

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

School name	Southend YMCA Community School
DfE registration number	A22/1101
Unique reference number (URN)	139903
Inspection number	422354
Inspection dates	5 July 2013
Reporting inspector	Declan McCarthy

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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

Southend YMCA Community School is located in the centre of Southend-on-Sea with excellent access to local facilities and public transport. As a new free school, it wishes to provide full and part-time education for students aged 14 to 19 who for various reasons, such as long term illness or exclusions, are not attending mainstream school. The free school intends to work in partnership with mainstream schools in providing an alternative education programme for their students, which will help them to overcome their barriers to learning so that they achieve their potential and are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. All students will continue to be registered on the roll of their mainstream school. In the first year of operation, the free school will provide 30 full-time places for students aged 14 to 16 years. In subsequent years the roll will rise to 50 full-time equivalent places and will include 10 full-time places at post-16 for students with a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The free school is directly funded by the Department for Education and the proprietorial body is South Essex Community School Limited, which is a registered charity. It will open in September when eight students in Year 11 will transfer from their alternative education programmes at Southend YMCA to the free school. A further 22 students in Years 10 and 11 will transfer to the free school on a full-time basis from their mainstream schools. The free school will be accommodated in three new mobile classrooms on the site of the disused ticket house opposite Prittlewell train station until December 2013. Up to this time the ticket house will be refurbished and on completion, students will move into the refurbished ticket house. The mobile classrooms will be removed so that the remainder of the building, which will be an extension twice the size of the ticket house, can be completed.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The free school is likely to meet all regulations, although implementation could not be seen. Students have a system of rewards including 'calls rewards' and 'individual rewards' including phone calls home, letters home, and points which can be exchanged for mobile phone top-up vouchers. Tutor time during registration periods at the beginning and end of the school day is planned to build their confidence. Students will be enabled to distinguish right from wrong through a programme which is to include guest speakers, such as a police community officer who will talk about drugs

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

and crime and will visit the school. The Southend-on-Sea (SOS) bus will visit the free school to talk about domestic abuse and drug and alcohol issues. The citizenship unit within the school's vocational programme looks at how students can contribute as active citizens. There are plans for students to run 'community impact projects' such as sports day and garden and art projects for the local community to build better relationship within the local community. There are planned visits for students to learn about public institutions and the workings of civil law. These include visits to local banks, to a job centre and the citizens advice bureau.

Students will have topic work on equality and diversity, prejudice and discrimination. Plans show that during registration periods they will discuss issues around black history, the holocaust memorial, Lent, Gaelic Day, Africa Day, Mandela Day, Judaism Day, Yom Kippur and Islam Day. An imam from a local mosque and a local Christian priest will visit students to increase their appreciation and awareness of different faiths. Students will also visit a traveller site. Staff are clearly informed in the staff handbook and in job descriptions that partisan political views will not be promoted in any subject.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The free school is likely to meet all the regulations, although implementation was not seen. Robust policies and procedures to promote the safety and wellbeing of students are in place. The clear policies and procedures to promote good behaviour include a code of conduct, plans for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality, exclusion procedures, guidelines on the use of mobile phones, whole school agreements and rewards. The anti-bullying policy contains guidance on dealing with incidents of homophobia and prejudice bullying relating to transgender sexual orientation, disability and religion. The health and safety policy provides guidance on risk assessments and outlines the arrangements for risk assessments of the building, each activity and individual risk assessments for every student. The free school has robust procedures for managing any allegations of abuse.

The free school has adopted Southend-on-Sea local authority's policy on child protection. There are two designated persons including the headteacher and both have received training in safer recruitment and the required designated higher level training from the local safeguarding board. The headteacher sits as a member on the local safeguarding board. There are plans to refresh the safeguarding training of all teachers in August 2013 before the free school opens. The building contractor has confirmed that a fire risk assessment and a report from the Essex fire authority are planned and will be carried out as soon as the mobile accommodation is in place. The facilities manager will carry out regular checking of fire and electrical appliances on a weekly basis and will feed findings back to the health and safety committee of the governing body. There is a suitable first aid policy and there are sufficient trained first aiders.

The clear records of sanctions imposed include telephone calls home, verbal reprimands, detentions, internal and external exclusions. A whole school equality policy is in place. The free school has adopted the Southend equality policy and has

developed a plan to improve accessibility with designated parking spaces for disabled people, disabled toilets and showers, wide access areas in classrooms and corridors for wheelchair users and a lift.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The free school is likely to meet all the regulations. All the required checks are made. The single central record provides details of all the necessary checks on the suitability of staff, visitors and proprietors to work with children including qualifications checks where appropriate and right to work in the United Kingdom. The free school does not intend to use supply staff or staff from an employment business.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

All regulations are likely to be met. The temporary accommodation is likely to meet all requirements, with sufficient classrooms for the numbers involved, adequate toilets for staff and students and a suitable medical room. Drinking water will be provided, clearly labelled. Heating, lighting and ventilation are suitable. The plans for the refurbishment of the ticket house and the new building extension show that it is spacious, well-lit and ventilated and will be decorated to a high standard. The ticket house and new extension will include a reception area, five classrooms, a sports hall doubling up as a dining hall, a food technology practical area, an interview room, a suitable sick bay, sufficient toilets, shower facilities, kitchen and dining facilities. The extension is due for completion in April 2014. In the meantime, students will attend the YMCA in Southend for Food technology and the local sports centre for physical education, where there are showers and changing facilities. Plans show that there are suitable changing and shower facilities in the new building. The new building has incorporated hot air and cold air recycling, using the latest technology for heating and ventilation. Drinking water is clearly labelled and available at six key points throughout the building. Interactive white boards will be fixed in all classrooms and a low-level work surface will be fitted in the domestic science area for access by wheelchair users. The plans show that there is sufficient outdoor space behind the new extension for students to relax and play.

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

If registration is recommended, please state:

Recommended number of day pupils: 50

Recommended number of boarders: 0

Recommended age range: 14-19

Recommended gender of pupils: Mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.