

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

School name	Pix Brook Academy
DfE registration number	823/4012
Unique reference number (URN)	147081
Inspection number	10103203
Inspection dates	11/06/2019
Reporting inspector	Jason Howard HMI



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

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	53 on opening rising to 1260 when full
Age range	9–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	N/A

Context of the school

Pix Brook Academy is a free school for pupils of between nine and 16 years of age. The academy will cater, initially, for 53 Year 5 pupils when it opens in September 2019. It has a planned admission number of 180 pupils per year group; when the school is full it is anticipated that 1260 pupils will be on roll. The school is being built in response to demographic pressures and significant new housing construction in the local community.

The school will initially operate from a purpose-built but temporary building on the grounds of Etonbury Academy in Stotfold. It is anticipated that construction of the school's permanent premises, on a site very close to Etonbury Academy, will be completed by September 2020.

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/schedule/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. The school's policies indicate a strong commitment to the promotion of fundamental British values, and an understanding of the evolution and importance of Britain's democratic institutions. Pupils will develop their understanding of the democratic process through electing members of the school council. Pupils will take up leadership positions as prefects, peer mediators and members of the healthy schools team, for example. There will be ample opportunities for pupils to develop mutual respect for those of other beliefs and traditions, including through the taught curriculum and the assembly programme. Pupils will regularly engage with and discuss national and international current affairs issues and be taught how to critically evaluate different sources of information about these. Some aspects of provision will be distinctive and promote social inclusion; all pupils will be taught sign language, for example.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant standards. The new school will benefit from the use of clear, comprehensive and statutorily-compliant policies and procedures that are already being used by other schools within the multi-academy trust, Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST). Existing policies, alongside other evidence, indicate that health and safety (including behaviour, fire safety, first aid, risk assessment and safeguarding) will be secure and comply with guidance. Members of the BEST central team complete regular fire audits, fire risk assessments and safeguarding audits. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have significant experience of ensuring secure provision in this regard. Appropriate systems are in place for recording and responding to safeguarding concerns. The school's behaviour policy is clear and comprehensive. It sets out appropriate procedures for promoting and rewarding positive conduct and tackling unacceptable behaviour.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant standards. The single central record template, which is used within other BEST schools, indicates that all of the required pre-employment checks will be made, including those required for governors.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations. The school's purpose-built temporary premises are being constructed on the site of Etonbury Academy. It is anticipated that these will be ready to admit the school's first cohort of pupils in September 2019. The structure is a permanent one and the buildings will be given over to Etonbury Academy once the school moves in to its permanent premises nearby. The design for the school's permanent site and buildings has been approved

by the Department for Education. Building works are anticipated to be completed by September 2020.

The building plans for both the permanent building and for the school's temporary facilities indicate that the premises will meet all current requirements including, for example, provision for toileting, first-aid and medical facilities. The plots on which both the temporary and permanent accommodation are situated provide ample space for play and to enable the requirements of the physical education curriculum to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements. All of the required policies are in place and will be made available to parents. The school's website is under construction and will include up-to-date policies and other information. Copies of these policies will be made available on request.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant standards. The complaints policy contains all of the formal and informal steps required. Timelines and procedures for the efficient and appropriate handling of any complaints are clearly stated within it. The policy will appear on the school's website.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements. The multi-academy trust has experience of running local schools. Leaders, including the principal, have significant educational experience and a successful track-record in improving outcomes for pupils. Leaders have a good understanding of the regulatory requirements, having already fulfilled them successfully at other schools. They have the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure that established policies provide strongly for the health, safety and welfare of pupils.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements. The school's policies make clear how different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, will be supported, and how their progress and well-being will be monitored. Both the school's temporary and permanent premises will provide ease of access to those who use wheelchairs.

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