

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

School name	Wye Free School
DfE registration number	886/4007
Unique reference number (URN)	139664
Inspection number	422395
Inspection dates	26 July 2013
Reporting inspector	David Scott

Information about the inspection

This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.¹

Context of the school

Wye Free School will be temporarily located, for up to three years, on the site of a two-storey former university library and learning resource centre in Ashford, Kent, belonging to Imperial College, London. The building is currently being refurbished and is due to be completed by the end of August. The school is sponsored by United Learning and is due to open on 4 September 2013. The school has applied to be registered to admit 600 boys and girls from ages 11 to 19. It will admit students aged 11 and 12 in its first year. At present there are 86 students registered for enrolment. There are no students who have a statement of special educational needs; it is not yet known how many will be on the special educational needs register. The school's vision is to 'transform children's lives by preparing them for life and employment' in order to become 'good, contributing citizens'.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations, but implementation could not be seen. Through strong and holistic pastoral care and the promotion of academic excellence, the school intends to create an ethos where 'positive, enduring and nurturing relationships will embrace the Christian values of honesty, respect, service and compassion'. In addition, the school's vision is to have the theme of 'sustainability within the rural and built environments' running as a core thread through the curriculum. Over time, the school intends to establish a number of community links with Wye Community Farm, Wye Heritage Society, Wye Arts Association and local sports clubs in order to widen students' educational experience and provide students with opportunities to become responsible citizens. The parish council has donated two allotment sites adjacent to the school, so that students will be able to learn how cultivate plants and vegetables as members of the local community. The personal, social and health education and citizenship courses include activities designed to help students appreciate and respect the diversity of traditions and cultures globally and in the local community.

The planned assembly and tutorial programme, across all faith and non-faith groups, has been carefully thought through to stimulate students' appreciation of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects in their lives. Citizenship will be timetabled as a distinct subject taught by specialist teachers, with intentions

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/99

including developing students' understanding of civil law, public institutions and services in England. The school's values of enthusiasm, determination, confidence, creativity, respect and ambition, will be incorporated in to the planning of these lessons, as they are the values common to all United Learning schools. The communication policy gives guidance to teachers to ensure that planned lessons and activities will be free from partisan political or religious views and that, where any political issues are discussed, a balanced view is always presented.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Documentary evidence indicates that all regulations are likely to be met. Policies for child protection, safeguarding, care and guidance, behaviour and anti-bullying have been prepared in accordance with requirements. The behaviour policy is focused on cultivating a 'proactive approach' in order to prevent 'vulnerable students from spiralling into repeated negative behaviour patterns'. It contains an appropriate range of rewards and sanctions strategies designed to 'educate and modify behaviour' rather than just punish perpetrators. All staff appointed to date have been trained in safeguarding, safer recruitment and child protection. In addition, the school has seven members of staff with a first aid qualification, including two with paediatric first aid qualifications. For those members of staff and governors still to be appointed, dates have been identified and a specialist qualified trainer has been firmly booked, to provide the required training in child protection, first aid and safeguarding procedures for all staff before the school opens, so that requirements were likely to be met.

Suitable policies and risk assessments have been completed for all required aspects of health and safety, including fire safety, and a visit from the fire officer has been arranged, so that requirements are likely to be met. Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements. The school's three-year accessibility plan provides a commitment to review and improve access for disabled students.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

All the required vetting checks on all appointed staff and members of the governing body are captured in a single central record which meets requirements. The school does not intend to employ supply staff but, if the need arises, will in the first instance utilise existing teaching assistants and part-time staff to fulfil any short-term absences. If required, the school has appropriate procedures in place to conduct the required checks on agency staff, although their implementation could not be seen.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

A tour of the site and scrutiny of the scope of works and architects plans confirm that the refurbishment of the existing university building is likely to meet the regulations in readiness for opening in September. Heating, lighting and air-circulation systems are likely to meet requirements. Orders for resources, furniture,

fixtures and fittings have been placed to provide a suitably stimulating learning environment. The access policy details arrangements for disabled students to be admitted, and there is a lift to both floors. There are sufficient washrooms, including two for disabled users, located on the ground floor. These have a regulated hot water supply. A labelled supply of water will be accessible to all students. A medical room with a hand basin, will be sited adjacent to the reception area, with washrooms nearby.

For lessons in physical education (PE), the school will utilise its planned new showers and changing facilities. The site has sufficient outside space for recreation and 'hard surface' PE. In addition, the school has secured permission to use the local sports playing field and pavilion for outside games and physical fitness activities and this has appropriate changing and showering facilities. The school has appropriate risk assessments in place to ensure students will be safely chaperoned when walking to and from the venue.

In September 2015, the school intends to move to a permanent site located across the road – this being formally known as Imperial College Wye Campus. At this stage only the architect's 'site layout plan' or artistic impression was available for scrutiny and this document was not sufficiently detailed to determine the school's intended facilities.

Provision of information

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The 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 a satisfactory report from the fire authority.**

Recommended number of day pupils: 600

Recommended age range: 11–19 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.

Note: The Department should obtain confirmation from the school before it opens that the planned building works have been completed.