



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR FOCUS SCHOOL ATHERSTONE CAMPUS

DfE No:

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	good	2

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: 24-26 April 2018

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Focus School Atherstone Campus meets all of the independent school standards and provides its students with a good quality of education. Students of all abilities achieve well and make good progress from their varied starting points. Last year's results at the end of key stage 2 were well above the national average in reading but below it in writing. At the end of key stage 4 Attainment 8 and EBac results were well above the national average; while all sixth form students passed A2 examinations, few obtained higher grades. Substantial efforts have been made throughout this academic year to focus on areas of weakness, and this work has had a strong impact on primary students' writing and on achievement in the sixth form, both of which are now much improved. The curriculum is broad and balanced and enables all students to make good progress. Students are keen learners, have risen well to the challenges and responsibilities of self-directed learning (SDL). They have developed excellent research skills and are using the *Canvas* online learning platform well. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers know their students well and set clear and achievable targets and appropriately differentiated tasks for them. Teaching methodology is adapting successfully to the challenges of SDL and having a positive impact on learning. Students' work is marked regularly and carefully and they are given valuable feedback on how to improve it. Assessment is accurate, but the absence of a fully-developed system for tracking progress prevents the school from making the best use of its data to raise standards further. The support in place for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective and helps these students make good progress. Students' personal development is good. Their attendance is excellent. Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Students are well-informed about British society, its institutions and values. This enables them to develop good moral values and respect for others. The student leadership team is underdeveloped as a vehicle for ensuring that the students' voice is heard. The school's arrangements for safeguarding students and supporting their welfare, health and safety are good. Staff recruitment and checking procedures are meticulous. Leadership and management of the school is good overall. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, has been instrumental in bringing about substantial improvements over the last year in the quality of teaching and learning and in students' behaviour and welfare. Current weaknesses relate to the unfilled senior leadership roles to which appointments have already been made. Trustees work in close partnership with the school and provide it with strong support and challenge. Parents are kept fully informed of school developments and support the school well.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- ensure that the school has a robust system for tracking students' progress and analysing its data to help all pupils make even better progress; and
- develop the role of the student leadership team to give students more input into school development.

SECTION B: INFORMATION

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(3) 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 teaching and learning throughout the school in a range of subjects, spending time in the Learning Centre observing and talking to students. They looked at the school's website, documentation and records. The inspectors spoke to groups of students, and interviewed key members of staff and trustees about their work. The inspectors took account of the views of parents and students through their responses to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Mrs Jane Cooper
Team inspectors:	Mr Dilip Kadodwala

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

Focus School Atherstone Campus opened on its current site in the town of Atherstone, Warwickshire, in September 2016. It is an amalgamation of Focus School Coventry Campus, which was previously located on two sites in Coventry, and the former Focus School Stafford Campus. The school is an independent charity, owned by the Copsewood Education Trust and supported by the Focus Learning Trust, and is registered with the Department for Education (DfE) as a school with a special religious character. It is a non-selective independent day school for boys and girls aged between seven and eighteen years, and admits children from Plymouth Brethren families in the Midlands, most of whom travel to school by minibus from Coventry, Leamington Spa and Stafford. There are currently 155 students on roll, of whom 60 are in key stage 2; 76 are in key stages 3 and 4; and 19 are in the sixth form. Twenty-two students receive additional help for their special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), but none has an educational health care (EHC) plan. There are no students who have English as an additional language (EAL). Sixteen students have been identified as able, gifted or talented.

The school aims to provide a good quality education in a safe and caring environment, by encouraging students to develop their full potential and acquire the discipline of learning how to learn while upholding the Christian beliefs and core values of the Brethren community.

This is the first standard inspection of Focus School Atherstone Campus.

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Pupils' learning and achievement

Students' learning and achievement are good. In key stage 2 standards of reading are exceptionally high. The students read widely and fluently, demonstrating high level comprehension skills. At the end of key stage 2 last year attainment was well above average in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar; and above average in mathematics. In these areas the students were making very good progress. However, below average scores in writing indicated insufficient progress. Throughout this academic year the relentless focus on improving writing techniques has had a significant impact on driving up standards of writing among primary students. They now produce writing which is interesting and engaging, and uses an increasingly varied range of sophisticated structures and techniques. Current predictions based on school assessment indicate that attainment has risen still further in reading, especially at the higher levels; and that positive value is now added in writing too. Primary students have a secure grasp of number and mathematical concepts and standards are good.

The GCSE results last year were well above the national average with the EBac score being exceptional especially at higher levels. The vast majority of students of all abilities continue to make progress which is good or better than expected, despite staff turnover and illness, which have been managed successfully to limit their potentially detrimental effect on students' learning. The students display mature attitudes to study. They build on the reading comprehension skills developed in key stage 2 and rapidly acquire excellent research skills through frequent use of information and communication technology (ICT) in SDL. Students are able, inquisitive learners, confident to question and challenge themselves and others and eager to take ownership of their own progress.

