

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

School name	Chichester Free School
DfE registration number	N/A
Unique reference number (URN)	1503
Inspection number	422418
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Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

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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

The proposed Chichester Free School is to be temporarily located in the premises of a business office complex located in Vinnetrow Business Park on the outskirts of Chichester. The school is sponsored by the Sussex Education Trust Limited and is due to open on 9 September 2013. The school has applied to be initially registered to admit up to 360 boys and girls in the age range four to 19 years. It will admit pupils to Reception, Years 1, 3, 7, and 8 in its first year. To date, 210 pupils are registered for enrolment. Currently one of these pupils has a statement of special educational needs. The school will be non-selective and is prepared to admit other pupils with special educational needs. There are also seven pupils to be admitted who are currently in local authority care. The school plans to continue to expand over time, with numbers on roll rising to a maximum of 1,260 once the school has re-located to a much larger, permanent site. The school aims 'to nurture, challenge and inspire its pupils for their future by giving them not only the necessary qualifications but, through an emphasis on building character, the vital personal and employability skills they will need to lead successful and fulfilling lives'.

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 behaviour and anti-bullying policies provide a framework within which pupils will be encouraged to develop an understanding of right and wrong and the consequences of personal decisions. The school's policy for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils sets out a vision for pupils to be equipped to take their place in society as valued, economically viable and responsible citizens. It places an emphasis on the development of independence, cooperation, innovation and motivation, giving equal importance to the school's four 'cardinal virtues' of wisdom, temperance, justice and courage. The policy defines each of the four elements of personal development and the strategies designed to implement these. Planned provision includes: encouraging students to respect diversity of beliefs and opinions; developing the ability to distinguish between right and wrong; developing respect for the needs, interests and feelings of others; and providing links with the world of work and the wider community, as well as planned opportunities for older and younger pupils to work and socialise together. A scheme of projects, visits and

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

visitors is aimed at developing pupils' insights into the working of the civil law in England. Pupils will have the opportunity to take part in a number of community enterprises including making links with local groups as part of a 'Young Apprentice' styled project. Planned themes within the programme for personal, social and health education provide pupils with an understanding of citizenship and the roles of individuals within the wider community. The themes include developing students' understanding of the workings of English public institutions and services. Planned visits by local magistrates to discuss the work of the judiciary will also provide opportunities for older students to discuss associated social justice and political issues. The religious studies curriculum explores a variety of issues and questions from a multi-faith perspective. In line with the policy for students' personal development, it is designed to enable students to understand and respect diversity of viewpoints and cultures. The school has ensured that the planned curriculum, including provision for pupils' personal development, is free from partisan political or religious views and that, where any political, philosophical and ethical issues are discussed and debated a balanced view is always presented.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Documentary evidence indicates that most of the regulations are likely to be met. Most of the required policy documents have been produced, including comprehensive policies for safeguarding, safer recruitment, behaviour management, anti-bullying, health and safety and first aid. The headteacher has been trained in safe recruitment and the principles have been applied effectively to the recruitment process to date. Providers and dates have been identified for the training of all staff in child protection and the training has been booked for before the school opens. The headteacher has been trained to the required level as designated person for child protection. A member of staff has been identified as the health and safety coordinator. However, training in health and safety has yet to be planned for either the coordinator or other members of staff. A first aid coordinator has been identified and the required training has been booked for staff before the school opens, so that requirements are likely to be met.

Suitable policies have been prepared for most required aspects of health and safety, but as yet the school has been unable to gain access to the school site to complete risk assessments, including fire risks, of the new school site. A member of staff is designated as a fire safety officer. However, the school has yet to complete a fire safety policy, develop fire procedures, set up systems to inspect and maintain emergency lighting, fire alarms and extinguishers, provide key information regarding fire safety for those working on the school site and make plans to provide fire safety training for the designated coordinator and other members of staff. Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats meet most requirements. However, admission records currently do not contain sufficient details about each pupil including gender, emergency contact details, date of admission and the name and address of the last school attended. The school's Equalities Plan makes a commitment to providing equality of access for disabled students and provides the required three-year plan to increase accessibility.

