

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

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School	Buckinghamshire UTC
DfE registration number	N/A
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Reporting inspector	Caroline Bolton

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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 Buckinghamshire University Technical College (UTC) is situated near the centre of the town of Aylesbury and will be adjacent to one of its sponsors, Aylesbury College, a further education provider. The school is also sponsored by Buckinghamshire New University and is working in partnership with four companies which are major local employers: Taylor Wimpey, Cisco, Esri UK and McAfee. Buckinghamshire UTC will be housed in new accommodation which is scheduled for completion before the school opens in September 2013. The facilities include extensive and purpose-built facilities for the school's intended specialisms of information and communication technology, and construction. The age range of the students will be 14–19, although for the first year applications for Years 10 and 12 only will be accepted. At the time of the inspection visit, 93 applications had been accepted from a target roll of 120 in the first year. The aim is for a total school population of 600 learners once all the intended year groups have been admitted. The UTC will have no religious affiliation. It will be non-selective and will cater for a range of abilities, including students with disabilities and special educational needs. The vision is for 'an innovative, dynamic, employment-led environment which will prepare young people to become highly skilled employees of the future through the integration of business with education'.

## Compliance with the regulations

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

All regulations are likely to be met, although implementation could not be seen. The school's mission and values statements emphasise teamwork and strong relationships, respect for others, diversity, integrity, honesty and openness. The policy for equality and diversity emphasises developing respect for different faiths and cultures, and the promotion of equality of opportunity for individuals and groups of students. The behaviour policy makes it clear that students will be expected to be responsible for their own conduct, and to dress and behave in ways that are appropriate for a work environment. The school's specialisms are vocational and it seeks to prepare students personally, as well as through study, for life beyond school. The older 14–19 age range is reflected in the emphasis on motivation, punctuality, a relatively long working day and mature behaviour suited to the working world.

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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)

The curriculum makes provision for enrichment, including educational visits, and for personal, social and health education. The planning indicates that students will have opportunities to pursue a range of interests, and to increase their knowledge and understanding of personal relationships and of the society in which they live, including the risks associated with some lifestyles. Teamwork is emphasised and the school has already established active partnerships with local employers and providers of education and training. The difference between right and wrong behaviour is made clear through the personal, social and health education programme, and through the detailed behaviour policy, with rewards and sanctions appropriately set out. Curricular planning also makes provision for students to learn about aspects of civil and criminal law, as well as the workings of English public institutions. There is no indication from the planning documents seen that any biased political views will be promoted or tolerated in the school.

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

The school is likely to meet almost all the regulations, although implementation could not be seen. The policies to prevent bullying, and those for health and safety, safeguarding, safer recruitment, educational visits, first aid and substance abuse, are detailed and take account, where appropriate, of relevant government guidance and legislation. The Principal and the Vice-Principal, who is the designated person for safeguarding, have both had recent training in child protection. The rest of the staff are scheduled for training in safeguarding towards the end of August this year, regardless of any previous expertise they may have. The school opens in September. The safeguarding policy is detailed and takes account of a broad range of indications that young people may be suffering neglect or harm, including female genital mutilation.

The first aid policy covers the requirements. It is intended to have four staff members trained in first aid and the training is booked for before the school opens. The policy includes a procedure for summoning an ambulance or moving a student to hospital where necessary. In addition, all staff working on the construction courses will be required to have specific health and safety training for the activities in their areas. The method of safe disposal of any bodily fluids is clearly set out. Within the home-school agreement, parents and carers are asked to provide information of any medical conditions which may require extra vigilance or attention on the part of staff.

The school has a fire plan, but further information, for example about the means of using the fire detection system to be installed, will need to be added as the building works progress. The school has applied to the local fire authority for an inspection visit as the basis of a fire risk assessment, but the response was that the request was made too early. It has not therefore been possible for the school to provide evidence of a fire authority report and an associated risk assessment.

The school is housed in a building which is separate from Aylesbury College. The grounds of the two providers are adjacent, but it is clear which area belongs to each institution. Sightlines are likely to be good and the plans for staff supervision indicate that the school will oversee outdoor break times, arrivals and departures effectively. Moreover, CCTV is used across the campus and the school is able to draw on the services of the college's security staff, who monitor activity across the campus grounds. The entrance to be used by cars is separate from the pedestrian access.

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

- arrange for an inspection visit by the local fire authority before the school opens; draw up a risk assessment and adapt the existing fire plan in the light of the outcomes of the visit (paragraph 13).

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

The school is likely to meet all requirements. The recruitment process is still continuing ahead of the opening in September this year. The school has a service-level agreement with the Aylesbury College Human Resources department, which carries out the required checks on the school's staff and, on behalf of the Chair, its governors. The human resources staff record the outcomes electronically on the school's single central register. There are columns in which each aspect of the process and the dates on which the information is received are clearly recorded. Checks are made of individuals' identities, qualifications and medical fitness and with the Disclosure and Barring Service. Some staff have been appointed so recently that the checks are ongoing, but their names and the stage of the verification process are shown on the register. At present, no staff have been engaged who will not be directly employed by the school, but the school is aware of the required procedures should such staff be engaged.

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

The school is likely to meet all the requirements. It is to be accommodated in a new building adjacent to Aylesbury College, a large further education provider with which it works in partnership. The inspector was able to tour the building, although works are not yet complete. However, the indications are that the learning environment will be of high quality, spacious and with areas that have been designed specifically for the school's specialisms of construction, and information and communication technology. Students will have the opportunity to learn heritage building and stonework techniques, and there is a large area set aside for this purpose. It is outdoors, but covered, to enable use in wet weather. Consideration has been given to acoustic conditions, with sound-absorbing panels suspended from ceilings, and the lighting seen in operation was good. External areas will be lit once the school is operational.

There are suitable toilet and washing facilities on each floor and there are toilets for the use of disabled staff or students. The students' toilets were not completed at the time of the inspection visit, but it is planned that the water temperature for taps will be pre-set. Drinking water is to be provided from water coolers. Changing and showering areas are also under construction; showers will provide suitable standards of privacy for the users. There is a suitable designated medical room, with appropriate facilities to hand, for sick or injured students. There is also a spacious 'hygiene room', with a toilet accessible to disabled users and washing facilities.

External space is safe and adequate for recreational purposes. The school is able to share good-quality games accommodation with partner institutions, including a secondary academy which is within a few minutes' walk of its premises.

### **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**

- **YES. The school can be registered and allowed to open on receipt by DfE of evidence of improvement in relation to the matters detailed above.**

Recommended number of day pupils: 600

Recommended number of boarders: 0

Recommended age range: 14–19

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: Not applicable.

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