

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

School name	The Swan School
DfE registration number	931/4016
Unique reference number (URN)	147203
Inspection number	10103166
Inspection dates	17 June 2019
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Moles



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	1,260
Age range	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Not applicable

Context of the school

The Swan School plans to open as a free school in September 2019. Initially, it intends accommodating 120 pupils in Year 7. Over time, it will expand to include a maximum of 1,260 pupils aged 11 to 18 years, with 120 pupils in each year group. The school will become part of the River Learning multi-academy trust. This is the first new school that the trust has sought to open.

Initially, the school will be in temporary accommodation, in a segregated part of the grounds of another school within the trust. Leaders anticipate moving to partial occupation of the school's permanent site in September 2020, with a view to being fully operational on that site by January 2021. Planning permission is in place for the temporary accommodation to be in place for two years if necessary. Initial building work has started on the school's permanent site.

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 this part of the independent school standards. Leaders' vision for developing pupils' learning beyond the academic curriculum is based securely on the school's core values of ambition, dedication, kindness and integrity. Well-considered plans are in place to ensure that this ethos is established clearly at the start of the academic year, engaging staff and pupils equally. Initial work is already involving staff in thinking carefully about how pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development will be achieved through the taught pastoral curriculum, as well as through relevant academic learning.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant requirements in relation to this part of the independent school standards. Relevant outline policies support the trust's effective approach to aspects such as health and safety, risk assessment and the implementation of first aid. The headteacher and colleagues from the trust have rigorous and timely plans that show convincingly how these policies will evolve and be personalised to the school once the temporary buildings are in place. Safeguarding arrangements, including training, reporting systems and plans for teaching through the curriculum reflect a thoughtful and pupil-centred approach.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet the regulations surrounding this part of the independent school standards. All staff have now been recruited in anticipation of opening in September. The single central record shows that all appropriate checks have been made and recorded in relation both to staff and to the steering group that currently represents governance. Leaders are mindful that information relating to governors will need to be updated as governance arrangements transition to having a local governing body in place during the first term of the school's operation.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards. At the time of this inspection, the temporary site is in the early stages of construction, with modular buildings due to arrive imminently. Plans show that due consideration has been given to ensuring that the premises are suitably secure and meet requirements, including for teaching, toilets and the administration of first aid. Additionally, a building already on the site will be refurbished to provide appropriate assembly and dining facilities, and physical education (PE) changing spaces, for the school's exclusive use. While there is much to do in order for facilities to be ready by September, the trust is overseeing this development work effectively and its plans to complete building and renovation work in a timely way appear realistic. The school

will benefit from access to extensive playing fields while on the temporary site and leaders have appropriate plans for managing short-term limits around indoor PE space and specialist facilities for teaching subjects such as art and design technology.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant requirements in relation to this part of the independent school standards. A live website already provides prospective pupils and their parents with useful initial information about the school. Behind the scenes, an updated version of this website is evolving, with leaders demonstrating clarity about the information that they are required and/or recommended to publish. Leaders have produced a helpful 'family handbook' which is being shared with parents of pupils who have accepted a place at the school in September. These developments are helping to keep pupils and their families informed about expectations and arrangements for joining the school in September, as well as fulfilling the requirements for the information that leaders are required to make available to them.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet the regulations surrounding this part of the independent school standards. The trust's complaints policy has been adopted in full, and is clear and appropriate. The headteacher demonstrates a determination to work openly with parents, starting with enrolment interviews that will emphasise the school's expectations and form initial lines of communication between home and school. Useful systems look likely to help teachers and leaders to keep parents well informed about their children's progress.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet this part of the independent school standards. The trust has well-established structures for monitoring school standards, which will be adopted fully. These will provide routine opportunities for school leaders to be challenged about the impact of their work, lending support appropriately where it is needed. Trust leaders have taken sensible steps to ensure that they are suitably informed about the risks associated with opening a brand new school, as well as the opportunities, which is supporting their work successfully.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant regulations in relation to this part of the independent school standards. The headteacher demonstrates a considered approach to anticipating the school's likely priorities for promoting equality. This is supported successfully by the trust's work to ensure that arrangements to promote equality are suitable.

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