



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR FOCUS SCHOOL BERKELEY CAMPUS

DfE No: 916/6002

The key inspection judgements for this school are:

The quality of education	good	2
Pupils' personal development	good	2
Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety	good	2
Leadership, management and governance	requires improvement	3

Compliance with the Independent School Standards:

The school meets the regulatory requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Compliance with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Date of inspection: 1 – 3 February 2016

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Focus School Berkeley Campus provides a good quality of education for all pupils. The education provided fulfils the school's aims for a safe and secure learning environment in which every child can develop academically and morally. The developments in self-directed learning (SDL) and a broadening of the curriculum strengthen the fulfilment of these aims and make the curriculum outstanding. Pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve standards that are at least in line with national expectations through the good quality of teaching they receive. Pupils learn well and develop academically, spiritually and morally through the breadth of educational experience. This has a significant impact on their personal development which is good and has many excellent features. Behaviour is good overall. The opportunities for pupils to research different cultures and faiths are giving them a greater appreciation of the views and beliefs of others. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. Procedures in place to check the suitability of staff and the implementation of child protection policies meet requirements. Those responsible for child protection and the protection of children from the risk of extremism have received appropriate training. Leadership and management on the part of the trustees require improvement. The headteacher and senior leaders ensure that the education provided enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. The school meets all the independent school standards. Nevertheless, the governance of the school requires improvement because trustees lack an understanding of their roles and responsibilities and how they should hold the school to account through effective monitoring and evaluation. This has an impact on the quality and robustness of evidence provided to verify the accuracy of the school's own self-evaluation procedures.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- ensure that trustees and campus administrators have a clear understanding of their roles and the responsibilities that go with them so that they can more effectively carry out their statutory duties;
- ensure that trustees and campus administrators have put in place robust procedures to implement speedily the latest national and local guidance and that current practice is amended to reflect latest expectations;
- ensure that systems are quickly established that improve the rigour with which trustees and campus administrators monitor and evaluate the work of the school and keep detailed records as evidence of this development; and
- improve the overall quality of marking by using examples of the very best models of practice to engage pupils in dialogue with teachers so as to challenge perceptions and add depth to learning.

SECTION B: INFORMATION

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE).

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed lessons across a range of subjects and areas of learning. Examples of pupils' work were examined and data regarding pupil achievement was analysed. Discussions were held with members of staff and trustees and inspectors spoke with groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the life of the school, including break and lunch times. They analysed the school website and other documentation and records. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires and secondary pupil questionnaires were taken into account.

The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Mr Andrew Rickett
Team inspectors:	Mr Ted Cohn
Lay inspector:	Mr Roger Hughes

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

Focus School Berkeley Campus is an independent day school for boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 18. It is registered with the department for education as an independent charity being a school with a religious character serving families of the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church. The school's trustees aim to provide a Christian based education within a secure and stimulating environment to fulfil the potential of each pupil. The school was established in 1995 and moved to its current location in September 2012. The proprietors are the Prospect Education Trust. The school has 186 pupils on roll evenly divided between boys and girls. At the time of the inspection, one pupil had a statement of educational need and seven had been identified as having some form of special education need or disability (SEND). Five were deemed to be able, gifted or talented. The school is affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) which provides support and direction for the school's management and development.

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Pupils' learning and achievement

Pupils make good progress in their learning across all age groups. Achievement for nearly all pupils is in line with national expectations and, where this is not the case, pupils have made better than expected progress towards achieving national averages. For an increasing number of pupils, achievement is at a higher level. Achievement at the end of Key Stage Two is above national averages in literacy and pupils' achievement is broadly in line for numeracy. A firm foundation in literacy and numeracy in Key Stage Two enables pupils to apply their learning across subjects. Support given to pupils who may not achieve expectations is strong and these pupils quickly make progress in Year Seven to meet their targets.

Pupils make at least expected progress in Key Stage Three and results show that there is an improvement in the rate of progress from one year to the next. Challenging targets are set using a series of test measures particularly to show progress through the transition from Key Stage Two to Key Stage Three. The school is currently exploring the accuracy and usefulness of such measures in the light of the latest approaches to assessment without National Curriculum levels together with guidance on assessment from FLT.

Results at the end of Key Stages Four and Five show that pupils do well in their learning and achieve grades which are broadly similar to national averages. The greater flexibility in the Sixth Form to study subjects more closely related to the pupils' needs and abilities is having a good impact on the progress they make.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching is good. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least good and some were of a high quality. Teachers set expectations that reflect the FLT curriculum and examination syllabi which lead to progress against clear learning outcomes. The very best lessons provided opportunities for pupils to engage in their learning at a deeper level through an emphasis on enquiry and exploration. The introduction of SDL is making a valuable contribution to the quality of pupil motivation and level of engagement in their learning. At its best, SDL encourages pupils to think at a more complex level and apply their learning in a creative and innovative way to investigate 'big questions'. In these lessons, pupils responded with greater enthusiasm and engagement. The use of SDL, and the more challenging teaching and learning that this entails, is not yet fully embedded across all age groups and all subject areas.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and deliver lessons with confidence and a good grasp of key learning skills that enable pupils to access learning at greater depth. Lessons are delivered at a good pace using a broad range of teaching and learning strategies that engage pupils of all abilities. Good use is made of teaching assistants who offer targeted support to specific pupils enabling them to make progress in their learning.

