

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of an academy/free school/studio school/university technical college (UTC)

School name	St Martin's Academy Chester
DfE registration number	896/
Unique reference number (URN)	139377
Inspection number	422314
Inspection dates	2 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our website for news, information and updates at www.ofsted.gov.uk/user.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090080

© Crown copyright 2013



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

The proposed St Martin's Academy is to be located temporarily in a demountable building within the grounds of a Victorian building, which is not currently in use, close to Chester town centre. The Victorian building is to be the permanent location for the academy. It is planned that this permanent building will be extended and ready for occupation by the end of March 2014. The school is being developed by North West Academies (St Martin's Academy) Ltd, a non-profit making company, and is to be run by St Martin's Academy Trust. It is due to open to pupils on 5 September 2013. Twenty five children of Reception age are currently registered for enrolment. The school has applied to be registered to, eventually, admit up to 175 boys and girls between the ages of four and 11 years. It is intended that the school will admit some pupils with special educational needs and those that are looked after by the local authority. The proposed school has no religious affiliation. It intends to provide, 'Excellence, Inspiration and Care', highlighting as a key strength its 'beyond curriculum' activities in the arts and physical education which it proposes to deliver four days a week as part of the extended school day.

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 as the school has yet to open. The personal, social, health education and citizenship policy sets out the school's intention to enable pupils to 'recognise their own worth, work well with others and become increasingly responsible for their own learning.' In its first year, all children will be in the Early Years Foundation Stage and it is planned that they will, therefore, be taught according to that statutory framework. This places great emphasis on personal and social development, building relationships and establishing a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. These are the first steps to building children's awareness of the criminal and civil law. It is intended that older pupils will follow a broad, international curriculum which teaches the social and emotional aspects of learning as well as opening pupils' eyes to community responsibility, mutual respect and tolerance of others' beliefs and cultural traditions. It is planned that daily, non-denominational assemblies will encourage reflection. The school site is adjacent to a church with which school leaders have already forged strong links. It is intended that the school

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

day will start at 8.30 to avoid traffic congestion in the local area. Both these features demonstrate the school's commitment to becoming involved in, and contributing to, its surrounding community. In order to encourage a strong pupil voice, it is intended that a school council will be established, starting with the first 25 children. It is planned that they will also have opportunities to contribute their ideas to the development of the permanent building as it progresses, suitably equipped with 25 hard hats, each bearing their own name! There is no indication that the school will involve any partisan political view in its teaching, or in activities in or out of school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Although implementation could not be seen, documentary evidence indicates that all the regulations are likely to be met. It is intended that all policies will be reviewed during the school's first year to ensure that all staff understand and feel ownership of their contents. 'Together', the child protection policy, which is deliberately brief and intended for quick reference, and the comprehensive safeguarding policy provide clear, appropriate guidance about responsibilities and procedures to follow should any concerns arise. Appropriate numbers of staff are trained to the required level in child protection and first aid, with further training planned to update the skills of all. Leaders have had training in safer recruitment and all appointments have been conducted appropriately according to those guidelines. The anti-bullying and behaviour policies, with a clear requirement for 'Praise in public' (PIP) and 'Reprimand in private' (RIP), provide a strong framework which is likely to lead to staff applying the guidance consistently, thereby helping to ensure pupils' welfare and safety. The accessibility plan sets out the way in which the proposed school intends to increase access to the premises, curriculum and information for disabled pupils over a period of time. Admission and attendance registers meet requirements. The health, safety and welfare policy clearly outlines responsibilities and arrangements for these aspects of the school's provision and states unequivocally that, 'the underlying process which secures this policy is risk assessment.' In discussion, school leaders demonstrate good awareness of health and safety requirements and potential hazards, ranging from secure fencing to the seed pods of laburnum trees. Because the school does not yet have its accommodation in place, leaders have not conducted a fire risk assessment nor acquired a fire safety report from the appropriate fire authority. However, both provisions are clearly planned, so that requirements are likely to be met.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Evidence, from the actions taken to ensure the proprietors' and staff members' suitability to work with children, indicates that all regulations are likely to be met. The school has appointed four members of teaching and support staff, three of whom are qualified teachers, and does not intend to employ supply staff. However, it is aware of its responsibilities to ensure that any such staff have been thoroughly checked for their suitability to work with children. It also understands its duty to refer any person who is deemed unsuitable for working with children to the Disclosure and Barring Service. The single central register, which records that all the

required checks have taken place, is kept confidentially, while readily accessible when needed, and includes all the necessary information.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet the regulations. It is intended that a demountable temporary building will be installed on 15 August 2013. This will be in the extensive grounds of the brick building which is due to be extended and refurbished as the school's permanent home. It is hoped that planning permission will be gained on 15 July 2013 and that the permanent building will be ready for occupation by the end of March 2014. Discussion with school leaders and the project architect as well as plans for the temporary accommodation indicate that it is likely to be of suitable size to accommodate 25 Reception-age children. The plans also show appropriate provision for toilet facilities, for the short term care of sick and injured pupils and for medical examination or treatment if necessary. There will be provision for drinking water, suitably labelled. The hot water system is designed with a regulator to ensure that its temperature is safe. There is a safe and suitable area for outdoor play. School leaders are aware of and fully intend to comply with all requirements.

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

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