

# Advice note for pre-registration inspections of all types of academies and free schools/studio schools/university technical colleges (UTC)

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School name	Thomson House School
DfE registration number	318/2005
Unique reference number (URN)	139549
Inspection number	422409
Inspection dates	12 June 2013
Reporting inspector	David Scott

## **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**

Thomson House School will be located on two sites, one a former United Reformed Church (URC) and the other, the former Old Courthouse, which has in more recent times been a nursery and a pupil referral unit. The school is not sponsored and is due to open on 5 September 2013. The school has applied to be registered to admit 360 boys and girls from age four to 11. It will admit children aged four to five in its first year. At present, there are 48 children registered for enrolment. Currently, there is one child who has special educational needs, with none having a statement of special educational needs. For September 2013, the school will open on the URC site and the Old Courthouse site is due to be completed by April 2014. The school aims to prepare children 'to develop the habits of mind and spirit associated with excellence and well-being, enabling them to lead fulfilled lives'.

## **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's intended ethos will welcome children irrespective of their backgrounds, and will nourish their 'curiosity, kindness and courage' in order to provide a 'truly all-round education; a love of learning; a focus on family and a commitment to excellence'. The planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme emphasises the promotion of 'excellence and well-being' to ensure that pupils develop 'strong character', based on showing care and concern for others. Each child from Year 1 will take part in the Richmond Awards Scheme, which aims to develop the pupils' citizenship skills, by providing 'service' to the local community, through a variety of projects. The daily circle and reflection times have been built into the school day designed to extend pupils' communication and research skills in order to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Trips and visits, and an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, are planned to broaden cultural horizons so that all pupils can develop an understanding of civil law, public institutions and services in England.

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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)

The planned programme of assemblies, linked to the well-being and PSHE curriculum, is intended to provide all children, whatever their faith background, with the opportunity to appreciate and respect the diversity of various traditions and cultures in the local community. The staff handbook gives details for staff to ensure that their planned lessons will be free from partisan political or religious views and that, where any political issues are discussed, a balanced view is always presented.

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

Documentary evidence indicates that almost all regulations are likely to be met. The school has policies and procedures to assess and manage health and safety risks around the school site including those applying for educational visits. Evacuation procedures, premises and fire safety risk assessments have been completed and a report from the fire authority has been arranged. The behaviour policy sets high expectations where children are afforded opportunities to earn appropriate rewards that focus on the positive and celebrate success. Appropriate attendance and admission registers are ready for use. The school does not currently have an accessibility improvement plan in place to review and improve equality of access for disabled students.

The school has appropriate policies for safeguarding, safer recruitment and first aid. All staff and governors appointed to date have been trained to a suitable level in safer recruitment, safeguarding and child protection. For those staff still to be appointed, dates have been identified for them to complete their safeguarding and child protection training with the local authority.

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

- produce a three-year plan to increase accessibility as required by the Equality Act 2010.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

All appointed staff to date are suitably vetted and these checks are captured in a single central record which includes checks on members of the governing body. The school does not intend to employ supply staff but is aware of the appropriate checks and procedures required to meet the regulations.

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

An on-site visit and scrutiny of the architect's plans confirms that the URC premises are likely to meet the regulations in readiness for opening in September. The installation of washrooms is satisfactory, including two disabled toilets, one being located on each floor. Orders for furniture, fixtures and fittings have been placed (orders seen) to provide a learning environment suitable for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A suitable area has been designated for food preparation. The building will have full access for disabled students via a ramped entrance and a

lift to both floors. The access policy details arrangements for disabled children to be admitted to the school. A medical room is planned with washrooms nearby, all suitably equipped. The URC site does not have any designated outside areas. However, a number of locations have been identified, including a park located nearby, and suitable risk assessments, contained in the 'EYFS Outdoor Learning Policy' have been completed to ensure children are safely chaperoned and suitably cared for on such visits. Plans and inspection of the site indicate that the Old Courthouse will also meet requirements when the building refurbishment is completed.

### **Provision of information**

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school 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:**

- produce a three-year plan to increase accessibility as required by the Equality Act 2010.

Recommended number of day pupils: 360

Recommended age range: 4–11

Recommended gender of pupils: mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: not applicable.