

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

School name	Addington Valley Academy
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	306/7002
Unique reference number (URN)	147874
Inspection number	10148390
Inspection dates	22/06/2020 to 25/06/2020
Reporting inspector	Stephanie Innes-Taylor HMI



Information about the inspection

This inspection was carried out 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 inspection was carried out during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As a result, we could not visit the school site or meet with the proposer in person. The inspector held telephone discussions with the principal, the chief executive officer of the trust and the chair of the governing board. The inspector viewed a virtual tour of the temporary site that the school will use until the permanent site opens in 2021. The inspector reviewed a range of policies and procedures provided by the proposer and scrutinised information available on the school's website. Using the available information, the inspector is able to give sufficient assurance that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	150 (initially 20 on opening)
Age range	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Autistic spectrum disorder

Context of the school

The new provision is a special school within the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust. The trust consists of special schools. The proposed school intends to work closely with the trust's existing schools to share expertise, resources and good practice.

The school will open in September 2020. Initially, this will be for 20 Year 7 pupils.

During the first year of opening, the school will be located at a temporary site. The school will move to a new, permanent site in September 2021. The temporary building has been designed with careful consideration to the needs of the pupils who will attend the school. Until recently, the building was used as a special school and

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.

is, therefore, fit for purpose. The building is due to be refurbished to ensure that it meets the independent school standards in full, as well as the needs of the pupils who will attend. The school offers provision with specialist facilities, such as a sensory room, hygiene rooms and therapy room.

The school will not admit children into the early years until it moves to its new site in September 2021. Post-16 provision will be offered from 2023.

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, provided that it addresses the regulations noted in the tables set out in parts 3 and 5.
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Compliance with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students

The proposed school is likely to meet all the regulations in relation to this part. The school's inclusive ethos is threaded throughout the school's policies and highlighted in the school's values. There is a comprehensive plan in place to teach pupils about the world around them. The policy for equality and diversity identifies protected characteristics. It outlines expectations for staff and pupils and explains how pupils will be supported. Policies clearly promote the importance of British values. Provision in this area is likely to be strong if policies are implemented as planned.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The proposed school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations in this part. Necessary policies are in place. They provide comprehensive evidence that the school is likely to comply with guidance. The details included in these documents indicate that health and safety (including fire safety), first aid and assessments of risk and of behaviour are high priority for leaders of the school. Practices and procedures are clearly stated. The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy. Safeguarding advice and management are up to date with the latest statutory guidance, including with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are rigorous and include relevant strategies for addressing any issues. However, the inspector is only able to provide limited assurance about the implementation of health and safety policies because the site is about to undergo refurbishment. For example, leaders were not able to demonstrate full compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 because they have not so far been able to address the actions identified in the recent fire risk assessment. Additionally, the building does not yet have hot water supplied for washing facilities.

In order to meet the requirements in full, the school should:

comply with relevant health and safety laws by implementing the health and safety policy effectively	paragraph 11
ensure that, when refurbishment work is complete, the school is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.	paragraph 12

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The proposed school is likely to meet all of regulations for this part. The single central register is in place. This details the required checks that have been made, by whom and when. Checks are recorded on the system for staff, trustees and members of the governing board. Leaders of the trust regularly monitor the record of checks to make sure that statutory guidance is followed closely.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations in this part. Leaders' plans and procedures are comprehensive. Nevertheless, the inspector is only able to provide limited assurance about some aspects of the premises. The virtual tour showed that there is no hot water supplied to the site currently. There are no drinking water facilities installed and toilet facilities are inappropriate to the age of pupils. Leaders' plans indicate that the refurbishment aims to address these areas and the standards are likely to be met. For example, pupils will be encouraged to use bottled water and toilet facilities are planned to be replaced to suit the age of pupils. Evidence relating to the premises shows good-quality provision is in place. Further facilities are planned as part of the refurbishment to meet the needs of pupils.

In order to meet the requirements in full, the school should:

ensure that the building is maintained to a standard so that the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured	paragraph 25
provide suitable drinking water facilities	paragraph 28(1)(a)
provide washing facilities with an adequate supply of hot and cold water	paragraph 28(1)(b)
ensure that water suitable for drinking is clearly labelled as such	paragraph 28(1)(c)
ensure that the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.	paragraph 28(1)(d)

Part 6. Provision of information

The proposed school is likely to meet all the regulations in this part. The school has a comprehensive website in place. The website is up to date and compliant with guidance for what academies should publish on their website. All required policies are in place and are available to parents, including the safeguarding policy.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The proposed school is likely to meet all the regulations in this part. The complaints policy, which is also the trust's policy, is appropriate to the context of the school. It contains comprehensive information that clearly sets out the procedure to be followed and the timescales involved. The policy is published on the school's website.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the regulations in this part. Senior leaders articulate a clear and passionate vision for the inclusive and high-quality provision they want this school to provide for pupils. The principal is an experienced leader

and headteacher. He possesses extensive knowledge and expertise in the field of special educational needs provision. Leaders of the trust have ensured that senior leaders, members of the governing board and trustees have relevant knowledge and skills to provide strong leadership and management to the school. Trustees have a good understanding of the regulatory requirements. They have provided policies that give strong guidance for the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Leaders have concise plans in place to monitor all aspects of the school so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The proposed school is likely to meet all of the regulations in this schedule. The school is designed to be inclusive. Features such as ramps and wheelchair accessible doors and corridors make facilities accessible for disabled pupils.

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

All the statutory requirements for the early years are likely to be met. The school does not intend to admit children to the early years until it moves to the new site. The trust has appropriate expertise and staff to ensure that the proposed school will provide for the safety, health and welfare of children. The trust's plans evidence that experienced staff who are suitably qualified will be appointed. Whole-school policies and procedures consider the needs of early years children and meet requirements.

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