

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

School name	River Mill Primary School
DfE registration number	886/2112
Unique reference number (URN)	147083
Inspection number	10103206
Inspection dates	5 June 2019
Reporting inspector	Clive Close, Her Majesty's Inspector



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 reviewed plans for the permanent site, scrutinised information available on the school's website and reviewed a range of policies, documents and procedures. He held discussions with the chief operating officer of the multi-academy trust, the headteacher and the proposed school's project manager.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	446 (including 26 Nursery places)
Age range	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Not applicable

Context of the school

River Mill Primary School is scheduled to open in September 2019. Initially, the school will open with up to 30 children in Reception and up to 30 pupils in Year 1. It is proposed that the school will expand year on year to become a two-form-entry primary school over time. There are also plans to open a nursery on the same site as accommodation becomes available.

In the first instance, the school will operate from a temporary building while the new school is being built on the same site in Dartford, Kent. At the time of the pre-registration inspection, the temporary building was not in place. However, detailed plans of both the temporary and proposed school building were available for the inspector to review. Work to build the new school is due to begin soon, with a projected opening in May 2020, at which stage, the temporary building will be removed.

River Mill Primary School will be part of the Connect Schools Academy Trust. The trust currently consists of four schools and four pre-schools.

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.

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	446 (including 26 Nursery places)
Recommended age range	3 to 11
Recommended gender of pupils	Mixed
Recommended type of special educational needs	N/A

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 relevant standards in this part. Leaders articulate a clear vision for the ethos and values of the proposed school. Pupils will benefit from experiences generated through the school's planned curriculum, which is designed to provide opportunities for pupils to learn about the cultures, faiths and beliefs of others, as well as promoting values such as tolerance and respect.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant standards in this part. Appropriate policies are already in place. The safeguarding of pupils is considered the highest priority by leaders. Plans are in place for staff to be trained at a level commensurate to their levels of responsibility. This includes appropriate first-aid training. Key leaders and trustees have already undertaken safer recruitment training.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant standards in this part. All relevant checks have been carried out on staff already employed by the school. This includes the headteacher as well as trustees. The single central record of staff checks is fully in place, is maintained well and complies with current guidance.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant standards in this part. At the time of the pre-registration inspection, it was not possible to view the school's proposed premises. A temporary building is about to be erected and will be used for Reception and Year 1 until the main school building is ready. Plans for both temporary and new-build schools show rooms of appropriate size, with adequate office space and storage. The outside learning environment has been carefully considered by leaders. Careful consideration has been given to how the site will be accessed in the initial phase of building work. This includes ensuring the safety of pupils, staff and visitors.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant standards in this part. The school's website is in place and contains appropriate information, including a safeguarding policy which takes into account current guidance. A further good range of documentation, including policies or information about the work of the trust, are already contained on the website.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant standards in this part. A suitable complaints policy is already in place and published on the school's website. Leaders fully understand all requirements of this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant standards in this part. Leaders and managers, including members of the trust, have appropriate experience in school leadership. Although the proposed new school will stand alone, much of the documentation, systems and processes are based on the trust's other successful primary-phase schools. Consequently, leaders have an excellent understanding of the requirements considered during the pre-registration inspection and Her Majesty's Inspector had no concerns at any stage.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The proposed school is likely to meet the requirements of schedule 10. Relevant policies are in place, as is an accessibility plan.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The proposed school is likely to meet all of the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage. An experienced teacher has already been recruited to lead the early years. There are plans to recruit suitably qualified and experienced support staff in the coming weeks. Systems and procedures are being developed to ensure that children will be safe and thrive in the early years. This includes in the temporary building that will be used before the main school building is open. The school will eventually have a Nursery Year, which will open when the new building is complete.

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