The overall pass rate at Advanced level was high in 2017, but students' performance at the higher grades was lower than average and demonstrated a lack of progress from their starting point. The school has worked hard to improve students' performance at higher grades. Recent predictions show that this work has been successful and that this year's sixth form students are now reaching the higher levels of which they are capable.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. It is accelerating students' progress and supporting standards that are above average overall at all key stages. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, as is their knowledge of students' capabilities. This results in tasks which challenge and support all students appropriately, from those who have been identified as able, gifted or talented to those who struggle and need support. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, including those where self-directed learning encourages them to work in groups to discuss the so-called 'Big Questions' with their peers. Here, teachers are active participants, moving between groups and challenging students to explore further

and deepen their understanding. The tasks and research topics are engaging and interesting. Primary-aged students are developing from the outset the techniques and skills needed for successful SDL. The quality of teaching is increasingly being restructured so that more use of technology, through *Canvas*, becomes the norm. School leaders ensure that teachers are well trained in using *Canvas* and are adapting their teaching styles and methodologies successfully. This way of teaching helps students to think and learn for themselves, develop good team-working and research skills, and make successful links between subjects so that they integrate speaking, writing and evaluation skills across the curriculum. Students enjoy learning through SDL technology and it prepares them well for life in modern society and the world of work. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are well supported through effective teaching and early identification of their needs. Interventions made to help these students are appropriate and help them to achieve well from their different starting points.

Routine assessment of students' work is strong. Teachers mark work regularly and give clear and detailed feedback, including through *Canvas*, on the quality of students' work which helps them to improve further. Qualitative verbal feedback and one-to-one support also helps students to make progress. They all know their targets and what is required to move to the next level. However, the school lacks an overall system for tracking students' progress through which to analyse the performance of subjects, cohorts, groups and individual students, and facilitate further progress.

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is based on the Focus Learning Trust schemes of work which cover the national curriculum comprehensively. In key stage 4 and in the post 16 courses the curriculum is based on the national examination specifications. Across the school the curriculum is broad and balanced, meeting the school's aims effectively and preparing students well for their future lives. In key stage 2 students acquire good speaking, reading, writing and numeracy skills and apply these with increasing confidence as they move through the school. The breadth of subjects at GCSE enables students to achieve well in terms of the national measures of Attainment 8 and EBac. All students can study a modern foreign language and citizenship, and can choose a creative subject or a GCSE course in physical education. As from September 2018 no music will be taught in the secondary phase of the school. Curriculum planning is strong: it defines carefully the development of students' knowledge, understanding and skills and takes account of students' different abilities, thus helping them all to achieve well. Sixth form students are able to follow individual programmes of academic or vocational options suited to their interests. Their choice of sixth form study is broadened considerably by access to virtual classroom tuition from teachers at other FLT schools. Students also benefit from physical education and public speaking as well as the extensive programme of careers development which prepares them exceptionally well for the world of work. Sixth form students achieve an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) which covers decision-making and problem-solving skills.

Despite a short lunch break and limited opportunities for after school clubs, the curriculum is enriched through a variety of extra-curricular opportunities, including concerts, trips and visiting speakers. A visit from the local MP and a trip to the Houses of Parliament enhanced students' understanding of democracy and law in British society. Through participation in the Young Enterprise scheme sixth formers have learned a great deal about running a successful business.

2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Students' personal development is good. They make good friends, work hard, have secure moral values and understand right from wrong. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and students behave well in lessons and around the school campus. This reflects the efforts of school leaders over the year to engage students more in the drive to reward excellence in learning and behaviour. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) and citizenship programmes help students to understand the importance of tolerance and respect for others and that the rights of people are protected under British law. They gain a broad understanding of British values and British institutions. Assemblies are effective in deepening students' knowledge and understanding about diversity in Britain, but opportunities for students to work productively in Britain's multicultural, multi-faith society could be further developed. The students contribute willingly to the local community through impressive charitable work, but their contribution to school life, for example, through the school council, is under-developed.

The Careers Advantage Programme (CAP) in Year 11 and in the sixth form ensures that students are very well informed about career opportunities. For example, a recent business event enabled sixth form students to show their CVs, make presentations and share their Atherstone Campus employability reports to prospective community employers. Although students in this community do not traditionally go on to university, none leave the school without employment where many of them continue to train and gain professional qualifications.

3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

The school's provision for safeguarding students' welfare, health and safety is good. All members of staff have received recent and relevant training in safeguarding, including anti-radicalisation, and understand the school's procedures for child protection and their role in safeguarding students. Those with lead safeguarding responsibilities have all received training at the appropriate level and carry out their roles diligently and with care and good sense. They know the students well. They ensure that all staff are fully briefed on new developments and manage the induction of new staff effectively so that all have up to date safeguarding information and training. Child protection records are well kept, with a clear coversheet in each file. The files are reviewed on a regular basis and this ensures that any patterns are noticed and prompt referral is made if required. The school has effective contacts with local social services. The safeguarding team is complemented by two trained school

counsellors, one a member of the Brethren community, one a member of the school staff, who provide caring, helpful and unobtrusive support for those who need it.

