

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

School name	ContinU Plus Academy
DfE registration number	999/1456
Unique reference number (URN)	1456
Inspection number	422358
Inspection dates	5 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Michael Best

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Piccadilly Gate
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M1 2WD

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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, ContinU Plus Academy Trust, seeks to establish a free school for up to 120 male and female students aged 11 to 16 years from the Wyre Forest and Hagley areas of Worcestershire who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools. The school will occupy purpose-built premises in Kidderminster; construction of the permanent buildings has yet to start and is likely to be completed early in 2014. As a temporary measure, when the school opens on 1 September 2013, Key Stage 3 students will be based in accommodation at a local outdoor education centre maintained by Worcestershire local authority and Key Stage 4 students will occupy temporary buildings to be erected on part of the new school site.

The school aims to reintegrate students into mainstream education, and support their transition to post-16 training, apprenticeship or employment.

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 range of the students and accords with the school's aims. The school has devised a comprehensive programme of enrichment that provides for students' personal, social and health education through the taught curriculum, extra-curricular activities and individual support. It will develop students' insights into the workings of public institutions and the civil law.

The school's proposed programme focuses on preparing students for their future lives in society and in the workplace. At the heart of this lies promoting students' self-respect, an understanding and tolerance of others and their cultures and beliefs, and building healthy relationships. Students will be supported in valuing themselves as individuals, developing their talents to the full and contributing to the local community, while at the same time learning to accept success and failure as part of this process. Through outdoor activities such as survival skills, bush craft and community projects, together with creative activities such as photography and music

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

technology, students will build resilience and develop social and team skills, and broaden their cultural perspective. The provision includes helping students to understand their rights and responsibilities within a democratic society, leading healthy and safe lives, and developing a healthy set of values and attitudes within a robust moral code. The school's policies and procedures promote high expectations of students' behaviour, together with a strong sense of motivation and sense of purpose.

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 follows the local authority's model and reflects the guidance provided by the Secretary of State and the local safeguarding board. The headteacher-designate has completed the required higher level training in child protection and two senior staff members are additionally booked to attend higher level training before the school opens. All staff have had appropriate training in safeguarding matters in their previous posts and will have refresher training as part of their induction programme prior to the school opening. The chair of the governing body and the headteacher-designate have completed recognised training courses 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 has made suitable arrangements at both temporary sites to ensure that the welfare, health and safety of students and staff are not compromised.

The school's policies for promoting students' good behaviour, preventing bullying and ensuring their health and safety, both in school and when on visits, meet requirements. A suitable record will be maintained of the sanctions imposed on students for serious misbehaviour. The local fire officer has reviewed the school's proposed provision and its plans for ensuring fire safety at the temporary buildings, and has expressed his satisfaction with them. He is returning to undertake an inspection prior to the school admitting students. The school has due regard to the Equality Act 2010, with an action plan drawn up to improve access to the premises, the curriculum and to information. The first aid policy provides suitable guidance, and it is planned to train all staff in first aid procedures during their induction. The school will use a computerised database to provide admission and attendance registers that reflects 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 being made on staff and the members of the proprietorial body, including criminal records checks, as they are appointed. These are suitably 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. The school has made suitable arrangements with the outdoor centre for ensuring the suitability of all adults with whom students may have contact.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet all of the requirements for registration. It was not possible to see the temporary accommodation as this is not yet available and construction has not started on the permanent accommodation. The plans for the permanent school provide a mix of teaching rooms, suited to small groups and individuals. There will be specialist facilities to support the curriculum to Key Stage 4. The school has ordered furnishings and equipment and these are awaiting delivery for when the first students arrive in September. Mains services will be available at the temporary premises. The maintenance of the premises, and the arrangements for keeping them clean and tidy, have been arranged and appropriate standards of decoration, inside and outside lighting, ventilation, heating and flooring have been specified for all the premises. The local fire officer has been consulted over the school's plans and is due to visit and report once the temporary accommodation becomes available and before the first students arrive.

All teaching rooms will have multi-media facilities. Until the permanent accommodation is ready, the school will use specialist facilities for science at the outdoor centre and local facilities for physical education and games. Students will travel with staff between the temporary sites, where necessary. The school has arranged for students to have suitable outdoor facilities for recreation and play.

The school's plans indicate that all the requirements regarding hot and cold water supplies are likely to be met. The washroom facilities available for students and staff are sufficient. There will be suitable washroom facilities for disabled people and appropriately equipped medical facilities for students at both temporary sites. The facilities for physical education and games include separate changing room facilities and showers for male and female students. The security of the buildings and grounds is likely to meet requirements. At the outdoor centre, arrangements have been made for visitors and deliveries to be properly checked and supervised. The temporary accommodation at the school's new site will be fully fenced off during construction.

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 Department for Education of evidence of improvement in relation to the following matters:**

Recommended number of day pupils: 120

Recommended number of boarders: N/A

Recommended age range: 11–16 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: Alternative provision for students at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools.