

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

School name	Maiden Erlegh School
DfE registration number	870/4001
Unique reference number (URN)	141886
Inspection number	465531
Inspection dates	10 June and 31 July 2015
Reporting inspector	Susan Jackson

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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 2008.¹

Context of the school

The proposed Maiden Erlegh School is to be located in new buildings in a residential area of Reading. The school is sponsored by the Maiden Erlegh Trust and is due to open on 3 September 2015. The school has applied to be registered to admit up to 900 boys and girls in the age range 11 to 16 years. It will admit students in Year 7 in its first year. The school is already oversubscribed having reached capacity of 180 students registered for Year 7. Two of these students have statements of special educational needs or educational health care plans. The school will be non-selective and will admit students with special educational needs. The school aims to help students value everyone as a unique human being and to develop a sense of belonging and community on a local, regional, national and global level.

A follow-up exercise, not involving a visit, was conducted to evaluate the school's progress in meeting the relevant regulations, as at the time of the initial visit not all were likely to be met. The inspector scrutinised documentation and held discussions with the headteacher.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	900
Age range	11–16
Gender of pupils	mixed
Type of special educational needs	n/a

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 students

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant regulations for this part, but implementation could not be seen. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies set out a framework within which students will be encouraged to know the difference between right and wrong, and understand the consequences of personal decisions.

The school's policy for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students sets out a vision for students to be equipped to take their place in a fair society as responsible citizens. It places an emphasis on cooperation and the importance of teaching students about British values of democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect. Planned provision includes: encouraging students to respect diversity of beliefs and opinions; developing moral integrity; developing respect for the needs, interests and feelings of others; and, providing links with the world of work and the wider community.

The well-considered tutorial and assembly programme aims to develop students' moral understanding and their ability to make good judgements. Overall, the school is aiming to develop qualities of happiness, pride and forgiveness in students, and to develop their curiosity and resilience.

The introduction of a house system is designed to foster a sense of responsibility and underline the importance of democratic values. Students will also be involved in charity work and community enterprises. Planned topics within the programme for personal, social and health education and within the tutor programme will provide students with an understanding of citizenship and the roles of individuals within the wider community. These topics include the workings of English public institutions and services, and the fundamentals of the law in England, both civil and criminal.

The planned religious education curriculum is designed to enable students to understand and respect different faiths and cultures. The proprietors hold a strong commitment to ensuring that all lessons, including provision for students' personal development, are free from partisan political or religious views and that where any political issues are discussed a balanced view is always presented.

Parents are introduced to the school's ethos before their children join the school and the importance to the school of British values is made clear from the outset. The school's opening assembly is also planned around the theme of respecting and upholding British values.

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/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.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements for this part. Policy documents have been produced, including detailed policies for safeguarding, safer recruitment, behaviour management, anti-bullying and first aid. The school's safeguarding policy is fully compliant and it makes specific reference to the Department for Education guidelines entitled *Working together to safeguard children*, as published in 2015.

Senior staff have been trained in safe recruitment and the principles have been applied effectively to the recruitment process to date. Arrangements have been made for the training of all staff in child protection before the school opens in September.

The designated person for child protection has been trained to the required level. All staff will be qualified in first aid, and training has been arranged. Suitable policies have been prepared for all required aspects of health and safety and for fire safety, including fire safety risk assessments. The site managers plan to carry out fire risk assessments for the temporary buildings before the school opens in September.

The plans for the temporary pre-fabricated buildings suggest that they are likely to conform to required standards and provide suitable and secure accommodation for the new free school in its first year of operation. The buildings are configured as a school and have previously been in use as a primary school.

Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements.

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

The school's planning for the completion of all required checks on the suitability of staff and implementation to date indicate that all relevant regulations are likely to be met. All required checks have been completed, or are in the process of being completed, for the proprietors and for staff appointed to date. These are recorded on a suitable single central register. Checks are being completed and entries on the register updated as new staff are appointed, including for staff who are being transferred over from Maiden Erlegh School in Earley, or will be working on both sites.

The school does not intend to employ supply staff but is aware of its responsibilities should supply staff be appointed in the future.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements in this part, although implementation could not be seen in full. It is to be located in a new purpose-built building, a short distance away from Maiden Erlegh School in Earley, in a residential area of Reading. The premises will be ready for occupation in October 2016. Building work has not yet commenced, so that access for this visit was not possible. Detailed plans for the premises and accommodation were scrutinised. The building is likely to meet all requirements, including provision for

sick students and medical examinations. There will be appropriate facilities for the preparation and serving of food on the school site. The Education Funding Agency, the Department for Education's delivery agent, is managing the preparation and refurbishment process on behalf of the academy trust. The Department will wish to continue to monitor progress with the premises directly with the Agency.

Plans for the temporary buildings were also scrutinised during the initial visit. Initially, only Year 7 students will be admitted. The premises are suitable for the Year 7 planned curriculum to be provided in September 2015. Access to science laboratories, design and technology accommodation and sports facilities will be provided by UTC Reading, which is located on a site that is adjacent to the proposed school. The UTC and the areas for co-location were seen to be spacious and secure; the planned arrangements for the safeguarding of Maiden Erlegh students whilst on site are robust.

Plans for the pre-fabricated buildings indicate that classrooms are of adequate size and sufficient in number for the planned intake in September 2015. Furniture, suitable for the proposed age range on opening, is to be provided ready for the opening of the school in September. There are sufficient washrooms, although some modifications may be required to the toilet facilities. Adequate showers and changing facilities are available to students following physical education or sports. There will be no catering on the temporary site as meals will be brought over from the kitchens of Maiden Erlegh School in Earley. Careful attention has been paid to hygiene in terms of the transportation arrangements. There is just sufficient safe outside space for play and recreation, and possible access to neighbouring playing fields. The buildings and access points to the grounds are likely to be fully secure.

Part 6. Provision of information

The information provided for prospective parents and found on the school's website is likely to meet requirements, although implementation could not be seen in full.

The school intends to provide full written reports to parents once a year and shorter reports at five intervals during the year.

School leaders are aware of the requirements to provide the local authority and others with information as required.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all of the relevant requirements for registration in this part. Clear and well developed procedures for handling complaints are being carried over from Maiden Erlegh School in Earley.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The new school will benefit from leaders and staff with significant expertise and experience. The principal of the proposed Maiden Erlegh School in Reading will be transferring from Maiden Erlegh School in Earley. The executive principal

possesses good skills and knowledge appropriate to his new role and has put in place robust systems and procedures so that the relevant independent school standards are likely to be upheld consistently.

The trust and the executive principal have a good understanding of what is needed for successful implementation of the school's policies, although implementation at this stage could not be seen. Pupils' safety is of paramount importance; this is borne out through compliance with safeguarding standards and the careful attention applied to welfare, health and safety procedures.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school recognises the need to make a general commitment to providing equality of access for disabled students and has plans to prepare the required three-year plan to increase accessibility in the new building.

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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Recommended number of day pupils	900
Recommended age range	11–16
Recommended gender of pupils	mixed
Recommended type of special educational needs	n/a