

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

School name	Castle Mead Academy
DfE registration number	4009
Unique reference number (URN)	147068
Inspection number	10103148
Inspection dates	03/06/2019 to 03/06/2019
Reporting inspector	Deirdre Duignan



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 executive principal, the principal designate, the school's designated safeguarding lead, the chief executive officer of The Mead Educational Trust and the chair of the board of trustees. A range of documentation was considered, including the school's single central record, policies and documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, health and safety, fire safety and first aid. The inspector scrutinised the school's building plans.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of pupils	240 in first year, rising to 1200
Age range	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	All, excluding severe learning difficulties

Context of the school

The proposed free school is a new secondary academy located in the city of Leicester. The school's opening date has been brought forward to alleviate a shortage of places in the city. Consequently, the building is not yet complete and the school will be housed in temporary accommodation. The school will move to the new building in approximately two years' time. The school will be part of the Mead Academy Trust.

Advice to the Secretary of State for Education

Overall outcome	The school is likely to meet all the relevant independent school standards when it opens.
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¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/99.

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

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 of the regulations in relation to this part. Leaders plan to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the school's code of conduct, assemblies and the tutor programme. A plan for the assembly programme has been drawn up with links to events such as democracy day. Leaders intend to promote pupils' understanding of democracy further by developing a school council and staging mock elections.

Leaders plan to establish an inclusive ethos and culture that is intended to promote a culture of tolerance and respect among pupils. They have begun to plan opportunities for pupils to make a positive contribution to the community that the school is in, for example, through charity fundraising. Leaders intend that the school will be a 'coherent microcosm of [our] diverse city'. Their plans to develop pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures are appropriate.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations in relation to this part. Leaders have appointed a designated lead for safeguarding who has received appropriate training. The school's policy for safeguarding is thorough and detailed and provides appropriate guidance for staff should they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Leaders have begun to consider the risks that pupils may face.

The school has a comprehensive set of policies that cover all aspects of health and safety, including fire safety and first aid. An external company has carried out an initial check of fire safety and will re-visit once the building is complete. The plans of the building indicate where fire exits and fire equipment will be located. The staff to pupil ratio is appropriate. Leaders have begun to consider which areas of the premises may need additional supervision.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations in relation to this part. The single central record (SCR) is in place and meets current requirements. All staff have already been appointed to their posts and have been subject to the necessary checks. The SCR identifies who has carried out the checks and the date on which they were completed. Leaders have suitable arrangements in place with supply agencies to check the qualifications and suitability of any supply staff that the school may use.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations in relation to this part. The school's temporary buildings will consist of classrooms, recreation space and office accommodation. There is also a dining area that can be used for assemblies.

Classrooms are of a suitable size and appear to be well lit through natural lighting. It was not possible to test their acoustic properties, but leaders are confident that the contractors have taken suitable account of this requirement. The toilet facilities are adequate and the plans show where drinking water will be located.

The outdoor area makes for a suitable play space. Leaders have ordered play equipment such as table tennis tables to enhance the outside area. There is no space on the school grounds for physical education but there are suitable plans in place to use nearby sports facilities that are equipped with changing rooms and showers.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in relation to this part. Leaders have an understanding of the information that should be published on the school's website. The trust has a checklist of the information that is required to be on the school's website. Relevant policies are available to prospective parents and carers on the school's website. Leaders intend to publish information about the school's performance on the school's website. They plan to issue annual reports to parents containing information about their child's attainment and progress.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in relation to this part. The complaints policy is available to parents through the school's website. The policy meets the requirements in full. It sets out how leaders will tackle complaints on an informal and, if necessary, a formal basis. The policy contains timescales within which complaints should be resolved.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in relation to this part. Leaders have a clear vision for the school's success and have begun to lay the foundations necessary to achieve this. They demonstrate a clear moral purpose to improve the lives of young people in the city. They have appropriate plans in place to develop the quality of education, for example by ensuring that curriculum leaders work with colleagues from partner schools to develop the school's curriculum.

The school will be part of The Mead Educational Trust. There are appropriate processes in place to check on the school's performance and to hold school leaders to account for the quality of education. Leaders will have access to support from the trust, for example, through curriculum networks. The school will have a shared local governing body with its partner school, Rushey Mead Academy. Some responsibilities

will be delegated from the trustees to local governors. The governance arrangements appear to be well understood.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in relation to this part. The school's accessibility policy and plan are available on the website. Leaders have given thought to the needs of disabled pupils, ensuring that, for example, there are adequate disabled toilets and that these are conveniently located and well signposted. The spacious nature of the classrooms means that there is sufficient space for wheelchair users to move around.

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