

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

School name	Robert Owen Vocational School
DfE registration number	999/1445
Unique reference number (URN)	1445
Inspection number	422343
Inspection dates	22 July 2013
Reporting inspector	David Young

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 Robert Owen Vocational School is to be located in refurbished premises in the centre of Hereford with effect from September 2014. The school will be registered for up to 500 students in the age range 14 to 19 years. It will open in temporary premises in a refurbished primary school in the village of Holme Lacy, about four miles from Hereford. In the first year, September 2013, it will admit up to 60 students into Year 10. The school will be non-selective and will admit some students with statements of special educational needs.

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

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Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school is likely to meet all of the regulations, but implementation could not be seen. The school has identified six values which underpin its ethos and its curriculum. These are community; integrity; democracy; equality and respect; responsibility and solidarity. A commitment to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is exemplified by the pre-eminence of these values throughout the school's documentation, in the construction of its vocational baccalaureate, in the personal attributes assessed in the student appraisal system, and in the specific citizenship programme.

The curriculum experience for all students will include themes covering global citizenship, personal image and aspirations, team building, leadership, creative enterprise and public services. The school's plans demonstrate how these themes will contribute to the development of self-esteem, distinguishing between right and wrong and respecting the rights of others. Specific subject themes and the compulsory study of citizenship will ensure that students understand the role of public services and institutions and have an insight into democratic processes and the workings of civil law. There is a strong emphasis on global citizenship and there are planned opportunities for students to encounter diversity in cultures and beliefs, for example through developing links with named schools in areas of contrasting cultural identity. The school's commitment to students' personal development will be supported through a system of personal coaching and a student appraisal system which is based on the school's core values. There are a number of planned opportunities for students to engage with the local community, such as organising a community event, a local environmental investigation, work placements and taking part in a customer-service business challenge. The curriculum plans and other planning are free from any political partisanship or bias and the governors are preparing a statement to this effect.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Documentary evidence indicates that the majority of regulations are likely to be met. The school has produced comprehensive policies for child protection, the promotion of good behaviour, the prevention of bullying, first aid and the administration of medicines. The health and safety policy includes comprehensive strategies for managing all aspects of health and safety, and fire safety. This includes clear arrangements for the periodic checking and recording of all required aspects of fire safety, in addition to an additional set of procedures for fire risk assessment and premises evacuation. A premises risk assessment has not yet been completed. A fire risk assessment has been completed by a commercial company and is due to be submitted to the fire authority. A report has not yet been received from the local fire authority. The headteacher is booked for training to the required level as designated person for child protection and plans are in place for the training of all staff in child protection as part of the induction programme before the school opens. 'First aid at

work' training is booked for two members of staff, with emergency first aid training for three teaching assistants before the school opens. Admission and attendance registers are to be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements. Records of any incidents and sanctions for serious misbehaviour will also be recorded on the electronic management system. A three-year plan to increase accessibility is in place.

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 report from the fire authority (paragraph 13).

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school's planning for checks on the suitability of staff and proprietors, and implementation to date, indicate that all regulations are likely to be met. All required suitability checks have been completed according to the school's recruitment procedures to date and have been recorded in an appropriate single central register of checks. The school has a policy for the recruitment of supply staff which meets the regulatory requirements.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school's premises in the first year will be a refurbished village primary school. Plans for minor refurbishment have been drawn up by the Education Funding Agency and a final planning meeting with the trust has been arranged for next week. The timescales identified in the planning documentation should ensure that all required work is completed in time for opening in September 2013. The Department will wish to continue to monitor progress with the premises directly with the Agency.

Initially, up to 50 Year 10 students will be admitted to the refurbished premises. There are sufficient classrooms of suitable size, including appropriate facilities for teaching science, food technology and information and communication technology. The school has arrangements in place to use the off-site facilities of local further education providers and local employers to implement some of the planned vocational experiences. There are sufficient separate washrooms available for male and female students and for staff. A room with suitable facilities is available for medical examinations and for any student who may be ill. There is sufficient safe outside space for play and recreation. Suitably equipped off-site facilities are to be used for physical education as there are no showers available on the school site. This is a temporary arrangement for one year as suitable changing facilities and showers

are to be provided on the permanent site due to open in September 2014. 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.**

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 report from the fire authority (paragraph 13).

Recommended number of day pupils: 60 in September 2013*

Recommended number of boarders: 0

Recommended age range: 14–19 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.

*The school has applied to be registered for up to 500 students. The premises due to open in September 2013 are suitable to accommodate up to 60 students.

Once the accommodation is completed on the proposed permanent site, a material change inspection may be required to assess the suitability of the premises and accommodation to admit up to 500 students.