

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

School name	Ixworth Free School
DfE registration number	N/A
Unique reference number (URN)	1656
Inspection number	446873
Inspection dates	10 June 2014
Reporting inspector	Declan McCarthy

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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 2008.¹

Context of the school

Ixworth free school is located in the village of Ixworth near Bury St Edmunds with good access to local amenities and public transport. As a new free school it wishes to provide full-time education for up to 600 students aged 11-16 years. The school is directly funded by the Department for Education and its proprietorial body is the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust, which is a registered charity. It will open on the site of Ixworth Middle School, which is due for closure and will be refurbished during the summer vacation period to accommodate up to 160 students. At present, 360 students are registered for enrolment when the school opens. The keys are due to be handed over to the trustees on 1 August 2014. Further modifications to the building will take place between February and September 2015 to accommodate the remaining number of students. The school is not affiliated to any particular religion or culture but has an outlook and ethos based on six 'Cs' – co-operation, community, celebration, challenge, commitment and confidence. Central to this will be the pursuit of equality and excellence for all students.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school is likely to meet all regulations, although implementation was not seen. The school has a strong emphasis on promoting students' personal development through a wide range of well-written policies which promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Clear reward systems are in place to enhance students' confidence and self-esteem. Students will be encouraged to distinguish between right and wrong through the programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), the school's code of conduct and the discipline policy supported by an appropriate range of sanctions. Students will be encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, show initiative and make a contribution to the local and wider communities through, for example, fund raising to support local and national charities. The PSHE programme aims to ensure that students develop an insight into a range of cultures and tolerance for the views and beliefs of others. Its citizenship element will provide a suitable insight into the working of local and national institutions. Students will be encouraged to respect British values,

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

democracy and the rule of civil law. The school is providing clear guidance to staff that partisan views will not be promoted in the teaching of any subject.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The free school is likely to meet all regulations, although implementation was not seen. Clear policies and procedures to promote the safety and well-being of students are in place. All staff have been suitably vetted and will undertake up-to-date training in safeguarding in September according as part of a clearly planned induction programme to familiarise new staff with the school's safeguarding policies. Firm links will be established with the local safeguarding authority through the designated person for child protection and the deputy designated persons, all of whom have been trained at the appropriate level in safer recruitment. Well-considered policies are in place to manage students' behaviour and these are supported by a well-conceived system of rewards and sanctions. The anti-bullying policy provides good guidance for staff on dealing with potential bullying and there are clear procedures for ensuring students' safety on educational trips and visits. There are clear policies on first aid and health and safety. A fire risk assessment and a report from the fire authority have been firmly planned for well before the school opens, so that requirements are likely to be met. Protocols for the regular checking of fire and electrical appliances are in place. The school's disability and equality scheme provides detailed information and guidelines on promoting and improving access and includes the development of disabled toilet facilities and wheelchair access for wheelchair users.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

All regulations are likely to be met. All staff, governors and proprietors have been thoroughly vetted and the recommended checks of identity, qualifications, right to work in the United Kingdom and medical fitness have been carried out. The single central record provides the essential details of all appropriate checks made for staff, governors, proprietors and visitors. These are duly signed and dated. The school does not intend to use supply staff from an employment business but plans to use existing staff to cover for any absence. Leaders are aware of the required checks should the school employ supply staff in the future.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

All regulations are likely to be met. The current building is spacious, well-lit and ventilated. It will undergo an initial refurbishment in August 2014 and will be decorated to a high standard so that up to 360 students aged 11-14 may be admitted. The second phase of refurbishment will begin in February 2015 and will be completed in August 2015, when additional accommodation will include a new sports complex. Plans of the refurbishment show that drinking water will be clearly labelled and available at key points throughout the building. Classroom accommodation, including practical areas, will be well designed and resourced with new equipment. In the existing building, there are sufficient separate washrooms for students,

visitors and staff and a suitable designated medical room for students who may be ill. The outdoor recreational area is spacious and well designed with a tennis court and a football pitch. There are suitable separate changing and shower facilities for boys and girls within the school.

Provision of information

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.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

- **YES. This school is likely to meet all regulations and national minimum standards when it opens and is recommended for registration.**

If registration is recommended, please state:

Recommended number of day pupils: up to 360 until August 2015 and then for 600 when the second phase of the building will be completed

Recommended number of boarders: 0

Recommended age range: 11-16

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.

The building will undergo its first stage of refurbishment in August 2014 and will be ready to accommodate up to 360 students for September 2014. The school will be able to accommodate up to 600 students in September 2015 when the final phase of building work has been completed.