

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

School name	Bearsted Primary Academy
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	886/2131
Unique reference number (URN)	147866
Inspection number	10148475
Inspection dates	09/06/2020 to 15/06/2020
Reporting inspector	Stephanie Innes-Taylor 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 operating officer of the trust and the chair of the governing board. 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	420 (initially 39 in September 2020, plus 26 nursery children from January 2021)
Age range	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Not applicable

Context of the school

The proposed new provision is a primary school within the Leigh Academies Trust. The school shares a site with a proposed new special school provision, Snowfields Academy. The schools intend to work closely together and with other schools within the trust to share expertise, resources and good practice.

The school is proposed to open in September 2020. Initially, this will be with 39 children in Reception.

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.

Due to the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the building of the school has been delayed and is incomplete. However, building work has now resumed. Leaders are hoping that the site will be ready to admit pupils from September 2020 as planned. Appropriate plans are in place for pupils to use another primary school within the trust on a temporary basis, if there are further delays.

Leaders of the Leigh Academies Trust have designed the new provision to be inclusive. The school is located to serve the growing need for primary school places within the local community. The school will benefit from thoughtfully designed external sports, play and learning facilities.

Children will be offered nursery places at the school from January 2021.

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, provided that it addresses the regulations noted in the tables set out in parts 3 and 5.
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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. Leaders have a planned programme of learning to enable pupils to build their knowledge and understanding of the wider world, including learning about British values and social and cultural traditions. Through this approach, the school plans to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop skills in tolerance and mutual respect for those with other beliefs. Policies and procedures demonstrate leaders' motivation for the school to be one where 'ambition knows no bounds, making every moment count'.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The proposed school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations in this part. Relevant policies are in place. They provide satisfactory evidence that the school is likely to comply with relevant guidance. The content within these documents indicates that health, safety, first-aid, assessments of risk, supervision and behaviour policies are well prepared and robust. Procedures are explained clearly. The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy, which is up to date with the latest statutory guidance including with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies detail appropriate strategies for addressing any issues. However, the inspector is only able to provide limited assurance about the implementation of health and safety policies because the site is unfinished.

Leaders appreciate that there is significant work to do to ensure that the school is ready to admit pupils. For example, leaders were not able to demonstrate full compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Additionally, the building does not yet have lighting, toilets or washing facilities installed.

In order to meet the requirements in full, the school should:

comply with relevant health and safety laws by implementing the health and safety policy effectively	paragraph 11
ensure that, when building work is complete, the school is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.	paragraph 12

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The proposed school is likely to meet all the regulations. A single central register is in place. This details the required checks that have been made, by whom and when. Checks are recorded on the system for all relevant staff and trustees.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations in this part. Leaders' plans and procedures are comprehensive. Nevertheless, the inspector is only able to provide limited assurance about some aspects of the premises. The virtual tour showed that there are no toilets or washing or drinking water facilities installed currently. Internal and external lighting have yet to be fitted. The architect's plans demonstrate that requirements for this part are likely to be met if leaders implement them as intended. For example, there is provision for drinking water fountains, ample outside space, appropriate lighting, toilet and hygiene facilities. Evidence relating to the premises shows good-quality provision is planned which is fully accessible for all pupils who will attend the school.

In order to meet the requirements in full, the school should:

ensure that the building is maintained to a standard so that the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured	paragraph 25
ensure that the lighting in each room or other internal space is suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities that normally take place there	paragraph 27(a)
provide external lighting in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises	paragraph 27(b)
provide suitable drinking water facilities	paragraph 28(1)(a)
provide toilets and urinals with an adequate supply of cold water	paragraph 28(1)(b)
provide washing facilities with an adequate supply of hot and cold water	paragraph 28(1)(b)
ensure that water suitable for drinking is clearly labelled as such	paragraph 28(1)(c)
ensure that the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.	paragraph 28(1)(d)

Part 6. Provision of information

The proposed school is likely to meet all the regulations in this part. A website for the school is in place with relevant links to the trust's website. It is up to date and compliant with guidance for what academies should publish on their website. All mandatory policies are in place and are available to parents, including the safeguarding policy.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The proposed school is likely to meet all the regulations in this part. The complaints policy is suitable to the context of the school. It contains information that clearly sets out the procedure to be followed and the timescales involved. The policy is published on the school's website.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the regulations in this part. Senior leaders of the school and trust have a clear vision of the school they wish to establish. This is evident in their policies and in the passion articulated by leaders. The headteacher is an experienced practitioner in primary education who has established an effective relationship between the local community and the proposed school. Leaders of the trust have the relevant knowledge and skills to provide strong challenge and support to the management of the school. Leaders have a good understanding of the regulatory requirements and their roles and responsibilities. They have ensured that school policies provide appropriate guidance for the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The proposed school is likely to meet the regulations in this schedule. The school is designed to be inclusive. It is accessible for disabled pupils and staff. The policies for equal opportunities identify protected characteristics. They outline expectations for staff and pupils in two appropriately targeted policies. It is clear how pupils will be supported.

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

All the statutory requirements for the early years are likely to be met. The proposed school has been designed to ensure that children have sufficient space for indoor and outdoor learning. Leaders have appointed experienced staff to adequately provide for the safety, health and welfare of children. Plans are in place to ensure that children are appropriately supervised at all times. Whole-school policies and procedures consider the needs of early years children and meet requirements.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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