

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

School name	Perry Beeches IV – The Free School
DfE registration number	Not yet allocated
Unique reference number (URN)	1661
Inspection number	446882
Inspection dates	9 June 2014
Reporting inspector	John Gush

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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

Perry Beeches IV – The Free School is a secondary co-educational free school located in a converted building in Birmingham’s Jewellery Quarter that has a history of commercial and industrial use. The refurbishment of the building is well under way with the first phase scheduled for completion in August 2014 and the remainder of the work for April 2015.

The school is operated by the Perry Beeches Academy Trust, which already runs an academy and two other free schools. They are all located in Central Birmingham.

The school will ultimately admit 720 boys and girls but it will start with Year 7 students only. It is planning to open on 1 September 2014 with 146 students and places have already been allocated. The headteacher and other senior staff have previously held senior posts in the academy trust. The full complement of staff members is in the process of being appointed.

The school is ‘built on traditional values ... with an ethos and culture of learning and success for all’.

Compliance with the regulations

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school is likely to meet all regulations for this standard. In addition to subject matter contained within schemes of work for citizenship education and personal, social and health education, plans have been made to ensure that all students learn about the civil and criminal law as well as becoming acquainted with English institutions and services. These include a summer school for the new intake of Year 7 students where they will focus on safety issues and work with the West Midlands Fire Service. The school benefits from the experience of the other schools in the group and is able to adapt and make use of very thorough behaviour and anti-bullying policies. These include strategies and procedures which the school has plans to implement and which will enable the students to be clear about right and wrong especially in their day to day experience in school.

Plans are also in place to ensure that students have chances to develop responsibility by carrying out a range of activities within the school. These include school council,

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

year council, senior students and an anti-bullying committee. Voting procedures for many of these groups are planned to help students gain a first hand understanding of democratic processes. Opportunities planned to enable students to benefit from supporting the community in the school's locality include support for the operation of the Birmingham food bank and learning from, and working with, the anti-poverty team and those agencies that support local rough sleepers. Planned support for communities more widely includes an initiative to build contact with schools in the Punjab, where families in the local community have close contacts. All of these plans, together with the school emphasis on academic excellence, are aimed at giving students suitable chances to develop self-confidence and self-esteem.

The school's new intake has a wide ethnic mix and the school plans to build on the experience and positive reputation of other schools in the group to ensure that they have many chances to work and learn together harmoniously. This is planned to include celebration of religious and other festivals from the various cultural groups represented in addition to a focus on issues such as black history and the positive contribution that people who are lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender can make to the community of the school.

Clear policies exist to ensure that whenever political issues are raised they are conducted in a balanced manner and that partisan opinions are never promoted in the school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Some, but not all, of the regulations that are designed to ensure the welfare, health and safety of students in the school are likely to be met. In a number of instances the school has not completed its preparation and in these areas the regulations are not likely to be met.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSGL) is the deputy head teacher. He has been trained to the required level and is due shortly for upgrade training that is already booked. The head teacher and another member of the senior leadership team (SLT) are also shortly to receive training on child protection at the advanced level so that they can deputise for the DSGL as required. The governor responsible for safeguarding will join them on this training so as to have a better understanding of her responsibilities. Many of the new staff are already trained in child protection and they, together with all new appointments, will receive training before the start of the new term. However, although the head teacher and another member of the SLT are trained in safe recruitment there are a number of inaccuracies and omissions in the single central register of checks to ensure that staff and members of the proprietorial body are suitable to work with children. Some references have not been taken up or recorded and a number of the members of the proprietorial body are not included in the register. In other respects safe recruitment practice is carried out thoroughly.

Arrangements to assess the risk that students might encounter in the various areas of the school and in relation to fire safety have not been carried out as the building is not ready and as the site manager whom the school plans to make responsible for

this has not been appointed. In addition, the regular checks of the premises and equipment that are necessary to ensure student safety and in particular the checks and maintenance of fire safety equipment have not yet been planned. Nonetheless, a broad range of policy statements and procedures are ready to be implemented with the intention of promoting the welfare and safety of students. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies are matched with secure recording processes for both rewards and sanctions making use of commercial software with the capability of enabling staff to spot patterns and triggers of inappropriate behaviour when it occurs. The first aid policy is thorough and detailed and includes suitable references to the procedures for dealing with blood and body fluid spillages. A member of the SLT is already a fully trained first aider and training for others has already been planned. Suitable plans are in place for fulfilling the school's legal responsibilities with regard to admissions and attendance registers and its duties under the Equalities Act 2010.

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

- ensure that all aspects of safe recruitment are carried out in full (paragraph 7)
- ensure that the health and safety policy complies with legislative requirements (paragraph 11)
- ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 13).

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

A number of the regulations for this standard are not likely to be met because some of the processes of checking the suitability of staff and the proprietorial body to work with children have not been completed. Most of the required checks are recorded for the staff members who have been employed to date. This includes the head teacher and members of the SLT as well as some teachers who are transferring from other schools in the group. However, no checks have been recorded for some members of the proprietorial body. The single central register includes most of the required checks but not all references are recorded as having been taken up.

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

- ensure that the required checks are made and recorded for all members of the proprietorial body (paragraphs 21(6)(a) and (b))
- ensure that the single central register accurately records all the required checks about the suitability of members of staff and of members of the proprietorial body to work with children (paragraphs 22(2) and (6)).

Premises of and accommodation at the school

All of the regulations regarding the premises and accommodation at the school are likely to be met. This judgement has been reached following a tour of the site, scrutiny of the plans and discussion with the contractor regarding the timelines of the building contract. Building and refurbishment of the school's premises is well under way and is suitably managed by a single contractor. The first phase will be ready for the initial cohort of Year 7s who will join the school in September 2014 and the remainder of the contract is planned to be completed by April 2015, thus allowing the school to increase its numbers thereafter. Suitably-sized classrooms are under construction with an appropriate range of services to enable electronic communications and aids to learning to be provided. Specialist science, technology and art rooms are planned, as is an extensive library and flexible learning suite. A fitness suite is planned to complement the covered and outdoor areas for physical exercise, sports and relaxation; changing facilities with showers are under construction. An appropriate range of toilet facilities is being built on each floor and the medical room is planned with washing facilities. It is located close to one of the toilet areas. Suitable arrangements are in place for the provision of labelled drinking water and for ensuring that hot water does not scald users. External lighting is being installed.

Provision of information

The provision meets all 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:**
 - ensure that all aspects of safe recruitment are carried out in full (paragraph 7)
 - ensure that the health and safety policy complies with legislative requirements (paragraph 11)
 - ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 13)
 - ensure that the required checks are made and recorded for all members of the proprietorial body (paragraphs 21(6)(a) and (b))
 - ensure that the single central register accurately records all the required checks about the suitability of members of staff and of members of the proprietorial body to work with children (paragraphs 22(2) and (6)).

If registration is recommended, please state:

Recommended number of day pupils: 720

Recommended number of boarders: 0

Recommended age range: 11–18 years

Recommended gender of pupils: mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: N/A.