

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

School name	Archer Academy
DfE registration number	N/A
Unique reference number (URN)	N/A
Inspection number	422360
Inspection dates	9 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Susan Jackson

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

The proposed Archer Academy Free School is to be located in East Finchley in the London borough of Barnet, and will take over a significant section of a building currently occupied by The Institute Arts Centre, an adult education centre, in Beaumont Close. The school has purchased The Institute Arts Centre building and, for the first year of operation, will be co-located with the Institute in delineated premises. The school premises are to be reworked and refitted, inside and outside, to create flexible spaces for teaching and learning. In September 2014, the school will start to use the complete building, and plans are in place to refit the remaining spaces during the summer of 2014, in order to create a bespoke learning environment for a maximum of 300 students. A second campus will be opened in September 2015 at Stanley Road, a ten-minute walk away from Beaumont Close. Ultimately, the Beaumont Close building will accommodate the upper school and the lower school will use the Stanley Road site. The brand-new sustainable school buildings at Stanley Road are supported by the Education Funding Agency. Plans are currently with the architects.

The sponsors of the school are a diverse group of local parents. The school, which is due to open on 9 September 2013, has applied to be registered to admit up to 750 boys and girls in the age range 11 to 16 years. The sponsors would like to extend this provision to include a sixth form in due course. The school will admit students into Year 7 only in its first year. There are currently 141 students registered for enrolment in September 2013, representing five classes of up to 30 children. The school will be non-selective and will admit students with special educational needs. One student joining in September 2013 currently has a statement of special educational needs; another student is in the process of being assessed.

The school aims to challenge students and 'inspire them to become creative, inquisitive and engaged learners with a firm sense of community and a determination to be the very best they can be'. The school aspires for the curriculum to engage every child and to 'offer a meaningful, relevant education for the 21st century'. The curriculum will be based on the National Curriculum in Year 7 and Year 8, but will include thematic learning programmes and cross-curricular work which 'far exceed statutory requirements'. An extended curriculum will provide access to classics, Latin and Mandarin. An extended day on two afternoons each week will be compulsory for all students and will include access to sports clubs and teams, creative arts societies, media activities. Activities will include working on a radio station, vocational and

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

entrepreneurial societies, and voluntary work and award schemes. The Archer Academy will be non-denominational.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations, but implementation could not be seen. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are set out in a framework within which students will be encouraged to demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour, and high levels of emotional intelligence, based on the school's values of 'achievement, respect for others, curiosity, hard work, enjoyment and responsibility'. There are detailed strategies in place for tackling any discriminatory or oppressive behaviour. The school aims for students to become effective self-managers. The school has high expectations and intends that students will show 'personal responsibility, initiative, creativity and enterprise with a commitment to learning and self-improvement'. The school's ethos is designed to promote an understanding of the relationship between effort and achievement, and between responsible behaviour and exciting opportunities.

The school's policy for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students sets out a vision for students to realise their potential and to become confident individuals who are able to work with different people to achieve shared goals. A broad and rich range of opportunities is planned for both inside and outside the classroom to enable students to engage in teamwork and to be contemplative and thoughtful about their own and others' ideas. The school is aiming for students to be globally aware and to make a significant contribution to the life of the school and the wider community. Treating everyone with kindness will be a priority at the school; students will be encouraged to listen to and to value different opinions, beliefs and cultures. Planned provision is designed to help students to develop the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, to acquire an insight into the workings of civil law, to gain a general knowledge of local institutions and to participate in local organisations such as the East Finchley Festival, where entrepreneurial students will be encouraged to trade their own products. All students will have the chance to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Students will also be involved in work with local charities, and a global charity of their choice.

Archer Academy has ensured that the planned curriculum, including provision for students' personal development, is free from partisan political or religious views and that, where any political issues are discussed, a balanced view will always be presented. Specific reference is to be made to anti-extremism requirements in the information for staff.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Documentary evidence indicates that all the regulations are likely to be met but implementation could not be seen. Required policy documents have been produced, including very comprehensive policies for safeguarding, safer recruitment, behaviour management, anti-bullying and first aid. Senior staff have been trained in safe recruitment and the principles have been applied effectively to the recruitment process to date. The school's safer recruitment policy covers the employment of supply staff and volunteers, and there is a designated person in place to oversee their recruitment.

