

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

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School name	Steiner Academy Exeter
DfE registration number	n/a
Unique reference number (URN)	1468
Inspection number	422373
Inspection dates	29 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Susan Kara

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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 Steiner Academy Exeter is to be temporarily located on the former site of a local authority infant school. It is due to open on 5 September 2013. The school's permanent site is a university hall of residence set in its own grounds with a large walled garden. It requires extensive refurbishment and also additional new buildings. It has a planned opening date of September 2015. The school has applied to be registered as an all-through school admitting 624 girls and boys in the age range four to 16. At the temporary location there will be a maximum of 182 pupils. There are 116 pupils currently registered for enrolment in September, 10 of whom have statements of special educational needs. The school will open with three kindergarten classes (which include pupils of Reception and Year 1 age) and classes for pupils of Years 2, 3 and 7 age. Six full-time teachers and five part-time teachers, including the Principal, have been appointed. Five teaching assistants have also been appointed.

Through offering the Steiner curriculum and applying Steiner's methodology and thinking on child development, the school's mission is to create an outstanding school for the children of Exeter. The school will be accessible to all, regardless of background, income, ability, faith, gender or any other consideration. The school's vision is to provide an education which supports children in developing their fullest potential as motivated, confident, self-reliant and responsible individuals with a life-long love of learning and a strong sense of the contribution that they can make to society.

## Compliance with the regulations

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

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations subject to the satisfactory implementation of the planned curriculum; however, implementation could not be seen. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies set out clearly how pupils will be encouraged to develop their understanding of right and wrong and the consequences of their decisions and actions. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development policy makes clear how the school will develop and motivate young people to become responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society. Citizenship is integral to the curriculum. Younger pupils begin by looking at the inter-

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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)

connected nature of public services and infrastructure that support living in England: roads, rail, water, electricity; police, fire and ambulance services. Older pupils study the development of democracy, the making of laws and modern political institutions. This will contribute to the pupils' understanding of the civil law in England. Pupils will take part in a number of local community enterprises and also international ones, including the annual Waldorf One World collaborative event which involves the Steiner Schools worldwide in raising funds for the disadvantaged.

The aims of the proposed curriculum include supporting and valuing every learner to inspire interest in, and a love of, learning in order to produce confident well-rounded individuals who are able to lead fulfilling and healthy lives. The essence of the Steiner methodology and curriculum is that it is free from partisan political or religious views. The planned religious education curriculum is designed to enable students to understand and respect a diversity of viewpoints whilst developing their own personal moral code. The intended pattern of teaching allows time for quiet reflection and the planned curriculum will include celebrating all the festivals that are culturally relevant to the United Kingdom, with the emphasis on Christian festivals. A programme of visits to benefit from Exeter's rich educational resources, and annual overnight trips, are an essential aspect of the curriculum.

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

The majority of regulations are likely to be met. All the required policy documents have been produced including comprehensive policies for the health and safety of children and staff, which include a first aid policy; safeguarding and safer recruitment; behaviour management and preventing bullying. The Principal and one of the directors have been trained in safe recruitment and they have applied the relevant regulations and guidance in appointments made to date. Two staff are already trained in child protection and the appointed special educational needs coordinator is trained to the relevant level to be the designated child protection officer. All the other staff are booked for child protection training before the school opens to pupils, so that requirements are likely to be met. Similarly, a number of staff are already trained in first aid and a range of first aid courses have been booked for other staff before term starts. The school has appointed its teaching staff from the 1 August so they are able to insist that all of them attend the range of courses that have been booked.

Suitable policies have been prepared for all the required aspects of health and safety. In particular, reference to the safe use of candles, which is an integral part of the Steiner Curriculum, is clearly set out. However, premises and fire safety risk assessments have yet to be completed, including a report from the fire authority.

Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements. The school admission and equal opportunities policies make clear that the school will be accessible to all, regardless of background, income, ability, faith, gender or any other consideration. The temporary buildings are wheelchair accessible; the accessibility of the refurbished and new buildings at the

permanent site will be required by regulations to be a key aspect of the Education Funding Agency's plans. Those physical activities that require pupils to take a shower will be held at facilities off the site where showers are available. There is not yet a three-year plan to improve accessibility.

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

- comply with health and safety law by producing a risk assessment for the premises (paragraph 11)
- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a fire risk assessment and arranging a report from the fire authority (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 indicates that all regulations are likely to be met. All the required checks have been completed for the proprietors and the staff appointed; they are recorded appropriately on a single central register. Checks are completed as new staff are appointed and the necessary entries made to the register. The school does not intend to employ supply staff but it is aware of its responsibilities should that situation change.

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

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. The temporary location was formerly the site of the local authority infant school at Exwick. As all the previous school buildings were demolished, access on this visit was limited to an inspection of the site and a discussion of the site plans. Nine temporary classrooms are being erected in two blocks during August. The school has already secured separate storage facilities so that it can take delivery of all furniture and equipment until the temporary classrooms are able to be used. The Education Funding Agency, the Department's delivery agent, is managing both the building of the temporary site and the refurbishment and new build at the permanent site.

Initially pupils will be admitted to the Reception Year, Years 1, 2, 3 and 7. The temporary buildings will be suitable for the delivery of the planned curriculum. A distinctive feature of the Steiner curriculum includes extensive use of the outdoors. Ground works are being completed which will make the surrounding sloped grounds safe and suitable for the pupils. The pupils in the Kindergarten classes (Reception and Year 1) will have a self-contained teaching area and play area. The plans show sufficient toilets and hand-washing facilities. Hot water supplies will be regulated. Separate labelled provision for drinking water will be made in each classroom. One of the classrooms will be used as an administrative and staff centre, with suitable facilities for the medical examination and treatment of pupils who may become ill.

There is no provision for the preparation and serving of food. Negotiations with caterers who can provide a packed lunch in line with the Steiner philosophy of fresh locally sourced organic produce are in hand.

### **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**

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 producing a risk assessment for the premises (paragraph 11)
- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a fire risk assessment and arranging a report from the fire authority (paragraph 13)
- produce a three year plan to increase accessibility as required by the Equality Act 2010.

Recommended number of day pupils: 182 in the temporary premises, rising to 624 in the permanent premises on their completion

Recommended age range: 4 to 16

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 temporary building works have been completed and then when the school expands. The school may need to apply for a material change when the new premises are completed.