

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of an academy/free school/studio school/university technical college (UTC)

School name	La Fontaine Academy
DfE registration number	305/2036
Unique reference number (URN)	1681
Inspection number	446907
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Reporting inspector	David Scott

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Information about the inspection

This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.¹

Context of the school

La Fontaine Academy will open on a temporary site in a former teachers' centre, adjacent to Princes Plain Primary School, in Bromley, south east London. In July 2014, phase one of the refurbishment programme of the two-storey building was commenced. This building will provide accommodation including administrative offices, four classrooms and a large hall, for assemblies, performances, indoor physical education (PE). In addition, it is intended that the outside area will be suitably landscaped. This will include a garden and recreation area where children can learn and enjoy the leisure space. Located next door to the academy is the Bishop Justus Secondary School, which will provide hot lunches for the academy pupils and staff, and access to their extensive playing fields.

The academy is sponsored by the STEP Academy Trust and is due to open on 11 September 2014. The academy has applied to be registered to admit 630 pupils from ages four to 11. It will admit children aged four to seven in its first year. At present, 84 are children registered for enrolment. Currently, no children registered for enrolment have special educational needs or are in receipt of a statement of special educational needs. The academy aims to be an 'inclusive, non-denominational, primary school that is committed to the teaching of English and French, and engages the local and global communities'.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The academy is likely to meet all of the regulations, but implementation could not be seen. The academy intends to base its ethos on the values of, 'Excellence, Respect, Collaboration, Responsibility and Creativity'. The academy intends that 'staff and children will live out those values' in order to develop a sense of mutual responsibility across the academy. At the heart of its ethos, the academy intends to develop 'pupils' extraordinary cultural capital' through a rich and broad curriculum. It is intended to promote a deep understanding and appreciation of both French and British cultures, together with the rich diversity of cultures and customs that make up contemporary life in Britain and beyond.

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

It is intended that the academy will specialise in developing pupils' 'academic potential and life chances that arise from a bilingual education'. The aim of this will be to promote tolerance and cultural exchange that prepares pupils to become 'citizens who can play an active role in 21st century society'. The academy intends to provide 'wrap around care', through activities such as breakfast club, after-school clubs and 'STEP Zone'. In order to build strong partnerships with pupils, parents and teachers, these activities will be led by teachers, learning support assistants and an external provider. Over time, the academy intends to establish a number of community links, through coffee mornings, headteacher's surgeries and family workshops to support families with their children's learning. These, together with an extensive range of planned trips and visits, will provide pupils with opportunities to become responsible citizens. The personal, social and health education and citizenship courses will be based on the principles of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child. There will be a focus on promoting the 'notions of respect and responsibility' for every child.

The planned assembly programme, across all faith and non-faith groups, has been carefully thought through to stimulate pupils' appreciation of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their lives and to promote tolerance of the cultures and beliefs of others. It is intended that there will be three assemblies per week: Monday 'Values'; Wednesday 'Music'; and Friday 'Celebrations'.

Citizenship will be delivered as part of the programme for personal, social and health education; this is intended to develop pupils' understanding of civil law and public institutions and services in England, in addition to promoting the school's values. The staff code of conduct and the curriculum policy give guidance to teachers to ensure that planned lessons and activities will be free from partisan political or religious views and that, where any political issues are discussed, a balanced view is always presented.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Documentary evidence indicates that all regulations are likely to be met. Policies for child protection, recruitment and selection, safeguarding and pupil welfare, behaviour, exclusion, anti-bullying and whistle blowing have been prepared in accordance with requirements. The academy's behaviour policy includes a commitment to the academy becoming a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. As such, 'rights respecting' is a key principle on which the behaviour policy is based. The policy expects all staff to treat children fairly, consistently and sensitively; also, to hear both sides of the story and help children to find a solution or resolution to any challenges they face. In addition, the academy has a 'CALM Code' which is designed to help children 'return to a place of reflective calm', so that they are able to maintain high standards of behaviour at all times. The behaviour policy contains very clear expectations about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, together with a range of rewards and sanctions.

The headteacher and one governor have been trained in safer recruitment and child protection. Two members of staff have a paediatric first aid qualification. For those members of staff and governors still to be appointed, dates have been identified, and a specialist qualified trainer has been firmly booked, to provide the required training in child protection, paediatric first aid and safeguarding procedures for all staff before the school opens, so that requirements are likely to be met.

Suitable health and safety policies and risk assessments have been completed. A visit from two independent fire, health and safety consultants has been planned for the end of August so that requirements are likely to be met. Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements. The academy's three-year accessibility plan details arrangements to review and improve access for disabled pupils.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

All the required vetting checks on all appointed staff and members of the governing body are captured in a single central record which meets requirements. The academy does not intend to employ supply staff. It has appropriate procedures in place to conduct the required checks on agency staff, should the need arise, although their implementation could not be seen.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

A tour of the site and scrutiny of the architect's plans confirm that phase one of the refurbishment of the former teachers' centre is likely to meet the regulations in readiness for opening in September. The plans confirm that there will be one dedicated entrance for children and parents. There is a suitable number of washrooms available with safely regulated hot water, including one designated for disabled users. Heating, lighting and fire-safety systems are likely to meet requirements. A labelled supply of drinking water will be accessible to pupils. The equality and disability policy details arrangements for disabled pupils to be admitted to the academy. A suitable location has been identified for a medical room, complete with handbasin, with washrooms nearby. It is intended that the outside area will be suitably landscaped for children to enjoy their learning and recreation. The academy has been unable to secure permission to install a canopy for the outside area, due to planning restrictions for 1940s building. To address this, the academy staff have produced appropriate risk assessments to ensure children can use the outside area safely. On warm days they will have access to water, sun cream and hats, and will be provided with suitable protective attire when the weather is inclement.

At present, the academy is in negotiation with the local authority and the education funding agency to secure a permanent site for the projected final number of pupils on roll.

Provision of information

The provision meets all regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The provision meets all regulations.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

- **YES. This school is likely to meet all regulations when it opens and is recommended for registration.**

Recommended number of day pupils: 630

Recommended number of boarders: 0

Recommended age range: 4–11

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.