

# SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

*Independent professional inspection of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust*

## INSPECTION REPORT

INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO SECTION 162A  
OF THE EDUCATION ACT 2002

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| <b>Name of school:</b>                     | Sefton Park Primary School,<br>Reading   |
| <b>DfE number:</b><br><b>FOCUS number:</b> | 872/6231<br>420  |
| <b>Inspection team:</b>                    | <b>Reporting Inspector:</b><br>Dr Martin Bradley<br><b>Supporting Inspector:</b><br>Mr Tony Hubbard<br><b>Lay Inspector:</b><br>Mr Doug Siderfin |
| <b>Dates of inspection:</b>                | 19 - 21 June 2012  |

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## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Sefton Park Primary School - Reading

Address of school: 401 Old Whitley Wood Lane  
Reading RG2 8QA

Telephone number: 0118 931 2938

Fax number: 0118 931 2118

Email address: seftonpark.reading@focus.school.com

Proprietor: Fulmer Education Trust

Name of Chief Executive Officer: Mr Keith Barnes

Name of Senior Teacher: Mr David Hopkins

DfE number: 872/6231

FOCUS number: 420

Type of school: Independent school affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust

Age range of pupils: 8 – 11

Gender of pupils: Male and female

Total number on roll: (Full-time) Boys: 17                      Girls: 19

Number of pupils with statements of special educational need: Boys: 0                      Girls: 0

Type of inspection: Section 162A of the Education Act 2002

Inspection Team:

    Reporting Inspector: Dr Martin Bradley

    Supporting Inspector: Mr Tony Hubbard

    Lay Inspector: Mr Doug Siderfin

Dates of inspection: 19 – 21 June 2012

## **SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

### **Purpose and scope of the inspection:**

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service in accordance with Section 162(A) (1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by the Service and the Focus Learning Trust and agreed with the Department for Education (DfE). It was conducted by independent professional inspectors who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations. The professional inspectors were accompanied by a trained lay inspector who looked at agreed aspects of the school's management and ethos and reported on these to the Focus Learning Trust. His findings are summarised in Section C of this document, but this section is not a statutory part of the inspection process.

### **Information about the school:**

Sefton Park Primary School, Reading provides education for pupils of the Brethren community from Reading, Didcot, Wallingford and Brightwell. It opened in 2008 and works closely with its sister primary school in Harrow and the secondary school in Stoke Poges. The schools are regulated independent schools of a Christian religious character, and the trustees and staff are committed to upholding the Christian ethos and guiding principles of the Focus Learning Trust. Fifteen pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, none of whom has a statement of special educational needs. The school aims 'to provide a safe, secure and positive learning environment within which each and every individual child can develop morally, physically, spiritually and also become a confident, tolerant and mature member of the community'.

### **Summary of main findings:**

The quality of education overall is good. The curriculum is good: the quality of teaching is good overall, but there are elements which are less effective, notably when work planned for pupils with different abilities is not sufficiently varied to meet the full range of ages and abilities in the class. Social development is outstanding. Spiritual, moral, and cultural development is good, and the school has put much effort into the cultural aspects, which show positive benefits for the pupils. Behaviour is good overall, but at times restlessness develops when lessons do not offer sufficient challenge. Work with pupils with identified special educational needs is a particularly strong feature of the school.

### **What the school does well:**

- it provides very effectively for pupils with special educational needs;
- it promotes the pupils' social development particularly well, enabling them to be mature and to reflect on issues;
- it has worked hard to develop effectively the pupils' cultural awareness through a particularly good range of visits outside school; and

- it has established the School Council as a valuable means of promoting pupils' independence and responsibility.

**What the school must do to comply with the regulations:**

- the school complies with the regulations.

**What the school must do to comply with the Equality Act (DDA) 2010**

- the school complies with the Equality Act 2010.

**Next Steps**

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- strengthen the rigour with which all documentation is reviewed and monitored;
- develop greater consistency in the quality of teaching; and
- extend the supportive marking currently used in English across all subjects.

## **SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION**

### **PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school**

#### **The quality of the curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is good. The school follows the Focus Learning Trust guidance which enables it to address the requirements of the National Curriculum effectively. The curriculum provides pupils with experiences in a good range of areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative. The two classes contain Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6 respectively, and most subjects are taught in two-year cycles to each class. Besides literacy, numeracy, science, history and geography, subjects taught include French, personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship, games and physical education, swimming, music and art. PSHE is taught by a member of the Brethren community. Taken overall, the curriculum provides a sound basis for adult life. It enables the pupils to learn and make good progress.

