

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

School name	EBN Free School
DfE registration number	999/1250
Unique reference number (URN)	1250
Inspection number	403969
Inspection dates	13 June 2012
Reporting inspector	Susan Lewis

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Context of the school

EBN Free School is located in East Birmingham. It is an 'Alternative Provision' school sponsored by the East Birmingham Network, a network of 12 head teachers of secondary schools and academies across East Birmingham. The network schools collaborate on a range of curriculum and pupil support areas including behaviour and attendance and post-16 provision. EBN Free School aims to extend and improve alternative provision opportunities for 13-16 year olds from across East Birmingham. The school will admit students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, who are disengaged, or are in danger of becoming disengaged, from mainstream education.

The school will open in September 2012 with 45 students on roll, in new premises which are attached to a shopping centre, The Swan Centre, in Yardley, Birmingham. It hopes to admit up to 90 students as the school grows.

The school's accommodation is currently being developed over three floors and includes specialist beauty facilities and independent learning areas. These are due to be completed at the end of August. There is no outdoor play area. The school entrance opens directly onto a pavement and is fronted by a main road. It plans to have use on at least one day of nearby playing fields and changing rooms.

The school's vision is to inspire young people and build their aspirations within a supportive, disciplined and educationally excellent environment so that, by being given the right skills by the right educators, each and every young person can and will achieve.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

All regulations are likely to be met, although implementation could not be seen. The school's planning is highly focused on personal development and helping students to manage and reflect on their own behaviour and experiences. Personal coaches and 'individual learning passports' will support consistency of approach and help students to take ownership of their learning and behaviour and to reflect on the needs and rights of others. The programmes and range of experiences planned will challenge students to think about the needs of others and to work together. The citizenship course will provide students with adequate insights into the workings of English institutions. There are appropriate policies, plans and procedures in place to help students to accept responsibility for their actions and to promote their understanding of others' points of view as well as the diversity of cultures and beliefs in today's world.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

All but one of the regulations are likely to be met. Implementation could not be seen as the school is not yet operating. The school has strong systems and procedures for health and safety, including those ensuring students are safe on educational visits. The building is not yet complete but a date for completion has been ascertained for the end of August, when the required fire risk assessments will also be carried out. However, there is a lack of clarity around the school's evacuation procedures and where students will assemble. Furthermore, there is a lift that makes the building accessible to disabled people but it is unclear how their evacuation will be managed should they be above the ground floor. The school is in discussions with the builders and fire service as to how appropriate provision can be made.

There are detailed policies on managing students' behaviour and the sanctions to be put in place if students do not adhere to the school's rules and code of conduct. Staff training and student pastoral care systems exemplify high expectations and a positive proactive approach to behaviour management. They focus on improving student attendance and engagement with education. There are clear guidelines as to how bullying will be dealt with should incidents occur.

The Principal has appropriate training as the designated child protection officer and also in safe recruitment. Safe recruitment guidance and procedures have been meticulously followed. All the required checks are carried out prior to staff taking up appointments. The school will have an appropriate number of qualified first aiders in place and has a detailed first aid policy. It has a comprehensive equal opportunities statement and a three year disability access plan which meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Staff induction covers pivotal aspects of the school's work such as safeguarding training and training in behavioural management techniques.

There are appropriate systems and procedures for the completion of attendance and admission registers and for improving attendance.

In summary:

- the school has not yet ascertained how it will comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 because it does not yet know the detail of how emergency evacuations linked to fire will be carried out and where students will assemble (paragraph 13).

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

All regulations are likely to be met. All the required checks on staff's identify, medical fitness, qualifications and right to work in the United Kingdom are in place and have been carried out meticulously to date. The school ensures all appointed staff, governors and regular visitors have an enhanced CRB check before taking up their

appointment and that these are recorded appropriately. The Chair of the Governing Body has had all her checks undertaken through the DfE, as required.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

All but two regulations are likely to be met. The building is spacious, well maintained and will have a good range of facilities. Plans for washroom facilities and a 'medical room' where students can go to if they are ill have been recently adapted so that all facilities for male and female students are separate and the medical room has the required washbasin and is near to the washroom facilities. However, the arrangements for emergency evacuations are still uncertain including assembly points and how those with physical disabilities or other needs will be evacuated. In addition, although there are some playing fields beyond the Swan Centre car park, to which the school will have access on one day per week, there is no outside play area which students can access daily.

In summary:

- there is no clear evacuation policy and procedure, and risk assessments have not been undertaken (paragraph 23(g))
- there is no outdoor space for young people to use on a regular basis (paragraph 23(s)).

Provision of information

The provision meets all the regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The provision meets 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:

- submission of an appropriate fire risk assessment including confirmation that emergency evacuation procedures including assembly points that are appropriate for all students (paragraphs 13 and 23(g))

- evidence as to how students' access to a safe outdoor play area will be provided on a regular basis (paragraph (23s)).

If registration is recommended, please state:

Recommended number of day pupils: 90

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

Recommended age range: 13-16 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.