

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of an academy

School name	Ark Atwood Primary Academy
DfE registration number	Not yet assigned
Unique reference number (URN)	1081
Inspection number	384315
Inspection dates	16 August 2011
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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Context of the school

Ark Atwood Primary Academy plans to open as a mixed, non-denominational two-form entry primary school in September 2011. Initially, it intends to cater for up to 60 children, aged 4 to 5, in two Reception classes. It then plans to accept up to 60 more children each year until it reaches its projected full capacity of 450 pupils by September 2017. This will include a 30 place nursery which will be opened on the new site.

The school is located in a residential area of Queens Park, London W10, and will provide for pupils in the local area. It plans to open in a building leased from Westminster City Council which formerly housed an NHS assessment centre and play centre. The building was converted from a row of terraced houses in 2005. It is currently being adapted and restored and will provide spacious, good-quality facilities for the number of children the school plans to admit in September. It has space to accommodate a further intake in September 2012. The school has also recently acquired the lease on a nearby former nursery school which currently stands empty. This will be adapted to accept pupils moving into Year 2 in September 2013. Finally, the school will relocate to premises in Amberly Road, W9. This building is about a mile away from its current premises and will be adapted to meet the needs of the projected numbers on roll by September 2017. The work on this building has not yet begun. The staff team for the first intake is fully in place. A headteacher, inclusion manager and two class teachers have been appointed for September as well as a number of support staff.

The school will be run in the spirit of the Ark family of academies, striving for high achievement and good behaviour. There will be a special focus on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Reception pupils will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. The school will cater for children from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, which includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those speaking English as an additional language.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The requirements of this regulation are likely to be met, subject to satisfactory implementation, through the ethos of the school and the opportunities planned for children in the curriculum. The intended ethos of the school emphasises positive relationships and the pupils' personal development, particularly through the enriched curriculum and the activities to be included in the extended school day. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum emphasises the development of the pupils' confidence and self-knowledge and their understanding of taking responsibility for their behaviour and actions. This is reinforced in the school's behaviour policies and procedures. The school plans to build on this as pupils move through the school. The annual cycle of celebrations across faith groups is built into the calendar for the new

school year so that pupils can grow in their awareness of, and respect for, traditions and cultures other than their own. Visitors and group visits, appropriate to the age range, are also planned so that pupils can develop an understanding of public institutions and services in England.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

All mandatory policies and procedures have been put in place and follow the recommendations of good practice provided by the Ark group of schools. They comply with current guidance and regulations related to behaviour, anti-bullying, health and safety and equalities. The policy for the safeguarding of children meets requirements and provides clear guidance to staff. The headteacher has already been trained as the school's child protection officer and the inclusion manager will also be trained in this area. The training of all staff is a priority in the induction of new staff which will take place before the children arrive.

The school has devised detailed and suitable procedures to assess and manage safety risks around the school site. There are written policies to promote pupils' good behaviour, with clear codes of conduct and an appropriate set of sanctions and rewards. The health and safety policy is in line with requirements and has been drawn up with the welfare of the pupils at its heart. There are plans to set up electronic admission and attendance registers. These are not yet in place but are likely to meet requirements when children arrive in September. The premises have been fully adapted to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Arrangements are in hand for the necessary fire safety checks when the building is deemed ready for the school. Evacuation procedures in the case of fire have been carefully considered.

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. The implementation of policies and procedures could not be seen as the school is not operating.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school's policies and procedures are likely to meet all requirements. Recruitment procedures meet the current guidance. All appointed staff are appropriately vetted and there is a single central record that contains all the required checks on the headteacher and staff. Currently, a number of Criminal Records Bureau checks remain 'pending', but the school has completed a risk assessment in the event of any not being completed by the time the children arrive. No member of staff will be allowed access to children without the appropriate checks being in place. The school does not intend to employ supply staff. Representatives of the proprietors have undergone the necessary checks and members of the governing body will be similarly vetted when they are appointed. The school is liaising with its caterers to ensure that they have been appropriately checked prior to the opening of the school. There are no plans for any other adults, not employed by the school, or volunteers to be working in school at the outset. Nevertheless, plans are in place for this eventuality.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

Building work is still underway on the site, but the visit confirmed that the premises are on track to meet the regulations in time for the proposed school opening. The building is likely to meet the regulations for heating, lighting, ventilation, decoration and floor covering. The classrooms are of a good size. Although the school will have no hall, the classrooms are large enough to accommodate the whole initial intake. There are plans to use the newly-acquired nursery site for assemblies and special occasions in the first year. The school also has use of the nearby leisure centre to support its physical education curriculum. The school has a good number of washrooms which more than meet requirements. Play areas have been carefully considered and surfaces matched to the needs of young children both for free and guided play. Appropriate furniture and fittings are on order. Full access is already in place for those with disabilities. The school has appropriate plans to cater for medical needs and to provide a private and well-appointed room for any children who are ill.

Provision of information

The school website and prospectus provide the required information. All policies are readily available to prospective parents on the website, as well as paper copies if required. Termly reports to parents on the achievement of pupils are already part of the planned school year.

The provision is likely to meet all regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy meets the regulations. As the school has not yet opened, there have been no informal or formal complaints.

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

Is registration recommended?

YES

For number of day pupils: 450

For age range: 3–11

For gender of pupils: Mixed.

Note to the Department

The school is opening in accommodation which is sufficient for the first intake of 60 children. The Department is advised to arrange for the accommodation to be inspected as the school grows and new premises are occupied to assess suitability for pupils.