

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

School name	Sherford Vale School
DfE registration number	2071
Unique reference number (URN)	145907
Inspection number	10053922
Inspection dates	21 June 2018
Reporting inspector	Nathan Kemp HMI



Information about the inspection

This inspection was conducted 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 inspector met with the headteacher and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Westcountry Schools Trust. The inspector visited the school site with the headteacher. The inspector spoke with the site manager to ascertain the status of the building phase and to check for specific standards contained within part 5 of the independent school standards. The inspector considered a range of documentation, including policies, both before and during the pre-registration inspection.

Information about the registration

Number of day pupils	480
Age range	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Not applicable

Context of the school

Sherford Vale School proposes to open in September 2018. The school will cater predominantly for local children in a large nearby housing development. The school's planned admission number will be 480 pupils from the Nursery Year to Year 6. In its first year, the school plans to admit pupils from the Nursery Year to Year 6, operating with mixed-aged classes for the Reception class, Years 1 and 2; and Years 4, 5 and 6.

Advice to the Secretary of State for Education

Overall outcome	The school is likely to meet all the independent school standards when it opens
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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.

Compliance with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014³

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

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. School leaders have detailed plans in place to make sure pupils have quality opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally (SMSC). The school's STAMP curriculum (Science, Technology, Arts, Mathematics and Physical Education) aims to ensure pupils access a well-rounded curriculum which will enhance their SMSC development.

The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum considers three main aspects of 'Health and Wellbeing', 'Relationships' and 'Living in the wider world'. The PSHE curriculum details the opportunities that pupils will have to develop understanding of public institutions such as the police, as well as developing their understanding of different faiths and cultures. Leaders also aim for pupils to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The 'daily mile' will help to contribute to this. In addition, leaders have ensured that current policies are in place to promote British values.

'Think, create, ask and succeed' are the cornerstones of the school's values. Leaders aim to develop pupils who are creative, ask questions, think about themselves and others; and ultimately, succeed. Leaders aspire for the school to form a key part of this newly built community. On the first day of school, plans are in place for staff, pupils and parents to meet and walk to school with members of the construction team. Here, the new school will be officially handed over to the pupils.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. School leaders have policies in place to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The behaviour policy reflects the school's expectations, making clear the use of any rewards and sanctions. The anti-bullying policy draws attention to the various types of bullying and, if such incidences should occur, how leaders will respond. Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding and child protection policy is current and takes account of the guidance within Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2016.

Leaders have ensured that the school's risk assessment policy is in place. By using a formula, likelihood x impact = risk factor, leaders aim to ensure that relevant actions are in place that are proportionate to the risk, thus alleviating any occurrence. Leaders plan to create specific risk assessments, alongside staff, when needed. Fire safety plans have been completed. Leaders are sourcing fire safety equipment to fulfil these requirements.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/contents/made. Part 1 to Schedule 1 is not reported against because it does not apply to academies, free schools, studio schools and UTCs.

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

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. The school's single central record is in place and covers all the checks required by statutory guidance. A scrutiny of the single central record and a sample of personnel files shows that most of the checks have been made in line with requirements.

There are several newly appointed staff for whom the full checks have yet to be completed. However, these checks were being undertaken at the time of the pre-registration visit. As these members of staff are not yet working with pupils, leaders are acting within statutory guidance. Leaders are purposely delaying the disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks, with the aim that checks are as current as possible when staff begin their roles from September 2018. This is an example of leaders' robust approach to ensuring that they only appoint those who are suitable to work with children. Personnel files are well organised and demonstrate the school's thorough recruitment processes.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. During this pre-registration inspection, the site was 10 weeks from completion with still much to do. The build is on track to be ready for the beginning of the academic year. However, leaders have suitable contingency plans in place, in the eventuality of any delays.

The building is well-lit throughout, with classrooms and communal spaces benefitting from several large windows. The acoustic conditions have been considered when designing the school, and ceiling tiles will be installed to further enhance this. Each classroom provides pupils with access to toilet and washing facilities. Separate toilets can also be found in communal areas. At the time of the pre-registration inspection, the building did not have a water supply. However, plans are in place to ensure that water does not pose a risk of scalding pupils. The school has a separate medical room, providing access to washing facilities and located nearby to toilet facilities. Finally, there are accessible washing facilities for pupils who rely on the use of a wheelchair. Outside, the site provides plenty of space for pupils to play. It is also suitable for the teaching of a physical education curriculum. Although not yet installed, the building will feature external lighting, aiding access to and from the school.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. Leaders plan to make information available to parents via the school's website. Leaders are currently uploading key policies on to the school's website in preparation for the school's opening in September 2018.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all of the standards in this part provided that it addresses the regulations set out in the table below.

The school's complaints policy is detailed and outlines the school's procedures that parents can follow should they have a complaint. The policy is unique to the school

and includes an additional level of 'mediation'. The policy sets out clear timescales for each stage of a complaint, from the informal stage through to the formal stage and, where relevant, any subsequent panel hearing.

In order to meet the requirements in full, the school should consider:

<p>The standard about the manner in which complaints are handled is met if the proprietor ensures that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented, and which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish; ▪ provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and stipulates that a copy of those findings and recommendations is- available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the head teacher; ▪ provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made in accordance with sub-paragraph (e); and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld); and provides that correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are to be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them. 	<p>33(h), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)</p>
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Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. Leaders have a clear understanding of the independent school standards and are well placed to ensure that these are met. Leaders' approach to meeting the independent school standards includes the involvement of a pro-active and established governing body as well as support from the Westcountry Schools Trust.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school has an appropriate equality policy. This policy meets the requirements of paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school's new premises are organised on a single level, suitable for wheelchair access. There are accessible facilities within the premises, including a disabled toilet and washing facilities. The school's equality policy makes clear reference to the protected characteristics, and outlines the school's approach to meeting the requirements as set out in the 2010 Equality Act. The policy makes clear the school's complaints process within the document, adequately cross-referencing to the school's complaints policy. The complaints policy is evaluated in part 7 of the independent school standards.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The school is likely to meet all the standards in this part. Leaders are familiar with the early years statutory requirements. Leaders have considered the number of staff required to maintain the correct ratio of adults to children. Leaders have contingency plans in place, in case the number of children within the early years increases, both before the school opens in September 2018 and during the academic year. The early years leader has qualified teacher status (QTS) and is paediatric first aid and child protection trained. There are plans for all staff to undertake a thorough induction process prior to the school opening. This induction will include safeguarding training for all staff and paediatric first aid training for an additional member of staff in the early years setting. Leaders have plans in place to make sure that there are suitable cover arrangements for staff in the early years. The safeguarding policy is in place. Across the early years setting, both indoors and outdoors, there is generous space afforded for physical activity. Outside, children will benefit from climbing equipment. Indoors, the setting provides suitable toileting and washing facilities as well as adequate space for nappy-changing. There is also a separate staffing area, providing space for staff to meet with parents.

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