

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of a 16–19 free school

School name	Dixons Sixth Form Academy
DfE registration number	380/4048
Unique reference number (URN)	143704
Inspection number	10103162
Inspection dates	26/06/2019
Reporting inspector	Debbie Redshaw



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(1) 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

During this inspection, the inspector held meetings with the principal designate and executive principal for the school. Meetings were also held with the chair of the governing body, an assistant principal and the operations manager. A tour of the proposed premises and a review of the site plans were carried out alongside the project manager and design manager for the new school. The single central record was checked. Policies were reviewed and evaluated, including those relating to safeguarding and health and safety.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a 16–19 free school for:

Number of day pupils	880
Age range	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Not applicable

Context of the school

It is proposed that Dixons Sixth Form Academy will be a large sixth form provision for pupils who have attended Dixons schools and for the wider community. The school will be the sole sixth-form provision for Dixons McMillan, Dixons City, Dixons Trinity and Dixons Kings.

The school, in the first year of operation, intends to take up to 440 Year 12 students. In the second year, the school intends to take up to 880 students. The building is intended to open in three phases. The first phase is to open the basement, ground and first floor of the building, with the sports facilities opening later in the year. There is an additional temporary block that will be available for students to use, situated in one of the three car parks. Sports facilities will be shared with other trust

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.

schools in the first instance until the brand-new, purpose-built sports hall and changing accommodation is open.

Students will select from 22 A-level courses and 5 vocational courses in line with their career aspirations.

The trust's mission is to tackle educational disadvantage in the north of England. The school's values will be integrity, curiosity and leadership, in line with the trust values. The trust intends that the school effectively prepares students for their career aspirations and for entry to Russell Group universities.

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, provided that it addresses the regulations noted in the tables set out in parts 3 and 5.
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Compliance with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

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

School leaders have really thought hard about ensuring that students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is a priority. Through careful curriculum planning, for example working with heads of department to identify where their subject areas will develop students' SMSC, leaders are aware of where this will be developed. In addition, there is a comprehensive programme of personal development studies which covers all areas required by this part of the standards. It is designed in line with the school's mission to overcome educational disadvantage. This aspect of the school is likely to be a strength.

If implemented, these standards are likely to be met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part provided that it addresses the regulations set out in the table below.

The safeguarding policy is detailed and comprehensive. It is in line with the latest guidance from the government. Safeguarding leads have considered the additional vulnerabilities of sixth-form students and will incorporate these into whole staff training. Policies relating to health and safety, anti-bullying, behaviour and first aid are appropriate, and leaders have plans to ensure that they are successfully implemented. Regular checks are planned to ensure fire safety and that pupils are safe in the building. Students will be supervised during social times through a duty rota that will be in place. Students will be able to leave the premises at lunch time. An electronic signing in system will be in place to maintain accurate records of who is on the school site. Example risk assessments were shared and these appropriately identify risks and actions to minimise the risk of harm. However, the school does not have a risk assessment policy in place currently. This is something that the trust is in the process of standardising to be ready for September 2019

An appropriate admissions register is in place that meets legal requirements. Attendance will be recorded electronically, using the same system that is in place across other schools in the trust.

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

Ensure that a written risk assessment policy is in place.	16, 16(a)
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Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school has in place a single central register that details all of the checks that are required to ensure that adults are appropriate to work with students, who carried out the check and when it was carried out. Recruitment files show that a diligent safer

recruitment process is in place. Leaders are knowledgeable about safer recruitment practices. Files are very well organised. Appropriate checks have taken place on the trust, governors and school leaders. Checks, such as medical checks, are carried out prior to the person's appointment.

These standards are likely to be met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements in this part provided that it addresses the regulations set out in the table below.

The premises are a renovation of a grade II listed building. Work has been underway since November 2018. The building is planned to be ready in three phases, the first of which covers the basement, ground floor and first floor for the first cohort of students to start in September 2019. The building is not yet ready. From the site tour and the plans, the building is likely to meet the standards, providing that the building is completed to the standards and specifications discussed at this inspection.

The building will have 49 toilets for students to use. These will be single or double self-contained units with handwashing facilities with hot and cold water. Each sink will have its own heater and thermostat to ensure that water does not pose a scalding risk. This will be checked regularly during health and safety checks carried out by site staff. They will be separate to staff toilets. Suitable changing accommodation is being built and will have 9 showers available for students to use. This part of the building is planned to be ready in phase II (March 2020). In the meantime, there are appropriate arrangements in place for the use of sports and changing facilities in other local trust schools.

An appropriate space has been identified for the medical room. It will contain a shower, toilet and sink. There will be a bed for medical examination of pupils who are unwell or who require first aid. There will be a lockable medicine cabinet, first-aid kit and a fridge for the storage of medicines. The school does not intend to cater for pupils with complex medical needs.

Classrooms are bright with light from outside and will have appropriate internal lighting. Acoustic rafts are in place and continue to be installed in other parts of the school to ensure good sound quality in classrooms. External lighting is planned to be attached to the building and on poles around the car parks. This will provide sufficient lighting for safe entry to and exit from the school site.

There are plans for two drinking fountains to be available on each floor and one in the basement of the school. This will be clearly labelled as drinking water.

A purpose-built sports facility is being constructed. This will provide suitable indoor space for students to have physical education (PE). For outdoor PE, students will use facilities, such as AstroTurf, at other academies in the trust. There are plans for a grassed area at the front of the school and seating close to the school building for

students to have access to outside space to socialise. Students will also be permitted to leave the school site at lunchtime.

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

Ensure that the toilets and changing accommodation and showers are completed in line with plans presented during the inspection.	23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c)
Ensure that the medical room is completed in line with the plans presented during the inspection.	24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b)
Once the building is fully completed, ensure that the health and safety policy is personalised to the site.	25
Ensure that the acoustic rafts, internal lighting and external lighting continue to be installed in line with the plans presented during the inspection.	26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)
Ensure that the water is clearly marked for drinking once the water fountains are installed and ensure that temperature regulators are functional on the sinks and that toilets and sinks have adequate water supplies.	28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d)
Make good the outside area so that there is appropriate space for pupils to socialise.	29(1), 29(1)(b)

Part 6. Provision of information

Leaders intend that all information listed in this part is made available to parents and carers on the school website. There is a parents' handbook that is given in hardcopy to all parents when their child joins the school. This handbook contains information about the policies, including the safeguarding policy, that are available and how they can be accessed, either on the school website or from the office.

The school will ensure that students who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan are appropriately supported and that regular reviews are in place to monitor their academic progress and progress against targets in the EHC plan. The school has appointed a special educational needs coordinator to start in September 2019.

These standards are likely to be met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Leaders have in place a complaints policy that meets the requirements of this part of the standards. These standards are likely to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The leadership team, local governing body and trustees of the multi-academy trust have a wealth of experience appropriate to ensuring that the school is well-led and managed. The principal and two of the assistant principals have leadership

experience in sixth forms. Leaders are in constant communication with the construction team and are ensuring that the building is meeting deadlines.

These standards are likely to be met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

Leaders have a full understanding of the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. When the building is complete, leaders intend to commission the local authority to carry out an accessibility audit. Following this, an accessibility plan will be produced.

This standard is likely to be met.

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