

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

School name	Liverpool Studio
DfE registration number	341/
Unique reference number (URN)	1433
Inspection number	422329
Inspection dates	30 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Terry McKenzie

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
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E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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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

This advice note should be read in conjunction with the advice note for the co-located proposed new Liverpool Life Sciences UTC, URN 1426, inspection number 422322.

Liverpool Studio School is to be located in very large landmark building that was once a warehouse for a well-known sugar importing company. The building, situated close to Liverpool docks was constructed in Victorian times and the studio will share the five very extensive floors of the building and many of the resources with the co-located Liverpool Life Sciences UTC. Staff will be expected to work with students from both the studio and the college. More recently the building has been used as an arts and drama centre in the city. The school has been established to provide an education for students aged 14 to 19 who have an interest in digital media and the development of associated software. It will educate young people for success in a digital world and, in particular, for employment, entrepreneurship, support for a new business venture or further study in the digital media sector. Some students will apply their skills directly in the gaming, animation, digital marketing and computer technology sectors, others will work for businesses and other organisations that use digital media to develop products and services and connect with clients, consumers, patients and citizens. Student will mainly come from six of the Merseyside local authorities. The sponsor for the studio and for the co-located Liverpool Life Sciences UTC is The North Liverpool Academy Trust that operates an academy school about a mile from the studio. The studio will ultimately admit up to 300 students aged from 14 to 19 years. 150 students aged 14 to 17 years are registered for enrolment in September 2013. The studio aims to provide experiences that will encourage students to believe in themselves and gain attributes of independence through undertaking computer related work and activities.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The studio is likely to meet all of the regulations but implementation could not be seen. It aims to provide students with a successful education that is based on the study of digital media and computer programming codes so that their self-esteem can grow. It is planned that they will gain qualifications and accreditations designed to equip them for moving on successfully to the next stages of their lives. The aims of the studio are well supported by the policy for personal, social and health

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

education that sets out to equip students to make informed choices about substance abuse and sex education, and to learn how to keep themselves safe. The behaviour policy is designed to help them to know about right and wrong and how to respect the civil and criminal law. Clear guidance to students and staff is provided through policies that encourage good behaviour and aim to prevent bullying. Opportunities will be provided for students to learn through citizenship courses about the workings of a democracy. They will contribute to the local community through, for example, the planned extensive opportunities to work with computer-related businesses and enterprises in and around Merseyside.

The citizenship curriculum is designed to ensure that students find out about the public institutions and services of England. The personal, social and health education courses will encourage them to live and work in tolerance and harmony with others of different faiths and cultures. Through off-site education and by having a planned programme of visitors into the studio, students will come into contact with people from different cultures and religions and learn how others work and live. The proprietorial body has already implemented policies at the North Liverpool Academy relating to equal opportunities and these have been tailored for use at the studio. They indicate that political and religious extremism will not be tolerated. The admissions policy will promote equality and the rights of all regardless of disability, ethnic background, language, culture, faith and gender.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

All but one of the regulations are likely to be met. The required policies and procedures are all in place including those for the management of behaviour, anti-bullying, safe recruitment and first aid. The policy for safeguarding has been constructed in cooperation with the co-located and commonly owned Liverpool Life Sciences UTC, so that the co-existence of the two education establishments is carefully accounted for. The policies refer to the constant need for staff vigilance and supervision with regard to safeguarding matters because the students' ages range from 14 to 19 years. Risk assessments have been devised for the range of activities associated with students' sharing of education staff and resources in addition to the specific risk assessment devised in relation to working with digital technology. The principal has experience in child protection through his previous work and has undertaken recent training to ensure his suitability as designated person for safeguarding. All staff appointed will undertake training in first aid and all will receive refresher training before the studio opens in the basic awareness of safeguarding and child protection, first aid and fire safety so that the requirements are likely to be met. Suitable policies for health and safety, including fire safety, and the associated risk assessments, including for the premises, are in place. However, the studio is yet to receive a visit from the local fire authority to finally confirm that the arrangements for fire safety are appropriate. Admissions and attendance registers will be kept electronically, backed up and printed as required.

In order to meet the regulations in full the studio should:

- obtain a report from the local fire authority and ensure that it is provided to the Department for Education (paragraph 13).

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

All regulations are likely to be met. Some staff are already employed by the proprietorial trust and are transferring from North Liverpool Academy. The proprietorial body has undertaken the required checks to ensure the suitability of the staff. The principal and the chair of the trust have undertaken training in safer recruitment and have implemented a suitable safe recruitment policy to ensure that all of the required checks will be undertaken on staff appointed in the future including any from an agency, should any such staff be employed. All required checks have been carried out on the trustees who form the proprietorial body of the studio. A suitable single central register of checks has been established and completed to date.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The studio is likely to meet all of the regulations. The building is almost ready to be occupied except for final decoration work that is being completed to a satisfactory standard. The contractor will hand over the building by 9 August 2013. Detailed plans for the premises and accommodation were scrutinised and all parts were visited. The inspector spoke at length with the chair of North Liverpool Academy Trust who is the project manager, the principal and the contractor's site manager.

The premises and accommodation are suitable for the proposed digital media- and computer-based curriculum. The building is largely made up of huge open spaces, many of which have been converted into high quality workshops. There are many classrooms and offices with plenty of space for the proposed number of students to be registered. There are sufficient toilets for staff, students and visitors with a regulated hot water supply and arrangements for suitable medical facilities have been provided. The arrangements for the preparation of hot food are appropriate. Where drinking water is provided these facilities are labelled. Outside space for recreation is limited, but the studio intends to make use of an extremely large indoor sports court as an additional recreational area for the students. Physical education and games will take place on-site by using the indoor sports court; associated changing rooms and showers have been constructed. Additional physical education and games will occur offsite at the North Liverpool Academy. Other physical activities will include regular use of the boating marina and a nearby climbing wall.

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. The school can be registered and allowed to open on receipt by DfE of evidence of improvement in relation to the following matters:**
 - the Department for Education must receive a satisfactory report from the relevant fire authority (paragraph 13).

If registration is recommended, please state:

Recommended number of day pupils: 300

Recommended number of boarders: 0

Recommended age range: 14-19 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.