

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

School name	Alder Grove Church of England Primary
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	872/2009
Unique reference number (URN)	147910
Inspection number	10148391
Inspection dates	08/06/2020 to 16/06/2020
Reporting inspector	Stewart Gale HMI



Information about the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted at the request of the Secretary of State for Education. It was carried out under section 99(1) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.¹

In carrying out this type of inspection, inspectors assess the extent to which the school is likely to meet 'The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014' when it opens.²

The inspection was carried out during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As a result, we could not visit the school site or meet with the proposer in person. The inspector held telephone discussions with the headteacher, the chief executive officer (CEO), the chair of trustees, the trust's safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector viewed a virtual tour of the permanent school site, reviewed the architects' plans for the permanent site, scrutinised information available on the school's website and reviewed a range of policies and procedures. Using the available information, the inspector is able to give sufficient assurance that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	472
Age range	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Not applicable

Context of the school

The Keys Trust intends to open Alder Grove Church of England Primary School in September 2020. The school grounds and building are in the final completion stages. This means pupils are likely to be able to start school at that time.

In its first year, the school will accept children in the Reception year and Nursery. They intend to increase the number of pupils each academic year, until the school reaches its capacity.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/99.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/schedule/made. Part 1 to Schedule 1 is not reported against because it does not apply to academies, free schools, studio schools and UTCs.

Advice to the Secretary of State for Education

Overall outcome	The school is likely to meet all the relevant independent school standards when it opens.
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Compliance with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

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

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part.

Leaders, including trustees and governors, have a clear vision and compelling ethos to build pupils' character and their cultural capital. Plans and policies reflect leaders' intentions and aims to actively promote British values and help pupils to distinguish right from wrong. The personal social health and economic education and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development policies, for example, are based on the school's Christian foundation but are welcoming of those from all backgrounds, including non-faith backgrounds. Leaders clearly express the will for pupils to accept responsibility, show initiative and contribute to the lives of those around them. Leaders demonstrate high regard for the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are likely to be effective. Leaders have a keen awareness of their safeguarding duties, which reverberate through the school's policies, plans and actions. Within the constraints of a remote inspection, leaders are able to demonstrate a strong culture for safeguarding pupils. Documents, including the single central register (SCR) and training records, show rigour and high expectations to fully meet the current guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Leaders demonstrate that they put pupils first and are likely to continue implementing robust procedures. One of the trustees has a professional background in safeguarding and uses this effectively to provide challenge for senior trust officers and school leaders. Leaders have rigorous checks and processes in place, which have already ensured that staff and governors are fully trained and accredited with suitable qualifications, including for those in the early years foundation stage (EYFS).

The proposed school has a comprehensive suite of policies relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety. Their policies interconnect well to offer greater reassurance that these are appropriate and well considered. For example, the pupils' 'six-point' code of conduct reflects the adult policy but sets this within boundaries and language accessible to the pupils. This is linked to the written behaviour policy, which suitably sets out the school's philosophy and preferred route to good behaviour: support, positive reinforcement and care. Sanctions, including exclusion, are clearly explained. The school has an appropriate anti-bullying and written behaviour policy.

The proposed school is likely to comply fully with standards relating to the health and safety of pupils, staff, visitors and contractors. This includes the publication of required policies and documentation relating to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety)

Order 2005. The new school building and grounds are safeguarded by the full implementation of required building regulations and requirements. School leaders ensure that appropriate risk assessments are in place for ongoing construction, appointing staff and identifying training needs. Risk assessments for individual pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or with an education, health and care plan have also been taken fully into account.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part.

Leaders have robust procedures and practices to govern the appropriate selection, appointment and training of staff. The SCR for those already employed meets the requirements set out by Secretary of State and is fully compliant with the independent school standards.

Checks for all staff, supply staff, leaders and visitors (including contractors) are already firmly in place and being implemented. The same checks (for example, a person's identity, right to work in the UK and relevant qualifications) are completed for all individuals likely to have any contact with pupils. The trust ensures that all checks, including the counter-signatory of the Secretary of State for the chair of trustees, have been carried out. The process for continuing and checking the SCR falls to the trust. They have systems to follow-up any concerns or issues quickly. The SCR is kept legibly on an electronic format.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part.

