

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of a free school

School name	Nishkam Primary School
DfE registration number	999/1125
Unique reference number (URN)	1125
Inspection number	385311
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Reporting inspector	Sue Aldridge

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Context of the school

Nishkam Primary School is situated in an urban environment on Soho Road in Handsworth, Birmingham. It is opposite a large Sikh gurdwara and the Nishkam Civic Association centre. It is sponsored by Guru Nanak Nishkam Sevak Jatha (GNNSJ), an education trust created by worshippers at the gurdwara. Although it will have a Sikh ethos, Nishkam will be a multi-faith school for boys and girls aged four to 11 years, and is set to open on 5 September 2011. Initially, the school will cater for pupils in Reception, Years 1 and 2, and will 'grow into' Years 3 to 6 over time. It will cater for 180 pupils from September 2011, rising to 420 when it has the full age range. The predecessor school is an independent school, last inspected in June 2011, when it met all the regulations.

The premises are made up of Regency-style Grade II listed buildings, together with adjoining houses of similar age but not listed. Landscaping, internal refurbishment and additional building work will be in three phases, due for completion early in September, in October and final completion by the end of December 2011. Number 1 Soho Road is used also as a separately registered nursery for babies and toddlers.

The vision for the school is one rooted in the Sikh ethos and emphasises values such as working hard and sharing with others. In addition to striving for academic excellence, the school aims to prepare children for work and life in society, support spiritual growth, overcome negative traits such as selfishness and greed, raise aspirations and personal standards and encourage children to fulfil a greater purpose in life. It aims to contribute to the fostering of shared values, community cohesion and well-being within society at large.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

It is likely that all regulations will be met, although implementation could not be seen. Initially, the school is to make use of all schemes of work, suitable for the age range, published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Alliance (QCA). Plans include topics designed to encourage an understanding of the locality and living in a diverse world. Pupils are to be encouraged to chart their own successes in meeting 'I can' targets and self-reflection is to be fostered through the use of 'thinking mats'. Pupils will take increasing responsibility, developing class rules to begin with and learning later about the Young People's Parliament. There will be an elected school council and pupils will learn about those who help in society, such as the police and fire services. Assembly themes and 'Thought for the day' are designed to encourage an understanding of moral and social issues. Pupils will raise funds and take part in enterprise activities. There are plans to involve parents and carers and the wider community in school activities. The curriculum will also draw on the local community and include visits to libraries, museums, theatres, art galleries and environmental projects. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education is to be used, to give

pupils a broad knowledge and understanding of the key faiths and cultures in Great Britain.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Almost all regulations are likely to be met, although implementation could not be seen. The school has all the required policies to guide this aspect of its work and they contain all the information that they should. These include policies on health and safety, safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying and educational visits.

Aspects of the comprehensive safeguarding and safer recruitment policy are being implemented already. The designated person for child protection and the deputy designated person have refresher training booked in November 2011, and all staff are to receive basic child protection awareness in September before the pupils are admitted. All those who work in the school are to be employed by Nishkam and not by any agency, including kitchen staff, site managers and cleaners. All those recruited have been subject to the full range of checks, including identity, professional qualifications, suitability to work with children and employment history; references have been correctly sought. As an additional 'cover teacher' has been employed, no supply teachers are to be used. However, should this become necessary, leaders know what their duties are in respect of obtaining clearance information and checking the identity of a person on their arrival at the school. Although there are plans to involve volunteers, including parents and carers, none have yet been approached; leaders plan to obtain enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for these.

There is a fire risk assessment, based on the existing school building, and dated September 2010. A comprehensive architect's report, prepared for this inspection, shows that a further full fire risk assessment is to be carried out by the fire service when Phase 1 of the building is complete in September 2011, and before pupils are admitted. This is to be repeated as each phase is completed. Arrangements for evacuation of the building are clearly shown on plans; these have been carefully considered and they change as the phases of building are completed.

Admissions and attendance are to be electronically recorded and the school has suitable software for this.

The school does not comply fully with the Equality Act 2010 because although it has a comprehensive policy it does not have a three-year plan showing how it will increase access of all types for people with disabilities.

In summary:

- the school does not fulfil its duties under the Equality Act 2010 as it does not have a three-year access plan.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. All existing and new staff have been checked as required and the single central register records the full range of checks made on all employed staff, the sponsor and other trustees of GNNSJ.

Premises and accommodation of schools

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. The premises and accommodation provide sufficient teaching, play space and washrooms for the number planned in September and by the end of December 2011 for the number sought.

The accommodation will include 12 classrooms, a dining area and kitchen, a sports and assembly hall, a reception area, a staff room and staff preparation area, a meeting room, a medical room with wash hand basin and nearby toilets, a kitchenette and headteacher's office. Specialist areas include an information and communication technology (ICT) suite, a library, together with design and technology and music rooms. There will also be some small rooms to be used for booster groups, meeting rooms and a conference room.

The buildings have been very well restored; completed areas are finished, fitted and maintained to a high standard. There is suitable lighting, flooring and heating and a fresh air ventilation system for the whole building. Furniture is new and of a size suitable for primary-aged children. Equipment for ICT is a strength.

Initially, there will be a need to use an adjacent school's playground, as the play-space will not be completed until half-term in October; the arrangements for this are clearly set out. There is suitable provision for an outdoor area for children in Reception while the refurbishment work is being completed and in the longer term.

Site security is well considered and the building will be securely fenced at all phases of completion. The architect's plan shows robust arrangements to separate ongoing building work from the parts of the school premises used by children and adults. The vehicular and pedestrian access to the site will be electronically controlled, as will entry to the new reception area. Traffic will follow a one-way system. There is a closed circuit television for monitoring the perimeter and key internal points.

Provision of information

The provision meets all regulations. Preparation for this inspection visit was exemplary, with helpful written reports showing clearly how regulations will be met, and evidence in support of these.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedures meet all regulations.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

Is registration recommended? **YES**

For number of day pupils: 420

For number of boarders: 0

For age range: 4–11

For gender of pupils: Mixed

YES, the school can be registered for the above and allowed to open on receipt of evidence of improvement of/completion of:

- the Equality Act 2010: a three-year plan showing how access of all types will be increased for people with disabilities.