

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, schools accredited as members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, and those schools belonging to the Cognita Group which are not members of the Independent Schools Council and its constituent association.

INSPECTION REPORT

**INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO
SECTION 109(1) AND (2) OF
THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS ACT 2008**

Name of school:	Focus School Reading Campus
DfE number: Focus number:	872/6231 420
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mr Andrew Rickett Supporting Inspector: Mrs Elisabeth Linley Lay Inspector: Mr Mike Thomas
Dates of inspection:	12-14/5/15

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Focus School Reading Campus		
Address of school:	401 Old Whitley Wood Lane, Reading RG2 8QA		
Telephone number:	01189 312938		
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Email address:	reading.primary@focus-school.com		
Proprietor:	Fulmer Education Trust		
Chief Executive Officer:	Mr Michael Brown		
Senior Teacher:	Mr Daniel Pitt		
DfE number:	872/6231		
Focus number:	420		
Type of school:	Independent school affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust		
Age range of pupils and students:	7-11		
Gender of pupils:	Male and female		
Total number on roll:	(Full-time)	Boys: 27	Girls: 22
	(Part-time)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0
Number of children under 5:		Boys: 0	Girls: 0
Number of post-16 students:		Boys: 0	Girls: 0
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need:		Boys: 1	Girls: 0
Type of inspection:	Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008		
Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector:	Mr Andrew Rickett		
	Supporting Inspector:	Mrs Elisabeth Linley	
	Lay Inspector:	Mr Mike Thomas	
Dates of inspection:	12-14 May 2015		

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of 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, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by SIS and the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) 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 regulations. The lay inspector also evaluated both the trustees' stewardship of resources and ethos of the school and reported on these to the FLT. The lay inspector's 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:

Focus School, Reading Campus, is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged from seven to eleven. It is located in Reading. Pupils of the Brethren community come from a wide catchment area including High Wycombe, Didcot and Wallingford. The school opened in 2008 on the site of a day nursery. The buildings have been modernised and adapted for the use of primary age pupils. Focus School Reading Campus is registered with the Department for Education as a school with a special religious character and is affiliated with the FLT. The school is owned by the Fulmer Education Trust and is governed by a board of trustees. The school aims are to provide an education 'governed by the Holy Bible and the Christian way of life'. At the time of the inspection there were 49 pupils on roll, one of whom had a statement of special educational need. All of the teaching staff have been appointed since the last inspection in June 2012 and a full complement of staff has been in place since Easter 2015.

Summary of main findings:

Reading Campus provides a sound quality of education which meets the school's aims and has many good features. The curriculum has been improved significantly. It is broad and well designed to provide pupils with opportunities to explore and be creative in their learning. Long and medium term curriculum planning is effective. The quality of short term planning varies and in some cases does not reflect the needs of pupils or lead to sustained progress. The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Overall the most effective teaching sets high expectations for pupils to engage in their learning and develop independence and imagination. This leads to good progress. Where teaching is only satisfactory some pupils do not make the good progress required to catch up from a legacy of underperformance. The quality of pupils' personal development is good as is their behaviour. Good arrangements are in place to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety and arrangements for safeguarding are up to date and effective. The management of the school is improving; however, greater rigour is required in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work and in the timely implementation of policies and procedures.

What the school does well:

- pupils have positive attitudes and are responsive and enthusiastic learners;
- the new curriculum is making a positive impact on the improving pupils' progress; and
- the new staff team work well together and have a clear vision for the school's further improvement.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

- the school meets all the regulatory requirements.

What the school must do to comply with the Equality Act 2010:

- the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Next Steps:

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following action:

- improve the overall quality of the teaching so that it is at least good across the whole school by improving short term planning and raising expectations, in order to help pupils make consistently good progress;
- improve procedures for monitoring and evaluation so that they focus on the impact of the school's work and can demonstrate a clear link between the quality of teaching and pupils' progress; and
- ensure that all policies and procedures reflect the latest government guidance and are reviewed and their implementation checked in a timely manner.

