

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

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School name	Riverside Free School
DfE registration number	n/a
Unique reference number (URN)	1457
Inspection number	422359
Inspection dates	11 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Sarah McDermott

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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 Riverside School is a comprehensive school that has applied to be registered for up to 1,800 students from the ages of 11 to 18. The school is sponsored by The Partnership Learning Trust, has no religious affiliation and is due to open in September 2013. It is to be located for the first two years of its existence in a brand new purpose-built school building eventually destined for a new primary school in 2015. Then Riverside School will move to its own specially designed secondary school site. One hundred and fifteen Year 7 students who are being educated currently at Barking Riverside Foundation Trust School will transfer to Riverside Free School in September to become Year 8. A further 120 students are also registered to enrol in the autumn term. The school has the motto, 'Excellence for all' and aims to deliver academic outcomes significantly above the national average and develop personal qualities of confidence and resilience to enable students to lead successful lives and contribute positively to society.

## Compliance with the regulations

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the regulations, but the implementation could not be seen. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies set out a framework within which students are encouraged to further their understanding of right and wrong and the consequences of personal decisions. They include a clear hierarchy of sanctions. Curriculum policies, in particular citizenship, community cohesion and spiritual, moral, social and cultural policies, promote self-knowledge and self-confidence to prepare students for playing an effective role in society at local, national and international levels. It is planned that students will study a range of religions and learn about different cultures. Leadership opportunities include acting as house captains, reading tutors and primary business and enterprise mentors. Extended learning is planned to take the form of two enrichment activities per student per week with opportunities to join a good range of clubs including the International Film Club, the choir or a multi-faith group. Of particular note is the Fundamental Architecture Crew which gives students influence in the regeneration of Barking.

The curriculum plans to introduce pupils to the civil and criminal law and the role of public institutions. It aims to promote respect for the fundamental British values of

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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)

democracy and rule of law. Citizenship study includes themes such as 'What is democracy?', 'What is the role of Parliament?' and 'What does it mean to be British?'. The school gives a strong message on preventing extremism. The proprietors have ensured that the planned curriculum, including provision for students' personal development, is free from partisan political or religious views and that, where any political views are discussed, a balanced view is always presented.

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

Documentary evidence indicates that all regulations are likely to be met although implementation could not be seen. All the required policy documents have been produced, including comprehensive policies for safeguarding, behaviour management, anti-bullying, first aid and medication. The principles of safer recruitment are being applied effectively to the current recruitment process. The designated person for child protection has been trained to the required level. Refresher training for all appointed staff and training for any new staff has been booked for 9 September, before the school opens. The school will have sufficient staff trained in first aid. Suitable policies have been prepared for all required aspects of health and safety and for fire safety. The students will be moving into a new building that is likely to meet all necessary safety requirements. In addition, the West Ham Fire Service has been booked to assess fire safety risks in the first week of September once the building has been signed over from the building contractors.

The school's plan for staff deployment is appropriate for the supervision of secondary aged students. Plans to ensure students are safe and secure when on outside visits are thorough. The care and guidance policy outlines the careful induction of new students and the roles of form tutors and mentors. Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements. The school's access plan makes a commitment to providing equality of access for disabled students and includes a plan to increase accessibility over three years.

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

The completion of all required checks on the suitability of staff and implementation to date indicate that all regulations are likely to be met. All necessary checks have been made for staff already appointed. Verification has been received that no proprietor or governor is barred from regulated activity relating to children. Criminal record checks of the proprietors have been initiated in the correct manner although, through no fault of the school, outcomes have been delayed. Checks are being recorded on a suitable single central register. The school is aware of its responsibilities should supply staff be appointed in the future or volunteers taken on.

## Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. The new building is of modular design and although it is not fully finished, it could be inspected and the plans scrutinised. Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, and representatives of the sponsor. Initially the building will accommodate up to 240 students in Years 7 and 8. The tour of the site indicates that classrooms are of adequate size, well lit and sufficient in number for the planned September intake. The premises are suitable for the relevant secondary curriculum, including facilities for music, art, technology, science and information and communication technology.

The building has been designed to adhere to the most up-to-date requirements for the welfare of students. The school has sufficient toilets, changing rooms, showers and a separate medical room. A lift is incorporated for students with mobility problems. The proprietors have ensured that water from all taps is potable and labelled as such. A hall will double up for assemblies, lunchtimes, dance and gymnastics. Other physical education is planned to take place in the 'Multi-Use Games Area' on site or a short walk away on football pitches at two nearby schools. Plans for the site show appropriate external security lighting for the entrance and cycle park.

## 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

Is registration recommended?

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

Recommended number of day pupils: 1,800

Recommended number of boarders: 0

Recommended age range: 11–18 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.

Note: The Department should obtain confirmation from the school before it opens that the planned risk assessments and building works have been completed.