

Advice note for pre-registration inspections of all types of academies and free schools/studio schools/university technical colleges (UTC)

School name	Exeter Maths School
DfE Registration Number	N/A
Unique Reference Number (URN)	1698
Inspection number	446924
Inspection dates	4 July 2014
Reporting inspector	Susan Jackson

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 proposed Exeter Maths School will be located in the centre of the city of Exeter in a Grade II* listed building. The school is sponsored by the University of Exeter and Exeter College, and is due to open on 1 September 2014. The school has applied to be registered to admit up to 120 boys and girls in the age range 16 to 19. Students attending this specialist mathematics school will be drawn from Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset.

In its first year, the school will admit students into Year 12 only. There are currently 36 students registered for enrolment in September 2014. The school will be selective and will require students entering Year 12 to have attained a minimum of five GCSE passes A* to C, including grade A* in mathematics, grade A*/A in physics or Double Award science, and grade B in English; in addition, prospective students will attend an interview and take an entrance test. The school is prepared to admit students with special educational needs. There are no students with statements of special educational needs joining in September 2014.

The school aims to build 'a mathematically stimulating, student-centred, collaborative working community'. The school's priority will be 'to provide an education that enables gifted young mathematicians to flourish and succeed'. It will specifically encourage enquiry and 'the pursuit of open-ended problems, and engender the confidence to do these things without the scaffolding common in current approaches to pre-university mathematics teaching and assessment'. The school is committed to working with the University of Exeter, Exeter College, local employers and other schools to ensure that provision is 'rich and relevant'. The sharing of research and mathematical ideas will be standard practice.

The Exeter Maths School will be non-denominational.

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 demonstrate personal responsibility and consistently high standards of behaviour.

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

The school has worked closely with Exeter College in designing its programme for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The over-arching vision is for the 'development of the whole person so that the mathematician can flourish'. The aim is for students to take their place in society as valued, resourceful and economically successful citizens. Using a carefully designed tutorial scheme of work and individual tutorial sessions, the school will place emphasis on personal development, and specifically on moral understanding. High levels of integrity, personal motivation and creativity will be expected of all students. Planned provision includes: encouraging students to respect diversity of beliefs and opinions; demonstrating tolerance and a respect for the interests and needs of others; and providing strong links with the world of work and the local academic community. Students will be expected to take the issue of their citizenship seriously and planned provision will involve them in gaining insights into different public institutions in England, and the workings of common and civil law. They will also be engaged in community enterprises and charitable activities of their choice. The school intends to ensure that students benefit from leadership opportunities, and that the student voice 'informs the learning environment'. Students will work as mentors as part of the school's outreach programme, and individual students will have the chance to sit on the governing body and the student committee.

Links with local businesses and organisations, such as the Meteorological Office, will be used to 'underline the importance and relevance of mathematics in the workplace'. The University of Exeter's focus on applied mathematics will be used to demonstrate 'the relevance of mathematics in the broader world'. Students and academics from the university will work closely with Exeter Maths School students as mentors and guides. Students from Exeter Maths School will gain exposure to the University of Exeter's interdisciplinary research groups in areas such as engineering, bio-systems, physical sciences, astrophysics, statistics, fluid dynamics and advanced manufacturing. Students will also have access to the Exeter College careers service.

Exeter Maths School will ensure that the planned curriculum, including provision for students' personal development, is free from partisan political or religious views and that, where any political matters are discussed, a balanced view is always presented. Specific reference is to be made to anti-extremism requirements in the handbook for staff.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Documentary evidence indicates that all the regulations are likely to be met but implementation could not be seen. Required policy documents, including policies for safeguarding, safer recruitment, educational visits, behaviour management, anti-bullying and first aid have been completed. The school is striving to implement 'a holistic package of care'. Senior staff have been trained in safer recruitment and the principles have been applied effectively to the recruitment process to date. The school's safer recruitment policy covers the employment of supply staff and volunteers, including student mentors. There is a designated person in place to oversee the recruitment process.

The Principal designate and her administrative assistant are trained in child protection to the required level and arrangements are in place for training all other staff as part of the induction programme, so that requirements are likely to be met in full.

A member of staff has been identified to take responsibility for first aid and a training schedule covering all staff has been drawn up to pre-date the opening of the school. First-aid kits are to be dispersed strategically around the school building and notices will be placed in every room. The school intends to ensure that all students are protected at all times, including when they are undertaking work experience, working with university or college personnel and taking part in educational visits. Sufficient resources and time have been allocated to allow the designated officer and staff to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. The school has a comprehensive written safeguarding policy, and procedures match locally agreed inter-agency procedures.

Suitable policies and risk assessments are being finalised for all required aspects of health and safety, and for fire safety; they are likely to meet requirements. The fire safety risk assessments will be completed by the Exeter College Health and Safety Leader once the handover of the building, which is currently being upgraded for use as a school, has taken place in early August 2014, so that requirements are likely to be met.

- Send advice to the DfE once the health and safety, and fire risk assessments have been completed for the premises following the handover.

Admission and attendance registers will be maintained electronically and their formats are likely to meet requirements. The school's 'Equalities Plan' includes a commitment to providing equality of access for disabled pupils, which is seen in the current work being undertaken in the building, and the school will increase accessibility as part of the required three-year plan. All school policies have been subject to an equality analysis.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school's procedures for the completion of required checks on the suitability of staff and members of the proprietorial body meet all regulations. Scrutiny of documentation, including the single central record, demonstrates that safer recruitment procedures have been followed in practice. Required checks have been, or are being, completed for the proprietors and for staff appointed to date. All the required checks are in place should supply staff and volunteers be appointed.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The handsome school buildings, which are planned to be operative from September 2014, are likely to meet all the regulations. The Grade II* listed premises are

currently being refurbished and refitted following very strict planning regulations to create a safe, inspiring and technology-rich learning environment for up to 120 students. During the visit, a comprehensive tour of the building took place; it was conducted by the construction company's representative who is responsible for the premises. The Education Funding Agency is supporting and monitoring the refurbishment process.

The specialist rooms and work-related spaces will be resourced to a high specification. The school's priority is for the design to be flexible. Some cutting-edge devices will be used to maximise space and to 'present a wow factor'. The intention is for the Exeter Maths School 'to feel like a special place to be', and the technology being purchased will reflect this objective. Walls will be covered with glass panels to enable students to write up mathematical equations spontaneously.

There are no dining room or café facilities on the premises but small kitchens have been located for students' use around the building, and students will have ready access to external cafes and restaurants nearby. Accessible, labelled drinking water stands are to be made available.

Washing, toilet and medical facilities will meet requirements. Planning has included careful consideration of requirements in respect of acoustics, ventilation, sound insulation and internal and external lighting. A well-resourced medical room, located close to a toilet, has been provided for the short-term care of sick or injured students.

The school site incorporates a very small outdoor site for recreation, but the school is adjacent to an attractive city park which students will be able to access. The buildings and access points to the current grounds are planned to be fully secure. The school will benefit from its location next door to the newly modernised Exeter City Library, and all students will have automatic membership. Physical education will take place at Exeter College facilities, where changing rooms and showers are available.

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

Is registration recommended?

YES. The school is likely to meet all regulations when it opens and is recommended for registration subject to the completion of required checks on health and safety and fire risk assessments.

Recommended number of day students: 120

Recommended age range: 16–19

Recommended gender of pupils: mixed

Recommended type of special educational needs: not applicable.