

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

School name	Hujjat Primary School
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	310/2004
Unique reference number (URN)	143925
Inspection number	10148493
Inspection dates	23/06/2020 to 29/06/2020
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 discussions over the telephone and through video conferencing with the headteacher, the chair of trustees, the early years foundation stage leader and other representative trustees. The inspector viewed a virtual tour of the permanent school site, reviewed the architect's plans, 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
Age range	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Not applicable

Context of the school

Hujjat Primary School intends to open in September 2020. The impact of COVID-19 has stalled the construction of the school site and premises. As a result, children will attend the school on the site of Weald Rise Primary School until October 2020, when the new school is expected to be completed.

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

The trustees of Hujjat Primary School have agreed to enter into a service-level agreement with The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust. This is to provide additional capacity while The Hujjat Primary Trust (as single-school trust) becomes established.

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 standards in this part are likely to be met.

Leaders, including trustees and governors, have a clear vision and strong ethos to build pupils' character and personal development. Plans and policies reflect leaders' intentions to actively promote British values and help pupils to learn right from wrong. The Islamic foundation and character of the school is intended to promote high-quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school will also welcome pupils from other religious beliefs as well as those of 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). Policies reflect the firm commitment to ensure that pupils, staff, parents and visitors are likely to benefit from mutual care, respect and tolerance at Hujjat Primary.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are likely to be effective. Leaders, including trustees, have a strong understanding of their safeguarding duties. Plans and policies are well formulated to give confidence in leaders' intentions. Within the constraints of a remote inspection, leaders ably demonstrate a strong culture for safeguarding pupils. For example, the single central register is underpinned by a series of rigorous checks. Training for trustees and staff has already taken place with a view to meeting the guidance issued by the Secretary of State in 'Keeping children safe in education' (2020). At least two of the trustees, including the chair of the trust board, have a professional background in safeguarding. Trustees are likely to use their extensive knowledge to hold school leaders to account effectively. Leaders have rigorous checks and processes in place that already ensure that staff and governors are trained and accredited with suitable qualifications, including for those in the early years foundation stage (EYFS).

The school's policies relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety are robust. These take into account the unique context of the school, including short-term arrangements when the school is likely to be operating from Weald Rise Primary School. Policies offer reassurance that the spectrum of health and safety arrangements is appropriate and well considered. For example, the written behaviour policy is firmly rooted in the school's ethos and shared vision. Sanctions, including the use of exclusion, are clearly explained. There is also an appropriate anti-bullying policy ready for immediate implementation.

The school complies fully with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The new school building and grounds are being finished to conform to the latest guidance and regulations. There will be a full fire risk assessment on completion of the building works. School leaders ensure that appropriate risk assessments are in place for all aspects of the school's work, including ongoing construction, further staffing appointments and training. Risk assessments for individual pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or an education, health and care plan have also been fully considered as part of the school's opening plans.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Leaders have robust procedures and practices for recruiting, appointing and vetting staff. The single central register (SCR) meets the requirements set out by the Secretary of State and is fully compliant with the independent school standards. Checks for all staff (including supply staff), leaders and visitors (including contractors) are also firmly in place and being implemented. The same checks are completed for all, for example, a person's identity, their right to work in the UK and their relevant qualifications. The trust ensures that all checks, including the counter-signatory of the Secretary of State for the chair of trustees, have been carried out. Trustees fully understand their safeguarding duties. The SCR is legible and is in an electronic format. Trustees carry this out as part of a strong culture for safeguarding effectively.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The standards in this part are likely to be met.

The new school building is designed well to promote the school's vision and values. Plans show how the accommodation is likely to fully meet the independent school standards. Modifications and conversion work to meet the needs of a contemporary primary school are well considered. For example, there are ample toilets and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils. These are also accessible to those with physical disabilities. The school will have separate toilets and age-appropriate hygiene facilities for children in the Reception classes. There is also a medical room for the immediate use of those who may need it. The first floor will be accessible to all pupils, with a lift installed. There are no areas of the school that are inaccessible to those with physical disabilities or mobility issues. Ramps are being installed for further accessibility to enter the school.

The school will be 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 design of the new school building is likely to meet the range of pupils' needs, including those with SEND. The school grounds have been well-designed to accommodate the age-range of the pupils, including those in the EYFS. The site has been planned well to allow plenty of space for pupils to play, relax and

learn. For example, there will be an outdoor space for reflection and meditation, based on Islamic shapes, art and culture. All reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that pupils will be kept safe.

During the interim period, while the new school is being completed, pupils will use Weald Rise Primary School site. This is a new build (completed in 2017). The inspection confirms that steps have been taken to ensure that pupils will be safe and will make a positive start on these premises. Weald Rise is approximately one mile from the proposed site for Hujjat Primary.

Part 6. Provision of information

The standards in this part are likely to be fully met.

The trust and school leaders ensure that all 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. Prospective parents are able to access key policies, such as the SEND and safeguarding policies. Contact details and updates are being provided through links to the trust's website. At this time, the school site does not have a phone line. Therefore, there is no phone number available. However, leaders are taking all practicable and reasonable steps to keep parents informed and provide any information required. For example, on the school's website there is a contact button enabling parents to email the trust directly. Leaders have made all necessary provision to communicate information, including facilities to receive hard copies of any policies, on request.

Policies relating to those with SEND or for whom English is an additional language (EAL) have already been adopted by the trust. School leaders are prepared and likely to be able to meet the full range of pupils' needs on opening.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The standards in this part are likely to be met.

The complaints policy is complete and has already been uploaded to the school's website. It complies with 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 inspector was unable to check how complaints are logged and processed as the school has not opened yet.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Leaders, including trustees, are organised and well prepared for the opening of the school in September 2020. They have taken much time and care to seek advice and the support of other organisations to mitigate against the inherent risks of being a single-academy trust. Trustees have worked with the DfE to create a service-level agreement with The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust. This will provide additional capacity and training as Hujjat Primary becomes established and grows. The terms of the service-level agreement may be reviewed on an ongoing basis to suit the needs of the school. In the short term, for example, Hujjat Primary will benefit from arrangements to purchase special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) time. Leaders have already established a strong network of local support for new school staff. A local cluster of schools, including Weald Rise Primary and Grimsdyke Primary, has already welcomed Hujjat Primary into its working arrangements.

Leaders 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. Safeguarding arrangements are likely to be effective in actively promoting the well-being of all 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 school's ethos and vision, based on the Islamic foundation, is strong. Leaders seek to promote cultural capital and want pupils to be academically, spiritually, morally and culturally rich.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school has an accessibility plan. Leaders are taking all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure full access and entitlement for all pupils.

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

The school will have two Reception-aged classes. The EYFS is commonly reflected in the range of documentation. Leaders have a good understanding of the uniqueness of the early years. However, they also have plans to ensure that the EYFS is an integral part of the whole school, including the curriculum offer. Leaders have recruited sufficient numbers of teachers and teaching assistants to meet supervision requirements for this age range. However, trustees are seeking to fulfil further posts to accommodate before- and after-school care.

Leaders have given due consideration to the changing and toileting arrangements for children 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 previous experience of leading a good EYFS department in Watford, which has a high proportion of pupils with EAL. There are also two trustees who have a background in teaching in the

EYFS. This is likely to enable trustees to hold challenging discussions and set high aspirations for the children. For example, trustees and leaders have clear expectations for pupils' phonic development and knowledge, where they told the inspector that children must 'hit the ground running'.

Safeguarding and welfare requirements for those in the early years are completed as part of wider school processes. Leaders have considered the children's learning and development requirements to meet the early learning goals.

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