

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

School name	St Michael's Church of England Academy
Department for Education (DfE) registration number	880/2005
Unique reference number (URN)	147851
Inspection number	10148520
Inspection dates	27/05/2021
Reporting inspector	Stewart Gale



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](#).

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.¹

The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation relating to the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards, and spoke to the lead proposers from the trust, including the chief executive officer, the chief operating officer and the chair of the board of trustees. The inspector toured the school site, including the planned temporary school site. He discussed plans for the proposed school sites with the headteacher (designate), the trust's director of education and the estates and services manager. The inspector scrutinised information on the school's website and the single central record.

Information about the registration

The school is seeking registration as a free school for:

Number of day pupils	210
Age range	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Type of special educational needs	Not applicable

Context of the school

The new provision is a primary school within the Learning Academy Partnership multi-academy trust. St Michael's Church of England Academy will be located in the town of Paignton, Devon.

The school will open in September 2021. It will initially be located in temporary accommodation with 30 children in Reception. It will also offer eight placements for three- and four-year-olds in its Nursery provision. The plan is to relocate into a new state-of-the-art building on an adjoining site in January 2022. The final capacity will be for a one-form entry primary school for 210 pupils, plus up to 30 children in the nursery. The provision will admit two-year-olds from January 2022. The school will add a new year group as it matures, at the start of every September.

¹ Part 1 to Schedule 1 is not reported against because it does not apply to academies, free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges.

When it opens, the school will have full access to the trust's services and support, including in relation to health and safety, school improvement and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In September 2021, the school will be part of the trust's local advisory group for South Devon, joining the 'hub' with another local primary school. The advisory group will account directly to the trust board.

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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Compliance with The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

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

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The school's policies actively promote fundamental British values and place pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development at the core of the school's work and curriculum. Leaders have built the SMSC curriculum on the school's Christian foundation. Leaders are enthusiastic to promote SMSC. They provide strong assurances that they can deliver on their mission that pupils really can be 'The future we create every day'.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements in this part. Policies are already in place and have been adapted to meet the school's context. The policies for health, safety (including fire safety on both sites), behaviour, supervision, risk assessment, first aid and safeguarding are likely to be implemented effectively. Trust leaders, including the headteacher, demonstrate a keen awareness of how to keep pupils safe. There are already stringent monitoring arrangements in place, as part of the trust's routine checks of its schools. School staff and leaders speak knowledgeably about the standards under this part. They are dedicated and have clear intentions. Leaders are likely to make pupils' safety a priority and to promote a culture of safeguarding.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all the relevant requirements in this part. The single central record is already in place. This details the required checks made, by whom and when, and these are recorded appropriately on the trust's system, including for governors. The school is already implementing its recruitment policy. This ensures that staff recruitment, vetting and training comply with government expectations for this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The school will initially be located in temporary accommodation, adjoining a local language centre. There are suitable plans in place to renovate the current site for the purposes of a two-class Reception provision for up to 30 children, plus a further eight three- and four-year-olds. The buildings are likely to meet all current requirements, including provision for toileting, learning and outdoor play. The building work is due to commence in July 2021. The plans for the new permanent building are well advanced. These show details of high-quality provision in all requirements, including facilities to support pupils with SEND. The permanent school site has suitable plans and arrangements for accommodating pre-school children, including two-year-olds.

Part 6. Provision of information

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. All required policies are in place and are available to parents, including an up-to-date safeguarding policy. The website is fully operational. It is well organised for easy use and access. Copies of all policies can be made available on request. While the permanent school is being built, the telephone number available for prospective parents is the trust's main office number.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The complaints policy is comprehensive and clear. It contains all necessary steps, with timelines for the efficient handling of any complaints. The policy sets out formal and informal stages of a complaint appropriately and how these can be escalated. The policy is published on the school's website.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The school is likely to meet all the requirements in this part. The trust has already set out clear accountabilities and duties, in line with its funding agreement, to be able to assure itself of the effective running of the school. School leaders will be accountable through the local advisory group, whose role is to scrutinise the effectiveness of leadership and management. Trust leaders have ensured that the school will have strong local support, while it gets 'off the ground.' For example, the headteacher will have allocated time from a special educational needs coordinator provided through the trust. There will be regular and ongoing liaison, including visits from the director of education, to provide any appropriate and timely support or challenge. Trust leaders have established high-quality practice in some of their other schools in order to support St Michael's. For example, one of the trust's schools is part of the English hub, providing local support for early reading and phonics. Leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills that mean the school is likely to meet the independent school standards in all parts.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

The school is likely to meet all the requirements of Schedule 10. Policies clearly identify equalities for all vulnerable groups and pupils, including those with protected characteristics. There is an accessibility plan that is already published on the school's website.

Statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage

All the statutory requirements for the early years are likely to be met. Staff who have already been appointed are suitably qualified and experienced. Supervision will be at least in line with stipulations in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework. This provides firm assurances for the well-being and safety of the

children. Leaders are passionate about getting it right 'from the beginning'. They understand the importance of the early years and recognise the essential milestones of children at different stages. The headteacher is an accredited specialist leader of education in the EYFS. Staff's knowledge is strong.

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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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