

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

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School name	University Cathedral Free School
DfE registration number	896/
Unique reference number (URN)	1421
Inspection number	422315
Inspection dates	6 June 2013
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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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

The proposed University Cathedral Free School is to be located temporarily in Gateway House, a property owned by the University of Chester, in the centre of Chester. It is intended that the school will move to permanent accommodation, within 100 metres of the temporary site, in January 2014. The school is sponsored by the University of Chester Academies Trust and is due to open on 4 September 2013. Chester Cathedral is a partner of the school, which has a Church of England admissions policy. The school has applied to be registered to admit up to 210 boys and girls in the age range 4 to 11. It will admit children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 in its first year. There are 60 pupils registered for enrolment at present. None of these pupils has a statement of special educational needs but the school is open to admitting pupils with special educational needs. The school aims to develop in its pupils, '21st century transferable skills and knowledge in an inspirational way by blending the innovative with the strongly traditional within a Christian ethos and using music's potential to raise self-belief.'

## 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 school's vision that its pupils will, 'Believe in themselves and each other; belong to an inclusive, harmonious community; become the very best they can be,' clearly sets out its determination to nurture their self-esteem, tolerance and ability to distinguish right from wrong. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies are founded on positivity, praise and support, while clearly outlining a proposed system of sanctions. Their purpose is to promote good relationships that allow everyone to work together in an effective and considerate way. As confirmed in the school development plan, pupils will be encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and, as they grow older, to undertake increasing acts of service within school and in the wider community. Policies relating to personal, social and health education, religious education and equality of opportunity confirm the school's intention to help its pupils develop an understanding of public institutions, different religions and beliefs, democracy and the rule of civil law. There is no evidence that political views will be presented in anything other than a balanced way. The school's strong links with its partners will mean that, for example, it will be

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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)

able to use the song school, as well as the adjacent cathedral for whole-school assemblies. It is intended that both of these features will be integral to the successful promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

Although implementation could not be seen, documentary and physical evidence indicates that the majority of regulations are likely to be met. All the required policy documents are in place, providing a comprehensive framework that underpins the school's procedures to support pupils' welfare, health and safety. Housed in buildings that belong to the University of Chester, rigorous and well-known procedures ensure that suitable risk assessments and practice are established to provide, for example, secure, well-lit access and safety catches on upstairs windows. The school has conducted a fire risk assessment and taken responsible steps, such as the installation of smoke detectors, fire doors and fire alarms, to ensure fire safety. However, the school does not comply with the requirement to obtain a fire safety report from an appropriate fire authority.

The school has taken action in response to a safety check identifying the need to provide netting to preclude any pupil catching their foot in the stairway. Steps have been taken to provide extra staff to support pupils on the stairs and when accessing the outdoor play area.

The school benefits from the university's long-standing arrangements to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. For example, all those carrying out property maintenance are known staff who have undergone appropriate checks. There are suitable arrangements to ensure that all school staff are trained to the required level in child protection and in first aid. The one current staff member is the designated child protection officer and has the required training. The admission and attendance registers are to be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements. The school's 'Education Brief' covers a period of six years and includes a clear outline of how it intends to increase access for disabled pupils to its premises, curriculum and information.

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

- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a report from the appropriate fire authority (paragraph 13).

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

Evidence, from the actions taken to ensure the suitability to work with children of current staff and the proprietors, indicates that all regulations are likely to be met. Those persons who have been working outside the United Kingdom in recent years have provided appropriate extra evidence of their suitability. A record that all the required checks have taken place is maintained on a single central register. The school is aware of its responsibilities relating to any future use of supply staff and

also of its duty to refer any person who is deemed unsuitable for working with children to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

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

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. The temporary accommodation is undergoing refurbishment to ensure it is safe and suitable for young children to use. It provides an appropriate range of spaces for whole class and small group sessions, for quiet activities and for more messy ones. There is sufficient space for the 60 pupils expected to join the school in September. Provision to support the use of information and communication technology in the classrooms is already in place. There are sufficient washrooms and an appropriate space allocated for the use of pupils who need medical examinations or who feel unwell. The walled and gated outdoor area includes both grassed and hard play areas. It is planned that pupils will use the university's sports facilities, such as the swimming pool.

## **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 following matters:**

- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a report from the appropriate fire authority (paragraph 13).

The school is to be housed in temporary accommodation within an existing building belonging to the university until the designated permanent accommodation is ready. The inspector informed the Principal Designate that, if and when the school wishes to move, it will need to submit a request to the Department for Education for a material change.