

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of an academy/free school

School name	Eden BESD Free School
DfE registration number	N/A
Unique reference number (URN)	1700
Inspection number	446927
Inspection dates	22 July 2014
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

Please note: The school originally applied to be registered as Eden BESD Free School but during the pre-registration visit senior leaders requested that it be registered as **Eden School**. This is the name by which it wishes to be known.

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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

During this pre-registration visit for the proposed Eden BESD Free School, senior leaders requested that it be registered as Eden School. The proposed school is a non-denominational day school for boys and girls between the ages of eight and 16 years. It is intended that the school will cater wholly for pupils who have special educational needs. The main groups that the proposed school will cater for are pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and those with autistic spectrum disorders. Eight such pupils are registered for enrolment to date; all have statements of special educational need. It is planned that, for the first year, the school will be housed in part of the building currently occupied by The Heights Free School to the south west of Blackburn. It is intended that the school will take up to 24 pupils in its first year before building up to 60 pupils once it moves to new, purpose-built accommodation on the same site in September 2015. The planned opening date is 8 September 2014. The proposed school has charitable status as part of the Education Partnership Trust which also runs The Heights Free School.

The aims of the proposed school are, 'To offer a turning point for the most vulnerable young people in our community; providing intensive support that develops abilities and inspires the belief that there are no limits to what can be achieved through education.'

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The proposed school is likely to meet all the regulations but implementation could not be seen since it has yet to open. The planned curriculum centres on enabling pupils to enhance their personal development, thereby equipping them to prepare for life beyond school and to become active participants in the community. It is intended that, after a welcoming breakfast, each day will start with a tutorial session, with groups of no more than eight pupils, where pupils will have the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues. The planned curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) includes such topics as: the role of each pupil within their family and the local community, through activities aimed at personal contributions such as supporting parents and senior citizens; tolerance of difference and diversity including preventing extremism; self-awareness; stress and relaxation; and anger

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

management. The planned citizenship curriculum includes topics on human rights, power, politics and the media and global village. Between them, these cover aspects as diverse as criminal and civil justice, why laws are needed for society to function, why freedom of information is necessary in a democracy, how local and national institutions function and environmental issues. All available evidence indicates that any political views or topics will be presented in a balanced way.

It is planned that one day a week will be devoted to social enrichment, outdoor education and the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is intended that this will be delivered through a series of themes, the first of which is planned to be the United States of America, which will cover literature, music and art as well as issues of race, tolerance and understanding.

Meetings with the architects of the proposed new accommodation are scheduled, to bring to pupils' attention the necessary considerations, such as taking into account neighbours' rights and needs, when planning a new building. It is proposed that pupils' views will contribute to the building plans, providing them with firsthand experience of democracy in action. It is also proposed that older pupils will act as mentors or reading buddies for younger pupils and that, as part of the enrichment days, pupils may become involved in local initiatives such as food banks. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development policy confirms the school's intention to help pupils use their imagination and creativity in learning, and to develop personal qualities such as honesty, consideration, independence and self-respect.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The proposed Eden School is likely to meet all the requirements but implementation could not be seen since the school is not yet open. Comprehensive systems are in place to ensure the safeguarding of pupils, with clear written guidance for staff and training in child protection planned for the week before the proposed school opens. The family support and attendance manager has already completed the appropriate level of training to undertake the role of designated person for child protection and it is planned that the head of school will also undertake this training in the near future. He delivers 'team teach' training across the local authority. There are suitable staff recruitment arrangements and senior leaders have had the appropriate training. In the first year, it is planned that Eden School will share its accommodation with The Heights Free School. Staff at both schools are employed by the Education Partnership Trust and subject to the same checking arrangements with regard to their previous employment history and suitability to work with children. The timetable has been carefully planned to ensure that pupils attending the different schools have separate break and lunch times.

The building has a comprehensive fire risk assessment with a report from the local fire authority. The very minor alterations planned to the building will not affect this. There are six trained fire wardens and five staff with first aid training for extreme conditions off site, in addition to staff trained in ordinary first aid. Evidence shows that all items of equipment, including water safety and portable electrical appliances,

have been checked over the past year and that there have been regular fire drills. There is every reason to expect that such actions are likely to continue.

There are detailed policies to promote good behaviour and to counter bullying. These clearly outline the proposed school's expectations, rewards and sanctions, and how staff should apply them. The PSHE curriculum highlights the school's intention to provide pupils with three stages of learning to support their welfare, starting with a nurture stage, followed by transition and finally progressing to Key Stage 4 provision. There is an appropriate admission register and an electronic method for recording individuals' attendance twice daily. The student disability policy outlines the proposed school's access improvement plan to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The proposed Eden School is likely to meet all the regulations. Confirmation of staff members' suitability to work with children has been received for three staff, and appropriate actions have been taken to secure this for those who have been more recently appointed. A similar full range of checks has been conducted for five out of the seven trustees, with checks underway for the remaining two members of the board. The proposed school's single central register clearly records staff members' qualifications, the checks undertaken prior to their taking up their post and their right to work in the United Kingdom. The proposed school does not intend to employ supply staff but has suitable procedures in place should it need to do so in the future. Similarly, it is aware of its duty to inform the Independent Safeguarding Authority should it become aware that any person is deemed unsuitable to work with children.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The proposed school is likely to meet all the requirements. The accommodation, which has formerly been occupied by pupils of The Heights Free School and is now released to Eden School, is recently built, well maintained and suitably equipped to cater for the proposed school's needs during its first year. The three classrooms provide adequate space for up to 24 pupils. Toilet facilities are suitable for the pupil group to be admitted. There is a designated medical room for pupils who are unwell and suitable outdoor space for physical education and for recreation. There is appropriate lighting inside and outside and suitable access to labelled drinking water. The accommodation which is to be shared with The Heights includes a large sports hall, with appropriate showers and changing facilities, as well as rooms for specialist teaching of construction, art and music. The latter has extensive sound insulation in place!

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: 24

Recommended number of boarders: not applicable

Recommended age range: 8 to 16 years

Recommended gender of pupils: mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties and those with autistic spectrum disorders.

The school originally applied to accept 60 pupils, which is the number it intends to accept once it moves into its new building. It is planned that this move will take place in September 2015. The accommodation currently available to the school is sufficient to accept no more than 24 pupils. The lead inspector informed the executive principal and the head of school that, when the time for the move to the new building arrives, the school will need to inform the Department for Education of a material change since it will be occupying different accommodation.