

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

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| School name | Europa School UK |
| DfE registration number | N/A |
| Unique reference number (URN) | 1253 |
| Inspection number | 403972 |
| Inspection dates | 11 July 2012 |
| Reporting inspector | Caroline Bolton |

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Context of the school

Europa School UK is a proposed two-form-entry mixed school which will eventually provide for a maximum of 784 pupils and will include both primary and secondary phases. The aim is that all year groups will be accommodated by 2017 but at the time of its opening in September 2012, the school will only accept pupils of Reception age and for Years 1 and 2. The full ability range usually found within mainstream schools will be represented, including, it is anticipated, disabled pupils and those with a variety of special educational needs. It is anticipated that at least one pupil with a statement of special educational needs will be among the first cohort of pupils admitted. Europa School UK is located in a rural area in the village of Culham, south of Oxford. It will share its site with the existing European School, which is in the process of a phased closure that is scheduled for completion in 2017. At that stage, the plan is for the new school to cater for pupils from four to 19 years of age. In its initial phase of development, the free school will make use of surplus European School classrooms, which are currently undergoing a complete refurbishment.

The Principal, the head of primary phase and three other members of teaching staff have been appointed, subject to satisfactory completion of the required checks. This number is more than would normally be necessary for the numbers of pupils expected in September. The intention is to appoint teaching assistants when the numbers of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs, and the nature of their needs, are known. A board of trustees, who are directors of the company, Europa School UK, is in place but as yet there is no governing body.

The school will specialise in modern European languages and in science. Much of the curriculum will be taught in two or more European languages, with the aim that its pupils will leave the school fluent in at least two, and probably more, languages, enriching their career prospects, their cultural lives and their awareness of the global perspective. The school will have no religious affiliation.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Policy and curricular documentation available at present indicate that requirements for this standard are likely to be met. There is a clear behaviour policy which sets out the school's expectations of pupils and strikes a well-judged balance between the provision of support for individuals who struggle to comply with classroom norms, encouragement and reward for positive response, and sanctions where they are necessary. The outcomes will depend on the consistent implementation by staff of the policy. The curricular emphasis on developing the pupils' fluency in modern languages and their knowledge and appreciation of different cultures offers a rich vein of learning in moral, social and cultural education. The aim of teaching a

'bilingual timetable' from the time of pupils' arrival in school, with some subjects taught in more than one language, is likely, if successful, to foster growth in pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. The joint focus on modern languages and science has been planned to prepare pupils for life in a global economy, in which such skills are increasingly valued. The planning will provide pupils with a good insight into British institutions and services.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Requirements are likely to be met, although implementation could not be seen. The school has drawn up a child protection policy and a policy for ensuring pupils' safety on school visits, both of which take account of government guidance. Safeguarding training is planned for the staff once they take up post so that requirements will be met. Recruitment is ongoing, with full regard to the necessary checks on individuals. The Principal plans that all staff should undertake first-aid training so that a suitably qualified person will be on site at all times of the school day. Clear behaviour and anti-bullying policies have been drawn up. The Chair of Trustees and the Principal are aware of the need to ensure fire safety requirements are met and plan that once the building is handed over, emergency evacuation procedures and fire practice arrangements will be put in place. A suitable space in which sick children can rest is planned to be within sight of the office staff and convenient for a WC.

The Reception base is at ground-floor level so that wheelchair access by ramps can be arranged without undue difficulty. The other building has two floors and no lift, nor is a chair-lift evidently a safe or realistic proposition. Although no pupils who have mobility difficulties are expected in September, the Principal has contingency plans if the need arises to put in place ramps for ground-floor access and to ensure that a class which a disabled pupil has joined is timetabled in one of the ground-floor rooms. The Principal is aware of the need to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and confirms that a three-year accessibility plan will be in place before the school opens. Registers were not available at the time of the inspection visit, numbers of pupils having not yet been finalised.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Although the recruitment process for the new school is not yet complete, the procedures are likely to meet all requirements. Enough teachers have been appointed for the first term, subject to satisfactory outcomes of the required checks, and a single central record shows the dates of CRB disclosures for each of them and for the trustees also. Other necessary checks were pending at the time of the inspection but are likely to be completed and recorded on the single central register before the school opens so that requirements will be met in full. Teaching assistants will not be recruited until the school has final information about the number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, together with the nature of their needs. The Principal is aware that checks must be made in relation to any supply staff who may be employed in the future.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The buildings in which the new school will be housed are already in existence, although undergoing substantial refurbishment. It is likely that requirements will be met by the time of opening in September this year. It was not possible during the inspection visit to speak to a representative of the company responsible for the project management of the work but the Principal reports that he expects the accommodation to be ready and fully compliant with the regulations in time for the opening. The Reception classroom is a conventional rectangular shape and is adequate in size. This area offers potential as a dedicated space for role play, private reading, practical activities or listening posts. A sink is already in situ and the ceiling has fittings for a modern overhead projector.

Outside, there is a spacious area with numerous large play structures, including a climbing frame. The school reports that the ground beneath these fixed objects is a safe soft surface. The outdoor area is to be upgraded in time for the new term. An adequate fence is in place around the Reception area but further thought is being given to security measures before the building is occupied. Europa School UK will continue to share a site, and also the access to it, with the existing European School until the latter's planned closure in 2017. This means that perimeter security measures must be agreed between the two organisations. Further discussions are planned to optimise arrangements, while allowing parents and carers the ready access to the site to which those with children at the European School are accustomed.

No access was available to the interior of the building for Years 1 and 2 but, from the evidence of the view through the windows, the rooms are fit for purpose. Architects' plans show provision for installation and upgrade of suitable washrooms and the Principal is aware of the requirements for the facilities and confirms that requirements will be met. The buildings are likely to meet requirements for heating, light, ventilation and floor covering.

Provision of information

The school website is under development. It is confirmed that all required information will be displayed on the website once it is completed and that hard copies of relevant documents will also be available in school for interested parties.

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 once the complaints procedure has been modified to include a small number of omissions. These include the need to ensure one person on any complaints panel is independent of the management and running of the school and that there are clear timescales for dealing with complaints. The Principal confirms that the necessary amendments will be made before the school opens. It is planned that the complaints policy will be published on the school's website once it is complete.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

Is registration recommended?

YES. This school is likely to meet all regulations when it opens and is recommended for registration.

If registration is recommended, please state:

Recommended number of day pupils: 784, within the planned time frame
Recommended number of boarders or residential pupils (if applicable): N/A
Recommended age range: 4–19, within the planned time frame
Recommended gender of pupils: mixed
Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.