

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

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School name	Norton Hill Primary School
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	800/2002
Unique reference number (URN)	143915
Inspection number	10148502
Inspection dates	18/05/2020 to 10/06/2020
Reporting inspector	Tracy Hannon 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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 executive headteacher (who is also the designated safeguarding lead), the headteacher, representatives of the trust's central team (including the chief executive officer (CEO)) and governance representatives. The inspector viewed a virtual tour of the permanent school site, reviewed the architect's plans for the permanent site, scrutinised information available on the school's website and reviewed a range of policies and procedures. 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:

<b>Number of day pupils</b>	630
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Type of special educational needs</b>	Not applicable

## Context of the school

The Midsomer Norton Partnership Trust has 25 schools: 17 primary schools, seven secondary schools and one all-through special school. It has a strong record of school improvement, including sponsoring inadequate schools that have recovered to become good. As part of the trust, the new school will have access to a range of high-quality leadership and management expertise.

Norton Hill Primary School is aimed at meeting the needs of a growing community in Midsomer Norton. Construction has started but it is likely that the permanent school site will not be ready for occupation until November 2020. The school will initially be

<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/99](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/99).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/schedule/made](http://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.

located in temporary accommodation in a self-contained part of Longvernal School, which is under two miles from the proposed site. Current arrangements suggest that pupils will move to the new site when construction is completed in November. The school's initial intake will be for 22 Reception-aged children. Leaders are anticipating significant growth over the next few years, and will be admitting pupils from other year groups in addition to Reception-aged pupils. The final capacity of the school will be 630 pupils across the primary age range.

## **Advice to the Secretary of State for Education**

<b>Overall outcome</b>	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 proposed school is likely to meet the standards for this part. Leaders have placed a strong emphasis on their aims for an inclusive school which values diversity. They have considered how they will teach pupils about the protected characteristics, including through resources and books that will be chosen to champion equality. Plans to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are comprehensive. Leaders have also thought of a wide range of complementary strategies aimed at supporting pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. For example, leaders have planned for pupils to participate in an elected school council. Provision in relation to this part is likely to be strong.

### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Well-established, trust-wide policies are being adapted to suit the new school. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies promote good behaviour. Leaders have thought carefully about ensuring that policies and practice will meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Safeguarding policies are comprehensive and are in line with the latest guidance from the Secretary of State. Leaders are clear about the local risks for pupils. First-aid training and training in fire procedures are planned for staff. Staff will be trained in how to implement these policies and procedures effectively so that there is a positive climate and culture for learning. Leaders' plans form a strong basis for staff to ensure pupils' well-being and safety.

### **Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

Leaders have a comprehensive recruitment policy in place, which shows their intention to adhere to safer recruitment guidance from the Secretary of State. The single central register is in place and shows appropriate pre-employment checks have been carried out for all staff appointed to date. The headteacher has had safer recruitment training and is able to demonstrate convincingly that safer recruitment practices are being used when recruiting staff. There has been proper consideration given to how the safety of pupils will be ensured when allowing visitors on site.

### **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

The proposed school is likely to meet the requirements for this part. Construction is well under way and contractors are confident that the school will be ready for occupation in November 2020 at the latest. Central trust staff are working very closely with the construction company to ensure that the building meets requirements.

The detailed plans were scrutinised, and will include provision for external lighting and drinking water and acoustic conditions. There will be a lift to aid accessibility for those with physical disabilities. The outdoor space is extensive and includes a grass sports field, a forested area, a multi-purpose games area and hard surfaces for play. Indoor facilities are of a high specification and include a dance studio. Evidence indicates that the building will be completed in line with the independent school standards.

## **Part 6. Provision of information**

Leaders have adapted trust policies to the needs of the proposed school. The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part. All required policies are written. There is space allocated on the school's website for policies to be published. Leaders are aware of the need to make policies available to parents.

## **Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled**

The proposed school is likely to meet all of the relevant regulations for this part. The complaints policy is appropriate to the context of the school. It contains 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 the requirements for this part. Leaders have a proven track record in providing high-quality education and raising pupils' achievement. They have also supported schools in challenging circumstances to improve. Trust leaders have a secure knowledge of the independent school standards. They have also developed monitoring systems within their existing schools, which provide them with assurances that their statutory duties are met. This system of checking will be extended to the proposed school. Leaders have plans in place to appropriately support pupils' well-being. The proposed school will benefit from the expertise and the central services within the trust. Leaders have clear plans to ensure that the school makes the best start possible and grows successfully over the coming years.

## **Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010**

The school is likely to meet the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders demonstrate a strong understanding of the requirements of an equalities policy. Leaders consider the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in a range of policies including those that relate to safeguarding, behaviour and bullying. The school has been designed with accessibility in mind. For example, there is a lift so that disabled pupils can access all parts of the school. An appropriate draft accessibility policy is in place to be updated further when the building is handed over.

## **Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage**

All statutory requirements for the early years are likely to be met. The headteacher is knowledgeable and has experience of implementing the early years welfare requirements in other trust schools. Leaders have plans in place to ensure that teaching staff are trained in all relevant aspects. Policies are in place that link well to whole-school policies and approaches.

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