

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

School name	The Springboard Project
DfE registration number	7003
Unique reference number (URN)	145922
Inspection number	10085156
Inspection dates	06/06/2019 to 06/06/2019
Reporting inspector	Emma Gregory



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 held discussions with the headteacher and deputy headteacher of the new school. She also spoke with the chief executive officer (CEO) of the New Bridge multi-academy trust (MAT). The inspector spoke with other members of staff from the New Bridge MAT, including the director of equality and diversity and two assistant CEOs, including a member of staff with responsibility for maintaining the school's single central record of pre-employment checks. The inspector scrutinised school documentation, including several school policies and relevant information.

The inspector reviewed the plans of the new school building. She toured the new school site accompanied by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, an assistant CEO from the New Bridge MAT and the contractor's site manager.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	50
Age range	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	SEMH

Context of the school

The new school is a special school for pupils aged between 14 and 19 years who have social, emotional and mental-health (SEMH) needs. The new school will be housed in a refurbished, bespoke building that caters for the needs of pupils with SEMH needs. This building is in the centre of Oldham. The school is planned to open in September 2019. It will initially have 37 pupils aged between 14 and 18 years, unless this number increases before September 2019.

The New Bridge MAT is already delivering successful education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) at three other schools. These are New Bridge School, Hollingwood Academy and Hawthorns School. The fourth school in the

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.

New Bridge MAT is Spring Brook Academy. This school has not been inspected by Ofsted since it joined the New Bridge MAT in December 2016.

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	50
Recommended age range	14–19
Recommended gender of pupils	Mixed
Recommended type of special educational needs	SEMH

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 curriculum will focus on building pupils' confidence, independence and self-esteem. It will also prepare pupils for the next stage of their education or employment through a range of initiatives, including opportunities to volunteer in the local community. Leaders have designed the curriculum to meet the individual needs of each pupil. The curriculum will ensure that pupils can develop their awareness of values, such as respect and tolerance for religions and ethnic groups different to their own. Within the curriculum, there will also be opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Leaders and trust representatives have used their extensive knowledge and experience of the local context to ensure that these aspects of the curriculum are appropriate.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations in this part. The school's policies and procedures are based on those used in other schools in the New Bridge MAT. Leaders ensure that policies and procedures are specific to the school. There are already systems in place to ensure that all staff access relevant safeguarding training. The new building is being built to meet all current safety requirements and will cater for the needs of those pupils who attend the school.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations in this part. All required details for members of staff who work in schools within the New Bridge MAT are recorded on each school's single central record. Systems for checking the suitability of staff, governors and trustees are thorough. Initially, the school does not intend to use supply teachers. Leaders understand the checks that must be carried out and the steps they must take if the use of supply teachers becomes necessary.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations in this part. Although the premises are currently unfinished, building work is currently on schedule. The refurbished building is scheduled to complete on 22 August 2019. Building contractors, trust representatives and school leaders are confident that this deadline will be met. The buildings are planned to meet all current building regulations. Aspects such as acoustics, lighting, medical facilities and suitable toilet facilities have been considered. The school site offers limited outdoor space for pupils. Leaders will ensure that all arrangements are in place for pupils to access enough outdoor space. Leaders have also made suitable arrangements to cater for pupils' physical

education. For instance, pupils will make use of facilities at the local sports centre as part of the physical education curriculum.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations in this part. School policies and procedures are based on those already in place elsewhere in the New Bridge MAT. These have been tailored to match the circumstances of the new school and the needs of pupils with SEMH. Many of the required policies are available already for parents and carers on the school's website.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations in this part. The complaints policy sets out clear stages and timelines to allow the school to respond appropriately to complaints. The school complaints policy requires a minor amendment to ensure that it meets up-to-date legislation.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations in this part. Leaders are building on the successful work of other schools in the New Bridge MAT. There are clear and detailed policies to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Leaders have the knowledge to ensure that the relevant independent school standards will be consistently met.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements. The building has been designed to be fully accessible for people with disabilities. Leaders regularly review policies and plans to ensure that all pupils can participate fully in the curriculum. School policies pay proper regard to the different protected characteristics.

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