

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of a 16 to 19 free school

School name	University of Liverpool Mathematics School
DfE registration number	341/4010
Unique reference number (URN)	147477
Inspection number	10148524
Inspection dates	06/07/2020 to 08/07/2020
Reporting inspector	Deirdre Duignan



Information about the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted at the request of the Secretary of State for Education. It was carried out under section 99(1) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.¹

In carrying out this type of inspection, inspectors assess the extent to which the school is likely to meet 'The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014' when it opens.²

The inspection was carried out during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As a result, we could not visit the school site or meet with the proposer in person. The inspector held telephone discussions with the headteacher and the chair of the board of trustees. The inspector reviewed the architects' plans for the temporary school site, scrutinised information available on the school's website and reviewed a range of policies and procedures. Using the available information, the inspector is able to give sufficient assurance that the school is likely to meet the independent school standards.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a 16 to 19 free school for:

Number of day pupils	360
Age range	16 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Not applicable

Context of the school

The proposed school is a 16 to 19 free school specialising in mathematics. It will recruit students from across the Liverpool city region and provide a curriculum based on the mathematical sciences. Leaders' aim is that the school's challenging and ambitious education, as well as its outreach work with other schools, will improve educational outcomes in mathematics across the region and ensure that more students study the mathematical sciences at university.

The school will be situated in the grounds of the University of Liverpool, in a building formerly used by the university. Adaptations to the building have been delayed by the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic and are not yet complete.

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

² 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.

Leaders do not currently have access to the building and were not able to provide a virtual tour of the premises.

The University of Liverpool Mathematics School is a single-academy trust run by a board of trustees. The trustees include members of the university. It is intended that the school will enjoy a close partnership with the university, including through the use of its facilities.

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, provided that it addresses the regulations noted in the tables set out in parts.
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Compliance with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

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

The proposed school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations in this part. The school is likely to meet the requirements of the standards in this part. Leaders have drawn up a policy that shows how they will promote students' spiritual, cultural, social and moral development. Through the school's pastoral and personal enrichment programme, they will ensure that students develop the knowledge and skills they need to live safe, happy and productive lives. They have drawn up plans to ensure that students have opportunities to develop their cultural capital. Leaders have begun to think about how they will use the history of the city of Liverpool to teach students about issues such as slavery and racism. They have thought about how students can contribute to the local community, for example by doing voluntary work in local primary schools. Students have already committed to improving the local area, for example by organising a litter-pick.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The proposed school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations in this part. Leaders have drawn up a detailed safeguarding policy, which is available on the school's website. This meets the current requirements, but leaders have plans to update the policy to reflect the guidance that will come into force in September. There are suitable training plans in place for staff to ensure that they fully understand their safeguarding duties. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies include appropriate strategies for addressing and recording any issues. The school has suitable arrangements to cover any requirements for first aid. The school's register and attendance procedures meet the requirements. Leaders have drafted a health and safety policy that will need revising and completing once they have access to the building. The fire risk assessment that is currently in place will also need updating once all the adaptations are complete. There is a detailed risk assessment policy in place, but leaders have not yet completed thorough risk assessments for all aspects of their work.

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

comply with relevant health and safety laws by implementing the health and safety policy effectively	paragraph 11
ensure that, when building work is complete, the school is compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	paragraph 12
ensure that the risk assessment policy is implemented effectively by identifying all risks that students may be vulnerable to and taking action to reduce these risks, including when students are not in the building.	paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The proposed school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations in this part. The school's safeguarding and child protection policy sets out the checks that leaders will carry out before staff begin work at the school. All of the necessary checks have already been carried out on staff and trustees who have been appointed. Leaders have suitable plans in place to ensure that any supply teachers are also subject to the necessary checks.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The proposed school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations in this part. The school will be housed temporarily in a building on the grounds of the university, before moving to a permanent home in 2022. Leaders were not able to provide a virtual tour of the premises. Therefore, the inspector is only able to provide limited assurance about some aspects of the premises. The architect's plans demonstrate that requirements for this part are likely to be met if leaders implement them as intended. For example, there is provision for a medical room in which leaders intend to have a sink installed. The toilet and hygiene facilities are more than adequate. Classrooms and other teaching spaces are of adequate size and appear to be well lit and ventilated. There is ample space for students to study and to relax. Although there is no outdoor recreation area, students will be able to use a local park at lunchtime. They will also have access to leisure facilities on the university's grounds. The building plans indicate that toilets have running water, but the inspector was not able to check this. The school's health and safety plans do not yet include processes to check the water temperature.

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

ensure that the building is maintained to a standard so that the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.	25
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Part 6. Provision of information

The proposed school is likely to meet all the relevant regulations in this part. The school's website contains relevant and useful information about the school, its aims and the trustees. All the necessary policies are in place and are available to parents, including the child protection and safeguarding policy. Any policies that are not on the school's website will be made available to parents and carers.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Leaders have drawn up a suitable complaints policy that sets out the arrangements to resolve and record all complaints, formally and informally. The policy sets out appropriate timescales.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Leaders and trustees have a very clear vision of the type of school they wish to create and of what they want the school to achieve and are deeply committed to making their vision a reality. They intend the school to be a centre of excellence for the study of mathematical sciences that will address the gender imbalance in the proportions of students who study mathematical sciences at A level and at university. The school will enjoy close ties with the University of Liverpool that will enable pupils to enjoy its facilities, but also gain an understanding of how mathematics is used and applied in a range of disciplines and careers. Trustees bring a wide range of experience and skills from education and other fields to their roles. The governance plan indicates that they will set ambitious targets for the school to achieve and is clear about how they will hold leaders to account for their performance against these targets.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The adaptations being made to the building will ensure that it is fully accessible. Leaders have an accessibility plan in place that will allow any further adaptations to be made.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

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