The Principal designate and the business manager are trained in child protection to the required level and arrangements are in place for training other staff before the school opens. Archer Academy is committed to ensuring that all students will be protected at all times. Sufficient resources and time have been allocated to allow the designated officer and staff to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities. The school has an exemplary child protection policy and procedures are in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures.

Staff on site will be trained to take responsibility for first aid before the school opens and will have suitable access to first-aid kits. Guidance is provided on the expected code of practice in first aid. The school is taking the matter of child supervision very seriously. There is carefully planned provision for the effective supervision of children on site, and during the proposed daily walk at break-time across a busy main road to a designated playground area in a local park. The school has limited, but adequate, outdoor recreational facilities at Beaumont Close.

All requirements are likely to be met in terms of policies and procedures for health and safety, and for fire safety. The fire safety risk assessments recently conducted by the fire authority and covering the accommodation used by the adult education centre are to be carefully reviewed to accord with a change of use, and re-assessed before the building is occupied by the first cohort of students.

Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements. The school's 'Equalities Plan' makes a commitment to providing equality of access for disabled students and increasing accessibility as part of the required three-year plan.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school's procedures for the completion of required checks on the suitability of members of the proprietorial body meet all regulations. Scrutiny of documentation demonstrated that safe recruitment procedures have been followed in practice. Required checks have been, or are being, completed for the proprietors and for staff appointed to date, and recorded on a single central register, which is kept in a legible form. The register is updated as new staff are appointed. All the required checks are likely to be in place should supply staff be appointed.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The Beaumont Close building, which is planned to be operative from September 2013, is likely to meet all the regulations. Detailed plans for the premises and accommodation were scrutinised. Work has not yet commenced on refitting the building but on the day the registration visit took place, a removal company was in the process of emptying the school's proposed teaching areas so that building work could begin. Initially, students will be admitted into Year 7 only.

The current general classrooms and specialist rooms are of good size and will be resourced appropriately. New equipment has been ordered in readiness for the opening of the school in September 2013, including 'a state-of the-art-ICT infrastructure' to support the innovative and creative use of technology.

There are no kitchens at Beaumont Close but appropriate facilities will be made available for serving breakfast and lunch meals. Students and staff will be involved in menu planning. Similarly, there are no accessible water fountains, but the school has made suitable plans for students to refill personal water bottles during the day so that all will have drinking water to hand. Catering facilities and accessible water fountains have been included in the designs for the new Stanley Road building. Washing, toilet and medical facilities are being upgraded to meet requirements at Beaumont Close, and have been well provided for in the Stanley Road plans.

Acoustics, ventilation, sound insulation and internal and external lighting are appropriate at Beaumont Close, and have been well provided for in the plans for the new school.

The Beaumont Close site incorporates a safe outside space for recreation but, owing to local planning restraints, this cannot be used for noisy play. However, the school will ensure that there are suitable outdoor seating areas so that students can benefit from the fresh air. They will also use the space imaginatively for outdoor learning. The Stanley Road site will include a series of outdoor spaces and sports facilities, including playing fields. All students at Beaumont Close will have daily access to a designated area of the local park at break-time, and a large room has been allocated for indoor play during the lunch break. The buildings and access points to the current grounds will be fully secure, and security arrangements are being carefully planned to meet requirements at the Stanley Road campus.

Provision of information

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations. The school has a website and is very committed to sharing particulars of policies and procedures with parents.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. There is an acceptable written complaints procedure in place which is being made available to parents.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

Is registration recommended?

YES. The school can be registered and allowed to open.

Recommended number of day pupils: 750

Recommended age range: 11–16 years

Recommended gender of pupils: mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: not applicable.