

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

School name	River Bank Primary School
DfE registration number	999/1449
Unique reference number (URN)	1449
Inspection number	422348
Inspection dates	01 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Fatiha Maitland

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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.

Context of the school

The proposed River Bank Primary School is a free school, which is situated in Luton, in Bedfordshire. It is located in a residential area and benefits from local parks and meadows. The school will occupy the land of a local swimming pool that moved to a new site. The swimming pool has been demolished. The school is not open but intends to do so in September 2013. The school will start with two classes for Reception Years and will grow over the coming years. The school will use portable classrooms as temporary accommodation on site from September 2013 to receive Reception children and will move to the new premises in September 2014 or earlier.

The school plans to admit up to 840 boys and girls, aged between four and 11 years. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs will be admitted if the school judges that their specific learning needs can be met. The school plans to make provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

The school's aims include: 'to prepare children for their role in society as responsible, young people and adults and be aware of their rights and responsibilities to develop a strong sense of personal worth and raise self-esteem by providing opportunities for all children to recognise and value personal skills and qualities of themselves and others'.

The school has no specific religious affiliation. This is the school's first registration visit.

The inspector visited the Trust's office at Wigmore Hall, Eaton Green Road, Luton, LU2 9JB where she conducted a scrutiny of documentation and had discussions with the management of the free school. She also visited the school premises at Bath Road, Luton, LU3 1ES, carried out a learning walk around the premises and checked the premises plans. The building work is taking place to provide accommodation for the education of up to 840 pupils. Construction plans and provision of the temporary accommodation is managed by the Elliott Company. The inspector also had discussions with the project manager of Wates Construction Ltd. The project manager for the builders gave reassurance that the building will be ready to receive pupils as planned. Such information about the construction work is shared regularly with the Department for Education.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school provided sufficient evidence to indicate that the planned provision is likely to meet all the regulations, but implementation could not be checked. Through the school's aims and ethos, the programmes of personal, social, health and citizenship, and the social, emotional aspects of learning, the religious education, circle time and assemblies, pupils including those in the Reception Years will be encouraged to talk about their feelings and express their own personal viewpoints in a thoughtful reasoned and considerate way. Pupils will be helped to distinguish right from wrong, build and maintain positive relationships, show consideration to one another, mix well and work together in harmony.

Learning about religious practices and lifestyles and taking part in festivals, cultural events and art will help pupils to learn about, and respect, the cultural diversity around them. Visits to places of interest and support from 'People who help us', alongside the citizenship programme, will provide pupils with adequate opportunities to gain sufficient knowledge and understanding of public institutions and services in England, to respect British democracy and to be aware of the importance and workings of civil law.

Discussions with the management of the school indicate that leaders will monitor the content and the teaching of its curriculum and support from visitors to the school to ensure that staff do not promote any particular political views to pupils and that there is a balanced presentation when any political issues arise.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Four regulations are not likely to be met. Implementation of other regulations could not be checked, as the school was not operating. The school has prepared written policies to promote good behaviour amongst pupils with clear codes of conduct, a set of suitable rewards and strategies to deal with unacceptable behaviour and information about the prevention of bullying. The school has also devised detailed procedures to assess and manage safety risks related to educational visits. The safeguarding policy contains all of the required information. This is well supported by the school's safer recruitment policy and procedures. The school has recently appointed a designated child protection officer. Staff are not yet all trained, but all members of staff, including the nominated child protection officer, are firmly booked to attend the relevant child protection training on 22-23 July 2013.

A health and safety policy exists. However, the school has yet to carry out the risk assessments on both sets of premises with regard to the safety of premises and resources. The school has yet to assure itself that there is a satisfactory level of fire safety for both premises, identified by its risk assessment under the Regulatory

Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The school has recently appointed a health and safety officer and is aware of its duty to carry out the necessary risk assessments before the opening of the school, including those relating to the premises and resources of the temporary accommodation. The premises will be checked by the local fire authority and a copy of the report will be sent to the Department for Education before the opening of the school.

A suitable first aid policy is in place. There are currently two first aiders in school who also have paediatric first aid training. One of the first aiders is a trainer and assessor for first aid. The school is planning to train more staff in first aid in the near future. The school has an admission register and attendance registers ready for use. The school has not drawn up a suitable three-year accessibility improvement plan to fulfil its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

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

- ensure that all members of staff including the designated child protection officer have undertaken the relevant child protection training as planned (paragraph 7)
- carry out risk assessments on the premises and resources to ensure pupils' health and safety (paragraph 11)
- ensure that there is a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by its risk assessment under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 13)
- complete a three-year plan to increase access to the premises, curriculum and information in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

All of the regulations are likely to be met. The school has conducted all the required vetting checks on members of staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. Suitable recruitment procedures are in place for the employment of additional staff. The school is aware of the safeguarding requirements should additional staff be recruited.

The chair of the governing body has been checked by the Department for Education. All the required checks have been made on all other governors. The school has established a single central register and recorded all the necessary information on checks on its staff and the governing body.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations. Discussions with the management of the school and the project manager and a scrutiny of the premises plans indicate that the premises are likely to be fit for purpose. The temporary accommodations for the Reception Years include two classrooms, a break-out room, a medical room, offices for staff and washroom facilities. Labelled drinking water is available for pupils. There is ample outdoor safe space for children to use. The school is planning to use the local church hall for physical activities for Reception children until the main school hall for sports is built.

The new school premises comprise 28 classrooms, several spaces for individual support, specialist teaching areas such as those for science and information and communication technology, a dining hall, a sports hall, a food technology room and a library. The school has ensured that there is a suitable designated area for pupils to go to when they are unwell. The provision has a washbasin and is located near washroom facilities. The toilets and washbasins are sufficient for staff and the proposed number of pupils, including those with disabilities. Pupils will have access to suitable outdoor areas for recreational and physical activities. These include a concrete play area, two netball courts, a football pitch and a training track for sprint and hurdles.

The Education Funding Agency, which is the Department's delivery agency, is managing the process of completing the premises on behalf of the governing body. The Department will continue to monitor the progress of the premises directly with the Agency.

Provision of information

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy and procedures are likely to meet all the regulations.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

YES. The school can be registered and allowed to open on receipt by DfE of evidence of improvement of:

- the school should ensure that all members of staff including the designated child protection officer have undertaken the relevant child protection training as planned (paragraph 7)
- the school should carry out risk assessments on both premises and resources to ensure pupils' health and safety (paragraph 11)
- the school should ensure that there is a satisfactory level of fire safety for both premises, identified by its risk assessment under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 13)
- The school should complete a three-year plan to increase access to the premises, curriculum and information in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Recommended number of day pupils: 840 pupils

Recommended number of boarders: N/A

Recommended age range: 4-11years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.