

# Elysian, West Horsley

Hillside Farm, Shere Road, West Horsley, Leatherhead, Surrey KT24 6ER

**Inspection date**

9 May 2024

**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

*Paragraphs 2(1) to 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d) to 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(g) to 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d) to 2A(2), 3 to 4.*

- The proprietor body and leaders have a clear vision for the school's curriculum. They aspire for this to enable pupils to make strong academic progress and to develop their emotional and interpersonal skills. Leaders intend to capitalise on the school's vast outdoor environment and farm location. They have extensive knowledge of working in two other schools, also located on farming sites and managed by the proprietor body. This means that leaders are well placed to draw on this experience. They are also knowledgeable about the different special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of the pupils likely to attend the school.
- Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. This includes a wide range of subjects such as art, animal husbandry, design and technology and physical education. Detailed schemes of work set out what pupils will learn. Content is sequenced logically and carefully to enable pupils to build their knowledge over time. Key stage 4 pupils will study a variety of academic and vocational courses. They will also have opportunities to achieve a suitable range of academic or vocational qualifications.
- Pupils who join the school may have not previously attended school regularly and are likely to have significant gaps in their learning. Therefore, leaders propose to give priority to addressing these gaps, particularly in English and mathematics. Leaders have a suitable phonics programme in place to support pupils who are still at an early stage of learning to read.
- Leaders have thought carefully about how pupils will be supported to develop confidence and increased independence. Leaders intend to provide strong guidance to support pupils' social and emotional development. The curriculum and the school's therapeutic approach will help pupils to understand their own feelings and to acquire strategies to help them to self-regulate. Staff will also help pupils learn essential life skills by taking responsibility for the many small and farm animals at the school.
- The school's careers guidance is well considered. Leaders have thought carefully

about the way in which pupils will be supported to make appropriate choices about their futures. For example, leaders have developed links with several local employers and professional organisations that have the potential to provide pupils with meaningful interactions with the world of work.

- Leaders intend to appoint appropriately qualified teachers and support staff with experience of working with pupils with SEND. Staff will have a strong understanding of pupils' aptitudes and individual needs when preparing lessons. They will also have the appropriate knowledge and skills to implement the curriculum well.
- The proprietor body has ensured that senior leaders and staff will benefit from a broad range of training and development opportunities. For instance, teaching staff will receive training in trauma-informed practice and positive de-escalation strategies. The proprietor body has also appointed a therapist and specialist staff who will work alongside teachers.
- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) forms an integral part of the planned curriculum. The PSHE programme will enable pupils to develop their understanding of healthy relationships and will teach them how to keep themselves physically and emotionally safe.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the school is granted permission to register.

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

### *Paragraphs 5 to 5(d)(iii)*

- The proposed school has set out a clear rationale for the importance of prioritising pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Detailed programmes of study in different subjects will be used to develop pupils' understanding of aspects of British society, such as democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. Pupils will learn about different faiths through visits to various places of worship and celebrating diversity events.
- Leaders intend to help pupils to develop their social skills. Pupils will be taught how to interact positively with their peers. It is anticipated they will learn how to express their opinions and to respect the views of others. Teachers will encourage pupils to debate a range of moral dilemmas and current affairs. Pupils will be supported to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to distinguish right from wrong.
- The proposed school has clear plans in place to enrich the curriculum through a range of carefully structured opportunities. Trips and visits to museums, art galleries, the theatre, towns and major cities are intended to support this ambition.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if given permission to open.

## Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

### *Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 9 to 16(b), 34(1)(c)*

- The school's detailed written safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance.

This is underpinned by several other policies and procedures that are designed to keep pupils safe from harm. The safeguarding policy will be available to parents on request and is published on the school's website.

