

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

School name	East London Science School
DfE registration number	n/a
Unique reference number (URN)	1500
Inspection number	422415
Inspection dates	25 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Bill Stoneham

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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 East London Science Free School is to be located in the premises of a former mill in a heritage site on the borders of Newham and Tower Hamlets in Bromley-by-Bow, east London. The secluded site is on an island surrounded by the River Lea and shared with a film studio. All the buildings proposed to be used are listed. There are no sponsors. The school is being run by a group of teachers. It is due to open on 2 September 2013. The school has applied to be registered to admit up to 1,000 students in the age range 11 to 19 by the start of the 2019/20 academic year. In its first year it will admit 120 boys and girls aged 11 to 12. There are 65 students registered for enrolment at present. The school will be non-selective and will admit students with special educational needs. Two of those currently enrolled are known to have a statement of special educational needs. The school's vision is stated thus. 'All our girls and boys will receive an excellent academic education which will rival the best on offer in public schools. We aim to give our pupils the confidence to strive for success in everything they do. We will give our pupils a unique space in which their imaginations are set free and given the chance to flourish.' The proposed curriculum will have a strong, but not exclusive, emphasis on promoting high quality learning in biology, chemistry and physics.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations. Although implementation could not be seen, many policies, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour and anti-bullying, were scrutinised. All policies set out a framework within which students 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 its students sets out a vision for them to be equipped to take their place in society as valued, scientifically aware, economically viable and responsible citizens. The proposed curriculum places much emphasis on scientific enquiry. It aims to develop independence, tolerance, understanding and community spirit. Running through the proposed curriculum, there is an emphasis on ethics, especially in relation to ethical practices in science.

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

The planning defines various elements of personal development and links these to environmental education, language development and to studies of major faiths including Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. Planning includes proposals to develop aesthetic appreciation through regular visits to major venues in London including art galleries, museums and historical sites such as the Tower of London. Relevant references to community contribution by the students are proposed through partnership work with the local river and canal regulatory bodies to look at water quality and the increased recreational use of these facilities by the general public. There is an emphasis on encouraging students to respect diversity, develop an ability to distinguish between right and wrong and develop respect for others. Planned themes in the personal, social and health education programme will provide students with an understanding of citizenship and the roles of individuals in the wider community. The themes include the workings of English public institutions including the civil and criminal justice system. The proprietors have ensured that the planned curriculum is free from partisan political or religious views and that, where any political issues are discussed, a balanced view is always presented.

Welfare, health and safety of students

Documentary evidence suggests that the majority of regulations are likely to be met. All required policy documents have been produced, including appropriate policies for safeguarding, safer recruitment, behaviour management, anti-bullying and first aid. Senior staff have been trained in safe recruitment and the principles have been properly applied to all staff recruitment to date. Arrangements are in place for the training of all staff in child protection. This will take place in September before the students start at the school, so that requirements are likely to be met. The designated persons for child protection have not yet been trained to the required level, but appropriate training has been booked. This requirement is likely to be met. All appropriate training should be completed before the start of the 2013/14 academic year. Staff have been identified to take responsibility for first aid and appropriate training has been booked so that this requirement is likely to be met before the start of the academic year. Suitable policies have been prepared for all required aspects of health and safety and for fire protection. However, premises and fire safety risk assessments have not yet been completed. A fire authority report is not yet available. Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements. The school's equality planning makes a clear commitment to providing equality of access for disabled students, but the school does not have a three-year access improvement plan.

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

- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a fire risk assessment and a fire authority report (paragraph 13)
- produce a three-year plan to increase accessibility as required by the Equality Act 2010.

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 indicate that all regulations are likely to be met. All required checks have been completed for the governors and for staff appointed to date. These are recorded on a suitable electronic single central register. Checks are completed and records updated as new staff are appointed. The school intends to employ a permanent supply teacher, and is fully aware of its responsibilities relating to the checking and engagement of this member of staff, with systems in place to make and record the checks.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. It is to be located in the premises of a former mill in east London. The premises are currently unoccupied. Although the premises have no grounds, there is an extensive, well-maintained and well-equipped play area, including a significant grassed area, within 100 metres of the school's site. The school has already negotiated the use of these facilities for physical education and recreational purposes. Refurbishment work to bring the property up to the required standard is already in progress and is due for completion before the end of August 2013. This appears reasonable.

Initially only Year 7 students will be admitted. The school has ambitious plans to continue expanding until the start of the 2019/20 academic year. By this time it will be an 11 to 19 school catering for some 1,000 students. In order for these targets to be met, the proprietor acknowledges that a new site will need to be found. Current plans are for the school to utilise its present site for two academic years only. Present plans indicate that classrooms are of an adequate size and sufficient in number for the proposed September 2013 intake. They also include provision for catering and food preparation, physical education (including shower facilities) and a library.

New furniture has been ordered (orders seen). There are sufficient washroom facilities for the number being admitted. Provision has been made for a suitable medical room where first aid might be administered, or where students who are taken ill can retire to. Drinking water will be provided and appropriately labelled. The buildings and access points to the grounds are fully secure.

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:**
- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a fire risk assessment and a fire authority report (paragraph 13)
- produce a three-year plan to increase accessibility as required by the Equality Act 2010.

Recommended number of day students: 120

Recommended number of boarders: 0

Recommended age range: 11 to 13 (at this site – plans are for 11 to 19 school when a more appropriate site is located)

Recommended gender of students: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: Not applicable.

The recommended number of 120 students represents the school's starting point in September 2013.

Note: The Department should obtain confirmation from the school before it opens (and later expands) that the planned building works have been completed.