

Advice note for pre-registration inspections of all types of academies and free schools/studio schools/university technical colleges (UTC)

School name	Oakbank
DfE registration	872/2000
Unique reference number (URN)	138367
Inspection number	403992
Inspection dates	18 July 2012
Reporting inspector	Caroline Bolton

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, 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.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090080.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our website for news, information and updates at www.ofsted.gov.uk/user.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

No. 090080

© Crown copyright 2012



Context of the school

Oakbank School is planned as a three-form entry, mixed secondary school with an eventual roll of 560 students, aged 11 to 16. The site is in a semi-rural area of Berkshire, to the west of Wokingham and south of Reading. At the time of opening in September 2012, only Year 7 students will be admitted, with the aim that the school will expand year on year thereafter. In 2017, the school plans to seek approval to open a sixth form, subject to local support for the provision. The school's intake will include students of all abilities as usually accommodated within mainstream schools, including learners with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school will have no religious affiliation. It aims to support all students in achieving the best possible academic qualifications, while emphasising as equally important their development into happy, confident and courteous young people, with the capacity to take individual responsibility and to show respect for themselves and others.

The school has been established through a partnership of local parents, known as the West of Wokingham Parent Group, and CfBT Schools Trust. The Principal, trustees, chair of the governing body and the teaching staff required for the first year have all been appointed; other governors have yet to be recruited. The intention is to appoint teaching assistants when the number of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is known.

The school will be located in some of the buildings and grounds previously used by Ryeish Green, a secondary school which closed in July 2010. Much of the internal space is in a poor condition, in terms of its appearance and facilities, and is undergoing an extensive two-phase programme of refurbishment. The first stage of the work is scheduled to be completed by September 2012, in time to accommodate the first year of intake.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The evidence of the policy and curricular documents scrutinised by the inspector indicates that this standard is likely to be met, although implementation could not be seen. The school's vision statement emphasises the importance of collaboration, social opportunities and community involvement. Engagement with the local community is a strong feature of the policy documents. The planned curriculum includes a compulsory programme of enrichment activities, including visiting speakers and educational outings. Although students will not be old enough at first for the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, an in-house programme along similar lines, the Oakbank Challenge, will be launched in preparation for participation in the national scheme later. A citizenship programme, through which young people will learn about local and national public institutions and processes, is planned within a wider personal, social and health education curriculum.

The school believes that its relatively small size, close tutor-student engagement and a house system will foster good social skills and moral understanding. It is planned that assemblies will take account of the range of faith groups represented within the school and that the festivals of different religions will be celebrated in the course of each year. Students will learn to respect and tolerate other cultures. There are appropriate behaviour, attendance and anti-bullying policies, which are likely, if consistently implemented, to encourage in students a clear understanding of right and wrong conduct in the school, the wider world and, later, in the workplace.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The requirements in this aspect of the school's work are likely to be met, although implementation of the policies could not be seen. Proper checks have been carried out on all the staff and trustees who have so far been appointed. The school has clear policies, subject to governing body ratification, for child protection, safeguarding, safer recruitment, students' behaviour, anti-bullying measures, first aid, health and safety and ensuring students' safety on school visits. These are likely to meet requirements. The school plans to meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 through its policies for equal opportunities, disabled access and pupil equality. The range of policies has been drawn up with regard to current Department for Education guidance and with the support of CfBT Schools Trust. A fire risk assessment is scheduled to take place as part of the building hand-over process by the contractors so that requirements should be met. The Principal intends to put in place appropriate fire practice arrangements once the school is open.

It is planned that all staff will receive basic first-aid training, with more advanced training for the essential number of first aiders. A room has been designated as a sick bay and is both adjacent to a planned washroom and in sight of the main office. School policy makes provision for training in safeguarding for temporary staff and volunteers, as well as for all permanent employees. The school has provided confirmation that prior to opening, that staff and the designated safeguarding officers will receive the required training. Attendance registers will be maintained in both written and electronic forms. There is a suitable policy for promoting good attendance and dealing with truancy.

The accommodation is almost entirely on one level, enabling access for disabled students and adults to be readily provided by ramps. One short staircase between levels on a corridor presents a difficulty, which the school proposes to address with a stair lift. A dedicated washroom for individuals with disability is in preparation.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The recruitment of teaching staff for the first year of operation is complete and procedures are likely to meet all requirements. The single central record shows that all checks have been carried out on staff and trustees who have already accepted

positions, with the exception of very recent appointments; for these the checking process is in progress so that requirements will be met. Teaching assistants will be appointed when the extent and nature of students' special educational needs and/or disabilities are known. The Chair of the Governing Body has recently taken up office, but the other governors have yet to be recruited. The Principal and the CfBT Schools Trust are well aware of the requirements for the checks that will be needed. It is intended that any supply staff will be engaged via CfBT's preferred agency. CfBT's representative reports that, within this company, there are established procedures to ensure that all required checking procedures for staff are carried out within the required timescale.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The buildings for the proposed school already exist, having formed part of the accommodation of the now-closed Ryeish Green School. The new school will be smaller than Ryeish Green and the local authority, Wokingham, is retaining the use of some parts of the premises so that access to the grounds is shared. A substantial fence surrounds the perimeter. Discussions are under way to agree before September 2012 the arrangements for security at the entrance gates to allow access for legitimate users, whilst ensuring the safety of the staff and students. One of the Oakbank buildings, scheduled for completion within the first phase of the works, dates from the Victorian period and has many advantages in terms of the natural light for classrooms, the solidity of the build and the ventilation. Both main buildings for the new school appear in good condition from an external viewpoint, although the condition of the interior accommodation is superficially poor. There are few modern facilities in the designated classrooms and their appearance is tired and unattractive. Floor coverings are in need of replacement or repair. However, extensive refurbishment is under way with building, plumbing and electrical work in progress, including attention to the fire alarm system. There is provision in the planning to address the shortcomings in the internal spaces so that requirements are likely to be met before the school opens. Enough washrooms are planned to comply with regulations. Smartboards and suitable furnishings will be installed in each teaching room and there is adequate space for the intended class sizes. The facilities for science will not be fully equipped when the first phase of the works is completed and the school opens. In 2013/14, the science department will move to a newly-fitted specialist area, in the building which is scheduled to be completed in the second phase.

In the two years since Ryeish Green School closed, the site has become very overgrown, to the extent that light is almost completely blocked for some windows. Work is planned to restore the grounds to provide suitable facilities for sports, social and leisure spaces for the students. The outdoor space offers a variety of hard and grassy surfaces, is sufficient in size for the intended purpose, and has the potential to become an attractive as well as a useful resource. It is likely that requirements for the premises and grounds will be met for the opening of the new school.

Provision of information

The school website is already in existence, with the required information and policies displayed there, the latter as drafts subject to ratification by the governing body once its membership is complete.

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The provision is likely to meet all the 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: 560, within the timescale planned

Recommended number of boarders or residential pupils (if applicable): N/A

Recommended age range: 11 to 16 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.