

Advice note for a pre-registration inspection of a studio school

School name	Midland Studio College Nuneaton
DfE registration number	999/1455
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Inspection number	422356
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Reporting inspector	Michael Best

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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 proprietor, the Midland Academies Trust, seeks to establish a studio school for up to 300 male and female students aged 14 to 19 years at premises in the Bermuda Park Innovation Centre, Nuneaton. The school will specialise in Engineering (including Intelligent Transport Systems) and Enterprise. It is sponsored by North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, and will work in close partnership with the Midland Studio College in Hinckley. There will be an Executive Principal overseeing the work of both schools, with a Deputy Principal responsible for the day-to-day running of each school.

The school intends to open on 1 September 2013 with up to 75 students in Year 10 and up to 75 students in Year 12. The school expects there to be three male students for every two female students. Students will attend North Warwickshire and Hinckley College sites to use specialist teaching facilities, including for physical education. Students in Years 10 and 11 will spend at least half a day per week working with an employer, while those in Years 12 and 13 will spend two days a week with an employer. The Executive Principal estimates that on any one teaching day, which will run from 9am to 5pm for 40 weeks of the year, about 25% of the school's students will be off-site on timetabled learning or work experience.

The Midland Studio College Nuneaton aims to 'ensure that young people are successful at work and that they acquire the core skills and qualifications that will help them to be successful in life'.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the requirements for registration. Implementation could not be seen as the school is not yet operating. The proposed provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriate for the age of the school's students and in accord with its aims. The school has devised a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship that will be delivered thematically in weekly lessons. The school proposes to offer students a wide range of social and cultural enrichment activities, including residential and other visits, to promote their personal development and their

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

understanding of the arts, technology, and public services and institutions in England. A key element will be students' participation in the workplace so that they are enabled to step into employment ready for work from day one. The school's policies and procedures promote high expectations of students' behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and respect for others. Students will have numerous opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem through academic, vocational and enrichment activities, and as fully-involved members of the school community through the school council. Respect for civil law and for the differing views and opinions of others, including those of different faiths and cultures, is woven through the school's programme. The school has taken suitable steps to ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in the teaching of any subject and, where political issues are brought to the attention of the students, that reasonable steps will be taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views at all times.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements for registration. Implementation could not be seen as the school is not yet operating. The school's safeguarding policy reflects the guidance provided by the Secretary of State and includes suitable references to the local safeguarding board. The designated person for child protection is booked to attend and complete training at the required higher level shortly after the person takes up their appointment on 1 July 2013. All staff will be provided with appropriate awareness training as part of their induction programme, prior to the school opening in September 2013. The Executive Principal and others involved in appointing staff have completed recognised training in safe recruitment procedures. The school has a suitable policy and procedures for recruiting staff. All the required checks are being made on staff and the members of the proprietorial body as they are appointed.

The school's policies for promoting students' good behaviour, preventing bullying and ensuring their health and safety, both in the school and when on visits, meet requirements. A secure computer-based record will be maintained of the sanctions imposed on students for serious misbehaviour. The refurbishment of the premises has been planned to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Compliance will be confirmed to the Department in the documentation provided when the premises are handed over to the school. In addition, the school has arranged for a visit from the local fire officer prior to its opening. The school has had due regard to the Equality Act 2010, with the refurbishment incorporating the latest requirements for access to the premises; the school is also ensuring full access to the curriculum and to information. The first aid policy is detailed and provides clear guidance on dealing with body fluid spillages and when to call for expert assistance; it is planned to train staff in first aid procedures during their induction. The school will use a computerised database to provide admission and attendance registers that reflect requirements.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements for registration. All the required checks are made on staff and the members of the proprietorial body, including criminal records checks, as they are appointed. These are systematically recorded on the school's single central register. The school's records of the checks made on the identity and qualifications (where required) of staff, together with their medical fitness and any other checks, are complete for those already in post and are in the process of being completed for others as they are appointed. The school obtains and checks written references on all applicants in line with safe recruitment guidelines.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet all but one of the requirements for registration. The refurbishment of the accommodation is underway and is likely to be completed in time for handover on 1 August 2013. The timetable for the delivery and installation of furnishings and equipment has been agreed with suppliers and contractors. The plans seen on this inspection visit indicate a high quality of finish and fitness for purpose; the refurbishment is being managed by an officer from North Warwickshire and Hinckley College who demonstrates a robust mastery of the project. All mains services are already connected to the school and they are functional. Arrangements have been made for the maintenance of the premises and to ensure that they are kept clean and tidy. The standards of decoration, inside and outside lighting, ventilation, heating and flooring specified are likely to meet requirements. There is suitable access, including a stair lift for people with physical disabilities. Emergency exit routes are clearly signed and provide free passage to safety.

The specification indicates that the provision of teaching space, study areas, and furnishings and fittings is likely to meet requirements. All teaching rooms will have multi-media facilities. A science laboratory and computer suite are to be fitted out in time for the school's opening. Specialist teaching facilities for engineering classes, and for physical education and games, are located at a nearby campus of the North Warwickshire and Hinckley College. Students will travel to and from these facilities on supervised private transport.

All the requirements regarding hot and cold water supplies are likely to be met. The present plans indicate that there will be insufficient washroom facilities for the number of students on roll when the school is at its capacity of 300 students from September 2014. The plans seen provide sufficient facilities for the 150 students that will be admitted from September 2013, together with staff and visitors. There are currently two washroom facilities for disabled people. The school's original proposals for a medical room for students, for which the appropriate fittings and furnishings are specified, were unsuitable because the room was not sufficiently close to a toilet facility; it would have required a sick student to go through an office and public area. An alternative location was identified during this inspection visit; this is likely to meet requirements. A suitable area of hard standing will be available for students' daily recreation in a secure compound beyond the car park. Off-site facilities will be timetabled for students' exclusive use for physical education and recreation; these

include separate changing room facilities and showers for male and female students. The security of the building and grounds is likely to meet requirements, with access to the building controlled from the reception office.

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

- ensure that there are sufficient toilet and washing facilities for students, staff and visitors (paragraph 23A(1)(a)).

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

YES. The school can be registered and allowed to open on receipt by DfE of evidence of improvement in relation to:

- the provision of toilets and washing facilities for students, staff and visitors (paragraph 23A(1)(a)).

Recommended number of day pupils: 300

Recommended number of boarders: N/a

Recommended age range: 14–19 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/a