

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

School name	Walsall Studio School
DfE registration number	335/4005
Unique reference number (URN)	139789
Inspection number	422414
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Reporting inspector	Colin Mackinlay

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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 Walsall Studio School is to be located in new premises in the centre of Walsall. The school is sponsored by the Vine Group, which is a community development trust that has a focus on the involvement of young people in social and economic development. It is due to open on 2 September 2013 and has applied to be registered to admit up to 300 boys and girls in the age range 14 to 19 years. It will admit students in Years 10 and 12 in its first year. There are 65 students registered for enrolment at present from a wide range of local schools. None of these students have statements of special educational needs, but a small number will be on the school's register of special educational needs. The school will specialise in business and social enterprise and digital media technologies, with an emphasis on music and the arts. The school aims to be entrepreneurial and innovative and a key feature of its provision will be paid work experience opportunities for all students.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school is likely to meet most of the regulations, but implementation could not be seen. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying 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. There are detailed plans to ensure that all students develop a wide range of personal skills and attributes in order to fulfil the school's ambition of providing 'personalised educational experience in a family environment where personal discipline, respect and care for others, the community and the environment is paramount'. The school's policies will promote an appreciation of students' own and other cultures and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs. They do not, however, yet include the promotion of respect for the civil and criminal law or sufficiently emphasise the respect for the fundamental British values of democracy and the rule of law. The documentation indicates that the school will ensure that any political issues encountered are presented and discussed in a balanced manner.

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

- ensure that respect for civil and criminal law is promoted in policies and provision (paragraph 5(a)(ii))

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

- ensure that the personal, social and health education curriculum emphasises the respect for the fundamental British values of democracy and the rule of law (paragraph 5(a)(vi)).

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Documentary evidence indicates that all the regulations are likely to be met, but implementation could not be seen. All the required policy documents have been produced, including policies for safeguarding, safer recruitment, behaviour management, anti-bullying and first aid. The Principal and Chair of the Governing Body have been formally trained in safer recruitment, and the principles of safer recruitment have been applied effectively to the recruitment process to date. A provider and dates have been booked for the training of all staff in child protection, including appropriate training for the designated person for child protection. Staff qualified in first aid have been identified to take responsibility for first aid. Suitable policies have been prepared for all required aspects of health and safety and for fire safety. Premises and fire safety risk assessments have been prepared. The fire authority will conduct the required report as part of the building control process. Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements. The school's Equalities Plan, to improve access over the required three-year period, is in place.

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 most regulations are likely to be met. All required checks have been completed for staff currently employed and are under way for those appointed to date. Checks for the proprietors have been completed. The school will be using staff from its parent trust and a partner school. The school has established and can demonstrate that these staff have had the required checks, but has not yet had formal written notification of this or made provision for the checks to be recorded in the single central register.

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

- obtain written notifications of the appropriate checks for all persons offered for supply by another business (paragraph 20(2)(a))
- ensure that the appropriate checks for all persons offered for supply by another business are recorded in the single central register (paragraph 22(5)).

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet most of the regulations. The school is to be located in purpose-built premises which were recently completed and officially opened by HRH The Duke of York. Classrooms are of adequate size, and although sufficient in number for the initial intake, the school will need additional teaching space in order to accommodate its planned number on roll, or may reduce the eventual number on roll. There are sufficient washrooms, changing facilities and showers. All areas of the

building are fully accessible and there are disabled toilet facilities on each floor. There is a medical room located close to an accessible toilet; however, it does not have its own washing facilities. There are appropriate facilities for the preparation and serving of food. There is very limited outside space for play and recreation which, although sufficient for the initial cohorts joining the school, will need to be enhanced with additional space for the intended number on roll. There are plans to provide more space in future developments, but these are not yet funded. Outdoor and indoor physical education will be provided at a neighbouring school with the required facilities, which is a short walk away. The school has completed a risk assessment with appropriate controls for managing the transfer of students to these facilities. The buildings and access points to the grounds have appropriate security.

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

- ensure that washing facilities are provided in the room designated for the short term care of sick and injured pupils (paragraph 23B(1)(b))
- ensure that there is a suitable outdoor play space for the planned number of pupils (paragraph 23G(1)(b)).

Provision of information

The provision is likely to meet most of the regulations. The school has not yet made all of the required information available to parents. Although most of the information and policies are available from the school reception they are not all on the website and parents have not been informed how to access them. The school has not yet completed its policy and procedures on assessment and reporting.

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

- ensure that it provides its address and that of its registered office to parents as well as a name and address for correspondence with the chair of the governing body (paragraph 24(1)(a))
- ensure that all of the required information is made available to parents and prospective parents on its website and ensure that parents are appropriately informed (paragraph 24(1)(b))
- publish its safeguarding children policy (as required under part 3 paragraph 7) on its website (paragraph 24(1)(c))
- complete its planning to provide an annual written report of progress to parents (paragraph 24(1)(f)).

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:

- ensure that respect for civil and criminal law is promoted in policies and provision (paragraph 5(a)(ii))
- ensure that the personal, social and health education curriculum emphasises the respect for the fundamental British values of democracy and the rule of law (paragraph 5(a)(vi))
- obtain written notifications of the appropriate checks for all persons offered for supply by another business (paragraph 20(2)(a))
- ensure that the appropriate checks for all persons offered for supply by another business are recorded in the single central register (paragraph 22(5))
- ensure that washing facilities are provided in the room designated for the short term care of sick and injured pupils (paragraph 23B(1)(b))
- ensure that there is a suitable outdoor play space for the planned number of pupils (paragraph 23G(1)(b))
- ensure that the school provides its address and that of its registered office to parents as well as a name and address for correspondence with the chair of the governing body (paragraph 24(1)(a))
- ensure that all of the required information is made available to parents and prospective parents on its website and ensure that parents are appropriately informed (paragraph 24(1)(b))
- publish its safeguarding children policy (as required under part 3 paragraph 7) on its website (paragraph 24(1)(c))
- complete its planning to provide an annual written report of progress to parents (paragraph 24(1)(f)).

Recommended number of day pupils: 300

Recommended number of boarders: 0

Recommended age range: 14–19 years

Recommended gender of pupils: mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: n/a.