

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

School name	Discovery School
DfE registration number	391/
Unique reference number (URN)	1692A
Inspection number	446917
Inspection dates	1 July 2014
Reporting inspector	Jo Sharpe

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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 Discovery School will be located in a purpose-built building in the heart of Newcastle upon Tyne. The school is sponsored by NCG (Newcastle College) and is due to open in September 2014, with the handover of the building taking place on 25 August 2014. The school has applied to be registered to admit up to 720 male and female students in the age range 14 to 19 years old. To date, 127 students have been registered for enrolment, including six with statements of special educational need. The school will be non-selective and will admit some students with statements of special educational needs. The aim of the school is to be a high-tech purpose built school specialising in engineering underpinned by science, technology and mathematics – this being the STEM curriculum. The school intends to encourage ambition and a 'can do' attitude and approach. The school anticipates that students will thrive when theory is embedded in practical application within the context of industry and the school will instil the sense of inquiry and discovery intrinsic to all engineering and scientific innovation. The school aims that it will be defined by its teaching and learning excellence and innovation; but equally by its warmth and inclusivity.

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 aims to be an inclusive, student-centred organisation and to meet the needs of and inspire young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and abilities from across the North East of England to become the outstanding engineers, technicians and scientists of their generation. The school's education plan endeavours to link traditional academic qualifications with the gaining of practical and technical skills in a project-based learning environment. The school plans to make strong links with local industry to support their education plan. The school has developed a highly individualized personal development programme which aims to enable students to reflect daily on important world events and topics as part of their personal learning pathways. This detailed programme is planned to enable students to consider the difference between right and wrong, respect the fundamental British value of democracy and to present a balanced presentation of opposing views. The detailed spiritual, moral, social and cultural policy dictates that students will be given the opportunity to learn tolerance and understanding of different

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

cultures and different opinions. They will learn respect for the civil law and gain an insight into the workings of local and national institutions.

The school is keen to preclude the promotion of partisan political views and daily pastoral support in the form of tutor groups is planned to support the monitoring of any unwanted or biased opinions. Behaviour guidelines and policies and anti-bullying policies set out clear defined guidance on what is acceptable and on permissible sanctions and positive reinforcements for good behaviour. A commercial scheme provides the necessary documentation to record any incidents of inappropriate or unwanted behaviour.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Documentary evidence indicates that regulations are likely to be met. Senior staff have appropriate training in safeguarding, safer recruitment, fire safety and first aid. A planned comprehensive induction programme for new staff in their first week in September 2014 includes training in health and safety, disability awareness, fire safety, child protection and first aid; the training is planned and timed in such a way that it is likely to meet regulatory requirements. A comprehensive fire risk assessment was undertaken by the academy sponsors in May 2014 to meet requirements and it is planned to check procedures once the academy is open. An accessibility plan fulfils the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. An electronic system is being used to maintain appropriate admission and attendance registers.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

A single central register records all the required checks for senior staff and trustees and entries indicate that all regulations are met. A safer recruitment policy notes the procedures to be undertaken for the safe recruitment of all new staff as they are appointed. A separate policy indicates the procedures to be undertaken for the safe recruitment of supply teachers and any visiting tutors to ensure regulations are met.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school is likely to meet all the regulations. It is intended that the handover of the building will take place in August 2014. The building plans ensure the needs of students are well met in case of medical emergencies. Ample washroom facilities, the availability of fresh drinking water and shower facilities are detailed on the plans. The building has been specifically planned to be able to deliver the required learning environment, with a combination of large workshop space and smaller resource areas. A large area of the building is designated to the installation of large engineering equipment to ensure the practical needs of students are met. Large external areas are designated for physical activities and are located close to male and female shower facilities.

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. This school is likely to meet all regulations when it opens and is recommended for registration.**

Recommended number of day pupils: 720

Recommended number of boarders: N/A

Recommended age range: 14 to 19 years

Recommended gender of pupils: mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.