

# Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of an academy/free school

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School name	INSPIRE Special Free School
DfE registration number	N/A
Unique reference number (URN)	1701
Inspection number	446926
Inspection dates	18 July 2014
Reporting inspector	Sandra Teacher

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## 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.<sup>1</sup>

## Context of the school

Inspire Free School is located in the heart of Medway and aims to serve the needs of all young people in Kent and Medway who have a statement of special educational needs designated by the local authority as 'Social, Mental and Emotional Health'. It is sponsored by three headteachers who run local networks of schools which have outstanding reputations. They have a unique range of experience and expertise in special educational needs and are ideally placed to open Inspire, which will serve the most vulnerable students.

The school will cater for boys and girls in the age range 11 to 19 years. Currently, there are 39 male and female students registered to enrol when the school officially opens on 1 September 2014. It proposes to expand to an ultimate intake of 80 students, when the new build is complete. The school is housed on the original site of the Silverbanks pupil referral unit, and plans are in place for a complete refurbishment of the existing building, with further additional construction and building works to extend the premises in the spacious grounds. A new Principal, who is very experienced in the local context, has been appointed. The stated vision of the school is 'to develop in all young people those characteristics that will build resilience and skills for life'.

The visit took place on the final day of operation of the previous school and the inspector observed a celebration assembly, and had the opportunity to speak to former students and also students who will be going forward into the new school.

## Compliance with the regulations

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Documentary evidence, observations and discussions indicate that all regulations in this standard are likely to be met by the planning, but implementation could not be fully checked. The social, moral and personal development of the students is at the heart of the school's ethos, and the school plans to make the highest quality provision. Observation of an 'achievement assembly' gave a clear indication of the success of the merit reward system, where students had amassed points for behaviour, effort and achievement. The endeavours of these students enabled them to go on Outward Bound trips. Many of the Year 11 leavers gained certificates and

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/99](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/section/99)

accreditation, and all are going on to study at colleges of further education. Former students came back to visit the school and gave encouragement to the present cohort about their life-changing experiences.

All students have targets relating to their behavioural needs, and staff support students to face up to and acknowledge truths about themselves. Working with others is an important theme included in the personal, social and health education and religious studies (RS) programmes. These programmes promote the importance of leadership, leading to students taking initiatives to improve their communities, for example, working in the local environment to develop gardens. Extra-curricular activities include a wide range of educational visits and a residential trip, which current students say 'is great'. The RS programme includes the study of world faiths, although visits or visitors from faith communities or minority ethnic groups are not clearly included in the planning. The policy for students' personal development emphasises the importance of the school being outward looking and rooted in its community, with strong local partnerships.

A scheme of projects, visits and visitors is aimed at developing students' insights into the working of the civil law in England. Students will take part in a number of community enterprises, including a local recycling initiative and becoming involved in developing a nearby park. Planned themes within the programme for personal, social and health education provide students with an understanding of citizenship and the roles of individuals within the wider community. The themes include developing students' understanding of the workings of English public institutions and services. The RS curriculum explores a variety of issues and questions from a multi-faith perspective; it is designed to enable students to understand, tolerate and respect a diversity of viewpoints and cultures. The proprietors have ensured that the planned curriculum, including provision for students' personal development, is free from partisan political or religious views and that, where any political issues are discussed, a balanced view is always presented. Detailed guidance on these matters is included in the staff handbook.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Documentary evidence indicates that all of the regulations are likely to be met. All the required policy documents have been produced, including comprehensive policies for safeguarding, safer recruitment, behaviour management, anti-bullying and first aid. Senior staff have been trained in safe recruitment and the principles have been applied effectively to the recruitment process to date. Providers and dates have been identified for the training of all staff in child protection, and the first day of the new term has been dedicated to a training day for this purpose. The designated person for child protection has been trained to the required level. Staff have been identified to take responsibility for first aid, and training has taken place. Suitable policies have been prepared for all required aspects of health and safety. Premises and fire safety risk assessments have been completed. Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements. The school's Equalities Plan makes a commitment to providing equality of access for disabled

students and the required three-year plan to increase accessibility has been completed.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

The school's completion of all required checks on the suitability of staff and implementation to date indicates that all regulations are likely to be met. All required checks have been completed for the proprietors. All the checks are recorded on a suitable single central register. Checks are completed and entries on the register updated as new staff are appointed. The single central register also contains the relevant checks for supply staff and the school has a signed agreement from the local authority and other contracted businesses that they accept responsibility for their employees' safety checks.

### **Premises of and accommodation at the school**

The premises and accommodation are likely to meet almost all of the requirements. The new build, planned for completion in 2015, is at the 'tendering' stage and will be modular in structure. The current accommodation will be refurbished in the summer break. The present premises meet the regulations for the existing students, with more than adequate space for teaching and most of the required facilities, with the exception of a dedicated medical room for sick and injured students and shower facilities for students. Toilet facilities will be adequate for the numbers on roll. The water supplies are likely to meet requirements, with a labelled source of drinking water and safely regulated hot water. There is particular care in meeting the specific needs of students' special needs, with breakout rooms, a sensory room, large grounds and gardens including a full size football pitch, all within a safe and secure environment.

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

- provide showers for pupils aged 11 years and over who receive physical education (paragraph 23A(1)(c))
- provide accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of students (paragraph 23B(1)(a))
- make suitable provision for any students who may be sick or injured (paragraph 23B(1)(b))
- provide additional medical accommodation for pupils with complex needs. (paragraph 23B(1)(c)).

### **Provision of information**

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The provision meets all regulations.

## **Recommendation to the Department for Education**

### **Registration**

- **YES.** The school can be registered and allowed to open on receipt by DfE of evidence of improvement in relation to the matters detailed above.