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 provides pupils with a broad and balanced education that covers all the areas of learning required by the independent schools regulations. The curriculum, which largely reflects the requirements of the new 2014 National Curriculum, is planned effectively and is underpinned by guidance provided by the FLT.

New curriculum guidance was introduced by FLT in September 2014 and this is being successfully implemented by the school. It provides schemes of work for all subjects and identifies the curriculum content to be covered over a two-year cycle for all year groups with specific guidance for mixed-age classes. There is greater emphasis on a cross-curricular approach where individual subjects link to termly themes. Learning strands that include creativity, critical thinking and cultural diversity are identified and threaded through these themes. This is evident in Discovery lessons when history and geography are taught and in the development of pupils' creative talents through art, design technology and music. The impact of the new curriculum has enabled many pupils to make good progress since it was introduced.

The school has recently introduced the 'Genius Hour' which has been designed to enable pupils to develop effective research and presentation skills, and extend their learning. Pupils confirmed that they enjoyed the opportunities to share their work through power point presentations and through the school's newsletter. French is taught throughout the school; specialist teachers are employed to teach swimming and music, and pupils benefit from individual music tuition in woodwind and piano. Termly visits also enrich the planned curriculum; places recently visited include the National Science Museum, Butser Hill Ancient Farm and The River and Rowing Museum at Henley.

The school promotes its Christian ethos through assemblies and provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE). In these lessons, there is a strong focus on pupils' rights and responsibilities, democracy and issues that affect the lives of others. For example, pupils have discussed the crisis currently faced by those living in Nepal and have responded by planning to raise funds for the relief effort in the wake of the recent earthquakes. This is a good example of the pupils' strong commitment to helping others and their clear understanding of the needs of different societies. Visitors to school, such as a local magistrate, who spoke about the work of the Justice system, have contributed well to pupils' preparation for their future responsibilities as British citizens. As a result, the curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as seen in their confidence, engagement, attitudes to learning, and their willingness to take on responsibilities and help others.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs, or who have English as an additional language, is good. Assessments of pupils' needs and abilities are carried out when they join the school. Where support is needed it is implemented and reviewed well. Effective links with others: parents, specialists, the Special

Educational Needs Coordinator at the senior school to which pupils may progress and the FLT learning support advisor, have been made and such links have a positive impact on both the curriculum offered and enables the pupils concerned to make good progress.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Good teaching in some parts of the school is effectively addressing a history of underperformance in pupils' attainment. This picture of good teaching is not consistent across the whole school. Satisfactory teaching is not making sufficient impact on the rate of progress in order for pupils to catch up from the legacy of underachievement in the past. Pupil progress overall is improving for many pupils but some, across all year groups, are still not making the progress of which they are capable. In some curriculum areas, such as mathematics, even where teaching is strong, pupils have not yet made sufficient progress to catch up. This is because gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding has an impact on the level at which they can attain. Improvement in the rate of progress has been recent and has been supported by the introduction of the new FLT curriculum. There is as yet little evidence of progress being sustained over a period of time so that all groups of pupils make sufficient progress to achieve at the right level for their age and abilities and close the gap in past underachievement.

An emphasis on language and mathematics focuses teaching and learning on developing core knowledge and skills. Pupils' work shows that teaching in some classes is responding to pupil's past underachievement by spending considerable time improving basic skills and understanding of concepts. This means that, on occasions, pupils need to acquire new knowledge to access learning at the level expected for their age range before they can make progress. A particular strength of good teaching is the accurate identification by teachers of what needs to be done to support pupils to accelerate progress in their learning. In lessons where this is happening, teachers have high expectations of pupils and challenge them with imaginative tasks and fast paced learning to which they respond with enthusiasm and excitement. Satisfactory teaching relies too heavily on less challenging learning activities that do not inspire pupils or which consist of a series of learning tasks that do not clearly support the progress that pupils are expected to make during that lesson. Occasionally, pupils spend too long covering a single topic which loses momentum in the learning as well as pupil interest in the subject. There is some restlessness among some pupils in these lessons. Good teaching is characterised by effective short term lesson planning that identifies clear learning steps to ensure the progress pupils are expected to make in that lesson. These detailed and carefully designed short term plans make an effective contribution to the good progress seen. The quality of these short term plans is not consistent across the school.