The provision is planned to meet the range of needs in each class, although in some lessons the planned activities are not sufficiently matched to the full range of needs. This is especially difficult where mixed age classes contain younger pupils whose achievement is higher than that of their older class peers. The school intends partly to address this issue by having a third class next year. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well identified by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). She currently works one-to-one with five pupils and has assessed a further ten. All fifteen are provided with good individual education plans (IEPs). The IEPs are clear and very useful documents with targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and set against appropriate timescales. Those given to the class teachers are well-related to the curriculum and those used by the SENCO for her one-to-one work are also well targeted. This provision is of high quality.

Personal, social and health education has been developed using the Focus scheme. It is supported by 'Activate' movement lessons planned for the start of sessions: although these did not always take place during the inspection. Healthy eating is encouraged and the pupils have basic first aid and life support training which was provided by the Red Cross last year. The present Year 6 pupils have also passed a cycling proficiency course.

The school has developed its use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress. Test results and the scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that they make good progress over the four years in school, albeit often from a relatively low baseline on entry. The school uses a range of assessments of reading, writing and mathematics which provide National Curriculum levels for individual pupils as well as enabling the progress of pupils to be tracked throughout their time at school. Other tests provide standardised scores for reading and mathematics which relate individual pupil's performance to national expectations. These are useful assessments.

#### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

The quality of teaching is good overall, although it varies; the majority of lessons seen were good, and a small number of lessons were outstanding. The remainder were satisfactory. Most lessons are well-planned and are designed to provide an

appropriate range of activities for different groups in the class according to their ability and prior attainment. This includes pupils with identified learning difficulties and also the small number of pupils identified as being able, gifted and talented. Planning does not always take sufficient account of individual pupil's identified learning needs as specified in their IEPs. Some lessons do not provide a sufficient variety of tasks, especially where worksheets form the basis of learning. In a number of lessons the detailed planning is not fully reflected in the activities undertaken: these can be more uniform than the plans suggest. At times this leads to the pace of the teaching slowing which, in turn, causes the pupils to become more restless and inattentive. The school has recognised this issue and intends to develop more formal observation of teaching to help to address these issues.

The teaching enables the pupils to use intellectual, physical and creative skills to develop their learning. They show considerable interest in their work for most of the time and are developing good thinking and listening skills. Pupils' 'Learning Logs' provide opportunities for them to develop their thinking and learning in a personalised way, although the quality and presentation of work in the logs is variable. Teachers and teaching assistants demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught. Knowledge and understanding is particularly secure in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science as well as in some foundations subjects such as history and geography. Resources are of good quality and sufficient for the number of pupils, and are used effectively. Equipment has been purchased for outside play and is much appreciated by the pupils.

The pupils make good progress during their time at the school. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, most are attaining at or above national expectations, although the small size of each year group makes year-on-year comparisons difficult. Pupils know which levels they are at in English, especially in the older class. The school is developing its use of assessments to inform lesson planning. Pupils' work, especially in English and mathematics is regularly marked although marking in other subjects is not sufficiently informative to help the pupils develop their learning. The school uses a good range of assessments, both teacher- devised and standardised tests. Its analysis of the results of tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2010-11 shows that the majority of pupils achieved above national expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science. With the small size of each year group, the data is being analysed at the level of the individual child, rightly recognising that overall year-group analyses are likely to be skewed by the performance of individual pupils. This is enabling the school to monitor progress much more effectively and represents a significant improvement since the first inspection in 2009 following the school's establishment.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

**PART 2 - The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The school provides well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and achieves its aims for their personal development. It has maintained and developed the quality and effectiveness of its provision since the inspection in 2009. Pupils develop into confident, articulate and thoughtful young people, ready for the secondary stage of their education.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is good because the school successfully blends the essence of the community's faith and values into the curriculum through PSHE, its assemblies and in the general life in the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. This is reinforced in the work they do in PSHE where they regularly make connections between the values they learn with relevant passages in the Old and New Testaments. Pupils have a confident sense of themselves and of their feelings and values as well as those of others. Their good behaviour is demonstrated in the combination of vigorous energy and consideration for others that is evident at playtimes. They are usually well behaved in lessons and even when restless, generally when lessons lack pace, they respond positively to their teachers' reminders.

