

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of a free school

School name	ACE Tiverton Special School
DfE registration number	7009
Unique reference number (URN)	147064
Inspection number	10103171
Inspection dates	26 June 2019
Reporting inspector	Nathan Kemp



Information about the inspection

This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the Secretary of State for Education. It was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.¹

In carrying out this type of inspection, inspectors assess the extent to which the school is likely to meet 'The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014' when it opens.²

The inspector met with the headteacher, the director of school improvement and the director of performance. The inspector met with leaders to discuss their vision for the school and the pupils who stand to benefit. Leaders made clear their vision and values. The inspector visited the school site, accompanied by leaders and the site manager. The inspector considered a range of documentation, including policies, and approaches to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The inspector scrutinised the process of staff recruitment, including how leaders record this information on the school's single central record.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	70
Age range	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed

Context of the school

ACE Tiverton proposes to open in September 2019. The school will cater for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school will accommodate pupils with specific learning difficulties; behavioural, emotional and social development needs; communication and interaction need; speech, language and communication needs; and pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.

The school will eventually accommodate 70 pupils but will start with an initial intake of 35 pupils before increasing to 55 after its first year of operation. All pupils live within Devon, spread over the mid- to northern region of the county.

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

² www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/schedule/made. Part 1 to Schedule 1 is not reported against because it does not apply to academies, free schools, studio schools and UTCs.

Advice to the Secretary of State for Education

Overall outcome	The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens.
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Recommended number of day pupils	70
Recommended age range	11–16
Recommended gender of pupils	Mixed

Compliance with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. Leaders have placed pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the school's curriculum.

Curriculum plans are detailed and closely consider pupils' development in the following areas: living in the wider world, relationships, and health and well-being. These areas include opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the impact of racism, diversity, prejudice and discrimination.

Leaders have closely considered how to promote fundamental British values: through raising awareness of democracy, by establishing student leadership roles and recognising awareness days throughout the academic year to raise pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. The safeguarding policy reflects guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Leaders have an induction programme in place to ensure that staff will be able to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities and these will be revisited annually by way of refresher training. Leaders intend on making sure staff are confident to recognise potential concerns about pupils' welfare and passing them on to the designated leaders of safeguarding. All staff will complete level 2 child protection training to help them achieve this.

The behaviour policy makes clear how staff will recognise, and subsequently reward, pupils' positive behaviour. The behaviour policy is clear for all to understand, so there is no confusion about the use of reward or sanction. Leaders have planned weekly opportunities for all pupils to access a 'reward session'. They have three tiers of activities, under the headings of 'gold, silver and bronze', depending on how many points pupils accrue, and this will determine the level of reward. When behaviour falls below that expected, leaders will adopt the use of restorative practice by way of helping improve future behaviour based on a detailed analysis of any behaviours that have occurred, so pupils can develop strategies to prevent recurrence. The school's

anti-bullying strategy aligns closely with the behaviour policy, so expectations are clear.

The health and safety policy is reviewed and is currently up to date. Leaders are introducing an online method of tracking key maintenance activity, which will prevent key aspects such as fire equipment checks and water testing being overlooked. The policy also contains information on how leaders and staff will ensure that pupils are kept safe both on and off site by way of first aid. All staff will be first-aid trained, so are well placed to administer first aid, if needed. Leaders have clear plans in place to reduce risk and harm to pupils by way of a risk assessment policy. Risk assessments closely consider each pupil and the specific activity tasking place. Plans are detailed, and adequate steps are in place to prevent or minimise potential risks. Leaders have ensured that an adequate number of staff, across a range of roles, will be in post to allow pupils to be well supervised at school.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. The school's single central record is in place and includes information about staff from the school and staff from the wider trust team. All the necessary recruitment checks have either been completed or are due for completion, ensuring that leaders only appoint adults who are suitable to work with children. Personnel files, which capture the staff recruitment process in its entirety, show evidence of safer recruitment in place. References are sought and verified, matching those the applicant has placed on their application form. At interview, the panel probes candidates' awareness of safeguarding and child protection. These measures act as further deterrents to adults unsuitable to work with children from applying for a position in the school.

School leaders intend to occasionally use supply staff from known supply agencies, used frequently by other schools in the trust. The single central record includes a specific section dedicated to supply or agency staff.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. The premises are currently under construction, with the internal spaces ready for the fitting of lighting and electrical sockets. The premises are on course to be handed over to school leaders towards the end of August. The premises have many toilets, for the sole purpose of pupils, including some that are designed to be accessible for those with limited mobility. The premises also include a medical room, which is close to toileting facilities and has access to drinking water. While lighting has not yet been fitted, plans show extensive lighting, both internally and externally. The school also benefits from noise-reducing qualities, which prevents echoing and noise carrying through the school. Outside, adequate space is provided for pupils to engage in physical education and, during breaktimes, to be physically active.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all of the standards in this part. The school's website contains key information about the school, including contact details, and the names of the headteacher and representatives of the governing body. The website contains links to the school's policies. These policies closely consider the school's setting and the pupils it will provide education for. The website also contains details about the schools' approach to the curriculum offer.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all of the standards in this part. The school's complaints policy is detailed and makes clear the school's procedures that parents can follow should they have dissatisfaction about an aspect of the school that they feel warrants submitting a complaint. The policy makes clear the difference between an informal and formal complaint and the timescales involved for school leaders to provide a response. Should a parent choose to submit a formal complaint, the policy makes clear, at each stage, what will occur, and how findings will be shared with the parent at the end of this process.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. Leaders have a clear understanding of the independent school standards and are well placed to ensure that these are met. There are clear systems in place to check on the school's performance, including the formation of a governing body.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school has an appropriate equality policy. This policy meets the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The school's equality policy makes clear reference to the protected characteristics and outlines the school's approach to meeting the requirements as set out in the 2010 Equality Act. Leaders have set out plans to raise awareness of 'unconscious bias', so all members of the school community are treated equally, regardless of their individual characteristics.

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