

Advice note for pre-registration inspections of all types of academies and free schools/studio schools/university technical colleges (UTC)

School name	Beccles Free School
DfE registration number	999/1288
Unique reference number (URN)	1288
Inspection number	404008
Inspection dates	11 June 2012
Reporting inspector	Fatiha Maitland

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Context of the school

The proposed 'Beccles Free School' is situated in Lowestoft, in Suffolk. The school is not open but intends to do so in September 2012. It will operate from a large building, which was formerly known as Carlton Colville Primary School. The latter moved to new premises at the end of February 2012. The premises are owned by The Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust, which consists of three trustees. The premises have not yet been handed over by Suffolk local authority.

The school plans to admit up to 540 boys and girls, aged between 11 and 16 years. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs will be admitted if the school judges that their specific learning needs can be met. The school plans to make provision for students who speak English as an additional language.

One of the school's visions is 'to help students achieve their potential through a culture of high academic, personal and social expectations and aspirations.'

The school has no specific religious affiliation. This is the school's first registration visit.

The pre-registration inspection of Beccles Free School took place at the same time as Saxmundham Free School. Both inspectors carried out a scrutiny of documentation and discussions with the management team of the local Free Schools Trust in their main office at Marryott House, in Woodbridge, in Suffolk. The inspections were reported separately.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school provided sufficient evidence to indicate that the planned provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) meets all the regulations, but implementation could not be checked. The provision clearly encompasses the development of self-knowledge and the acceptance of responsibility for one's behaviour and actions. The school has devised a policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; this is founded on the '6Cs to Success' (Co-operation, Commitment, Confidence, Community, Challenge, Celebration) that underpin the ethos of the Trust and its Free Schools. Planned activities in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), assemblies and acts of worship will provide opportunities for students to differentiate between what is right and wrong, to make connections between aspects of their learning and to express their views on ethical issues and personal values.

Scrutiny of documentation indicates that there is a strong emphasis on promoting

tolerance and developing an appreciation and respect for other faiths and cultures. Visitors to school and visits to places of interest, alongside the PSHCE programme, will provide students with adequate opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding of public institutions and services in England.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

A number of regulations are not likely to be met. Implementation could not be checked, as the school was not operating. The school has prepared written policies to promote good behaviour amongst students with clear codes of conduct and a set of rewards and sanctions, and information about the prevention of bullying. This will be supported by the school's '6Cs to Success' scheme, ensuring a positive ethos based on the development of key skills and values for life. The school has also devised detailed procedures to assess and manage safety risks related to educational visits. The school has a detailed policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school; this contains all the required information and is well supported by the school's safer recruitment policy and procedures. The school has recently appointed two designated child protection officers. All members of staff including the designated child protection officers are now firmly booked to attend the relevant child protection training on 27-28 August 2012.

The school has prepared a health and safety policy, and has yet to carry out the risk assessment on the premises and resources to minimise risks. Fire evacuation policy and procedures are in place. However, the school has yet to assure itself that there is a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by its risk assessment under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The school has plans to carry out the necessary risk assessments, including those on premises and resources, when the building is handed over by the local authority.

A first aid policy exists. This provides sufficient guidance for staff on hygiene procedures in case of spillage of blood or body fluid and how medical conditions should be treated and recorded. There are currently no certified first aiders in school. However, the school has identified members of staff, who will receive first aid training on 29-30 August 2012. The school has an admission register and attendance registers which meet requirements. An inclusion policy is in place. The school has yet to devise a suitable three-year accessibility improvement plan to fulfil its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

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

- ensure that all members of staff including the designated child protection officers have undertaken the relevant child protection training as planned (paragraph 7)

- carry out risk assessments on the premises and resources to ensure students' health and safety which have regard to the DfES guidance (paragraph 11)
- assure itself that there is a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by its risk assessment under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 13)
- ensure that the identified members of staff undertake first aid training as planned (paragraph 14)
- devise a suitable three-year accessibility improvement plan to fulfil its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations related to the suitability of the proprietor and staff. Scrutiny of documentation and discussion with the management of the school indicates that the school is aware of all safeguarding requirements. The school has made all of the required vetting checks on existing members of staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. Suitable recruitment procedures are in place in the event that additional staff are employed.

The school has also established a single central register and recorded all of the required information on all members of staff and the proprietorial body.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school has firm plans to ensure that the building is likely to meet all of the regulations. The scrutiny of the school's floor plan and discussions with the senior management of the school indicates that the premises are fit for purpose. The school consists of several classrooms. The premises also benefit from specialist accommodation including an information and communication technology suite, two science laboratories, an art and design and technology workshop, a food and technology room and a library. The school has a large hall, which will be used for assemblies, lunch and physical activities.

The school ensures that there is a suitable designated area for students to go to when they are unwell. The current provision of toilets and washbasins is suitable for staff and the proposed number of students including those with disabilities. Students will have access to a suitable outdoor area to play safely.

The Education Funding Agency, which is the Department Delivery Agency, is managing the process of acquiring the premises on behalf of the Trust. The Department will wish to continue to monitor the progress of the premises directly with the Agency.

Provision of information

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy and procedures are likely to meet all the regulations.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

Is registration recommended?

YES. The school can be registered and allowed to open on receipt by DfE of evidence of improvement in relation to the following matters:

- ensure that all members of staff including the designated child protection officers have undertaken the relevant child protection training as planned (paragraph 7)
- carry out the risk assessment on the premises and resources to ensure students' health and safety which have regard to the DfES guidance (paragraph 11)
- assure itself that there is a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by its risk assessment under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 13)
- ensure that the identified members of staff undertake first aid training as planned (paragraph 14)
- devise a suitable three-year accessibility improvement plan to fulfil its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Recommended number of day pupils: 540 students

Recommended number of boarders or residential pupils (if applicable): N/A

Recommended age range: 11-16 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A