The use of learning objectives linked to clear success criteria is making a positive contribution to assessment for learning. Pupils confidently articulate how well they achieve against learning objectives, the reasons why they think they will achieve at a certain level and are clear about why they sometimes do not achieve as expected. They are confident to attempt learning objectives that challenge them and enjoy the fact that there are also extension activities for them to aspire to. Sometimes the level of challenge of these extension activities does not stretch the more able. The use of these learning objectives, and the marking of pupils' work, while often good,

are not used in a consistent way across the school and do not always identify next steps in the pupils' learning especially outside of the core subjects. Therefore, pupils are not always fully challenged and work is not sufficiently differentiated to allow pupils of all abilities to make sustained progress.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and most respond with eagerness and enthusiasm to their work. They become particularly engaged and animated with opportunities to think creatively and express their thoughts and ideas in imaginative ways. For example, in an art lesson, pupils responded with some very personal and insightful interpretations of what Japanese paintings meant to them. In this example, a strong teacher used the opportunity to challenge the pupils' thinking by encouraging them to express their thoughts and ideas using very sophisticated language.

The introduction of a new system to assess pupil attainment in September 2014 has enabled pupils' progress to be tracked and to be directly linked to the new FLT curriculum. Assessments are regularly carried out and data is beginning to be used to track progress over time. The implementation of this new assessment system is still at an early stage. Some moderation has taken place to ensure the accuracy of assessments and further training on this has been planned.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

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

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their very good attendance which is well above the national average. The pupils' contribution to their school and the wider community is good. They take responsibility for a range of tasks in the classroom and around school which encourages them to be responsible. There is an elected school council which meets weekly. Pupils say that the council's work makes a difference, for example, in suggesting how money raised by pupils can be used to make improvements to the life of the school.

A particular strength of social development is the way in which pupils collaborate with one another and work together in lessons. They are considerate of others' feeling and often take a supportive role to aid someone who might need help with their learning. Similarly, pupils play together well on the playground and when needed those with posts of responsibilities, such as prefects or house captains, intervene to ensure that any differences are resolved quickly. The school has high expectations for pupils to behave well and in the main, the pupils respond positively and their behaviour is good.

Pupils have a good awareness of moral issues and a growing understanding of social justice and the concept of equality and fairness. This is reflected in their commitment to raise money for others, such as for the British Heart Foundation, Thames Valley & Chiltern Air Ambulance, the Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, Marie Curie Cancer Care and Great Ormond Street. Raising money for those in need who live in other countries also enables pupils to learn about the lives of other people, their cultures and customs, such as in their response to the earthquakes in Nepal.

The good opportunities to develop the pupils' cultural awareness include an International Children's Week and through this vehicle pupils develop an understanding of children in other countries and their different faiths. They learn about others, and their work beyond their community, through educational visits and from visitors who come into school to talk about what they do, such as representatives from Thames Valley Police, Berkshire Fire and Rescue and the Red Cross. The pupils' work in personal, social, health and economic education covers a range of issues that promotes thought and debate and these are underpinned by care, consideration and respect of others and their beliefs.

The introduction of the new curriculum is providing more experiences for pupils to develop aspects of their spiritual awareness. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the opportunities to explore art and music in creative and imaginative ways that encourage them to express their thoughts with a growing confidence as they acquire the language through which they can articulate their ideas in greater depth.