Pupils' social development is outstanding. The school is a strong community in which pupils enjoy the company of their peers. Pupils take readily to responsibility, particularly in the School Council, which is organised to ensure that all pupils are members at some stage. It has frequent meetings, at which representatives, after consultation with their classmates, debate proposals, manage their meetings themselves and publish suggestions adopted by the school in their well written newsletter. For example, they have successfully set up and managed the finances of their own 'healthy tuck shop'. Their experience in PSHE, reinforced by their work in other subjects, gives them a good understanding of social issues and problems. This was evident in their intelligent response when constructing arguments for and against a proposal for the development of a major store chain in a town they had recently visited. In this English lesson, they were coming to grips with the competing claims of different social interest groups, as well as with the techniques of persuasion. They are proud of having raised money for many good causes often chosen by themselves, such as the British Heart Foundation. They have many opportunities to learn about how government works, including a visit to the Houses of Parliament in which they met the local MP, as well as visits from local magistrates and providers of key public services, such as the police and fire services. Most recently, some pupils attended the Garter Ceremony at Windsor Castle. Their economic understanding is very well promoted by an enterprise initiative, in which pupils are given a small amount of seed money to develop a business idea and market to members of the community at a fair.

The cultural development of pupils is particularly good. The school has developed and built on its provision. Music, including playing musical instruments, is a strong feature of the school's provision. The school is aware of the importance of promoting tolerance and diversity and of challenging prejudice. It has developed links with other schools, including a Focus school in Barbados, learning about life in that country and writing to pen friends in the school. In the course of their PSHE lessons they learn of other faiths and customs, including Judaism and other world faiths.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

### **PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The arrangements for welfare, health and safety are good overall and those for safeguarding pupils are in place. The school identifies a child protection officer (CPO) and a deputy CPO, a trustee, both of whom have up-to-date training in interagency working. Staff have undertaken three-yearly training in basic child

protection. They are aware of the child protection arrangements and understand the signs of abuse and how to respond to concerns. The school provides both parents and pupils with information about the arrangements and makes a point of posting the Childline number prominently throughout the school premises. Communication between the school and proprietors about any concerns about welfare is good. The arrangements have regard to almost all the guidance, but the school does not formally review the policy and its implementation, or fully record the discussions. The trustees are aware of this and intend to put a more formal review system in place.

Staff and volunteers take good care for their pupils' well-being. Trustees also take a close interest in their welfare. Staff and volunteers know pupils very well and are very caring towards them. Pupils say they feel safe in the school and that they can go to a member of staff or a volunteer with a worry. Relationships among pupils are strong. The school does not tolerate bullying and has an effective policy to deal with any issues. This work includes strong elements within the PSHE scheme. Pupils think that bullying is not a problem and that teachers deal with it effectively when it happens. The school is effective in promoting good behaviour and has a clear and fairly operated policy for rewards and sanctions; it relies above all on establishing in pupils an understanding of why they should behave well. The school keeps an incident book in which matters requiring formal attention, including serious misdemeanours are recorded. The format of the incident book makes systematic monitoring across the school difficult, while the records themselves do not specifically record the outcomes of any actions taken.

The arrangements for health and safety are a strong feature of the school's provision. The arrangements for the prevention of fire are comprehensive. The school has two trained fire marshals who carry out and record termly fire drills, which are very efficient. Fire equipment is regularly serviced and checked. The recent professional fire risk assessment had few action points, all of which have been followed up. All electrical equipment is properly tested for safety. The risk assessments for the many visits outside schools are exceptionally thorough and have to be approved by the trustee with responsibility for health and safety. The school has a suitable written policy for first aid, including an appropriate number of staff with up-to-date training to accompany school outings. Education in health and safety plays a prominent and effective part in the pupils' education. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They respond positively to the school's encouragement to eat sensibly. They relish the many opportunities for vigorous exercise both at playtimes and in the variety of sporting and swimming activities. They have a good practical understanding of the importance of protecting the environment through their science and geography lessons and from their own recycling activities.

