

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

School name	Windmill Hill School
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	821/7000
Unique reference number (URN)	148558
Inspection number	10189017
Inspection dates	27/05/2021
Reporting inspector	Fiona Webb

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. The inspector held face-to-face discussions over the internet with the headteacher, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, the chair of the trustees and two other trustees. The inspector toured the proposed school site and discussed the site plans with the lead trustee for the proposed school, the CEO and the headteacher.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	120
Age range	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	All types

Context of the school

Windmill Hill School is a new secondary school for pupils and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school will be part of the Creating Tomorrow multi-academy trust.

The school will open in September 2021 in new, purpose-built accommodation. The school intends to initially admit 40 Year 7 and eight Year 8 pupils for the 2021/22 academic year. Leaders plan that 20 post-16 students will begin studying at the school at the start of the 2024/25 academic year. When full, the school will accommodate approximately 100 pupils in Year 7 to Year 11, and 20 post-16 students.

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 proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part. Leaders have developed clearly defined policies and plans which show how different aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development will be promoted. Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is a core aspect of the proposed school's provision. Through a comprehensive PSHE curriculum, pupils will be taught specific lessons that promote their physical, social and healthy well-being. These will be supported by assemblies, extra-curricular activities, trips, visiting speakers and enrichment opportunities.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The proposed school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations for this part. Policies that are used effectively elsewhere within the multi-academy trust are in place. These policies, and the systems that underpin them, indicate that health, safety, behaviour, supervision, risk assessment, first aid and safeguarding will be secure and compliant with regulations and statutory guidance. Monitoring and auditing arrangements are established. Pre-employment checks are thorough. Proposed staffing levels are suitable to meet the needs of pupils. The comprehensive training programme for staff as they join the school indicates that policies and systems are likely to be understood and followed consistently.

Fire risk assessments and evacuation plans at the new site are yet to be carried out as the building is not complete. However, leaders demonstrate extensive knowledge and expertise that indicate these policies and systems will be firmly established once the building works are finished.

The proposed school has invested in an electronic system to maintain admissions and attendance registers. This is due to be operational before the school opens. The chosen system is already in use elsewhere in the trust.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part. Appropriate checks have been made on the staff who have been appointed to the school. Checks have already been made on trustees. Leaders intend to carry out and record checks which have not yet been carried out, for example on future staff and supply staff, in line with the requirements in this part and to meet statutory obligations.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the regulations for this part. Leaders' knowledgeable and thoughtful input at the planning stage has helped to create an

attractive, appropriate environment that will meet the educational, social and day-to-day requirements of all those who work and learn within it.

The purpose-built accommodation will have well-lit classrooms, effective acoustics and appropriate provision of toilet, medical and welfare facilities. There is suitable outdoor space for pupils' free time and for outside teaching. The building will be equipped with a full range of facilities to support pupils and students with additional needs. For example, the school will have a lift, a sensory room, a soft playroom, hygiene and physiotherapy rooms and classrooms complete with hoists. The self-contained sixth-form area includes a classroom and hub for interventions and socialising during breaktimes.

Leaders have firm plans in place to ensure that the building is fully ready for occupation, for example labelling drinking water and carrying out a fire risk assessment, when they have taken possession of the site in August 2021.

Part 6. Provision of information

The proposed 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. The website continues to be updated with the most recent policies and information. Copies of these policies can be made available on request.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part. The complaints policy is comprehensive and clearly written. It contains all the necessary steps and the timelines for the efficient handling of any complaints and is available on the school's website. Copies can be made available to parents if requested.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for this part. The headteacher is well supported by an established trust. The trust already has experience of opening and leading other schools. It has a good understanding of the regulatory requirements, having already fulfilled them successfully in other settings. Leaders have established comprehensive and coherent policies which provide strongly for the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Arrangements are in place for a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders are clear about how they will continue to monitor provision so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements for Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The accessibility policy clearly states the aims of the accessibility plan and how the plan will be monitored. The plan will be developed once the school is opened. The plan will include targets for achieving the aims set out in the accessibility policy, alongside strategies for doing so.

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