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

- comply with health and safety law by providing staff, including the health and safety coordinator with appropriate health and safety training; produce a risk assessment for the new school premises (paragraph 11)
- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a fire risk assessment; producing a fire risk policy; developing fire procedures and providing fire safety staff training; having a suitable system in place for the inspection and maintenance of emergency lighting (where required), fire alarms and extinguishers, and providing staff and any others working on the school site with fire safety information (paragraph 13)
- maintain an admission register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 by ensuring that pupil admission records contain information about pupils' gender, emergency contact details, date of admission, and name and address of last school attended (paragraph 17).

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school's planning for the completion of all required checks on the suitability of staff and implementation to date indicates that all regulations are likely to be met. All required checks have been completed for the proprietors and for staff appointed to date. These are recorded on a suitable single central register. Checks are completed and entries on the register updated as new staff are appointed. The school does not intend to employ supply staff but is aware of its responsibilities should supply staff be appointed in the future.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet most of the regulations. The school is to be temporarily located in the premises of a former commercial business park. The premises are currently occupied, but will shortly be undergoing extensive refurbishment in order for the school to open at the start of the autumn term. A brief visit to the site and detailed plans for the premises and accommodation were scrutinised and discussions were held with the Sussex Education Trust's representative responsible for the premises and with the newly appointed headteacher. The Education Funding Agency, the Department's delivery agent, is managing the preparation process on behalf of the foundation. The Department will wish to continue to monitor progress with the premises directly with the agency.

Initially, 210 pupils will be admitted to Reception, Years 1, 3, 7 and 8. Plans indicate that the premises will be suitable for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 curriculum to be provided in September 2013. Plans show that the premises will be remodelled during the school year 2013/14 to provide additional classrooms as the school intake grows. The school will re-locate in order to accommodate Key Stage 4 and sixth form students once permanent buildings are completed. Currently, there is a limited number of specialist rooms, but these include

a large sports hall currently being converted from a storage warehouse and a music specialist room with plans for acoustic amendments to the room. Plans indicate that classrooms are of adequate size and sufficient in number for the planned intake in September 2013. New furniture, suitable for the proposed age range on opening, is in the process of being ordered (orders seen) to be ready for the opening of the school in September. There is a limited, but adequate, number of washrooms. The school has made arrangements to ensure that these are suitably located according to age and need, including for those who are disabled. Current plans indicate that there will be refurbishment of an existing space to provide suitable accommodation for pupils who may need medical examinations or for those who may be ill. Drinking water will be provided by mobile drinking water units. School facilities include a playing field. The school also anticipates making use off-site physical education facilities at nearby independent schools and leisure centre. This has yet to be confirmed. However, current school plans do not include on-site changing accommodation or showers for pupils over the age of 11 years who have physical education. There are appropriate facilities for the preparation and serving of food. There is sufficient safe outside space for play and recreation. There are planned adaptations to ensure an appropriate outdoor learning area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The buildings and access points to the grounds are in the process of being made fully secure so that requirements are likely to be met.

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

- ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years and over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23A(1)(c)).

Provision of information

The provision is likely to meet most of the the regulations. However, information provided for parents of pupils or prospective parents on the school's website does not record the school's new address nor does it state the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff or a summary of their qualifications.

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

- update information available for parents of pupils and prospective parents on the school's website by recording school's new address (paragraph 24(1)(a))
- provide information about the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

Recommendation to the Department for Education

Registration

Is registration recommended?

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 health and safety law by providing staff, including the health and safety co-ordinator with appropriate health and safety training and producing a risk assessment for the premises (paragraph 11)
- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a fire risk assessment; producing a fire risk policy; developing fire procedures; providing fire safety staff training; having a suitable system in place for the inspection and maintenance of emergency lighting (where required), fire alarms and extinguishers, and providing staff and any others working on the school site with fire safety information (paragraph 13)
- maintain an admission register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 by ensuring that pupil admission records also contain information about pupils' gender, emergency contact details, date of admission and name and address of last school attended (paragraph 17)
- ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years and over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23A(1)(c))
- update information available for parents of pupils and prospective parents on the school's website by recording school's new address (paragraph 24(1)(a))
- update information available for parents of pupils and prospective parents on the school's website by providing information about the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

Recommended number of day pupils for current temporary accommodation: 360 (210 currently enrolled for September 2013), rising to 1,260 when permanent accommodation becomes available.

Recommended age range: 4–19 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.