The new school building is well designed to promote the school's vision and values, including its intent for the curriculum. The accommodation, including the grounds, is likely to fully meet the independent school standards. The spacious school building and grounds provide ample toileting and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils. These are accessible to all with designated facilities for disabled individuals. Separate toileting and hygiene arrangements are suitable for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. There is also a 'sick bay', which meets the full designation of the independent school standards. Leaders are also taking additional steps to ensure the privacy and well-being of those who may need to use this. The first floor is accessible to pupils via a lift. There are no areas of the school that are inaccessible to those with physical disabilities or mobility issues.

The school is fully fitted with appropriate acoustic boarding to all internal walls with classrooms. Lighting and ventilation have been carefully considered to make best use of natural light. Further light fittings (internally and externally) mean that the school is likely to be able to fulfil the range and functions of the school's purpose and its curriculum. The school does not have any obvious trip or fall hazards. The school grounds have been well-designed to accommodate the age range and particulars of the pupils, including those in the EYFS. The site is vast with ample room for pupils to play, relax and learn – both indoors and outdoors – in a high-quality and

contemporary environment. All reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that pupils will be kept safe.

Part 6. Provision of information

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part.

The trust and school leaders ensure that the particulars and policies required have been fully completed in line with the independent school standards. The school has a website and is in the process of uploading relevant information to this. As a result, prospective parents can access key policies, such as those relating to admissions and the school's ethos and aims. Contact details and updates are being provided through links to the trust's website. Leaders have made the right provision to communicate information and requests for hard copies of any information to parents and carers.

The particulars of arrangements for all policies (for example, behaviour, those with SEND or for whom English is an additional language) have already been adopted by the trust.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part.

The complaints policy is complete and has already been uploaded to the school's website. It complies with all stipulations of the independent school standards and is ready for implementation. The policy clearly states deadlines and timeframes for different stages of a complaint, including formal and informal. Relevant information satisfies standards relating to appeals and ensuring independence or neutrality through a panel hearing. The policy provides details of how any findings or recommendations are to be handled, including that a copy of these must go to the complainant. The lead inspector was unable to check how these are logged and processed as the school is not yet open.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part.

Leaders, including trustees, are well organised and prepared. They ably demonstrate how systems and processes that already exist in the Keys Trust are to be incorporated into the running of Alder Grove. They are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities to implement the independent school standards as a minimum expectation. Leaders demonstrate a high regard for safeguarding policies and procedures, which are likely to be effective. There is expertise on the trust board, for example in safeguarding, and on the local governing body (relating to SEND), which is likely to provide high-quality challenge and support. Safeguarding arrangements are likely to be effective in actively promoting the well-being of pupils.

Similarly, leaders' understanding of the EYFS statutory framework and Equalities Act 2010 are likely to ensure that all pupils benefit from a positive start. Leaders are fully

committed to equality and the 'active' promotion of British values. The strong ethos and vision, based partially on the school's Christian foundation, is clear. Leaders seek to promote cultural capital and want to their pupils to be academically, spiritually, morally and culturally rich.

The school is likely to have effective systems for monitoring the implementation of policies.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

Arrangements to meet requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are fully considered. The design is likely to meet the range of pupils' needs, including those with SEND. Direct reference to protected characteristics is included in key curricular and health and safety policies. The school will be open to a diverse population without barriers or hindrance: being wholly inclusive of the range of protected characteristics and individual needs.

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

The school will have a Nursery (for children aged from three years) as well as two Reception-aged classes. The EYFS is commonly reflected in the range of documentation to show how school policies and procedures are taken into account for children and staff in the early years. Leaders have recruited staff with the right qualifications and in sufficient number to supervise the children, including full-time Reception teachers and teaching assistants.

Due regard has been given to the changing and toileting arrangements for pupils in this age range, with a bespoke hygiene room available. Toilets and washing facilities are matched appropriately to aid children's dignity and develop independence. The classrooms and outdoor spaces offer much room and scope to meet the full curricular aims of the EYFS.

The EYFS leader has much previous experience of leading a good EYFS at Earley, St Peters, which is another school in the trust. Along with the CEO and other trustees, she demonstrates good knowledge of the statutory requirements of the EYFS.

Safeguarding and welfare requirements for those in the early years are completed as part of the wider school processes. Leaders have considered children's learning and development requirements to meet the early learning goals. For example, children in the Nursery will be expected to begin work on the same daily phonics programme in place for those in Reception and key stage 1.

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