

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

School name	The Mendip School
DfE registration number	933/7000
Unique reference number (URN)	142118
Inspection number	464408
Inspection dates	12 June 2015
Reporting inspector	Fatiha Maitland

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090076.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our website for news, information and updates at www.ofsted.gov.uk/user.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090076

© Crown copyright 2015



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 of the Education and Skills Act 2008¹.

Context of the school

- The proposed Mendip School is a free school. It will be the third school within a multi-academy trust, in addition to Fosse Way School and Hayse Down School. The school is to be situated in Shepton Mallet, Somerset. It is not operating at present, but intends to open in September 2015.
- The school will occupy one part of the existing accommodation in Fosse Way School. The school is planning to use these premises temporarily to accommodate up to 30 pupils from September 2015. Currently, the Fosse Way School is building new accommodation, which is adjacent to the school. This is known as 'Fosse Way School Annex'. This new accommodation will be used temporarily by The Mendip School from January 2016 until July 2016.
- The school aims to move to permanent accommodation in September 2016. It has planned to admit up to 120 boys and girls, aged between four and 19 years. The school will cater for pupils with autistic spectrum conditions and speech, language and communication needs.
- The inspector carried out a scrutiny of documentation and had discussions with the management team of the school.
- The inspector and the management of the school undertook a walk around the temporary premises in the Fosse Way School.
- The inspector also visited the new site at The Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 6QN. The proposed school is still a playing field. The building work will start in the near future.
- The school aims 'to provide a broad and balanced curriculum aimed at creating an educational experience that prepares pupils for adult life'. The school has no specific religious affiliation.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	120
Age range	4–19
Gender of pupils	mixed
Type of special educational needs	Autistic spectrum disorder; speech, language and communication

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/99

Compliance with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014²

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

- The school is likely to meet all of the regulations, although implementation could not be seen.
- The behaviour, anti-bullying policies and procedures and the programme of personal, social, health, citizenship and economic education all indicate that they are likely to support the personal development of the pupils.
- Pupils will be taught to distinguish right from wrong, to develop a good sense of self-esteem and self-worth and to respect the environment and the rule of law.
- There will be a strong emphasis on promoting tolerance and developing an appreciation of, and respect for, other faiths and cultures.
- Visits to places of interest, support from the school nurse as well as the citizenship programme, will provide pupils with adequate opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding of public institutions and services in England. They will learn to respect the fundamental British values of democracy and to be aware of the importance and workings of the civil and criminal law.
- The school has devised an anti-radicalisation policy to prevent extremism in school. The school's planning makes it clear that it will not promote any particular political views to pupils. A balanced presentation of viewpoints will be offered.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- The school is likely to meet all of the regulations.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest guidance provided in the Department for Education's publication *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. All members of staff, including the designated persons, have received the appropriate child protection training. Leaders are very clear about their roles to safeguard children at the school.
- The school has devised written policies and procedures to promote good behaviour among pupils, with a clear code of conduct, rewards and sanctions, information about the prevention of bullying and guidance for physical interventions.
- The school has prepared and begun to implement its health and safety and risk assessment policies and procedures. It has conducted the risk assessments on the temporary premises and resources to ensure pupils' health and safety.
- Fire evacuation procedures are in place. Fire equipment and electrical appliances have similarly been checked to ensure that they are safe.

² <http://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.

- The school has carried out the required fire risk assessment on the temporary premises to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- The school is also aware of its duty to carry out the necessary fire risk assessments and will check on the premises and resources once the Fosse Way School Annex and the new school are built and are ready to receive pupils.
- A first-aid policy exists. The school has a sufficient number of first-aiders, including for paediatric first aid. The accident book, admission and attendance registers are ready for use.

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

- The school is likely to meet all of the regulations.
- The management of the school is aware of all safeguarding requirements. The school has made all of the required vetting checks on all members of staff to ensure their suitability to work with children and young people, including the checks for those prohibited from teaching and disqualified by association.
- The Department for Education has conducted all of the required vetting checks on the chairperson of the proprietorial body.
- All of the required checks are recorded in a suitable single central register, which enables the school to verify that all checks are made.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- The school is likely to meet all of the regulations.
- The school's temporary accommodation is of a high quality and fit for purpose. It consists of three classrooms, washrooms, showers and changing facilities. Pupils will have access to Fosse Way School's facilities for: science; music; art and design; drama; food technology; and physical education.
- The school has ensured that there is a suitable designated area for pupils to go to when they are unwell. The provision has a washbasin and is located near toilet facilities.
- The current provision of toilets and washbasins is sufficient for staff and the proposed number of pupils, including disabled people.
- Pupils will have access to a suitable outdoor area for recreational and physical activities. An agreement has been signed between the two schools for the temporary use of the facilities.
- The acoustic conditions, sound insulation, lighting, flooring and water supply, including labelled drinking water facilities, are likely to meet requirements.
- The 'Fosse Way School Annex' is likely to meet requirements as indicated in the school's plan. The building consists of several classrooms, toilets and spaces for intervention programmes and socialisation.
- The new school will consist of several classrooms, as seen from the site plan, a technology suite, a food technology facility, a music and dance studio, designated facilities for speech and language and occupational therapy, physical education, and several spaces for intervention programmes.

- The premise's plan shows that the school will have a medical room for pupils to go to when they are unwell or injured. This provision will have a washbasin with running water and will be reasonably located near washroom facilities. There will be sufficient numbers of toilets for staff, pupils and visitors to access.
- The school will also benefit from a large hall and outdoor facilities. There will be showers and changing facilities for pupils to use under appropriate supervision.

Part 6. Provision of information

- The school is likely to meet all of the regulations, although implementation could not be seen in full.
- The school does not have a website at present. It is in the process of designing a website, which will be 'live' when the school opens. A prospectus has been produced. A file containing key policies, including the safeguarding policy and procedures, is made available to parents on request.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- The school is likely to meet all of the regulations.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- The school is likely to meet all of the regulations.
- The leadership and management of the school have demonstrated good knowledge and skills appropriate to their roles and responsibilities and have ensured that all of the required independent school standards are likely to be met.
- Pupils will be provided with valued learning experiences to develop their personal development and well-being.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school has devised an appropriate three-year accessibility improvement plan to fulfil its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- The school is likely to meet all of the requirements.
- Discussions with the leadership of the school and a scrutiny of the early years curriculum planning indicate that children will have access to various activities and resources to help them develop their knowledge and skills in all of the required areas of learning.

- Staff will undertake observations of adult-led and child-initiated activities. This information will be used firstly to identify the children’s starting points and then to inform future planning and assessment.
- Staff will work in partnership with parents. They will involve parents in their children’s education and keep them informed about their progress and well-being.
- The school will work with other agencies to ensure the appropriate support for children and families.

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.
------------------------	---

Recommended number of day pupils	120
Recommended age range	4–19
Recommended gender of pupils	mixed
Recommended type of special educational needs	Autistic spectrum disorder; speech, language and communication