

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

School name	Dawes Lane Academy
DfE registration number	812/
Unique reference number (URN)	1665
Inspection number	446887
Inspection dates	9 June 2014
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

Dawes Lane Academy is a free school which is part of the School Partnership Trust. It is to be located near to the centre of Scunthorpe in refurbished retail premises. The academy proposes to provide part-time and full-time alternative provision for up to 135 students (boys and girls) in the age range four to 18 years. Students will be at risk of permanent exclusion from their present maintained schools as a result of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

Refurbishment work on the premises has not yet commenced; the academy is not yet operating and implementation of policies and procedures could not be checked. The academy is planned to open, on completion of the refurbishment work, in January 2015.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

All regulations are likely to be met although implementation could not be checked. The academy has prepared extensive schemes of work for personal, social and health education and citizenship which include a number of themes and experiences intended to support the personal development of students, improve their self-esteem and give them confidence to succeed in their work. Within the curriculum students will be provided with opportunities to learn about their rights and how to express themselves appropriately, attending to any deficits in their social skills.

They will be encouraged to take an active part in the local community, for example through activities under the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Plans are in place for their involvement in the renovation of local allotments and the local churchyard. The academy's leaders have already established good relationships with local police community support officers and will encourage them to contribute to students' understanding of civil and criminal law. The academy has a strong commitment to the development of tolerance and respect for diversity; students will be encouraged to express their own values and develop their thinking in a rational way. The academy's staff handbook places a requirement on staff to handle all sensitive or controversial political themes in a balanced and non-partisan manner.

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

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The majority of regulations are likely to be met although implementation could not be seen. Suitable policies and procedures have been prepared for all required aspects of students' welfare and safety, including those for the management of behaviour, the prevention of bullying, safety on off-site visits and for first aid. Senior staff members have been trained to the required levels to fulfil the role of designated person for child protection and to provide first aid. Suitable relationships have been established with the local authority designated officers for safeguarding in the four placing local authorities. Firm arrangements are in place, in line with the Trust's policy, for all staff to be trained in child protection during their induction period.

Senior staff in the Trust have been trained in safe recruitment and all required checks on previous employment history, professional and character references and medical fitness are completed. The academy's electronic information management system is appropriately prepared to accommodate records of serious incidents and sanctions, together with the admission and attendance registers.

The Trust has informed the local fire service of the proposed refurbishment of the premises and the planned use as a school. Confirmation of the fire safety of the building will be included in the building standards compliance certificate on completion of refurbishment. A fire risk policy has been prepared and the electronic management system is also prepared for the entry of all required regular checks on fire safety. However, the academy has not yet prepared a fire risk assessment for the premises. The academy has a clear commitment to equality of access in its equality statement but an accessibility plan has not yet been produced.

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

- prepare a suitable fire risk assessment and ensure that the school's building standards compliance certificate is obtained on completion of the refurbishment work (paragraph 13)
- produce an accessibility plan in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The academy is likely to meet all the regulations. The human resources service of the Trust provides robust support to the academy in all aspects of staff recruitment. Central staff have been trained in safe recruitment and procedures are implemented effectively. A single central register of checks on staff suitability has been prepared for staff and the proprietorial body. The academy does not intend to employ supply staff but is aware of the required checks should it do so in future.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The academy is likely to meet all the regulations. The academy is to be located in large retail premises which have never been occupied. This provides a shell of considerable size with an extensive outside area suitable for play and recreation. The planning application for refurbishment is expected to be agreed on 9 July 2014. A contractor has been secured to commence the refurbishment work once the legalities of the site purchase have been completed. Refurbishment work is expected to be completed by the end of November ready for the academy to open in January 2015. Plans for the premises and accommodation were scrutinised and discussed with the headteacher and the Trust's facilities manager. The Education Funding Agency, the Department's delivery agent, is managing the preparation and refurbishment process on behalf of the academy. The Department will wish to continue to monitor progress with the premises directly with the Agency.

The plans demonstrate compliance with all the independent school regulations for premises and accommodation. There will be sufficient classroom and workshop space for the planned number on roll, appropriately structured to meet the needs of students across the full age range. Changing rooms and showers are included in the plans, enabling the academy, if it so chooses, to teach physical education on site. All requirements for toilets, water supply including labelled drinking water, a medical room and securely fenced boundaries are included in the plans.

Provision of information

The academy must meet the regulations identified in the check sheet.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The academy must meet the regulations identified in the check sheet.

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:**
 - prepare a suitable fire risk assessment and ensure that the school's building standards compliance certificate is obtained on completion of the refurbishment work (paragraph 13)

 - produce an accessibility plan in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010

- meet the regulations identified in Parts 6 and 7 of the check sheet.

If registration is recommended, please state:

Recommended number of day pupils: 135

Recommended number of boarders: not applicable

Recommended age range: 4-18 years

Recommended gender of pupils: mixed

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