

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

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School name	Ark Blake Academy
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	306/4014
Unique reference number (URN)	147832
Inspection number	10148394
Inspection dates	27/05/2020
Reporting inspector	Catherine Old



## 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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, chair of the local board of governors, the regional director of the academy trust and a range of school leaders. The inspector reviewed the architects' plans for the school site and viewed a virtual tour of the school. The inspector 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:

<b>Number of day pupils</b>	1,200
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Type of special educational needs</b>	Not applicable

## Context of the school

The establishment of Ark Blake Secondary School is in response to the local need for more school places in Croydon. It will open in September 2020 in a new, purpose-built building. The school's initial intake will be for 180 pupils in Year 7. It will continue to take a similar number of pupils into Year 7 in each year. The final capacity of the school will be 900 pupils across key stage 3 and key stage 4 and 300 pupils in the sixth form.

The school will be part of Ark Academy Trust. The trust runs 37 schools, including several in London. As part of the trust, the new school will have access to a range of high-quality leadership and management expertise.

<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/99](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/99).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/schedule/made](http://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

<b>Overall outcome</b>	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 regulations in this part. The school's intention to develop pupils who will 'seize greatness' through encouraging them to flourish as knowledgeable, confident, articulate and responsible citizens is evident throughout leaders' policies. Leaders have thought carefully about how they will prepare pupils for growing up in a diverse society. They have clear plans in place to ensure that pupils will be accepting of difference and learn to be tolerant of others, including those with protected characteristics. The planned provision and policies include promoting fundamental British values as part of the taught curriculum and through developing the values of bravery, leadership, aspiration, kindness and endeavour. The planned provision and policies are very strong and likely to prepare pupils very well for life in modern Britain.

### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The proposed school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. Well-established, trust-wide policies are being adapted to suit the new school. There is a strong focus on pupils managing their own behaviour. Very clear rewards and sanctions provision is set out. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies promote good behaviour. Leaders have thought carefully about ensuring that policies and practice will meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Safeguarding policies are comprehensive and are in line with the latest guidance from the Secretary of State. Leaders are clear about the local risks for pupils, including radicalisation, county lines and knife crime. First-aid training and training in fire procedures are planned for staff. Staff will be trained in how to implement these policies and procedures effectively so that there is a positive climate and culture for learning. Leaders' plans form a strong basis for staff to ensure pupils' well-being and safety. This aspect of provision is also likely to be very strong.

### **Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The proposed school is likely to meet all the regulations in this part. The required checks on adults who will work in the school are being made and recorded on the single central register appropriately. Similarly, appropriate checking and recording systems are in place for governors and trustees. The headteacher has had safer recruitment training and is able to demonstrate convincingly that safer recruitment practices are being used when recruiting staff. There has been proper consideration given to how the safety of pupils will be ensured when allowing visitors and contractors on site.

## **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

The school is likely to meet all the requirements of this part. The school building is purpose-built. It is well proportioned, and it is likely that acoustic and lighting requirements will be suitable for a school. There is space to play in the playground and space for physical education on a multi-use games area surface and outside. There are enough toilets and washing facilities to meet requirements. Toilets are set out in individual cubicles, with some designated for boys, some for girls and some without designation so that pupils who identify as transgender can use the facilities without being highlighted as different. There are additional facilities for pupils with special educational needs including a hygiene room. There is accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils. Care has been taken to ensure that pupils can access the site safely, including a thorough travel plan which considers how parents and staff will use local transport safely.

## **Part 6. Provision of information**

The school is likely to meet the requirements in this part. The school's website is being populated with helpful information for parents, including access to school policies. Leaders have thought about how school reports will be written to inform parents of their child's attitude learning, behaviour and their progress. The appropriate contact details for the school and the trust are available on the school's website.

## **Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled**

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The complaints policy is thorough and contains all the required steps and appropriate timelines for the efficient handling of complaints. Leaders and governors are knowledgeable about the purpose and practices relating to the policy.

## **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

This standard is likely to be met. The trust has a clear track record in opening and running similar schools successfully. There are strong central systems in place within the trust to oversee the leadership and management of a school, as well as the regulatory requirements. The chair of the local governing body is an experienced national leader of governance. School leaders are experienced in educational leadership and demonstrate a thorough understanding of their roles. They articulated a useful understanding of their local context and demonstrated strong moral purpose in their ambition that all pupils succeed. Clear systems for monitoring all aspects of provision are in place so that the independent school standards are likely to be met consistently. Leaders have the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure that pupils will achieve academically and personally. They have due regard for pupils' well-being and safety. This aspect is likely to be strong.

## **Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010**

The school is likely to meet the requirements of Schedule 10. Leaders demonstrate a strong understanding of the requirements of an equalities policy, including that objectives are to be based on the cohort of pupils in the school when they arrive. Leaders consider the needs of pupils with SEND in a range of policies including those that relate to behaviour, safeguarding and bullying. The school has been designed with accessibility in mind. For example, there are lifts so that disabled pupils can access all parts of the school. Fire-safety considerations for disabled pupils have also been made. An appropriate draft accessibility policy is in place, which will be updated further when the building is handed over.

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