

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

School name	The Avenue
DfE registration number	304/7001
Unique reference number (URN)	143731
Inspection number	10103231
Inspection dates	13 June 2019
Reporting inspector	Sarah Murphy-Dutton, 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

The inspector met with the chief executive officer of the academy trust and the headteacher designate. The inspector undertook a tour of the temporary site and looked at architect's plans for the permanent premises. The inspector checked a range of policies and documentation, including those related to safeguarding, behaviour and health and safety. The inspector also checked the complaints policy and the school's website.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	104 pupils, initially 28 pupils in September
Age range	4 to 19, initially 5 to 11 in September
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Autistic spectrum disorder

Context of the school

The new provision is an all-through special school within the Brent Specialist Academy Trust (BSAT). The school will provide education for pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), primarily linked to a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils admitted will have an education, health and care plan.

The school will open in September 2019. Initially, the school will be located at a temporary site in Aylestone Avenue, NW6 and admit 28 pupils, aged five to 11. The school plans to move to purpose-built permanent premises in September 2021. Once this move is complete, the school intends to admit pupils aged from four to 19, including up to eight children in one Reception class. The final capacity of the school will be 104 pupils.

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 relevant independent school standards when it opens.
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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 this part. The school's motto of 'love, learn and laugh' will underpin its approach to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Policies give emphasis to making sure pupils can express their needs and wishes and learn to take account of the views of others. This includes plans for a school council so that pupils can contribute to decisions about school life.

The proposed programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education covers a range of suitable topics to help pupils develop the knowledge and attitudes they need for life in modern Britain. For instance, pupils will learn about forming positive relationships, caring for the environment and managing their own finances. The programme also provides ample opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of difference, such as learning about other faiths and cultures. A range of trips, both in the local area and further afield, will enhance the opportunities available in school. In designing the PSHE programme, leaders have given appropriate emphasis to making sure pupils are taught about safeguarding issues and how to make safe and sensible choices, both in and out of school.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. Comprehensive policies are already in place. Leaders articulate clearly how they intend to make sure these policies are implemented effectively, based on their extensive experience at other schools within the academy trust. Regular training for staff, together with close partnerships with families, will be at the heart of the school's approach to creating a culture of safeguarding.

High adult-to-pupil staffing ratios are likely to ensure that pupils are supervised appropriately. Suitable procedures are in place to cater for pupils' medical and first-aid needs. Health and safety policies, supported by detailed risk assessments, outline how leaders will ensure that the premises are well maintained and any risks to pupils' welfare are minimised, including on educational visits. The school's approach to promoting high standards of behaviour takes account of pupils' complex needs. Pupils will benefit from bespoke programmes of support with the aim of helping them to communicate their feelings and make positive choices. Staff will receive suitable training so that they have the necessary skills to implement the policies consistently. Leaders intend to check the impact of any extra help pupils receive carefully. In this respect, leaders have devised appropriate systems to record and evaluate any incidents of poor behaviour, including bullying.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant regulations in this part. Policies and documentation indicate that leaders will appoint staff in accordance with the most recent statutory guidance. The single central record contains all the required information on pre-employment checks on adults, including trustees and staff employed on a temporary basis.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all of the standards. The classrooms at the temporary premises are bright, airy and spacious. Plans show that two further classrooms will be added over the summer holidays. This is likely to ensure that the temporary site can accommodate the number of pupils the school plans to admit in September 2019. The temporary site is likely to meet all requirements with regard to fire safety, toilet facilities, drinking water and pupils' first-aid and medical needs. It also offers secure outside spaces for play and the teaching of physical education (PE).

Plans for the permanent site are well advanced. Leaders have been involved closely in the design of the building so that it is likely to meet all requirements. As well as suitable classroom spaces, pupils will have access to areas specifically designed for therapeutic provision as well as the teaching of art, music and science. The new premises will have extensive outdoor grounds, with sensory areas and space for gardening and sports activities.

Part 6. Provision of information

All requirements in this part are likely to be met. Leaders plan to use a range of appropriate strategies to keep parents and carers well informed about their children's education. Documentation seen indicates that parents will receive regular updates on their children's progress and achievements, including detailed written reports on a termly and annual basis. The website is already operational and contains all the required policies. This includes an up-to-date safeguarding policy. Leaders will ensure that copies of policies are available on request.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all of the standards in this part. The complaints policy is detailed and clear. It sets out the steps parents can take if they are dissatisfied with the school's work and how leaders will respond. A copy of the policy is published on the school's website.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant requirements of the independent school standards. Through their work at the BSAT multi-academy trust, leaders have gained considerable expertise in providing high-quality education for pupils with complex SEND. Leaders have drawn effectively on their experience to make sure that policies and procedures are likely to promote pupils' well-being, safety and personal

development. Leaders have an in-depth understanding of the regulations. They are clear about how they intend to evaluate their work so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements. The equalities policy and accessibility plan contain clear aims and objectives, with the intention of tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. This includes ensuring that all pupils, irrespective of their needs, can access the curriculum fully. Plans for the permanent site include the provision of lifts and accessible toilet facilities. Leaders have also made sure that designs for lighting and acoustics take account of the needs of pupils and adults with SEND.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The school does not propose to open its early years department until September 2021, once the permanent site is complete. Documentation indicates that the school is likely to comply with all the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage. Leaders intend to appoint suitably qualified staff and make sure that children access all areas of the early years curriculum.

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