

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

School name	Leigh Academy Rainham
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	887/4004
Unique reference number (URN)	148577
Inspection number	10189041
Inspection dates	11/05/2021
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 extensively to the principal designate. He also met with the chief operating officer and academies director of the Leigh Academies Trust. The inspector reviewed plans for the school site and viewed videos of the current stage of building works to make an assessment against all the relevant standards.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	1,150
Age range	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Not applicable

Context of the school

The proposed school is a secondary school within the Leigh Academies Trust situated in Rainham, Gillingham. It will occupy new purpose-built premises already designed to meet the school's final capacity.

Ultimately, it will provide education for 1,150 pupils aged 11 to 19 years. Initially, it will open to a Year 7 cohort only. For the first year, in agreement with Medway local authority, it will admit additional pupils, taking on a year group of 240 rather than the originally intended 180 Year 7 pupils.

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 in this part. Plans for promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are convincing. These include carefully considered content for personal, social and health education, form times, assemblies, visiting speakers and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The 'LEIGH learner profile', incorporating leadership, emotional intelligence, inquisitive, grit and humility, threads through the school's proposals.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements in this part. The safeguarding policy is drawn from the trust's policy, which is currently being reviewed to reference the most recent statutory documents. The substance of the policy is sound and it has been adapted to reflect the proposed school's specific context. Relevant training in safeguarding and associated matters is planned for staff according to their roles. The principal will be the designated safeguarding lead and has already received training from the local authority about local safeguarding arrangements. Leaders are in the process of finalising the risk assessment policy to reflect the trust's established risk assessment procedures.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements in this part. The single central record is in place and is currently being populated with all required checks as staff are appointed.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements in this part. Leaders are confident the building works are on track for the planned handover date of 26 July. Plans indicate that all requirements of this part will be met. For example, in addition to the earmarked 'sick bay', there is an additional room for the short-term care of sick or injured pupils which has the required integral washing facility. Both of these facilities are near to a toilet. The premises and accommodation for the school's proposed total capacity will be accessible at the point of opening, with the exception of part of the sports fields which will still be subject to reseeded.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements in this part. The creation of additional content for the school's website is already underway ready for release when the school opens. Leaders are familiar with requirements for publishing information, as well as the additional information it must provide to parents, carers and the local authority once operating.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The written complaints policy makes clear the aim to resolve matters as quickly as possible, preferably without recourse to formal procedures. However, the policy also sets out in detail how these formal procedures will operate, if required.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The trust is experienced at opening and running successful new schools. Support and training are in place for new leaders. The proposed policies and procedures are detailed and thorough. Some are substantially based on trust-wide policies, such as safeguarding and complaints. However, the trust belief is that its schools should be like 'siblings, not clones'. Thus, other policies, such as behaviour and attitudes, are more individualised to the intended ethos and culture of the proposed school.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

Leaders have considered accessibility through their plans and thinking for the school's policies and procedures. The principal is in the process of creating the required accessibility plan detailing what further steps to improve access to information, the curriculum and the physical environment are planned for the coming years.

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