The school keeps a suitable admissions record and properly maintained daily registers, which show high levels of attendance and punctuality. The school makes particularly good provision for pupils of a wide range of ability and need. The school meets the requirements of the Equality act 2010.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

#### **PART 4 - Suitability of the staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The proprietors carry out satisfactory checks to ensure that all staff, trustees and volunteers that work in the school are suitable for working with children. This provision has been improved since the inspection of 2009. The senior teacher has completed training in safer recruitment. All staff, proprietors and volunteers are subject to Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks before they start work. In addition, all the required background checks are made on permanent staff, including identity, employment background and medical details. Professional and character references are taken up. The checks are recorded and dated on a chart, which is placed in each member of staff's file. The information is then transferred onto the single central register as is required. The school has checked the CRB clearance for any staff supplied by an employment business, and received assurance from the business that all of the other background checks have been satisfactorily conducted. The proprietors have remedied the weakness identified in 2009 and now include in the central register all proprietors and any volunteers who regularly work in the school.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

#### **PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation**

The school has occupied a purpose-built former nursery near the M4 motorway since it opened in 2008. In 2010 additional land was purchased from the local authority who erected a high acoustic fence to help protect the school from traffic noise and pollution. The premises are well-maintained and include good-sized classrooms for the current two classes, as well as a hall, refectory, library, SEN support room and offices. Building work is planned over the summer period to accommodate the anticipated growth of the school. This is being well-managed and will not affect the adequate hard and grass surfaced play areas.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

#### **PART 6 - The quality of information for parents**

The school meets the requirements for registration. It provides appropriate information for parents and carers. At present the prospectus outlines a number of policies and indicates that all school policies are available on request, but it does not include a full list of these. Whilst this is not a matter for regulatory compliance parents and carers do not, as a result, have access to the full list of school policies.

The school provides parents with regular termly reports and parents' evenings are also held termly to discuss the pupils' progress. There is also an informative weekly newsletter sent to parents.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

## **PART 7 - The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure**

The school has adopted the FLT complaints procedures and practices and this is stated in its prospectus and fully meets the requirements. The prospectus indicates that a copy is available for parents and carers from the trustees. There have been no complaints in the last twelve months.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

## **SECTION C: ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT, AND MAINTENANCE OF THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

*This section is not a requirement of the Education Act 2002. The business organisation and management of the school were inspected by the Lay Inspector, who has written this section of the report.*

### **The quality of the organisation and management of the school**

Sefton Park Primary School is affiliated to the secondary school at Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, along with its sister primary school at Harrow. It is owned, as are the other schools, by The Fulmer Education Trust (F.E.T.), but is registered with the DfE in its own right. The F.E.T. has nine trustees of whom two, local to Reading are responsible for the management of the school. The properties are owned by another trust. The Chief Education Officer of the secondary school, along with the trust, is kept informed of all that proceeds at the primary.

The Senior Teacher is dedicated to the school, handling all day to day matters well, and keeping in touch with the two local trustees. He has the assistance of two full-time and three part-time teachers along with two teaching assistants and an experienced secretary/administrator four days a week. He is in regular touch with the secondary school, with visits from time to time both ways. This ensures a smooth transition for the pupils. One day a week he goes to Harrow to assist the staff. Year 6 have the opportunity to spend a few days at the secondary school before moving there in September.

The staff operate well, manifesting a good team spirit. However staff meetings are not held regularly and minutes are not submitted in a standard format with action points, personnel responsible for action to be taken and completion times. The atmosphere in school is happy and relaxed and the pupils are well mannered and responsive in conversation.

The facilities are safe and adequate and best use is made of the space available. A new classroom is being built to accommodate more pupils and a new teacher from September 2012. Pupils have the use once a week of a large purpose built sports hall for physical education and a swimming pool at a local leisure centre.

The school has good parental support with termly open days and opportunities for contact during the school day to discuss pupils' progress. A weekly bulletin to parents is provided. However parents are not always fully aware of the range of school policies that are available. The support of many community members is invaluable. The response to the parents' questionnaire by only one third of parents was disappointing. The responses received were, however, very positive.

The monthly FET trustee meetings are well attended. They are fully minuted with action points and personnel identified, and completion columns included. The Senior Teacher presents a comprehensive report each month to the trust.

### ***Could the organisation and management of the school be improved?***

The Trustees might like to take into consideration the following suggestions:

- Improve the management of the school by holding staff meetings more regularly with minutes submitted in a standard format with columns for action, the personnel to take action and completion time; and
- Improve contact with parents by ensuring that they are all aware, via the prospectus, of the titles of the policies available to them on request from the school.

**This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust. Further copies of the report are available from the Operations Manager of the Focus Learning Trust, Siskin House, Siskin Drive, Coventry, or from the School Inspection Service website: [www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk](http://www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk)**