

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

School name	Churchill Special Free School
DfE registration number	999/1454
Unique reference number (URN)	1454
Inspection number	422355
Inspection dates	10 July 2013
Reporting inspector	David Young

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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 proposed Churchill Free Special School is to be located in a new building in the grounds of the Samuel Ward Academy on the edge of Haverhill in Suffolk. It is due to open in September 2013 to cater for pupils with speech, language, communication and interaction needs. It is intended to fill in the gap in local provision for pupils who struggle to learn successfully in mainstream schools because of these difficulties, and, where possible, to enable them to return and re-engage in mainstream schools. It is planned to open with up to 18 pupils on roll, and to gradually increase the intake up to a maximum of 70 pupils within four years. It is anticipated that the majority of pupils will be placed at the school by a variety of local authorities. The majority of the pupils will have a statement of special educational needs.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school is likely to meet all the regulations in this area but implementation could not be seen. The curriculum policy promotes a vision that, 'all young people should be helped to develop as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors'. This underpins the school's commitment to ensure that all pupils have access to a range of experiences which promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's policies for the management of behaviour and the prevention of bullying set out clear principles which are aimed at ensuring pupils develop a secure understanding of right and wrong and of how to treat other people within the school community and beyond.

The school curriculum will provide daily time for pupils to meet in groups with their learning coach. Activities in this time will be directed at developing pupils' self-esteem, enabling them to make effective choices and to work towards re-integration. There is a strong emphasis in curriculum documentation on social communication, emotional management and the development of language. The school plans to engage pupils with a range of services and institutions within and beyond the local community, including the police and fire services, the library, the local shops, the arts centre and community organisations. The headteacher is committed also, to

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

ensuring that pupils' involvement in activities and events in their home communities are recognised and celebrated. Themes within the curriculum, including citizenship and religious education, across the key stages include opportunities for pupils to understand and value a variety of traditions, celebrations and religious festivals; to be involved in different ways in charity campaigns; to understand issues of global wellbeing. The citizenship curriculum includes appropriate themes providing knowledge and understanding of the rule of civil law, and public institutions and services in England. There is no evidence of any partisan political views in the school's documentation.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Documentary evidence indicates that all but two of the regulations in this area are likely to be met. All the required policies have been produced and are being uploaded to the school's website which is under construction. These include comprehensive policies and procedures for safeguarding of pupils, the management of behaviour, prevention of bullying, and first aid. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have both been trained in safeguarding to the level required by the senior designated person, and both have completed training in safer recruitment. Training for all other staff is planned to take place before the school opens. The headteacher has also been trained in fire safety awareness and in first aid. A suitable policy has been prepared, covering all required aspects of health and safety, including arrangements for training, regular safety checks on the premises, arrangements for off-site visits and appropriate risk assessments. A separate fire safety policy includes the requirement for a fire risk assessment to be completed and for all the required, regular checks on fire safety equipment, and fire evacuations. Premises and fire risk assessments have not yet been completed and a fire safety report has not yet been obtained from the fire authority. A three-year plan to increase access to the premises, the curriculum and to information has been prepared.

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 fire safety report from the fire authority (paragraph 13).

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school's planning for the completion of all the required checks on the suitability of staff, and implementation to date, indicate that all the regulations are likely to be met. A single central register has been completed of checks on the proprietors and of staff appointed to date. The register is set up to meet the requirements and all available data is entered. Criminal record checks have been applied for, together with references and these are being entered in the register as they arrive. There are

no plans to employ supply staff but the school's administrator has good experience of managing requirements for checks on such staff should any be needed.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school premises and accommodation are likely to meet all the regulations when the school opens. The school building is a modular construction and is currently being fabricated by the school's building contractor. The plans and specification for the premises and accommodation meet all the regulatory requirements with regard to washrooms and toilets, medical facilities, acoustics, internal and external lighting and water supplies. The site has been prepared and awaits the installation of the building.

Detailed plans are in place with a timeline for installation and completion. Photographs are available of the buildings under construction and the completed structure is now ready for viewing at the contractor's site. The planning timeline shows the complete sequence of delivery to the school site, installation of the sections, together with complete internal and external fitting out. The published timeline runs from commencement of installation on site on 29 July 2013 to handover on 30 August 2013. There is no reason to believe that this timeline will not be adhered to. The Education Funding Agency, the Department's delivery agent, is managing the construction process on behalf of the sponsor. The Department will wish to continue to monitor progress with the premises directly with the Agency.

The site on which the school is being constructed includes suitable spaces for play and recreation. The facilities of the Samuel Ward Academy, on the same site, will be used for physical education and games, including changing rooms and showers.

Provision of information

The provision is likely to meet all the 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 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)

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

Recommended number of day pupils: 70

Recommended number of boarders: N/A

Recommended age range: 8–18 years

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: speech, language, communication and interaction needs.