

Advice note for pre-registration inspections of free schools

School name	Atherton Community School
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Reporting inspector	Mohammad Ismail

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Context of the school

Atherton Community School is a free school sponsored by The Chapel Street Trust. The school will initially be based in the Atherton Town Hall and, after a year, it will move to its permanent building, which is at present undergoing some renovation work. The school will serve Atherton and the surrounding area in Greater Manchester. The school is planned to be opened to students in September 2012 for an age range of 11-18 years. The school intends to start with 40 students of mixed gender and all abilities. The numbers will gradually increase to 650 when the school will move into its permanent building. The school aims: 'to equip children for long-lasting success in school and society, in the workplace and the world'. The school is a non-denominational Christian school but is open to students from all other faiths and from backgrounds of no faith.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Documentary evidence indicates that all the regulations in this standard are likely to be met by the planning but implementation could not be checked. The school's motto is 'Learning should be an adventure'. The vision is based on 'Every Child Matters' principles, which are built into every scheme of work to focus on the importance of students' self-esteem. There is an emphasis on supporting students to develop their self-confidence and aspirations. The schemes of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious studies (RS) programmes will strongly support student's personal development. The PSHE programme is designed to promote the importance of leadership and to encourage community initiatives such as fund raising for charities and helping in the community. There are plans for visiting places relating to different cultures and speakers from different communities will be invited to talk to students. There is a detailed programme of extra-curricular activities. The activities will take place during lunch times, after school and in the holidays. This programme will include the school's 'parliament', sports team competitions, maths club, team building events, citizenship programmes, enterprise club, musical groups, drama and dance activities. In their citizenship programme, the students will learn about the global community. The school's citizenship and history programmes will enable students to learn about Britain's political system and about democracy. They also stress the importance of respect and tolerance. The RS programme features Christianity as a key religion but also includes the study of other major faiths and cultures in the UK and around the world. The school's pastoral programme is planned to promote good behaviour and sound ethics in the light of Christian teaching. Participation of parents in their children's education is regarded as essential.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school's policies and planning are likely to meet all regulatory requirements in this standard although implementation could not be seen. The required range of welfare, health and safety policies has been produced. These were scrutinised and were found to meet all the requirements. However, the school's proposed planned building work will require a further visit by the local fire officer, as noted below. The school has an appropriate number of staff with up-to-date training in first aid. Child protection training for the designated person is booked for July 2012. Child protection training for all staff is included in the school's training programme prior to opening so that requirements will be met. Suitable safe recruitment procedures are built into the safeguarding policy and have been implemented correctly in the appointment of staff to date. A database has been established to include registers for registration and admissions. An appropriate access improvement plan is being developed so that the school will meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 on opening.

- Child protection training for all staff will be undertaken as part of the induction process before opening, so that requirements will be met.
- The school's building will require a visit by the fire officer after its planned refurbishment work is complete. The school will ensure that the visit is undertaken before the school opens to students and a complete health and safety risk assessment will be conducted. This has been confirmed by the school in writing.
- The school will complete its access improvement plan so that the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The planning for safe recruitment and implementation to date indicate that all regulations are likely to be met. Checks on the suitability of staff have been completed and all existing governors have had a Criminal Records Bureau check. A suitable single central register has been constructed and details of all required staff checks are being entered correctly as they are received by the school.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The present and proposed premises and accommodation are likely to meet requirements. Some refurbishment is required in the present premises (Atherton Town Hall) to meet the standards relating to adequate teaching space, security and decoration. The associated refurbishment work in the building will be completed in July and it is likely that the building programme will be completed to a standard suitable for opening the school by the proposed date so that the regulations will be met. After the completion of planned work, the premises will provide adequate space for teaching. All required facilities will be in place, including a suitable outside play

area. The premises will provide a safe and secure environment. The number of classrooms and toilets for students and staff is sufficient. The proposed future premises are also undergoing refurbishment so as to meet requirements.

- The school's present building will go through some refurbishment work before opening in September so as to meet the standards relating to adequate teaching space and decoration. This work will also include making outside areas secure. The future premises are also undergoing refurbishment so as to meet requirements. The school confirmed this in writing.

Provision of information

The provision meets all regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The provision meets all regulations.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

- **YES. This school is likely to meet all regulations when it opens and is recommended for registration.**

Recommended number of day pupils: 650

Recommended number of boarders or residential pupils (if applicable): None

Recommended age range: 11-18 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.