

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

School name	Fox Grove School
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	936/7006
Unique reference number (URN)	148575
Inspection number	10189066
Inspection dates	23/06/2021
Reporting inspector	Clive Dunn



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](#).

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.¹

The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation related to the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards and spoke to the deputy chief executive officer of The Howard Partnership Trust (THPT) as representative of the lead proposer, the trust head of estates, the executive principal and principal designate, a trustee, and three staff from the trust's human resources department. The inspector toured the proposed school site. However, it was not possible to visit the proposed temporary site that the school intends to occupy initially because site preparations were not at a suitable stage. The inspector made an assessment of the likelihood of the temporary site to meet the relevant standards using the plans provided.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	152
Age range	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Social, communication and interaction

Context of the school

The proposed special school will be part of THPT. It will occupy a purpose-built two-storey building set within thoughtfully appointed grounds. These premises are not due for completion until the end of September 2021. In the meantime, the school will open in temporary accommodation at Hurst Park School in a mix of portable cabins and standalone buildings. The permanent building is due to be complete at the end of September. If this remains on track, school operations will move to the new premises after October half term. In the first instance, the school will be open to pupils in Reception Year and Years 3, 7 and 12.

¹ Part 1 to Schedule 1 is not reported against because it does not apply to academies, free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges.

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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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 the requirements of this part. Leaders intend to thread the school's chosen values of safety, trust, belonging and connection through all its work. They wish to prioritise identifying a strong pathway to adulthood for all pupils, right from the early years. Leaders see helping pupils to function and engage within the wider community as a critical part of this work.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements of this part. The core of the proposed safeguarding policy applies across the trust. It is also being suitably adapted to include details of school-specific safeguarding arrangements. Leaders clearly understand well the safeguarding context in which they will operate. Available evidence indicates that this work will be systematic and thorough. Other policies in this part, such as behaviour and anti-bullying, are closely attuned to the school's specific special context.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements of this part. The trust oversees and records the suitability checks for all schools in the trust. The proposed school-specific single central record makes provision for recording all the required information.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements of this part. Both the temporary and permanent premises and accommodation are likely to make the necessary provision, including for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements of this part. Leaders know the information they must publish and/or make available. They have systems in place for checking that these requirements are fulfilled.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all the requirements of this part. The updated draft policy, which is due to be ratified imminently, includes all the necessary detail. For example, it makes provision for maintaining a complaints record showing all relevant information.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements of this part. School leaders are experienced and knowledgeable about the context in which the school will operate. There will be an initial period of interim governance before substantive local governance arrangements function fully from September 2022.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

Leaders are in the process of formulating an accessibility plan which makes provision for all the required elements.

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

An experienced leader has been appointed to oversee the early years foundation stage. Leaders are checking diligently that all statutory requirements will be met.

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