

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

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| School name | Plymouth School of Creative Arts |
| DfE registration number | n/a |
| Unique reference number (URN) | 1493 |
| Inspection number | 422403 |
| Inspection dates | 28 June 2013 |
| Reporting inspector | Mick Pye |

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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.

Context of the school

The proposed Plymouth School of Creative Arts is to be located in a brand new, three-storey building. The school is due to open on 6 September 2013 and while the building work is being done it will make use of an adjacent two-storey building. The school has applied to be registered to admit 1,020 pupils, aged 4 to 16 years of age. Currently it has 100 applications for entry. The school is open to pupils with statements of special educational needs but none has formally registered for this coming year. The school aims to develop within the pupils a sense of creativity in their approach to all work, so that they approach work with imagination and an open mind. The school's vision is that the school and its pupils become a catalyst for change in the community.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school is likely to meet most, but not all, of the requirements. A pre-planned programme of personal, health, social and citizenship education has been drawn up. This will be the main formal vehicle for the delivery of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. In addition, the headteacher emphasises that the very ethos of the school is about reflection, empathy, and courage to experiment, as well as having mutual respect for your own and others' work and ideas. It is planned that pupils will explore their own feelings, their own gifts and hence build relationships and self-esteem. For example, there are units of work entitled 'Good to Be Me' and 'Building Confidence'. The unit of work on law needs to be more explicit about the need to differentiate between civil and criminal law. The school has prepared a religious education programme and an ethics course. These aim to add to pupils' knowledge of different faiths and enable reflection on various issues of importance to them. The school strongly believes that through their creative work pupils will develop an appreciation of the value of diversity. Links are being established with Swedish schools and the local ethnic minority community. While implicit in the documentation there is a further need to emphasise more clearly in policies and procedures the school's commitment to ensuring that partisan political beliefs are not promoted in lessons. Furthermore a similar commitment in policies needs to be made clear with respect to presenting a balanced view in lessons and during extra-curricular activities when political issues are discussed.

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

- ensure that the school's commitment not to promote partisan political views in the teaching of subjects is made clear (paragraph 5(b))
- ensure that, where political issues are discussed, reasonably practical steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views (paragraphs 5(c)(i), (ii) and (iii)).

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Welfare, health and safety of pupils

There are a number of well-written policies relating to pupils' welfare and safety. These, together with other documentary evidence and plans, suggest that most of the regulations are likely to be met. Of particular value is the policy for outdoor visits as it is the school's intention for pupils to regularly access out-of-school activities and trips. This policy has very detailed instructions about the preparation, conduct and evaluation of the trip, as well as valuable pro-forma which reinforce the health and safety aspects for pupils out of school. The headteacher is the designated child protection officer and is about to undergo refresher training in August. All staff, as part of their induction, will receive appropriate training before the school's opening in September so that requirements will be met. First aid training for sufficient staff, including paediatric training, is firmly booked to take place prior to the opening of the school. The school is developing risk assessments for all the required aspects and areas of activity. Appropriate policies for health and safety have been written although the school has yet to write a fire risk assessment and arrange a visit from the fire authority. A site visit and examination of plans show that provision for access by disabled pupils has been appropriately addressed although a three-year accessibility plan has not been written.

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

- provide evidence that training is complete and at the appropriate level for all staff and for the designated officer for child protection prior to the school opening (paragraph 7)
- provide evidence that training is complete and at the appropriate level for a sufficient number of staff prior to the school opening (paragraph 11)
- develop a fire risk assessment and arrange a report from the fire authority (paragraph 13)
- produce a three-year accessibility plan in order to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Regulations are likely to be met. An independent human resources organisation has been commissioned to carry out checks on adults for their suitability to work with children. These checks are scheduled so that they take place prior to appointment. A

single central register of suitability for employment is already in place and shows the appropriate information required and reference number of the enhanced criminal check certificates that have been seen by the school. The school has secure procedures for ensuring the suitability of supply staff, governors and contractors, and a list of volunteers has already been drawn up with a view to checking their backgrounds. The need for confidentiality of information has been addressed.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet most of the regulations. Building work is shortly to begin on the temporary building while work on the permanent site begins over the summer. The plans show attention has been appropriately paid to ensuring the safety of pupils in both sets of premises. For both sets of premises, the plans show the large studios which will be a part of the ethos of the school, providing room for artwork including sculpture. More traditional classrooms are planned in both buildings as well as science laboratories and a gym in the permanent building ready for when older pupils are admitted. Sufficient attention has been paid in the plans for washrooms and medical facilities in both buildings and, in the new building, changing areas and the provision of sufficient showers for older pupils. Other nearby areas such as the water-life centre will be used to extend the pupils' experiences. Appropriate attention has been paid to the acoustics, fire safety and drinking water needs of the pupils in both buildings. External lighting has been addressed at the new building but there is a need to supplement the street lighting to illuminate the entrance/exit door to the temporary building to ensure that car drivers can see pupils clearly. The Department of Education will wish to continue to monitor progress with the premises directly with the school trust.

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

- ensure that external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises (paragraph 23E(b)).

Provision of information

The provision is likely to meet all the regulations. A useful 'welcome pack' has been provided for parents and carers.

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:**

- ensure that the school's commitment not to promote partisan political views in the teaching of subjects is made clear (paragraph 5(b))
- ensure that where political issues are discussed reasonably practical steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views (paragraph 5(c)(i), (ii) and (iii))
- provide evidence that training is complete and at the appropriate level for all staff and for the designated officer for child protection prior to the school opening (paragraph 7)
- provide evidence that training is complete and at the appropriate level for a sufficient number of staff prior to the school opening (paragraph 11)
- develop a fire risk assessment and obtain a report from the fire authority (paragraph 13)
- produce a three-year accessibility plan in order to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010
- ensure that external lighting is provided in order to ensure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises (paragraph 23E(b)).

Recommended number of day pupils: 1,020

Recommended number of boarders: 0

Recommended age range: 4 – 16 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.