

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of a studio school

School name	Da Vinci Studio School of Creative Enterprise
DfE registration number	999/1444
Unique reference number (URN)	1444
Inspection number	422342
Inspection dates	17 June 2013
Reporting inspector	David Young

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 Da Vinci Studio School of Creative Enterprise is to be located in the premises of a former community theatre in the centre of Letchworth in Hertfordshire. The school is sponsored by North Hertfordshire College as part of the North Hertfordshire Studio School Trust and is due to open on 2 September 2013. The school has applied to be registered to admit up to 400 male and female students in the age range 14 to 19 years. In its first year, it will admit 40 students into Year 10, together with 50 post-16 students. The school will admit students from across the full ability range, including those with statements of special educational needs. The school will concentrate on developing the skills that students will need in order to work within the backstage industries linked to the creative and cultural sector.

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

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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. The school's vision statement sets high aspirations for its students. It states that 'they will set and achieve personal goals; they will develop as responsible and employable citizens; they will grow in self-confidence and will learn to embrace challenge'. This includes understanding what is right and what is wrong, with an emphasis on students' developing responsibility for their own values and behaviour. The school's core values include a commitment to 'create links with national and local businesses as well as the wider community; empower students to act responsibly and to work effectively with others'.

Arrangements are in place for a weekly assembly linked to a 90 minute 'Learning for Life' programme. Themes for these activities are designed to address all aspects of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These include equality and diversity, including the study of different religions and an understanding of cultural diversity within and beyond the local community. Public institutions and services are to be introduced through themes such as Remembrance Sunday; international disability day; the criminal justice system; healthy lifestyles and the services which support these; marriage and relationships. Each of the strands of the regulations in this standard has been analysed to demonstrate how the curriculum can contribute to students' personal development. Elements identified include the school's 'Charter of Respect'; the organisation of events such as a public festival and charitable collections to engage with the community; parliamentary democracy and government institutions in the UK and Europe. The school also has a stated aim to ensure and monitor a balanced presentation of political and religious perspectives throughout all school activities.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Documentary evidence and discussion of arrangements already in place indicate that the majority of regulations are likely to be met. As the school is not open, full implementation of the school's policies and procedures could not be seen.

Appropriate policies for the management of behaviour, the prevention of bullying, and arrangements for educational visits have been produced. Suitable procedures for recording incidents and sanctions are located within the school's electronic management system. Similarly, appropriate templates for the admission and attendance registers are maintained electronically. There is a comprehensive policy for safeguarding and child protection. The headteacher has received up-to-date training as designated person for child protection and arrangements are in place for training of a second member of staff to this level. Induction training for all staff includes plans for child protection training before the school opens. Suitable procedures are in place for checking the suitability of the adults who will be working with students. The school has a policy for safe recruitment and the headteacher has completed the required training.

A suitable first aid policy has been produced and key staff have been trained in first aid; further training is planned for additional staff. Comprehensive policies and procedures have been developed for health and safety and for fire safety; templates for regular, routine fire safety checks are in the process of production. Due to the current refurbishment work on the premises it is not possible, at present, to guarantee that the premises will present an entirely risk-free environment. A fire risk assessment and an accessibility audit, in order that the school may fulfil its duties under the Equality Act 2010, have yet to be produced as these await completion of the refurbishment of the premises. The school has yet to make arrangements for the local fire officer to inspect the premises before it opens, as required by the Department for Education.

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

- ensure that the premises and accommodation present a safe environment on completion of the refurbishment works (paragraph 11)
- complete a fire risk assessment and ensure suitable arrangements for the monitoring of all aspects of fire safety (paragraph 13)
- draw up an accessibility plan for the premises that fulfils the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school's arrangements for checking the suitability of all governors and staff, and the implementation of these to date, indicate that all the regulations are likely to be met. All required checks have been completed for the proprietors and for staff appointed to date. Details of these checks are recorded in a suitable single central register. There are no supply staff appointed but the school is aware of its responsibilities should supply staff be appointed in the future.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The premises, for at least the first year, will consist of a community theatre and associated rooms which are being refurbished and decorated to provide facilities and teaching spaces for the curriculum. The refurbished premises are due to be handed over to the school in mid-August. The required refurbishment is not extensive and involves no structural alterations. There are sufficient teaching rooms, of a suitable size and condition, and a suitable range of backstage facilities together with the main auditorium, to meet the requirements of the proposed curriculum. There are sufficient washrooms for male and female students, and for staff. There is a suitable medical room. Physical education will be taught in various off-site venues where changing and showering facilities are available. There is an outside space of sufficient size for play and recreation. The provision of hot and cold water is secure and the necessary checks on water temperature are in place. There are a sufficient

number of emergency exit points, and the controlled entry to the building ensures a secure environment for students and staff.

The refurbishment of adjacent premises, a former grammar school, will commence shortly and these will be occupied by the school in September 2014. These premises were not available to view and will not form part of the school's accommodation when it opens.

Provision of information

The provision meets all 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 following matters:**

The school should:

- ensure that the premises and accommodation present a safe environment on completion of the refurbishment works (paragraph 11)
- complete a fire risk assessment and ensure suitable arrangements for the monitoring of all aspects of fire safety (paragraph 13)
- draw up an accessibility plan for the premises that fulfils the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Recommended number of day pupils: 400

Recommended number of boarders: N/a

Recommended age range: 14–19 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/a