

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

School name	The St Marylebone CofE Bridge School
DfE registration number	213/7000
Unique reference number (URN)	139600
Inspection number	422420
Inspection dates	18 July 2013
Reporting inspector	David Scott

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 St Marylebone CofE Bridge School is a free school for pupils with special educational needs and will initially be located in the sixth form building of St Marylebone CofE School, a secondary academy for girls aged 11 to 18, which admits boys in the sixth form. The academy, which is affiliated to the Bridge free school, is a teaching school and a specialist college for performing arts, mathematics and special educational needs. While the Bridge pupils will have supervised access to the whole five-storey building, they will be based predominantly in the ground floor and basement areas; some minor refurbishment of the basement is required. It has begun and is due to be completed by the end of August. The school is not sponsored and is due to open on 6 September 2013. The school has applied to be registered to admit 84 boys and girls from age 11 to 19 who have speech, language and communication needs. It will admit students aged 11 to 12 in its first year. At present there are 12 students registered for enrolment, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs. In the long term, Key Stages 3 and 4 students will move to other premises within walking distance of the main school, and negotiations are currently underway to acquire the site of a former independent school for this purpose. Sixth form students will remain at the sixth form building. The school's mission 'aims to achieve the highest standards of effort, behaviour and commitment so that all pupils may realise their full potential. The Bridge School will create an environment in which our pupils can achieve their maximum potential, gain independence and social awareness so that they can, beyond school, enjoy and participate in the world of work and adult society along with their mainstream peers'

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 intended Christian ethos aims 'to develop students' character through exemplary behaviour, respect, care and compassion; instil a joy in learning; nurture creativity and individuality; recognise the importance of the spiritual, moral and cultural dimension of life; develop a healthy body and mind; build self-confidence and a strength of character and instil an awareness of faith and spirituality that connects the whole world.' These qualities will be at the heart of the planned personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) curriculum, where students will be encouraged to develop their 'sense of self-worth, learn how society

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

is organised and governed and appreciate what it means to be a positive member of a diverse society'.

The planned collective worship programme, across all faith and non-faith groups, is intended to provide all students with the opportunity to become responsible citizens by appreciating and respecting the diversity of various traditions and cultures globally and in the local community. The PSCHE programme is planned to develop an understanding of civil law, public institutions and services in England. The school will provide opportunities for students to contribute to activities in the local community, such as collecting food provisions for the local women's refuge and raising money for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. Social development will be further enhanced by allowing students to access the main school for assemblies, as well as receiving their information and communication technology, music and physical education lessons there. Extra-curricular activities will be integrated, where possible, with those undertaken by mainstream students. The policies for equal opportunities and PSCHE, together with the staff code of conduct, give guidance to ensure that planned lessons and activities will be free from partisan political or religious views and that, where any political issues are discussed, a balanced view is always presented.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Documentary evidence indicates that all regulations are likely to be met. The school has suitable policies in place for safeguarding children and child protection, first aid and medical procedures, recruitment and selection. All staff and governors have undergone suitable training in safer recruitment, safeguarding and child protection. In addition, four members of staff hold first-aid qualifications and there is a full-time qualified nurse, based in the main school.

Policies for health and safety, evacuation and planning for educational visits (off site) have been compiled. Risk assessments have been completed, including for fire safety and a visit from the fire department has been arranged. In the policy for positive behaviour, the 'Whole School Code of Conduct' section sets out an approach to guide staff, parents, carers and students in managing behaviour; it is based on praise and encouragement. Appropriate attendance and admission registers are available electronically and ready for use. The school has in place a three-year accessibility plan to review and improve equality of access for disabled students.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

All the required vetting checks on all appointed staff and members of the governing body are captured in a single central record that meets requirements. If the need arises, the school will employ supply staff and has appropriate procedures in place to conduct the checks on such staff.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

A tour of the site and scrutiny of the architect's plans confirm that the refurbishment of the site is likely to meet the regulations in readiness for opening in September. The five-storey sixth form building has already been refurbished. Some minor further refurbishment is planned for the basement, which along with the ground floor, will be the base for the Bridge provision. The Bridge students will have a separate entrance and reception area. Heating and lighting are likely to meet requirements. Orders for resources, furniture, fixtures and fittings have been placed (orders seen) to provide a learning environment rich in technology and suitable for students with speech, language and communication needs. The access policy details arrangements for disabled students to be admitted to the school. There will be a lift to all five floors with three washrooms for disabled users, located on the ground, first and third floors. A labelled supply of drinking water will be accessible to students. For lessons in physical education, the school will utilise the main school's showers and changing facilities. A suitable location has been identified for a medical room, with a hand basin, on the ground floor, with washrooms located nearby. The site has very limited outside space, but the school intends to use the playing facilities of a nearby primary school, together with a local park and Regents Park, for recreation and physical education. The school has appropriate risk assessments in place to ensure students will be safely chaperoned when walking to and from these venues.

Provision of information

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school is likely to meet all the regulations.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

Is registration recommended?

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

Recommended number of day pupils: 84

Recommended age range: 11–19

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: Speech, language and communication needs.

Note: The Department should obtain confirmation from the school before it opens that the planned building works have been completed.