

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

School name	The Elland Academy
DfE registration number	383/
Unique reference number (URN)	1664
Inspection number	446886
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Reporting inspector	Saleem Hussain

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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

The Elland Academy is a free school which is part of the School Partnership Trust. It is to be located near to the centre of Leeds in refurbished premises on a commercial industrial estate. The academy proposes to provide part-time and full-time alternative provision for up to 150 students (boys and girls) in the age range four to 18 years. It is likely that students will have experienced much disruption to their learning in their former educational provision or be at risk of permanent exclusion from their present maintained schools as a result of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

Refurbishment work on the premises has not yet commenced; the academy is not yet operating and implementation of policies and procedures could not be checked. The academy is planned to open, on completion of the refurbishment work, in January 2015. The academy has developed links with a local sports centre and an outdoor pursuit centre in order to provide physical education (PE) in line with its curriculum for PE.

The Trust is in the process of establishing three free schools in the North of England. Two have already been recommended for registration and this free school is the third and final to be registered in the summer period.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

All regulations are likely to be met although implementation could not be checked. The academy has prepared extensive schemes of work for personal, social and health education and citizenship which include a number of themes and experiences intended to support the personal development of students, improve their self-esteem and give them confidence to succeed in their work. Many specific themes will be taught in relation to personal development. For example, students will consider moral issues around negative stereotyping, sexism and racism. Within the curriculum students will also be provided with opportunities to learn about their rights and how to express themselves appropriately, attending to any deficits in their social skills.

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

The academy intends to provide students with opportunities to learn about British values such as democracy and freedom of speech through the establishment of a school council. The school council will also enable students to have a say in improvements to the academy. Students will be encouraged to take an active part in the local community, for example through activities under the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Plans are in place for their involvement in the renovation of local allotments and also recycling initiatives. The academy's leaders have already established good relationships with local police community support officers and will encourage them to contribute to students' understanding of the civil and criminal law. The academy has a strong commitment to the development of tolerance and respect for diversity; students will be encouraged to express their own values and develop their thinking in a rational way. The academy's staff handbook places a requirement on staff to handle all sensitive or controversial political themes in a balanced and non-partisan manner. The academy is planning a series of visitors and visits to support personal development. For example, trips will include theatres, art galleries, museums and different places of worship.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The majority of regulations are likely to be met although implementation could not be seen. Suitable policies and procedures have been prepared for all required aspects of students' welfare and safety, including those for the management of behaviour, the prevention of bullying, safety on off-site visits and for first aid. Senior staff members have been trained to the required levels to fulfil the role of designated person for child protection and to provide first aid. Suitable relationships have been established with the local authority designated officers for safeguarding in the four placing local authorities. Firm arrangements are in place, in line with the Trust's policy, for all staff to be trained in child protection during their induction period.

Senior staff in the Trust have been trained in safe recruitment and all required checks on previous employment history, professional and character references and medical fitness are completed. The academy's electronic information management system is appropriately prepared to accommodate records of serious incidents and sanctions, together with appropriate admission and attendance registers.

The Trust has informed the local fire service of the proposed refurbishment of the premises and the planned use as a school. Confirmation of the fire safety of the building will be included in the building standards compliance certificate on completion of refurbishment. A fire risk policy has been prepared and the electronic management system is also prepared for the entry of all required regular checks on fire safety. However, the academy has not yet prepared a fire risk assessment for the premises. The academy has a clear commitment to equality of access in its equality statement but a fully detailed accessibility plan has not yet been produced.

In order to meet the requirements in full, the academy should:

- prepare a suitable fire risk assessment and ensure that the building standards compliance certificate is obtained on completion of the refurbishment work (paragraph 13)
- produce a fully detailed accessibility plan in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The academy is likely to meet all the regulations. The human resources service of the Trust provides robust support to the academy in all aspects of staff recruitment. Central staff have been trained in safe recruitment and procedures are implemented effectively. A single central register of checks on staff suitability has been prepared with respect to staff and the proprietorial body. The academy does not intend to employ supply staff but is aware of the required checks should it do so in future.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The academy is likely to meet all the regulations. The academy is to be located in large three-storey premises, formerly used for office and administration purposes. This provides a shell of considerable size with an extensive outside area suitable for play and recreation. The planning application for refurbishment is expected to be agreed on 9 July 2014. A contractor has been secured to commence the refurbishment work once the legalities of the site purchase have been completed. Refurbishment work is expected to be completed by early December, ready for the academy to open in January 2015. Plans for the premises and accommodation were scrutinised and discussed with the headteacher, the Trust's facilities manager and an executive from the Trust. These officers are members of the Education Funding Agency project group. The Education Funding Agency, the Department's delivery agent, is managing the preparation and refurbishment process on behalf of the academy. The Department will wish to continue to monitor progress with the premises directly with the Agency.

The plans demonstrate compliance with all the independent school regulations for premises and accommodation. There will be sufficient classroom and other space for the planned number on roll, appropriately structured to meet the needs of students across the full age range. This includes general teaching and learning areas and specialist classrooms for science, art, information and communication technology and food technology. The proprietor has clear plans to ensure that there will be suitable outdoor space to enable PE to be provided to students in line with the academy's curriculum. The academy has already developed links with a local sports centre and an outdoor pursuit centre including in relation to the use of showers and changing facilities. All requirements for toilets, water supply including labelled drinking water,

medical rooms and securely fenced boundaries are met by the facilities which are included in the plans.

Provision of information

The academy must meet the regulations identified in the check sheet.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The provision is likely to meet all regulations.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

- **YES. The school can be registered and allowed to open on receipt by DfE of evidence of improvement in relation to the following matters:**
 - prepare a suitable fire risk assessment and ensure that the building standards compliance certificate is obtained on completion of the refurbishment work (paragraph 13)
 - produce a fully detailed accessibility plan in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010
 - meet the regulations identified in Part 6 of the check sheet.

If registration is recommended, please state:

Recommended number of day pupils: 150

Recommended number of boarders: not applicable

Recommended age range: 4 - 18 years

Recommended gender of pupils: mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.