

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

School name	Orsett Heath Academy
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	883/4004
Unique reference number (URN)	147847
Inspection number	10148805
Inspection dates	12/06/2020 to 18/06/2020
Reporting inspector	Michele Costello 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. During the inspection, video meetings were held with the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, the executive principal, the head of the school, the assistant headteacher, the chief operating officer and the chair of trustees. The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including policies and procedures, information available on the school's website and building plans for the interim school site. Using the information available, the inspector can give enough assurance that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards. However, the degree of assurance is more limited for the premises standards in part 5 and paragraph 11 and 12 in part 3. This is because the interim school building was not complete at the time of the inspection and it was not possible to view a virtual tour of the building. The standards for which assurance is limited are indicated in the relevant section for that part.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	1,200 (120 initially on opening)
Age range	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Not applicable

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.

Context of the school

Orsett Heath Academy is part of South West Essex Community Education Trust. The proposed school will be an 11–16 school. The school will open to 120 Year 7 pupils in September 2020. It is proposed that by 2025 the school will grow to 1,200 pupils in Years 7 to 11.

For the first two years, the school will be in an interim building on the site of Thurrock Rugby club. The interim building is adjacent to the proposed substantive school building. It is expected that the substantive school building will be opened in September 2022. At the time of the inspection, the interim building was not complete. The interim building is due to be completed by 27 August 2020.

All staff have been appointed for Orsett Heath Academy. The school's leadership team consists of an executive principal, a head of school and an assistant headteacher who will also be the school's special educational needs coordinator. All members of the school's leadership team are former members of staff at William Edwards School, which is also a member of the trust.

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.
------------------------	---

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 relation to this part. The school's policies show how the school will actively promote fundamental British values. The school's policies also make it clear how pupils will learn about different religions, faiths and cultures. Leaders are clear about how pupils will learn about the difference between right and wrong, take responsibility for their own behaviour and develop their self-esteem and self-confidence. Pupils will be given the opportunity to learn about public institutions in England. There will be opportunities for pupils to learn about democratic processes. For example, leaders will set up a 'student council' and pupils will be elected to the student council through a democratic system of voting. Leaders' plans include opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school and the local community. The school's visitors policy makes it clear how measures will be established to ensure that speakers are appropriately vetted. The school's documents and plans highlight how pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The proposed school is likely to meet the regulations in relation to this part. However, only limited assurance can be provided in relation to paragraphs 11 and 12, as it was not possible to visit the site or carry out a virtual tour during the inspection. The DfE were informed of this before the inspection commenced.

Leaders have ensured that there is an appropriate safeguarding policy, which has regard to the most recent guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Plans are in place to ensure appropriate safeguarding and induction training for staff.

The school has a suitable behaviour and anti-bullying policy. Leaders have plans in place to ensure that records are kept of all sanctions. Policies also make reference to reasonable adjustments for pupils with protected characteristics.

A trust-wide health and safety policy is in place with a specific health and safety policy for the school. The head of school will be the fire marshal. She has already received training for this role. Leaders were able to provide evidence that all staff will be trained in fire safety before pupils start. A fire evacuation plan for the school is booked in for July 2020. A fire safety policy is in place. Leaders were able to provide evidence of risk assessments for the school site and physical education (PE) activities. The building plans show that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 has been considered. For example, these plans show that fire exits, fire dampers, fire break glass points, heat detectors and sounders have all been considered. A risk assessment has been carried out for the non-inclusion of sprinklers. Leaders were able to provide evidence that a fire evacuation plan is booked in for 15 July 2020.

Clear guidance is in place for staff to record pupils' attendance. Leaders understand their responsibilities to contact the local authority should a pupil go missing from education or when a pupil is removed from the school's roll.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The school has an appropriate safer recruitment policy in place. The executive headteacher is trained in safer recruitment and will be on all interview panels. The school has a single central register (SCR) in place. At the time of the inspection, not all checks had been completed on all of the new staff appointed. These checks are underway and the trust does not offer any member of staff a 'firm' employment offer until all recruitment checks are completed. At the time of the inspection, four local governors had been appointed and checks were yet to be confirmed. Leaders have ensured that all legal checks have been carried out on trustees. One new trustee has been appointed and the necessary checks are being carried out. No trustees required an overseas check. However, this heading was missing from the SCR. Leaders addressed this during the inspection. Leaders understand the necessary checks that need to be carried out should supply staff be used. There is an appropriate supply staff policy in place.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. However, the level of assurance that the inspector is able to provide is much more limited than that for other parts of the independent school standards. This is because the inspector was not able to visit the interim site and a virtual tour was not able to be viewed during the inspection. However, the inspector scrutinised building plans. The inspector also viewed the architect's virtual tour of what the school will look like when completed. Discussions were held with the CEO about the interim building plans. Building plans were not available at the time of the inspection for the substantive building.

The interim building is being constructed on the site of Thurrock Ruby Club. Although the school will be a separate building from the rugby club, the school will use the rugby club kitchen and canteen. The school has a risk assessment for this. The kitchen area will be locked when not in use. The walkway to the canteen will be supervised by school staff on duty at breaktime and lunchtimes. Some sporting facilities will be shared with the rugby club – the rugby pitch and two squash courts. The rugby club will not use the outdoor rugby pitch or any other rugby site facilities during school hours unless in very exceptional circumstances and only if agreed by the school.

Building plans show the inclusion of a medical room. The architect confirmed during the inspection that there will be a sink in the medical room as this was not on the original plans. There are separate toilets for boys and girls with a supply of hot and cold water. Boys and girls changing rooms for PE are also included on the building

plans. The plans show space for pupils to participate in PE. There is a space for pupils to play outdoors.

Emergency lighting and external lighting are clear on the building plans. There is evidence that the architects have considered the acoustics and lighting to ensure that this meets current regulations.

Part 6. Provision of information

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part. The school has a website. During the inspection, a few updates were required to ensure that the school is fully compliant with all of the paragraphs in part 6. Information about the board of trustees is available on the trust's website, which can be accessed from a link on the school's website. The safeguarding policy is available for parents on the school's website.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. A trust-wide complaints policy is already in place. The school will use this policy. A minor amendment to the policy was made during the inspection. The policy meets all the requirements in part 7 of the independent school standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part. The trust has carried out a skills audit to ensure that the board of trustees has skills in education, finance and business. The trust has experience of running both primary and secondary schools. There are currently two other secondary schools in the trust. The scheme of delegation sets out who has the authority to make decisions. Leadership responsibilities are clear.

All schools in the trust were judged to be good in their most recent section 5 inspections, with the exception of William Edward School which was judged to require improvement. Although leaders have not opened a free school before, they understand the need to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met.

Leaders are clear about their role in actively promoting the well-being of pupils. They have ensured that appropriate health and safety and safeguarding policies are in place. Leaders can articulate how the effectiveness of these policies will be monitored and evaluated.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The proposed school is likely to meet the regulations. The school has an appropriate accessibility plan in place. This covers the school's curriculum and covers plans to improve the delivery of information and improve the physical environment. The

building plans for the interim site show a lift, disabled parking bays and disabled toilets. Consideration has been given to the width of corridors.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2021