

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

School name	Treetops Free School
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	883/7000
Unique reference number (URN)	148539
Inspection number	10189022
Inspection dates	14/06/2021
Reporting inspector	David Milligan

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 lead proposer from the trust and the principle designate. The inspector discussed plans for the proposed school site and was able to visit the school site although the building works were not completed.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	140. Initially 60 in September 2021
Age range	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Moderate learning difficulties

Context of the school

Treetops Free School will be part of the Treetops Learning Community. The school will open in September 2021 using existing classroom space in Treetops School.

There will be 60 pupils on roll initially, rising to 140 by September 2024. Forty pupils from Treetops School will be transferred onto Treetops Free School roll, with 20 new pupils from other schools joining in September 2021.

The plan is to relocate to a new building on the same site in April 2022.

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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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.

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. Leaders have clear plans in place to promote fundamental British values, respect, the rule of law, determination, equality and kindness. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum from Treetops School will be implemented and adapted to provide appropriate learning opportunities. The headteacher will begin weekly assemblies with existing pupils during summer 2021. These will focus on relationships, team building and starting a new school.

Leaders are keen for pupils to have a 'voice' in their new school. They have appropriate plans in place to enable pupils to have ownership of decisions made.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. Trust policies, including behaviour, safeguarding, visits and health and safety, are in place and have been adapted to ensure that they comply with legislation. Systems and procedures from within the trust are being followed consistently with specific detail in place to keep pupils and staff safe and secure.

Trustees will initially oversee the strategic development of the school, with a local governing body planned to be in place within three years.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The single central record is already in place with relevant checks being carried out appropriately. An experienced designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has already been appointed. Leaders have thought carefully about how to manage safeguarding effectively for their vulnerable pupils. Additional DSLs have been appointed to manage specific safeguarding areas in different key stages.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The school will initially be part of the existing Treetops School. A corridor in this school will be used to accommodate 60 pupils across a number of classrooms. Pupils will move into the new building once this is complete in April 2022. This building will meet all current requirements and is also designed to be carbon neutral.

As well as classrooms, the building will include additional space for therapy to take place, small-group life skills teaching and calm rooms, and it also has extensive outdoor space for pupils to access and use. Highly detailed plans are in place, showing appropriate provision indoors and outdoors for pupils.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The majority of pupils starting the school in September are currently on roll at Treetops School. Therefore, information regarding transition has been sent via existing communication methods.

For new pupils to the school, contact information has been gathered so that any communication can be sent directly to families to support a smooth and informative transition. The school is currently developing its own website. Ongoing 'blogs' from leaders are made available through the Treetops School website. Induction packs have been sent to all new pupils.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The complaints policy follows the trust's system for managing complaints. It is clearly written and contains all the necessary stages and timelines should a complaint need to be handled by the school.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The school is joining a trust that already has an outstanding special school. There is a depth of leadership experience within the trust. Procedures and policies are in place that mirror embedded successful practice in the partner school. All of the new staff for September 2021 have been recruited from Treetops School.

Leaders have a good understanding of the regulatory requirements and priorities for the opening of the new school, including considerations about the quality of education they will provide to pupils. Leaders are aware of the importance of monitoring pupils' safety and how to manage pupils' welfare and well-being.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The policy for equalities is trust-wide and incorporates appropriate monitoring processes. Plans for the new building show that features such as classroom sizes and additional rooms and spaces have been planned to meet the specific needs of pupils.

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