

Inspection of Koru

90 Taunton Road, Romford RM3 7SU

Inspection dates: 21–23 January 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders understand pupils' social, emotional and academic needs well. Staff build trusting relationships with the pupils and cater for their individual needs. Pupils say that staff are approachable and non-judgmental. They support and encourage them to try their best. As a result, pupils feel positive and re-engage in learning. The school's work enables most key stage 3 pupils to return to mainstream education. Most older pupils continue onto post-16 education.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They consider the school as family and they look out for each other. They behave sensibly, and bullying is rare. When an argument occurs, staff immediately intervene and restore calm. They follow up by helping pupils reflect on how to deal with situations in a more mature way in the future.

Pupils enjoy going out on educational visits and the opportunities for playing sport. Leaders encourage pupils to give to the community. Pupils ran a coffee morning for the public to raise funds for charity, for instance. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development.

Parents told us that they are extremely positive about the school's work. This is because they know that it improves their children's life chances.

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

The school caters for vulnerable pupils. Many have experienced trauma and/or are at risk of getting involved in criminal activity. Often their attendance in mainstream school was irregular. Some missed school for over a year. Leaders prioritise providing an in-depth pastoral and therapeutic curriculum. This is effective in helping pupils overcome their difficulties. They learn strategies to cope with their emotions and improve their behaviour. In this way, pupils learn to value learning and begin to believe they can achieve well. Pupils gain in self-belief and build resilience. As a result, they engage positively in lessons and cooperate with their teachers.

Leaders plan an academic curriculum which builds learning in a logical way. Pupils arrive at various points during the year. Many arrive with big gaps in their education. Staff make initial assessments of pupils' knowledge and skills. Staff use this information well to create a personalised learning plan for each pupil. Staff check often on pupils' ongoing learning across the subjects. They provide effective extra support to those pupils who fall behind. This helps pupils to catch up.

Leaders are also flexible in changing the curriculum to meet emerging needs. For example, some able Year 11 pupils who joined the school during this year have a strong knowledge and understanding of science. The school is meeting their needs by tutoring them for the challenging GCSE triple award in science.

Leaders keep the curriculum under review. Now that more pupils are full-time, leaders have expanded the offer. All Year 10 and 11 pupils study English and

mathematics functional skills or GCSEs. This year all pupils will enter the GCSE in citizenship. Pupils can choose a vocational qualification in sports or music technology.

Teachers have good subject knowledge in their main areas of expertise. When they are required to teach outside their main areas, as is sometimes necessary, pupils do not learn as well. This is because, in those instances, teachers' subject knowledge is not as strong.

Pupils study a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. The wide range of topics teaches pupils how to keep physically and mentally healthy. They learn about diversity and national institutions such as the criminal justice system. Pupils were animated when they related their experiences during a recent camping trip. They learned many new skills such as raft making and kayaking.

A group of pupils worked with a drama company. The company produced a play based on the pupils' experiences of danger. These pupils were invited to attend a tri-borough conference on tackling knife crime. The company presented the play to the attendees, to great acclaim.

Older pupils benefit from a weekly course on preparing for working life. Leaders arrange a programme of impartial careers guidance. Most pupils continue to sixth-form colleges or apprenticeships.

The proprietor is passionate in her determination to support vulnerable pupils to succeed in life. Staff share her vision.

I spoke with a local authority officer and some school leaders who refer pupils to this school. They praised the work of the school. They confirmed that the school is very successful in turning around the lives of their most vulnerable pupils.

The proprietor ensures that the independent school standards are met. Leaders also make sure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant and know how to identify signs that pupils may be at risk. They immediately share any concerns and leaders respond effectively. Leaders work with many agencies to broker specialist help to support pupils at risk.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations. They produced a leaflet for parents on how to look out for signs that their child is being groomed. Local authority leaders reproduced and distributed these leaflets to parents across the borough.

Risk assessments are completed for the site and for visits. Leaders make sure that staff are suitable to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a few cases, teachers who teach outside of their main area of expertise lack enough subject knowledge. This means that, in these classes, pupils do not gain the full knowledge and understanding of which they are capable. Leaders should ensure that staff receive quality training and development in all the subjects they teach.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	146973
DfE registration number	311/6004
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10115238
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Number of part-time pupils	31
Proprietor	Shona Anderson (KORU Educational Services)
Chair	Ande Hardiman
Headteacher	Shona Anderson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,500
Telephone number	01708 204560
Website	www.korueducation.co.uk
Email address	shona@koru-ed.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This was the first standard inspection since the school was first registered to admit pupils in May 2019.
- The school is registered for up to 50 pupils in the age range 11 to 16 years.
- The school provides primarily for pupils who are excluded or at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. It provides for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, autism spectrum disorder and associated behavioural difficulties. Some are at risk of getting involved in, or being victims of, criminal activities. Many have been out of full-time education for extended periods of time.
- Pupils are placed at the school by the local authority.

- Most pupils are dual registered with mainstream schools.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We 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 meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, physical education and PSHE education. This involved discussions with leaders and teachers, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. We also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- We spoke with the proprietor, the deputy headteacher, the chair of governors and three other governors. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the local authority inclusions leader and alternative provision commissioner, and with the deputy headteacher of a mainstream school who has referred pupils to this school.
- All these activities contributed to our review of safeguarding. In addition, we reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and the checks carried out during the appointment of staff. We also looked at records of pupils' attendance.
- We considered the views of pupils, staff and parents about the school.
- We scrutinised a range of documentary information to check on the statutory requirements of the independent school standards.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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