- Leaders are knowledgeable about how to keep pupils as safe as possible and understand this important aspect of their responsibility. They have clear processes in place to ensure staff receive ongoing training on this aspect, including as part of their induction into the school. Leaders intend to complete regular checks on staff's safeguarding knowledge. All safeguarding concerns will be recorded in a timely manner on a centralised electronic system.
- The head of education has already established strong links with Surrey County Council. This has enabled the school to access useful training and support from designated safeguarding leads in the local area. Leaders understand the potential for heightened risk in relation to pupils with SEND. They plan to seek advice from external experts when required.
- The proprietor body has drawn up a suitable behaviour policy to promote pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes. The policy is available on the school's website. It contains clear procedures and 'natural consequences' to ensure that pupils understand the importance of behaving well. Leaders plan to also use daily staff briefings to provide staff with behaviour and welfare updates about individual pupils.
- The school has published an appropriate anti-bullying policy on its website. This sets out the procedures for dealing with bullying issues should they occur. Leaders have set up a system for recording and monitoring instances of poor behaviour, discrimination and harassment. This is likely to provide leaders with a useful way to identify and address incidents and patterns of poor behaviour.
- The school's health and safety policy explains in detail the processes for keeping pupils and staff safe and for promoting their welfare. The school's risk assessment policy is well considered. It shows that the proprietor body has appropriate plans in place to identify and take appropriate action to mitigate any risks. Risk assessments carried out so far are fit for purpose.
- Suitable fire and first-aid policies are in place. All staff will complete health and safety training as part of their induction. This will include first-aid and fire marshal training. Suitable admissions and attendance registers are ready to be populated once the school is operating.
- The proprietor body has sought and acted on advice from external fire safety experts who have visited the site. Consequently, facilities, fire equipment and procedures are fit for purpose. Plans for fire evacuation are in place and are suitable. The proprietor body has designed an appropriate programme for regular testing of relevant fire equipment.
- The proprietor body has ensured that the school employs a suitable number of staff to provide appropriate supervision. There are currently no pupils attending the school. Nevertheless, suitable consideration has been given to how pupil supervision will be managed. For instance, staff will meet and welcome pupils in the car park when they arrive and leave school every day. The proposed staffing ratios are adequate to enable adults to manage their breaks without compromising pupil safety.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the school is

granted permission to register.

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

*Paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6) to 20(6)(c), 21(1) to 21(3)(b), 21(6)*

- The single central record is maintained electronically. The proprietor body demonstrates a good understanding of the different types of checks required on the suitability of staff prior to appointment.
- The required checks have been carried out on members of the proprietor body, the advisory board and senior staff.
- Leaders do not intend to use agency staff. However, they are aware of the checks that they need to carry out should they need to do so.
- The proprietor body and other leaders have completed safer recruitment training to ensure that the required checks on staff and other adults at the school are carried out appropriately.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if the school is permitted to open.

#### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

*Paragraphs 23(1) to 23(1)(c), 24(1) to 24(1)(b), 24(2), 25 to 29(1)(b)*

- The proposed school will be based at a 33-acre farm. The site includes several well-maintained fields and a number of outdoor paddocks. It has its own secure entrance, office space and toilet facilities. The proprietor body has ensured that suitable arrangements are in place for the health, safety and welfare of all those accessing and moving around the facilities. This includes external lighting.
- The proprietor body has created several spacious learning spaces in the large stable block. These areas are light, airy and pleasant spaces in which to learn. While leaders intend that most learning will take place outside, there is ample provision for all pupils to work indoors if necessary. The outdoor paddocks and some indoor spaces house various animals. There are also areas, both inside and out, for pupils to relax and socialise with others. The acoustics in all indoors areas are suitable. There is also a well-equipped kitchen available for pupils to use and drinking-water is always readily accessible to pupils.
- Toilet and washing facilities are available for the sole use of pupils. These have an adequate supply of hot and cold water. Changing and shower facilities exist on site should they be required. A separate medical room is available which is fit for purpose.
- The school's extensive site provides pupils with plenty of outdoor space to play and participate in physical education.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the school is granted permission to register.

## Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraphs 32 to 32(1)(d), 32(1)(f) to 32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii) to 32(4)(c)*

- Leaders are knowledgeable about the requirements for making information available to prospective pupils and their families to ensure compliance with the independent school standards. Required policies, such as for safeguarding and behaviour, are easy to find on the school's website and are up to date.
- Leaders are aware that some pupils and their families may find it difficult to access information via the school's website. They have considered how they will make information available in a different way should this be necessary.
- There are suitable procedures in place to report pupils' progress and attainment to parents, including annual reviews of pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC plan). Leaders view regular communication between school staff and parents as a key aspect of the proposed provision.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

## Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

*Paragraphs 33 to 33(k)*

- The school has a suitable complaints policy which is available on its website and on request. The proprietor body has ensured that the policy provides clear information on procedures and timescales to address any concerns. This policy also includes information about both informal and formal proceedings linked to making a complaint. The policy states that an appeals panel would include a member who is independent of the school.
- Procedures are in place to record complaints and the actions taken in response to them. Monitoring of complaints and any arising actions will be part of routine checks carried out by the proprietor body.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards if granted permission to open.

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

*Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(c)*

- Leaders and the proprietor body have an in-depth understanding of the independent school standards. They form a cohesive team and have relevant experience of operating special schools in farm-based settings. Many of the policies and procedures that will be used at the proposed school are based on those used at the other schools managed by the proprietor body.
- The proprietor body and leaders are aware of their responsibilities to actively safeguard and promote the well-being of pupils. They are committed to establishing a high-quality provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and severe anxiety. There are suitable systems in place to ensure that the proprietor body

can oversee all aspects of the proposed school's work and hold leaders to account for the quality of provision, for example through the appointment of the advisory board.

- The proprietor body also intends to commission regular auditing and external checks of the school's work, including in relation to the quality of education and safeguarding. These activities will keep them up to date with the school's performance, inform their decision-making and help them to identify the need for greater support or challenge where required.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the school is granted permission to register.

#### Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The proposed school's accessibility plan is likely to meet the requirement of 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	150760
DfE registration number	936/6072
Inspection number	10340186

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	Other independent special school
School status	Independent day school
Proprietor	Elysian Animal Assisted Interventions Ltd
Chair	Charlotte Williams
Headteacher	Joanne Nunn (Head of Education)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,842
Telephone number	07944 875155
Website	<a href="http://www.elysianuk.org">www.elysianuk.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@elysianuk.org">admin@elysianuk.org</a>
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	11 to 17	11 to 17
Number of pupils on the school roll	Not applicable	50	50

## 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	Up to 50



Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	Up to 50
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 50
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	Up to 50

### Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	19
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	5

### Information about this proposed school

- Elysian, West Horsley intends to cater for up to 50 mixed-gender pupils between the ages of 11 and 17. All pupils will have an EHC plan and their places will be funded by a local authority.
- Pupils attending the school are likely to have been away from formal education for a sustained period of time and have significant anxiety. They will have a range of SEND needs, including autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The accommodation will consist of a large stable block which has four learning spaces. The proposed school site is located on 33 acres of farmland. It hosts several different species of animals, including horses, goats, guinea pigs and donkeys.
- The proposed school will not have any particular religious character.
- It is not intended that the school will use alternative provision.
- The proposed school is led by a proprietor body, consisting of two directors who are also the governing body. An advisory board is in place and will provide school leaders with support and challenge regarding the quality of their work. A head of education will work with the headteacher to oversee the educational provision in the proposed school.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the school's first pre-registration inspection. The purpose of this inspection was to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Schools must comply with the independent school standards to be registered.
- The inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body, the newly appointed headteacher, the head of operations and the head of education. She toured the school's premises and grounds. She reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the single central record, policies and curriculum and assessment information.

## Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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