Lessons are well planned and provide a good level of challenge. The introduction of SDL is giving teachers more opportunities and a growing confidence to experiment with their teaching. It also places greater responsibility for learning onto pupils. Pupils' progress is more rapid when this happens.

Marking of pupils' work is regular and thorough. Comments made by teachers help pupils to identify how they can improve their work and sometimes teachers offer targets to help pupils attain that improvement. Marking at its very best makes a substantial difference to the quality of teaching and learning. The very best marking responded in a creative way to the pupils' work from an SDL enquiry project. Teachers entered into a creative dialogue with pupils about their work, generating a high level of discussion and a far deeper understanding of the extra challenge needed for the next steps in learning. This level of marking has not been embedded across all subjects. Assessment of pupil progress and attainment is currently being developed as the school responds to the requirements of the National Curriculum and FLT initiatives. The school has a realistic grasp that this is still work in progress but one that puts the needs of the pupils above mechanical systems of assessment.

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. It is outstanding because its breadth and balance, throughout the school and in all areas of learning, gives excellent opportunities that help pupils of all abilities make at least good progress. British values of fairness, respect and tolerance are embedded in the aims of the school and underpin the curriculum in all respects. This is clearly apparent in its planning and teaching. A particular strength is the breadth of the curriculum which continues higher up the school with GCSE courses in a range of core subjects, enhanced by options in art and citizenship. A flexible approach to options in the Sixth Form includes a judicious mix of AS and A-level courses alongside AS and Business and Technology Education Council courses that are more tailored to the diverse needs of pupils and their different levels of achievement.

At Key Stages Two and Three, planning draws mainly on the FLT schemes which provide a well-organised and comprehensive basis for teachers' own effective short-term planning. Effective medium and weekly planning is ensuring the transition to the new National Curriculum at Key Stage Two. A strong feature of this is an emphasis on a cross-curricular thematic approach with clear progression in knowledge, skills and understanding. Running throughout the teaching of the curriculum is a focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills.

The development of SDL is making a valuable contribution to extending opportunities for independent learning. Pupils are very positive about this approach because it gives them greater responsibility for their learning, and work of high quality is being produced.

The school has excellent procedures for supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Diagnostic evaluation clearly identifies particular learning needs. Subject and class teachers work closely with the SEND

coordinator to provide individual support which is very effective in helping pupils to access the curriculum and make progress in their learning.

2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The quality of pupils' personal development is good. British democratic values are integral to the school's approach to developing positive attitudes and behaviour and a reflection of the school's aims. Behaviour seen during the inspection was exemplary. Pupils were polite and keen to talk and share what is good about their school. Records indicate that sometimes behaviour falls below the high expectations set by the school and community. The school reinforces the strong moral code that pupils bring with them to the school and develops them for the majority of pupils who have a clear understanding of right from wrong. Likewise, pupils' self-esteem is consistently enhanced through encouragement and praise from teachers in a culture that values and supports achievement.

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) is strong. It is delivered through a comprehensive curriculum that covers topics that are relevant to the lives of pupils. The recent introduction of units on major world religions is giving pupils a greater awareness and understanding of a range of faiths and beliefs in which they show considerable interest. Citizenship is taught across Key Stage Three and includes good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of social and political institutions. These studies are continued in Year Ten and through to the PSHEE programme in the Sixth Form which covers a well-developed programme of economic education. This includes a combination of business orientated courses, work experience and careers guidance. Pupils also receive education in alcohol and drug abuse as part of the science curriculum. Careers guidance is excellent. It has made very good use of the FLT careers programme and gives pupils excellent opportunities to find out about work experience. The hundred hours of work experience that pupils undertake, often focussed on specific projects or tasks, are a key feature of the programme. An area that is less well developed is that of providing pupils with a wider context of employment, such as the occupational structures and job opportunities within the Brethren community regionally and nationally.

A common theme in the school is the encouragement of pupils to take responsibilities and use their initiative which is being further enhanced through the development of SDL. Pupils accept other responsibilities readily and say that they make an important part contribution to the life of the school. They act as mentors for younger pupils, decide which charities to support and organise fund-raising activities. The head boy and head girl take a leading role in this. Similarly, those elected to serve the school on the school council raise issues and make suggestions about how to improve the school.

