

Elysian Animal Assisted Therapy and Learning CIC, Liss

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

Inspection date

4 May 2023

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)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h)–2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d)–2A(2), 3–4

- The school's curriculum is designed to support pupils in becoming 'prepared for life and work'. Leaders have thoughtfully constructed an accessible and engaging curriculum. It is likely to enable pupils to experience a suitable range of subjects, making effective use of the school's context. Alongside the focus on the therapeutic support pupils will need, there is suitable emphasis on pupils' numeracy and literacy, including reading. Leaders aim to ensure that pupils achieve relevant qualifications, including in English and mathematics.
- Many pupils will have struggled in their previous mainstream schools or specialist provisions due to anxiety or issues relating to their social, emotional or mental health. Consequently, leaders intend to make the curriculum bespoke to meet both the academic and social and emotional needs of all pupils.
- Each pupil will have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) for an identified special educational need. Pupils may not have attended school for extended periods prior to joining.
- Leaders' high expectations are clearly stated in the school's curriculum policy. The curriculum consists of three pathways which are designed to be responsive to pupils' needs. Pupils will be moved between pathways wherever appropriate.
- Each pupil's EHC plan will provide the starting point for teaching. These, combined with discussions with parents and assessments, will be used to place pupils on the most suitable curriculum pathway when they join the school. Staff plan to regularly check pupils' progress towards agreed learning goals.
- Curriculum plans include the appropriate provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). The school's policy and intended practice around relationships and sex education are fit for purpose. Leaders have ensured that the policy is published on the school's website and plan to consult with parents when the school opens. Leaders plan for fundamental British values to be promoted through the

taught curriculum and school life. Pupils are likely to have access to independent careers guidance which is likely to meet requirements. Leaders intend to arrange work placements according to pupils' individual interests and ambitions.

- Leaders articulate clearly the school's recruitment procedures to ensure that staff are suitable. They intend to employ well-qualified and experienced staff. Training for staff will be a routine and regular part of school life. Leaders will use a range of activities to monitor curriculum delivery.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

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

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- Pupils' social development will be central to the school's work and ethos. Leaders are aware that being able to form and manage relationships with other pupils and adults is an area that pupils will need significant support with. Leaders intend to emphasise celebrating pupils' successes and building their self-esteem and confidence.
- Leaders aim to offer a 'therapeutic' approach to education. Pupils will be encouraged to recognise and understand their feelings, and to appreciate the impact of their actions on others. They will be taught how to express their feelings in appropriate ways.
- Leaders intend to provide a wide range of activities to enrich pupils' learning and to support personal development. Activities such as horse riding, learning to care for the other animals on the school site and trips will be a regular part of school life.
- The school's PSHE curriculum aims to support pupils' understanding and respect for diversity. For example, tolerance and respect for faiths and beliefs will be promoted throughout the school's curriculum.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met if the school is granted permission to register.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 6–7(b), 9–16(b)

- The school's written policy for safeguarding and child protection is published on the school's website. It is fit for purpose, meeting requirements laid out in current statutory guidance. Leaders have an astute understanding of the potential vulnerabilities that pupils attending the school may have. Practices for identifying, recording and actioning any concerns are already in place.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding have already completed suitable designated safeguarding lead training. Staff will complete safeguarding training regularly. This will be supplemented with daily staff briefings which will be used to share key information.
- The school site is securely fenced which, along with the hedgerows, is well maintained. Leaders have formulated a sensible plan to safely manage pupils' arrival and departure each day.
- The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are likely to achieve leaders' aim to secure positive behaviour if implemented securely and effectively. Staff will be suitably

trained to understand pupils' additional needs, many of whom will have complex needs linked to anxiety.

- Leaders intend to use the daily staff briefings to ensure that all relevant information about a pupil is shared and recorded appropriately. Leaders plan to monitor behaviour records carefully to spot and respond to any patterns that emerge.
- Pupils attending the proposed school are highly likely to exhibit extreme anxiety. Given this, leaders have thoughtfully planned the staffing to ensure that pupils will always be in sight of an adult. In addition, leaders plan to admit a small number of pupils in the first instance, gradually increasing the number of pupils on roll over time.
- The school's health and safety, first-aid and risk assessments policies are suitable. They comply with relevant statutory requirements. The directors have ensured the completion of a range of surveys to ensure site safety, including water tests and an asbestos survey. Risk assessments that are specific to working with the animals on the school site are fit for purpose.
- An independent fire risk assessment has been completed. New fire extinguishers have been installed at key locations in both buildings. Fire exit routes and procedures are clearly identified.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

