

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

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School name	Heyford Park Free School
DfE registration number	n/a
Unique reference number (URN)	1490
Inspection number	422400
Inspection dates	31 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Greg Sorrell

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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.<sup>1</sup>

## Context of the school

The proposed school, Heyford Park Free School, is to be located within a business park in the premises of a former RAF and US Air Force base at Upper Heyford near Bicester, Oxfordshire.

The school has declared two specialisms of modern history and enterprise, which reflect the context of the school's location. The school has no religious affiliation. Its proprietor, The Heyfordian School Trust, is a registered charity. Its governing body is made up of members of the trust, local community and businesses. The school plans to enlist parents to the governing body once the school opens.

It is planned to open on 4 September 2013. The school has applied to be registered to admit up to 840 boys and girls in the age range of four to 19 years. In its first year, the school will admit 18 Reception-age and 62 students in Year 7. There are 80 children and students registered for enrolment at present, one of whom has a statement of special educational needs. The school's aims may be summarised as 'we will know every one of our students well and provide them with an environment that promotes high academic achievements and a "can do" attitude that enables them to make a meaningful contribution to their communities'.

## 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 behaviour and anti-bullying policies set out a framework within which students will be encouraged to develop an understanding of right and wrong and what it means to be an active citizen in British society.

The school's policy for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development highlights the role that students play in the pastoral life of the school. It also supports the school's motto which translates as 'for the common good'. Students are encouraged to develop self-esteem and confidence by taking on responsibilities, for example running extra-curricular activities and acting as peer mentors and house captains. In order to emphasise the unique location of the school and the importance of service to others, the three school houses are named Bader, Lindh and McGuire. All have local aircraft connections, the latter two being USAF pilots who, in 1992, sacrificed

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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)

their own lives to spare the local village when their fighter jet developed technical problems. Students will be encouraged to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, community service and charity work. Specific examples already identified are the Oxfordshire Playbus for children in rural areas and the RAF Upper Heyford Heritage Trust. The school's location supports its enterprise specialism, whereby students may develop an understanding of how they can contribute to the lives of those who live and work locally. The citizenship programmes address the students' personal development, safety awareness and the importance of understanding the workings of English public institutions and aspects of criminal and civil law.

Other planned provision includes assemblies, a calendar of significant days and events, and a whole-school 'thought for the week' programme linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Religious education lessons and visits to places of worship offer students opportunities to develop an understanding and tolerance of the faiths and beliefs of others in the local community and beyond. The study of philosophy and ethics in religious education gives all students the opportunity to explore spirituality and morality. There is a firm commitment to ensure that partisan views are not promoted within the curriculum. This position is endorsed in the staff handbook and in teachers' contracts.

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

Documentary evidence indicates that most of the regulations are likely to be met. The school has produced all the required policy documents, including policies for safeguarding, safer recruitment, behaviour management, anti-bullying and first aid.

The headteacher has been trained at the appropriate level to serve as the designated person for child protection. He has also been trained in safe recruitment and the principles have been applied effectively to the recruitment process to date. For example, checks are made on staff with regard to their previous employment history, and character references and professional references are taken up. All other members of staff are appropriately trained in child protection. Several members of staff hold first-aid qualifications and the teacher responsible for the youngest children has booked refresher paediatric first-aid training before term starts.

There is a table of responsibilities that clearly indicates who is specifically responsible for the safety of the premises and safety training. Suitable policies have been prepared for all required aspects of health and safety with the exception of fire safety. The school handbook contains guidance for evacuations and training has been booked for staff to act as fire wardens. The school has not yet completed a fire risk assessment. Following the completion of building works, anticipated to be 27 August 2013, the fire authority is due to visit the school at which point the school will receive a written fire report.

Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats meet requirements. The school has appropriate guidance to increase accessibility in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, although it has yet to write a suitable three-year plan to achieve this end.

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

- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a fire risk assessment, ensuring an adequate number of staff are trained as fire wardens and arranging a report from the fire authority (paragraph 13)
- produce a three-year plan to increase accessibility as required by the Equality Act 2010.

## Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Implementation to date indicates that not all regulations are likely to be met. The school has made several staff appointments in anticipation of the school's opening in September 2013. All of the checks to confirm the suitability of the appointed staff are rigorously carried out and recorded appropriately on a single central register. However, the school had no evidence of checks made in relation to the proprietorial body; consequently, none of this evidence could be recorded on the single register. The school does not intend to employ supply staff, but it is aware of its responsibilities should supply staff be appointed in the future.

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

- verify that no member of the proprietorial body is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (DBS barred list), or does not carry out or intend to carry out work at the school in contravention of any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification prohibition or restriction having the same effect (paragraph 21(6)(a))
- where applicable, ensure the chairperson has made the following checks on other members of the proprietorial body:
  - an enhanced criminal record check
  - the individual's identity and their right to work in the United Kingdom, and
  - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks are made in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 21(6)(b))
- in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after **1 May 2007**, ensure the register of checks shows whether the checks referred to in 21(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained. Checks required include:
  - an enhanced criminal record check and, where requested by the Secretary of State, is countersigned by the Secretary of State
  - the individual's identity and their right to work in the United Kingdom, and

- in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 22(6)).

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

The school is likely to meet almost all of the regulations. The school is to be located within a business park in the premises of a former RAF and US Air Force base at Upper Heyford near Bicester, Oxfordshire. The school is phasing in its intake according to the capacity of its accommodation. During the first phase, the school will admit 62 students into Year 7 and 18 children into the Reception class. This first phase is to be housed in temporary accommodation. Scrutiny of planning documents was supplemented by a visit to the site, accompanied by the headteacher and site project manager. Plans indicate that classrooms are of adequate size and sufficient in number for the planned intake in September 2013. Suitable furniture has been ordered with delivery specified before the start of term. There are sufficient washrooms and a suitable medical room has been identified to care for students who may become ill during the day or require medical examinations. There is sufficient safe outside space for play and recreation, including that for the children in Reception. Attention has been given to ensuring security of the site. Suitable arrangements have been made to ensure that the hot water temperature is appropriate and that students have ready access to a drinking fountain. At this stage the school will not prepare or serve food at lunchtimes. Heating, interior lighting, acoustics and ventilation are suitably provided, although there is inadequate provision of exterior lighting to ensure safe entry and exit to the building. The school has identified local sporting venues for physical education that have adequate facilities for changing and showering.

The sports hall for the second phase is located a short walk away from the main site. The plans for the sports hall development indicate additional classrooms and suitable provision for practical subjects including physical education, art, music and dance. The plans indicate adequate access to drinking water and there are a sufficient number of washrooms and showers. The final phase is located in the former officers' mess with adequate classrooms for the proposed maximum number on roll.

In order to meet the regulations 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.

## **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:**

- comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by producing a fire risk assessment, ensuring an adequate number of staff are trained as fire wardens and arranging a report from the fire authority (paragraph 13)
- produce a three-year plan to increase accessibility as required by the Equality Act 2010
- verify that no member of the proprietorial body is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (DBS barred list), or does not carry out or intend to carry out work at the school in contravention of any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification prohibition or restriction having the same effect (paragraph 21(6)(a))
- where applicable, ensure the chairperson has made the following checks on other members of the proprietorial body:
  - an enhanced criminal records check
  - the individual's identity and their right to work in the United Kingdom and
  - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks are made in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 21(6)(b))
- in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after **1 May 2007**, ensure the register of checks shows whether the checks referred to in 21(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained. Checks required include:
  - an enhanced criminal record check and, where requested by the Secretary of State, is countersigned by the Secretary of State
  - the individual's identity and their right to work in the United Kingdom, and
  - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 22(6))
- 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: 840

Recommended number of boarders: N/A

Recommended age range: 4 to 19

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.

Note: The Department should obtain confirmation from the school before it opens and, as it expands, that the required building works have been completed.