The pupils' efforts to raise funds for the school as part of the annual Enterprise Day is an aspect of the school's work that prepares them well for their future economic well-being. The Enterprise Day is an occasion when pupils set up their own businesses; complete initial costings, consider advertising, profit margins and selling.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including safeguarding and child protection, is effective. Policies are up to date and all staff are aware of the very latest guidance for safeguarding. Child protection procedures are reviewed and training refreshed at regular intervals. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy are both senior staff in the school and have been trained to an appropriate level including interagency training and contributing to case conferences. The DSL has a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and child protection matters at the higher level. The school has clear policies relating to child protection and safeguarding matters and these are known to all staff and are consistently implemented. The DSL and staff all receive appropriate training at regular intervals. There are clear procedures for the induction of new staff that include awareness of the school's child protection policy.

Annual fire risk assessments are carried out and any required actions thoroughly followed up. Regular checks of fire safety procedures, including weekly tests to fire alarms and emergency lighting, ensure that fire equipment is well maintained. Fire drills are held twice a year and records are kept of the date and time taken to evacuate the building. The Senior Teacher has been identified as the competent person to oversee responsibility for fire safety. The school has an effective written policy for First Aid. Five members of staff have undertaken first aid training. All staff have received training in using an Epi-pen and the correct administration of medicines. Records relating to the medical treatment of individual pupils are good. First aid boxes are well stocked and readily available around the school.

Admission registers are up to date and daily attendance registers are accurately completed with all staff using them in a consistent way. The school keeps an

appropriate record of incidents of misbehaviour and the sanctions applied are proportionate and fair. Procedures to ensure pupils know how to use electronic media are part of the E-safety Policy. The Senior Teacher has the lead responsibility in this area. All pupils and their parents have signed an e-safety agreement and pupils learn about staying safe when using electronic media through assemblies and events such as the Safer Internet Day and tackling types of e-safety through the Anti-Bullying Week. These opportunities are helping pupils to develop an awareness of these issues. Pupils are aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns regarding staying safe when using electronic media. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and implemented effectively to ensure that pupils are safe both in school and away from the school site on educational visits.

Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils are generally polite and show care and concern to others. They have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and feel safe to approach adults in school with any concerns which they say are acted upon speedily

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

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

Enhanced criminal checks, and other evidence that staff and managers are suitable to work with children have been carried out and meet requirements. These procedures have also been done for volunteers helping in the school. The single central register is an accurate reflection of current guidance and procedures. Some aspects of the single central register were updated during the inspection to ensure that it now fully complies with the latest requirements.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation meet requirements. The accommodation, which was a purpose-built former nursery, has been extended and improved. It now provides three well-proportioned classrooms, specialist rooms for music and the support of special educational needs, an attractive library, a hall with a stage, refectory, medical room, offices; staff room and a resource room. The school has sufficient provision for washing and toilet facilities for pupils and has designated facilities with disabled access. The outdoor space, of hard and grassed surfaces provides well for physical education activities and play. The school buildings and grounds are well maintained, safe and secure and provide a pleasant environment for pupils' learning. The school's provision covers the requirements for the short term care of pupils who are sick or need medical treatment.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 6 - The quality of information for parents

The quality of information to parents meets requirements. The 2015-16 prospectus includes all the information that is required to be issued to parents. Relevant information is available in school and is all to hand. The school issues the Focus Handbook to all new parents at the beginning of each year. Parents are kept

informed of current events and developments inside and outside of classrooms each week by a cheerful illustrated 4-page newsletter. This is also sent to other interested members of the community. There is a school website which includes useful documents and policies for parents. A full report of each pupil's progress is sent to all parents during the summer term. These reports inform parents on pupil attainment related to National Curriculum levels, a grade for effort, with specific and useful comments on work done in each of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Briefer reports are added for other foundation subjects, a Senior Teacher's report, an attendance report and pupil targets for improvement the next year. Shorter interim reports on grades attained by pupils ensure that parents are well informed of their children's progress. Parents are invited to termly meetings with the teachers to discuss progress, concerns and targets.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