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)–20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(7)(b)

- Leaders understand their duty to make comprehensive recruitment checks on staff and those responsible for governance. It is not leaders' intention to use supply staff in the school.
- The single central record was in place and complete at the time of the inspection. It is set up in a way that is likely to ensure it will meet the statutory requirements when staff recruitment has been completed.
- The headteacher and one of the directors have completed suitable training in safer recruitment procedures.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)

- The proposed school will be based at a stable with extensive grounds. The indoor space comprises a converted stable block and a separate riding arena. The numerous paddocks and some indoor space house various animals. There are areas, both inside and out, for pupils to relax and socialise with others.
- The indoor learning spaces in the stable block are light and airy and pleasant areas in which to learn. The acoustics in these areas are suitable. There is also a small kitchen available for pupils to use. While leaders intend that most learning will take place outside, there is sufficient provision for all pupils to work indoors if necessary.
- Outdoor spaces are carefully maintained, with some uneven ground as you would expect at a stable. The proprietor employs a maintenance manager and has paid

appropriate care and attention to the health, safety and welfare of all those accessing and moving around the facilities. Suitable external lighting is in place around the buildings.

- Toilet and shower facilities are appropriate. They have sufficient water supplies, and the temperature of hot water is regulated appropriately. Drinking-water is available and labelled clearly.
- Leaders have created a suitably equipped medical room. It has an adequate supply of hot and cold running water. A toilet is located nearby.
- 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

Paragraph 32(1)–32(1)(d), 32(1)(f)–32(2)(b), 32(2)(b)(ii)–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.
- The school's website provides a wide range of information and procedures. Required policies, such as for safeguarding and behaviour, are easy to find and are up to date.
- Leaders are aware that some pupils and their families may find it difficult to access information via the website. They have considered how they will make information available should this situation arise.
- There are suitable procedures in place to report pupils' progress and attainment to parents, including annual reviews of pupils' EHC plans. Leaders see high levels of 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.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33–33(k)

- The school's complaints policy and procedures comply with statutory requirements and are published on the school's website.
- The complaints policy gives clear timescales for the management and consideration of any complaint. It clearly identifies a staged approach for complainants to take in the event of having a concern. This includes the opportunity to consider complaints informally in the first instance.
- Leaders have appropriate plans in place to keep records of any complaints received by the school. Monitoring of complaints and any arising actions will be part of routine checks carried out by the directors of the proprietor body.
- This part of the independent school standards is likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- The headteacher and directors of the proprietor body bring suitable knowledge and

expertise to their roles. They are experienced in providing education for highly anxious pupils and those with social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders' explanations of pupils' likely needs and how they intend to improve pupils' life chances are convincing.

- The directors have a well-established set of policies and procedures to ensure oversight of the school's work. They will use a suite of reports covering a range of themes, such as safeguarding, staffing, attendance and health and safety, to inform their work.
- Routines are already in place to keep the directors of the proprietor body informed about the standards in school. They are clear about the need for impartial, independent advice to support school leaders. For instance, there is an advisory board made up of relevant experts in place. They currently provide useful support and challenge to an existing school that is also run by the proprietor body.
- The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has a suitable equalities policy and accessibility plan which are published on the school website. The school is likely to meet the requirements of schedule 10 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	149862
DfE registration number	850/6110
Inspection number	10287794

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 special school
Proprietor	Elysian Animal Assisted Therapy and Learning CIC
Chair	Charlotte Williams
Headteacher	Jo Nunn
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,887
Telephone number	07944875155
Website	www.elysianuk.org
Email address	admin@elysianuk.org
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	45	45

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	45

Number of part-time pupils	Not applicable	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Not applicable	45
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	45
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	Not applicable	45

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	Not applicable	3
Number of part-time teaching staff	Not applicable	2
Number of staff in the welfare provision	Not applicable	20

Information about this proposed school

- Elysian Animal Assisted Therapy and Learning CIC Liss intends to cater for up to 45 mixed-gender pupils between the ages of 11 and 17.
- Pupils attending the school will have a variety of social, emotional and mental health needs. They are likely to have been away from formal education for a sustained period and have significant anxiety. All pupils will have an EHC plan and their places will be funded by a local authority.
- The accommodation will consist of a converted stable block that has four individual learning spaces. There is also a large indoor riding arena. The proposed school site also includes six acres of farmland. It hosts several different species of animals, including horses, goats, guinea pigs and donkeys.
- 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 and learning is in post and will take responsibility for 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 and headteacher. 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

Louise Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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