as one space in order to meet the requirements of the independent school standards.
- Pupils will continue to use local sports facilities for organised physical education.
- There are adequate toilets for 50 pupils, with separate toilets for boys and girls. Leaders are yet to decide how to designate these toilets depending on the proportion of boys and girls in the school, and their ages. Three toilets are single occupancy and could become unisex toilets.
- The school is likely to meet all relevant aspects of this part of the independent school standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are likely to be met if the material change is approved.
- The current leadership and governance of the school is strong. Leaders have experience in setting up and running similar schools for pupils with SEND which include girls and pupils in the sixth form.
- Leaders keep meticulous records about pupils' behaviour, safeguarding and the quality of the curriculum. This allows those responsible for governance to hold leaders to account for their work. A regular cycle of monitoring of aspects of the school alongside secure performance management procedures support this aspect of leadership. Meticulous oversight from the proprietorial body has ensured that there is sufficient capacity, skill and expertise to increase numbers in the school, increase the age of pupils who attend the school and prepare the new site. Additional advisers and consultants add to this capacity.
- The school is likely to meet all aspects of this independent school standard if the material change is implemented.

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 that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	146660
DfE registration number	306/6018
Inspection number	10205366

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Serenity School Limited
Chair	Linda Brown
Headteacher	Mrs Charmaine Ayisi
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000
Telephone number	07539 660430
Website	www.serenityschool.org.uk
Email address	office@serenityschool.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	14–16 May 2019

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16	11–19	11–19
Number of pupils on the school roll	25	50	50

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Boys	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	25	50
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	25	50
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	25	50
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	25	50

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	9	16
Number of part-time teaching staff	2	2

Information about this school

- The school is registered as an independent special school in the London Borough of Croydon. It's intended new premises is in Chipstead, which is in Surrey.
- The school offers day places to boys aged 11 to 16 with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. All places are commissioned by local authorities.
- At the time of the material change inspection, the school was operating beyond its registration agreement with the Department for Education (DfE) by providing remote

education for up to eight additional pupils who are girls and/or aged between 16 and 19.

- The school uses one registered provider of alternative education.
- The school's most recent standard inspection was in May 2019.

Information about this inspection

- The material change inspection was carried out at the request of the DfE. The purpose of the inspection was to establish if the school would be likely to meet all the relevant independent school standards if the proposed material changes are implemented. These material changes intended are to increase the number of pupils to 50, to become co-educational throughout the school and to increase the age range of pupils to 19. This is the first material change inspection in respect of these particular changes that the school has applied to make.
- The DfE requested that the school's arrangements for the curriculum and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development were scrutinised. They also requested that checks were made on the school's proposed new premises. The arrangements for safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety, risk assessments and supervision of pupils were scrutinised in order to check that they would be likely to meet all requirements. The DfE also requested that further checks were made on the recruitment of staff and the quality and capacity of leaders to lead the school should the material change be approved.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, a member of the proprietorial body, two governors, three members of staff, the human resources consultant, and the school's working director. The inspector toured the new school site. A range of documents, policies and plans were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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