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

The school has adopted the Focus Complaints Policy and meets all the requirements. There have been no complaints in the last 12 months.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

PART 8 - The quality and effectiveness of leadership in and management of schools

The leadership of the school is improving. School leadership and management ensure that the aims and special religious character of the school are met. There have been significant changes to staff since the previous inspection. The leadership and management have secured the appointment of a number of strong teachers who are helping to bring about improvements to the quality of teaching and pupil's academic achievement with some success. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of these changes are becoming established through more regular scrutiny of pupil work and peer observation of lessons. The school management is aware that there is still further to go in securing sustained improvement in pupil performance. Procedures for the performance management of teachers to support school improvement require further development. Policies and procedures take account of compliance with regulations. Latest guidance concerning changes to regulations is not always effectively communicated by trustees to relevant members of staff and thus it is not acted upon in a timely way. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and satisfied with its efficiency, the welfare of children and the approachability of leaders and managers.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes

SECTION C: ORGANISATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

This section is not a requirement of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The Lay Inspector evaluated both the school ethos and the Trustees' stewardship of resources and produced an internal report for the Focus Learning Trust, which is summarised below.'

The quality of the organisation and maintenance of the ethos of the school

Reading Campus (RP) is governed by the Fulmer Education Trust (FET) which also governs the nearby secondary campus at Stoke Poges. The FET board has 12 members who meet each term. Their meeting agendas include regular discussions on primary school strategies, resources available including staffing, and the ongoing needs of the school. Good minutes of these meetings are distributed to the trustees. One trustee has specific responsibility for the primary school and reports back to the Central Management Team on these matters. The Primary Trustee (PT), his assistant and Primary Senior Teacher (PST) hold fortnightly management meetings. Minutes are taken but not distributed. The Central Management Team, PT and PST are all clear and definite in their intent to follow the Focus ethos, vision and goals. This is evident in the way that they have embraced the new Curriculum, the new Key Stage 2 tracking tool, the guidance and support of the School Development Advisor (SDA) and the implementation of the Management of Effectiveness programme to raise the quality of teaching and learning. The retirement of the former (PST) at the end of last year provided the management with an opportunity to bring in a new staff team in an effort to raise the quality of teaching and learning. This process was only completed in the Easter of 2015, a month before the inspection. The development of the new team approach is growing but is already making significant differences to the overall quality of teaching. The SDA makes regular visits and prepares useful reports on observations from monitoring and suggested next steps. A robust performance management programme is in the course of being introduced and has identified the need to focus on improving the rigour and consistency of management and teaching. The PST consults closely with the PT and keeps him in touch on a daily basis. The PST is supportive of the ethos, is keen to develop in his role and ready for direction and guidance as given by the trustees. More could be done to involve the Central Management Team in the development of the primary school and its significance to the achievement of pupils at the secondary school. There is evidence of gaps in the passing on of Focus communications, policies and procedures to the primary management team.

Health and safety, recruitment, staff relations, pastoral care and finance are actively managed.

Pupils appear to be happy and appreciate what is being done for them. They spoke of feeling safe and well cared for. There is a good deal of voluntary work done by community members in supervision, assisting reading, driving the school buses and maintenance of the premises. Prefects are chosen from Year 6 pupils and were seen to be helping with supervision in break times. Parents express their overall support for the school.

The school secretary is diligent in keeping records and plays a valuable role in the organisation.

Could the organisation and management be improved?

Trustees might wish to consider the following:

- secure the rigour of the Management of Effectiveness programme in the school culture;
- ensure that there are effective channels of communication between the Central Management Team and the school so that all policies and procedures are regularly updated and acted upon; and
- strengthen the means by which the Central Management Team can more actively support the vital contribution primary education plays in the long term education of the pupils.

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, Exchange Place, Poseidon Way, Warwick, CV34 6BY, or from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk.