

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of an academy/free school/studio school/university technical college (UTC)

School name	Alma Primary School
DfE registration number	Not yet assigned
Unique reference number (URN)	1459
Inspection number	422361
Inspection dates	12 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Sandra Teacher

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Information about the inspection

This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.¹

Context of the school

Alma Primary School plans to open in September 2013, with its first Reception class, as a mixed, inclusive, state primary school created under the Free Schools Programme, established by a group of parents. It will be a one-form entry school with an inclusive Jewish ethos that accepts children from across the spectrum of Jewish belief and of other beliefs on an equal basis.

The school is sited in a residential area in the London Borough of Barnet and will provide for pupils from surrounding neighbourhoods and beyond. It has taken over the premises of a previous school temporarily. These have been refurbished to accommodate 60 Reception and Year 1 boys and girls.

The headteacher, an administrator, a school business manager, a class teacher and two teaching assistants have already been appointed to start in September, and 26 children have already registered for enrolment.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector advised that when the permanent premises are ready the school can apply for a material change visit. The school has no detail of its proposed permanent premises as yet.

The school is founded on four key 'pillars' which are: excellence in teaching and learning; inclusivity and diversity; identity and values; and nurturing each child to achieve their best.

Reception children will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum with an integrated Jewish studies programme, including Ivrit (Modern Hebrew) as a modern foreign language.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The requirements of this standard are likely to be met, subject to satisfactory implementation, through the planned curriculum. The intended ethos of the school emphasises the pupils' personal development, particularly through the enriched, integrated curriculum which focuses on building a learning community, which

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

emphasises '21st Century learning skills', 'deep learning', and creativity, along with Jewish knowledge and understanding. The planned provision clearly emphasises the development of the pupils' confidence, self-knowledge and their understanding of taking responsibility for their behaviour and actions. Although the emphasis is on the Jewish faith, because the children may come from all faith backgrounds the annual cycle of celebrations across faith groups is built into the calendar for the new school year. This should ensure that the children can grow in their awareness of, and respect for, traditions and cultures other than their own. Children of different backgrounds and beliefs will learn from diversity and difference and value one another. Visitors and group visits appropriate to the age range are also planned so that pupils can develop an understanding of the civil law and public institutions and services in England. The school intends to enable children to engage with wider British and world cultures through trips and connections to other schools, including a school with the same name. The governors have ensured that the planned curriculum, including provision for the children's personal development, is free from partisan political or religious views, and that, when political issues are discussed, a balanced view is always presented. Detailed guidance on these matters is included in the policy documents.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. The implementation of policies and procedures could not be seen as the school is not operating. All essential policies and procedures have been prepared and these comply with current guidance, including that on behaviour and anti-bullying. The safeguarding policy meets requirements and provides clear guidance to staff. All the necessary checks as regards suitability of staff are being made prior to appointment, and a satisfactory safer recruitment policy is in place. The headteacher, who is the designated person for child protection, has signed up for the appropriate safeguarding training with the local safeguarding board. Safeguarding training for all staff and adults on the site is part of the induction process prior to the school opening date, so that requirements will be met. The newly appointed staff team will include a number of qualified paediatric first aiders.

The school has devised detailed and suitable procedures to assess and manage safety risks around the school site. There are written policies to promote good behaviour, with clear codes of conduct, and an appropriate set of sanctions and rewards. The health and safety policy is in line with requirements and has been drawn up with the welfare of the children at its heart. Currently, the admission and attendance registers are blank but are likely to meet requirements. The premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and a three-year plan to improve access has been prepared. Arrangements are firmly in hand for the necessary fire safety checks and fire authority report to be completed before the school opens. Evacuation procedures in the case of fire have been carefully considered.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school's policies and procedures are likely to meet all requirements. Recruitment procedures meet the current guidance. All appointed staff are appropriately vetted and there is a single central record that contains all the required checks on the headteacher and staff. Members of the governing body already have the necessary checks. The school does not intend to employ supply staff, but is aware of its responsibilities should supply staff be appointed in the future. The school is carrying out and recording the required checks for security staff employed under contractual arrangement. The systems are in place for volunteers and other groups to be checked in time for the opening of the school and the outcomes recorded on the single central record.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school has taken over an existing educational facility which meets all of the required regulations, including those for heating, lighting, ventilation, decoration and floor covering. The classrooms are of a good size, as are other shared areas. New furniture, suitable for the proposed age range, is on order (orders seen) to be delivered ready for the opening of the school in September. Washrooms meet requirements, and a labelled source of drinking water is available. Play areas have been carefully considered and surfaces matched to the needs of young children, both for free and guided play. Access is already in place for those with disabilities. A medical room is fitted out appropriately. The building and access points to the grounds are fully secure and a full time security guard has been employed. No food will be prepared on the premises.

Provision of information

The provision meets all regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The provision meets all regulations.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

- **YES. This school is likely to meet all regulations when it opens and is recommended for registration.**

Recommended number of day pupils: 60

Recommended age range: 4 to 6 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.

Note: The Department should obtain confirmation from the school before it opens that the planned fire safety checks and fire authority report have been completed.