

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

School name	Soundwell Academy
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	801/7003
Unique reference number (URN)	147889
Inspection number	10148496
Inspection dates	26/06/2020 to 30/07/2020
Reporting inspector	Cindy Impey



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 carried out a virtual tour of the temporary site. The building work has not been completed. The inspector reviewed a range of policies and procedures provided by the proposer and scrutinised information available on the school's website. The inspector held telephone discussions with the headteacher. Video conference calls were held with the headteacher, the chief executive of the multi-academy trust and the chair of the academy council. Using the available information, the inspector can give sufficient assurance that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards. However, the degree of assurance is limited for some of the standards. The standards for which assurance is limited are indicated in the relevant section for that part.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	136 (28 on opening)
Age range	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

Context of the school

Soundwell Academy is a new school within Learn@Multi-Academy Trust.

Leaders plan to open the school in September 2020 for 28 pupils with education and health care plans. These pupils have been identified as having SEMH and SLCN. Leaders aim for the school to have a total of 136 pupils over the next two years. The

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.

school will be temporarily located on the Patchway Community School, Hempton Lane, Almondsbury, Bristol. This building is expected to be completed by September 2020. The school will move to a permanent site in Soundwell during 2021.

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.
------------------------	---

Compliance with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

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

All policies relating to this part are well linked, clear and comprehensive. Leaders' plans demonstrate how staff will develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding across the whole curriculum. Leaders have planned opportunities for pupils to practise making informed decisions and share their views. Leaders have also identified in the curriculum important cultural and religious festivals and commemorative days. Policies detail how British values will be taught. Pupils will have opportunities to take on responsibilities and play an important part in school life. Leaders expect all stakeholders to adopt the trust's values: 'All different, all equal, all achieve together'. Provision in this aspect is likely to be strong if policies are implemented as planned.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations assessed for this part. Policies are comprehensive and detailed. The school's policies focus well on the promotion of good behaviour and anti-bullying and are closely linked to the school's vision and ethos. The staff handbook and code of conduct give clear guidance for staff and pupils to achieve the trust's high expectations. Policies and procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are likely to comply with relevant guidance. Fire risks and evacuation procedures at the temporary site have not yet been assessed as the building is not yet complete. However, policies show that roles, responsibilities and reporting processes are in place.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all the regulations for this part. Leaders' policies and procedures for checking the suitability of all adults at the school are fit for purpose and meet the latest guidance. Trustees ensure that all the expected background checks are carried out and recorded effectively.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The virtual tour, building plans and discussions with the headteacher confirm that the accommodation is likely to meet requirements when completed. However, the inspector is only able to provide limited assurances about some aspects of the premises, such as the temperature of the water and the acoustics, as it was not possible to visit the site. There are no suitable changing and showering facilities on site. However, the pupils are timetabled to use the local leisure centre for a range of physical activities where they will have access to changing and shower facilities. The available evidence indicates that the proposed school is likely to meet all relevant regulations.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part. All the required policies are in place and available to parents, including an up-to-date safeguarding policy. Leaders have a range of processes for sharing relevant information with all stakeholders, including parents, trustees, external agencies and the local authority. The website contains many of the policies with updated information. Copies of these policies can be made available on request.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations in this part. The complaints policy is clear and contains all the required steps and the timelines for the efficient handling of any complaints. It appears on the school's website. Leaders have ensured that copies are available for those without access to the internet, if requested.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part. Discussions with leaders and the supporting documents provided demonstrate that leaders have the necessary experience, knowledge and expertise to lead and manage the proposed school effectively. Across the trust, there is a wealth of skills, knowledge and experience. Leaders have a good understanding of the regulatory requirements. They have established policies that provide strongly for the health, safety and welfare of pupils in their existing schools. Leaders demonstrate that they are reflective and have measures in place to monitor, evaluate and adapt provision as necessary.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. The school's accessibility plan is designed to be inclusive and demonstrates how access will be improved for pupils with disabilities, staff, parents and visitors to the school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021