The school's procedures for recruiting and vetting staff are robust. Key staff have received appropriate training in safer recruitment. This has ensured that a secure appointment process is followed and that all the required checks, including those on supply staff, have been undertaken prior to appointment and are entered meticulously on the school's single central record (SCR).

Students of all ages have been taught about e-safety and know how to stay safe online. This is very important as the use of technology is ubiquitous but still fairly new and students are still learning about the freedoms and responsibilities it brings. The school has strong filters and a robust monitoring system which tracks all online activity on school machines and laptops and identifies inappropriate activity. Staff have also done a great deal of pastoral work to help students develop a strong sense of self-discipline when working online.

Every care is taken to ensure students' safety in school, on off-site visits and on school buses. Risk assessments are professional, thorough and well-documented to minimise risk to students' health and safety. Students are well supervised at all times. The excellent online 'safety cloud' system for reviewing and recording matters concerning all aspects of students' welfare, health and safety ensures that issues are identified quickly and addressed promptly. All the required checks on fire safety, lighting, water and electrical equipment have been made and recorded. Drills are held on a regular basis. The lockdown procedure is rehearsed and understood. First-aid is well-managed with first-aid boxes held in strategic places and replenished frequently. First-aiders' training is up to date. The premises are secure, clean and very well maintained. The school presents a safe and pleasant learning environment. Admissions and attendance registers are well-maintained and show levels of attendance which are well above the national average. The school's anti-bullying strategy is clear and is implemented consistently by staff. Its messages have been reinforced through events such as 'anti-bullying week'. Younger students in particular say that they feel very safe in school, but about one in ten senior students told inspectors that there are instances of low level bullying in school. Senior leaders have identified further improvements to be made. One of these is to give the students' voice more prominence, as some students felt that their suggestions were not listened to or taken seriously. Much work is done in science, PE and food technology to help students develop healthy eating habits and exercise regimes. Nonetheless, some students still bring carbohydrate-rich food into school and this has been identified as a focus for improvement.

4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Leadership and management are good overall. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2017 and his enthusiasm, drive, commitment and inspirational leadership have already had a substantial impact on raising students' achievement and improving their behaviour, self-discipline and well-being. Working in partnership with the Campus Administrators and trustees, the headteacher has articulated an ambitious vision for the school with clear priorities

and achievable aims related to the One-school values. These aims are shared by the staff, students and parents. A detailed school improvement plan was drawn up at the start of the academic year. It has the right priorities: the actions already undertaken are generating rapid improvement. Senior leaders have successfully established a positive climate to take the school forward. The senior leadership team have clear roles and are held to account effectively for the success of their work and its impact on students' achievement and personal development. However, the senior team is not currently working at full strength and gaps within it highlight areas where improvements are needed for example in tracking student progress effectively, managing data and involving the students in school development. The leadership team is realistic in its appraisal of the school. They are well aware of its strengths and what there is still to do.

Performance management is professional and is used effectively to improve teachers' performance. The school has a clear schedule for observing lessons, conducting learning walks and scrutinising students' work, and thereby holds teachers to account successfully for the progress made by their students. Feedback to staff links to the excellent professional development opportunities provided by FLT. Good coaching in school has helped to develop senior and middle leaders within the school, and key appointments have been made for the future. Staff turnover and long term sickness have led to a lack of continuity in teaching this year and some anxiety among parents. The senior leaders have managed this issue very well by establishing positive relations with the supply agency and securing high quality supply teachers for a longer period. This has provided more consistency and stability in the teaching through a difficult time and limited the potentially detrimental impact on students' learning and progress.

The senior leadership team manages the procedures for safeguarding students very well. This includes ensuring that the school buildings and grounds are safe and well maintained and that the premises meet the standards required of independent schools.

Partnership working

Parents receive all the information to which they are legally entitled. They receive regular reports on their children's progress which are clear and useful. Excellent work has been done to engage the whole school community in supporting their school. This has taken the form of meetings and information-sharing sessions and improvements to the school website. Weekly newsletters keep parents in touch with developments, and an attractive termly publication celebrates the many achievements of the school and its students. A survey of parents' views showed renewed trust in the senior leadership of the school. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires strongly supported this view. The complaints procedure meets requirements. No formal complaints have been received in this academic year.

Governance

Governance is good. The Campus Administrators and trustees provide strong support and challenge to the school and are fully involved in and committed to its development. They have ensured that all independent school standards are met, and their decisive action has enabled school improvement to flourish.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Focus School Atherstone Campus			
Address of school:	Long Street Atherstone North Warwickshire CV9 1AE			
Telephone number:	01827 721751			
Email address:	atherstonecampus@focus-school.com			
Web address	http://atherstone.focus-school.com			
Proprietor:	Copsewood Education Trust			
Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4:	Mr Jim Clarke			
Head Teacher:	Mr Paul Davies			
DfE Number	937/6109			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	charged internally			
Age range of pupils	7-18			
Gender of pupils	girls and boys			
Total number on roll	full-time	155	part-time	0
Number of children under-5	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	75	Girls:	80
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	10	Girls:	9
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Type of inspection	Section 109(3) 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.