

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of an academy

School name	Woodpecker Hall Academy
DfE registration number	Not yet assigned
Unique reference number (URN)	1087
Inspection number	384321
Inspection dates	17 August 2011
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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Context of the school

Woodpecker Hall Academy is a proposed co-educational primary school located in a residential area of Edmonton in Enfield, North London. It will be housed in a brand new building on the site of Cuckoo Hall Academy. Work will begin on the new building in October 2011 and it is intended to be completed by June 2012. In the meantime it is proposed to open the school in September in a wing of Cuckoo Hall Academy with one part-time Nursery class, providing morning and afternoon sessions, and two full-time Reception classes. This accommodation is spacious, well resourced and fit for purpose. When the school relocates to its new premises in September 2012 it is intended to admit an additional year group of 60 each year until the school reaches its proposed capacity of 480.

The school will have no religious affiliation and serves a diverse community. Pupils will come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and most will speak English as an additional language. The school will also admit some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school aims to promote academic excellence with an emphasis on the core skills of literacy and numeracy.

The proprietor is the Cuckoo Hall Academies Trust which has considerable experience of education and a successful track record in running the Cuckoo Hall Academy. The newly-appointed principal was formerly the deputy headteacher of Cuckoo Hall Academy. She has been involved in the planning for the proposed new school from the outset. Woodpecker Hall is already fully staffed in anticipation of opening in September, with three full-time teachers, all of whom have qualified teacher status, and six teaching assistants. Most of these are already employed by the trust and have moved over from Cuckoo Hall. They are well known to the principal and trustees. The school will also be able to make use of the specialist staff employed by the trust, for example in physical education.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are likely to be met through the positive ethos of the school and the emphasis on good behaviour and supportive and respectful relationships. The planned provision clearly emphasises the development of the pupils' confidence, self-knowledge and understanding of taking responsibility for their behaviour and actions. The annual cycle of celebrations across the many faith groups within the school is built into the calendar for the new school year so that pupils can grow in their awareness of, and respect for, traditions and cultures other than their own. Visitors and group visits, appropriate to the age range, are also planned so that pupils can develop an understanding of public institutions and services in England.

The implementation of the plans and the establishment of the school's ethos could not be seen as the school is not yet operating.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Comprehensive policies have been put in place to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils in the school. They follow recommendations for good practice and fully meet statutory requirements. They set out clearly the proposed academy's approach to dealing with behaviour, bullying and health and safety and cover all current recommendations and regulations. The policy for the safeguarding of children meets requirements and provides clear guidance to staff. The headteacher has already been trained as the school's child protection officer. The training of all staff in safeguarding is a priority in the induction procedures which will take place before the children arrive. Safe recruitment policies and procedures are in place. Volunteers already working supporting the trust have all been checked and no new volunteers will be used unless the necessary checks have been carried out. The school has detailed and suitable procedures to assess and manage safety risks around the school site. The delineation of the areas to be used by Cuckoo Hall pupils and those from the new school are clear and well thought out. There are written policies to promote pupils' good behaviour with clear codes of conduct and an appropriate set of sanctions and rewards. The health and safety policy is in line with requirements and has been drawn up with the welfare of the pupils at its core. The premises have been fully adapted to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Arrangements are in hand to build on the good practice established on the site in respect of fire safety. Fire safety checks are regular, recorded in detail and evacuation procedures in the case of fire have been carefully considered.

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. The implementation of policies and procedures could not be seen as the school is not operating.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school's policies and procedures are likely to meet all requirements. Recruitment procedures meet the current guidance. All appointed staff are appropriately vetted and there is a single central record that contains all the required checks on the proprietors, headteacher and staff. The trust has well-established procedures for vetting of staff and the majority have already been checked under the existing procedures. The school only intends to employ supply staff on rare occasions and secure arrangements are in place for ensuring that agency staff are suitable to be working with children. Representatives of the proprietors and the governing body have completed the necessary checks.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

It is proposed that the school will open in a wing of the Cuckoo Hall Academy in September while brand new dedicated premises are built on another area of the site. The current premises provide good-quality accommodation which is fit for purpose.

There are three spacious, well-equipped classrooms with adjoining safe outside play areas. There are also large rooms upstairs which will be used for dining. The unit will be completely self-contained without free access to Cuckoo Hall Academy either inside or out. Woodpecker Hall will, however, have use of a suitable medical room within the Cuckoo Hall Academy for the first year. The building meets all regulations for heating, lighting, ventilation, decoration and floor covering. The school has a good number of washrooms which more than meet requirements. Play areas have been carefully considered and surfaces matched to the needs of young children, both for free and guided play. Appropriate furniture and fittings are in place. Access is already in place for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although building work has not yet begun on the new school premises, detailed plans show that they are designed to meet the educational and welfare needs for the proposed numbers to be admitted. The headteacher is confident that the new building will be completed in time for the next academic year, but contingency plans are in place in the event of any delay.

Provision of information

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

Recommendation to the Department for Education Registration

Is registration recommended?

YES

For number of day pupils: 480

For age range: 3–11

For gender of pupils: Mixed.