Pupils in the Sixth Form have mentors from local brethren businesses. These mentors provide very helpful and much appreciated advice to pupils about the skills and attitudes they will need in the world of work and in relation to some of their courses. Opportunities for pupils to start tertiary level vocational courses are increasing emphasising the importance of lifelong learning and complementing their other Sixth Form work.

3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

The school's provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school has effective policies for promoting pupils' welfare and safety. Procedures for ensuring that appropriate checks are made to protect pupils' safety are in place and comply with the standards required. Similarly, checks made to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and volunteers meet requirements. Nonetheless, the speed with which trustees ensure that latest guidance in these areas is implemented is not always timely. Staff and trustees with responsibility for safeguarding understand the procedures and the need to respond promptly to concerns about safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead is the headteacher who has undertaken the training at the relevant level. Staff receive training to refresh their understanding of safeguarding procedures and have undertaken some initial training to raise their awareness of how to identify risks concerning the prevention of extremism. A trustee and senior members of staff have undertaken the relevant training to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. Pupils understand the need to be mindful of personal safety including e-safety. Procedures are in place in school to ensure pupils are safe when using electronic media. The school has ensured that there is limited access to websites on school premises.

The school has appropriate behaviour and anti-bullying policies that are closely integrated. Pupils know what bullying is. They said that it is rare in the school but, if it does occur, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils also report that they are comfortable to approach staff if they have any problems.

There is stringent supervision of pupils at the beginning and end of the school day with thorough procedures to ensure their safety when boarding and exiting the many buses used. Risk assessments associated with school activities are very thorough. A member of the campus administration team, with specialist expertise, carries out risk assessments of sites visited by pupils which are shared with relevant staff. The school has an appropriate first aid policy and sufficient staff have been trained in first aid. Medical and fire arrangements meet requirements.

Admissions and attendance registers are maintained correctly in accordance with current regulations. Attendance is broadly in line with the national averages.

Premises and accommodation are good and have several excellent features such as the playing fields and facilities for design and food technology. The quality of the senior and junior libraries has improved since the last inspection.

4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The overall quality and effectiveness of leadership and management require improvement. The school's ethos makes a strong contribution to the quality of education and the pupils' personal development. The headteacher and her senior team provide effective leadership in ensuring that pupils experience a broad curriculum and good quality teaching that enables them to make good progress and achieve well. The work of trustees and the campus administration team in monitoring and challenging school leadership, particularly in relation to progress

being made in implementing the school improvement plan, is not sufficiently rigorous and therefore their effectiveness requires improvement. Similarly, a lack of clarity in the roles of trustees and the campus administration team, and the responsibilities that accompany those roles, mean that systems to monitor effectively the implementation of policies and procedures are not robust. In turn, this means that records lack precision and detail.

The school improvement plan identifies actions that focus on improving teaching and learning. The headteacher works closely and effectively with staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Performance management for staff is closely related to priorities in the school improvement plan contributing to the good quality of teaching and learning. Progress towards meeting their targets is reviewed through lesson observations by the headteacher and through useful peer observations all of which help teachers to improve their skills.

A large majority of parents strongly support the school. A very large number of parents support the school as volunteers in the school and make valuable contributions to school life. The school received no complaints last year and the complaints procedure complies with the standards required. Parents receive regular newsletters and information regarding school policies is readily available through a variety of channels.

Governance

The quality of governance requires improvement. Trustees are in attendance at the school although some have a more regular involvement in the life of the school and in taking responsibilities than others. Staff say that trustees are approachable. The effectiveness of the trustees has not been sufficiently developed so that they carry out their roles to a standard which is good. In particular they lack an understanding of the duties that their roles entail and the skills to monitor the overall work of the school and how their role as trustees should develop and support that work. The campus administration team has been formed relatively recently. They, together with trustees, lack appropriate structures to enable them to fully carry out their responsibilities. They have not yet acquired the skills and means to support and challenge school leadership and to hold them to account for the quality of education being provided.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Focus School – Berkeley Campus			
Address of school:	Wanswell, Berkeley Gloucestershire GL13 9RS			
Telephone number:	01453 511282			
Email address:	berkeley.secondary@focus-school.com			
Web address	www.berkeley.focus-school.com			
Proprietor:	Prospect Education Trust			
Campus Administrator:	Mr Alastair Leflaive			
Head Teacher:	Mrs Lucy Sherrin			
DfE Number	916/6002			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	Fees charged internally			
Age range of pupils	7 - 18			
Gender of pupils	Co-ed			
Total number on roll	full-time	186	part-time	0
Number of children in registered nursery		NA		NA
Number of children under-5	Boys:	NA	Girls:	NA
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	81	Girls:	72
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	15	Girls:	18
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	1	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Type of inspection	Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008			

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk.