

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

School name	STEM Sixth Form Academy
DfE registration number	n/a
Unique reference number (URN)	1478
Inspection number	422385
Inspection dates	25 June 2013
Reporting inspector	Calvin Pike

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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 The sponsor is Skills and Development Agency

Context of the school

The planned STEM Sixth Form Academy is to be situated in a six-floor, refurbished building in City Road, London, within Tech City's Silicon Roundabout. This free school, specialising in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, for 16-19-year-old students is due to open in September 2013. The Principal is already in place and almost all teaching and administrative staff have been appointed. The school has applied to admit 216 students in its first year and intends to increase to 432 students in 2014. At present, 100 students are registered for enrolment. With a strong focus on the development of employability and life skills, STEM Academy aims to engage closely with industry and employers to enable students to gain real-life work experience and meaningful employment-related skills which will serve them in their future careers. It is committed to helping young people to progress from the school to top universities as well as directly into the workplace or entrepreneurship.

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. Actions taken by the Principal and governors so far indicate that they are working effectively towards providing very well for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An example of these actions is the clear way in which behaviour and anti-bullying policies set out expectations of students and encourage them to respect others and take responsibility. Another is the Safeguarding and Promotion of Student Welfare policy which highlights the role of the curriculum in empowering students to prepare for adult life through tutorials and enrichment and career programmes which develop a healthy, safer lifestyle and skills in managing risk. These aims are reinforced further through student roles as ambassadors, student council elected representatives, and mentors and volunteers in primary and secondary schools and in community groups.

A strong emphasis on developing moral and cultural understanding is intended by applying STEM learning principles to current contexts. Student enrichment coordinators, for example, will organise fundraising, talent, dancing and singing events, and student environmental advocates who will drive forward the curriculum, its real-life impact and carbon footprint and lead publications on environmental

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

issues. Students will be given a good insight into the workings of civil law and English institutions. A range of visits in the United Kingdom and overseas is planned to explore multicultural issues related to the planned curriculum, to help students to appreciate other cultures and to implement the proprietors' determination to ensure that the planned curriculum is free from political, religious or partisan views.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Although implementation could not be seen, documentary evidence indicates that all but two of the requirements are likely to be met. All the mandatory policies are clear, comprehensive and coherent, including those for safeguarding students, safer recruitment, behaviour management, anti-bullying and first aid. Appointment panels include one member who has received safe recruitment training. The Vice-Principal is the designated student protection officer and has been trained appropriately. Additional designated members of staff will be updated with refresher courses regularly. All adults who work with students will have safeguarding refresher courses led by the Vice-Principal annually.

Suitable policies have been prepared for all required aspects of health and safety. These include fire safety. Premises and fire safety risk assessments have not yet been completed but a report from the fire authority has been arranged, following necessary refurbishments and prior to the school's opening. A premises manager has been appointed and site risk assessments are planned to be conducted in early August with the Principal and others responsible when the new school is ready for occupation. Arrangements have also been made with a contractor to conduct a fire risk assessment around the same time.

Comprehensive records of students who have enrolled to date have been created. Suitable admission and attendance registers have been created and are to be updated as new students are enrolled. Plans for the school's refurbished premises, affirmed during the inspection visit to the site, indicate clearly that there will be full access for students with disabilities. The school's equal opportunities policy provides a clear framework for enabling students with disabilities to reach their potential.

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 a report from the fire authority (paragraph 13).

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Systems in place for the completion of all required checks on the suitability of staff and rigorous actions taken so far indicate that all regulations are likely to be met. Required checks have been completed on the proprietors and staff appointed to date. These are recorded on a suitable single central register. As there is sufficient

capacity within the STEM Sixth Form Academy staff to cover staff absence, there is no intention to employ supply staff, but the Principal is aware of the responsibilities should supply staff be needed in future.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. It is to be located in premises previously occupied by Balfour Beatty's Mansell company, which are undergoing a staged programme of refurbishment. A tour of the site, including the part to be used from September 2013, was undertaken and detailed plans were scrutinised. The Education Funding Agency, the Department's delivery agent, is managing the preparation and refurbishment process. The Department will continue to monitor progress with the premises directly with the Agency.

In September, students will be admitted mainly to Year 12. The upper two floors of the six-floor premises which are to be opened at that time are suitable to meet the needs of the sixth form curriculum to be provided. A programme of refurbishment of the remaining floors has been set out effectively. It aims for the school to take occupation of an additional floor approximately every 16 weeks. The premises provides well for the non-mandatory 16-19 curriculum intended, with a good range of specialist laboratories and teaching rooms as well as general purpose teaching spaces and seminar areas. Outdoor recreation areas are not available on the school's site but will be accessible through its links with local partners. Orders for furniture and equipment, suitable for the proposed age range, are being placed. There are sufficient and suitable toilets, washing, changing and showering facilities on site, including plans for separate toilets for male and female students and staff. There is a medical bay with washing and toilet facilities plus toilets and shower facilities suitable for disabled students. There are appropriate facilities for the serving of food, and sixth form students will also be able to use facilities in the local area. In addition to facilities on site, the school plans to develop links with local industries, businesses and hospitals to extend the learning experiences for its students. The building is on track for being fully secure before the school opens.

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:

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- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a fire risk assessment and a report from the fire authority (paragraph 13).

Recommended number of day pupils:	216
Recommended number of boarders:	0
Recommended age range:	16–19 years
Recommended gender of pupils:	Mixed
Recommended type of special educational needs:	n/a