



## **SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE**

### **INSPECTION REPORT FOR FOCUS SCHOOL DUNSTABLE CAMPUS**

**DfE No: 823/6019**

#### **The key inspection judgements for this school are:**

<b>The quality of education</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Students' personal development</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Safeguarding students' welfare health and safety</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership, management and governance</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>

#### **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: 6-8 November 2018**

## **SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

Focus School Dunstable Campus meets all the independent school standards and its own aims. School leaders aim to provide the best possible education for students: this vision is strongly promoted by the headteacher and it is shared by all who work in the school. As a result the school has a warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos. Students thrive and staff appreciate the very good support and development they receive. Parents are very happy with all that the school provides and students are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of their education. The quality of education is outstanding. Students' learning skills are exceptionally well developed and this results in very high levels of achievement in national assessments and examinations in all key stages. The provision made for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including those with education and health care (EHC) plans is outstanding. Their needs are very well met and their progress is carefully monitored so they reach or exceed their predicted targets or grades. Students identified as being additionally gifted and talented have very good opportunities to deepen their knowledge, understanding and/or skills. The quality of teaching is outstanding. The school's assessment procedures are exemplary, data from assessments and examinations are carefully evaluated by phase leaders and immediate and effective action is taken to close any gaps in students' learning. The curriculum is outstanding. It is very well adapted to the needs of all students and ensures that they achieve very well. Students' personal development is outstanding. They are confident, articulate and aspirational young people with an excellent work ethic. They have a very good understanding of British values and institutions. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and ensuring students' welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The procedures for ensuring the suitability of staff are clear, appropriate and consistently applied. Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. The headteacher and campus administrator (CA) team, four trustees delegated to lead and manage the school, work well together. The lead CA and his colleagues have robust procedures in place to monitor the work of the school. The oversight of key aspects of the school, for example safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, is delegated to individual CAs and they carry out these responsibilities very effectively.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

The school meets all the independent school regulations and it is outstanding in all respects. It should continue to maintain this high quality.

## 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 lessons, carried out joint observations with the senior leadership team, held meetings with the campus administrators, headteacher, phase leaders, the regional special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinator (SENDCO), the regional principal, school staff and students. They examined the school's website, documents and records, scrutinised students' work and reviewed responses to parents', staff and students' questionnaires completed before the inspection. The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Mrs Christine Graham
Team inspectors:	Mr Chris Hall

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

Focus School Dunstable Campus is a co-educational, non-selective faith school for the children of Brethren families. The school is part of a national network of schools affiliated to Focus Learning Trust. The school opened in 2003. It caters for students from seven-18 years. Students come from Dunstable, Watford, Hemel Hempstead, Harrow, Northampton, Banbury and Brackley. There are 199 students on roll: 25 are in key stage 2: 74 in key stage 3: 55 in key stage 4 and 45 in the sixth form. Eleven students have been identified by the school as having SEND and one has an education and health care (EHC) plan. Six students are identified as being additionally gifted and talented (AGT). There are no students with English as an additional language. All students go onto employment at the end of their time in school. The school was last inspected in November 2015. The headteacher and trustees also run Northampton Campus, students from Northampton Campus move to Dunstable Campus at the end of Year 6 to complete their education. The school's motto is '*Learning to Learn*'.

# **SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

## **1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is outstanding.

### **Students' learning and achievement**

Students' learning and achievement are outstanding. Students' learning skills are very well developed. Self-directed learning (SDL) is an integral part of all lessons in the secondary phase and it is developing well in key stage 2. Students have a very good understanding of their current level of attainment and predicted grades. They are resilient learners, they persevere with challenging tasks and identify the best resources to help them, including online revision programmes, textbooks, discussion with a partner or group or the teacher. All students recognise that effective learning takes effort and application. They have very good opportunities to plan, organise and improve their work. In lessons they move very quickly to tasks which allow them to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills. Students make very good use of the written feedback they receive, especially on Canvas, the virtual learning environment, and information from assessments. The coaching provided by teachers in lessons ensures that all students make good progress. A Year 8 student described how she used feedback from her teachers and a range of learning resources to reach her predicted GCSE targets. She recognised the importance of self-study and a proactive attitude. She said that she liked being responsible for her own learning and that knowing her predicted GCSE grades at an early age made her more likely to achieve them. This was typical of comments made by students during the inspection. The outcomes of national assessments at the end of key stage 2 are above or well above the national figure and overall value added is high. Students' achieve very well in GCSE examinations and outcomes are well above all national benchmarks. All students reach their predicted grades and a high proportion exceed them, often by as much as two grades. The validated ALIS assessments provide challenging predictions at A level but all students reach their predicted grades. The outcomes of A level examinations are in-line with the national figure. There are no gender differences and students with SEND achieve very well from their individual starting points.

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

Teaching and assessment are outstanding. Teaching is consistently good in all key stages and subjects and a high proportion of teaching is outstanding. Teachers' planning is very effective and is shared with students so they can prepare for new topics or catch up with work missed through absence helping to ensure consistently good progress. Teachers' very effective use of data from assessments ensures that all students are challenged and that they have very good opportunities to improve areas of weakness and embed knowledge and skills. Teachers' have very good subject knowledge, a secure understanding of SDL and very high expectations of their students. In most lessons teachers provide a brief effective explanation of the lesson objective and then act as

coaches or facilitators. This is highly effective because in these lessons students direct their own learning and work industriously at their own pace. Their concentration and interest levels are very high because they can see the progress they are making. Teachers encourage students to be curious and to carry out their own research. In a Year 5/6 lesson students used BODMAS, the brackets, order, division, multiplication, addition, and subtraction acronym, to work out calculations. After some helpful explanations by the teacher and working through some examples they were given a range of tasks and asked to select the most appropriate level of task to deepen their understanding. Students could explain why some tasks were unhelpful because they would not help them to make progress. All students chose a task which was well matched to their needs: they found their chosen task challenging but the teacher provided excellent support and guidance so all students persevered and made very good progress, with their confidence improving rapidly. There were many lessons of this quality. Students are encouraged to work in a variety of groupings and teachers take account of individual learning preferences while also ensuring that students develop collaborative and leadership skills.

The school's assessment framework is very rigorous. Data from tests and assessments are shared with students ensuring they have a very good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. In maths they receive detailed question level analysis so they understand which aspects of a topic require further development. There is a very good range of assessments at all key stages. All assessment data are reviewed by phase leaders and any dips in individual performance identified. Phase leaders meet with staff and/or students to identify any issues or the additional support which may be needed. The school sets challenging targets for students. The outcomes of key stage 2 assessments are used to set GCSE targets when students are in Year 7. Students are aware that these are predictions and that their efforts will determine their final grade. Marking is at least good and usually very good particularly on Canvas. Teachers provide very effective written guidance so students know what has been achieved and what must be improved. Evidence from students' work shows that they act on the guidance received.

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

The curriculum is outstanding. It is based on the National Curriculum and examination specifications. The curriculum is very well adapted to the needs of all students including those with SEND or EHC plans. Some of these students are provided with a bespoke curriculum which can include a greater focus on vocational subjects and work experience. Students identified as additionally gifted and talented have good opportunities to work at their own level and further enhance their skills. The key stage 2 curriculum provides students with a good foundation in the basic skills of reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling and mathematics. Their speaking and listening skills are very well developed. They are given good opportunities to work in groups or with a partner and they work well on collaborative tasks, listening to the views of others and the feedback from their teachers. SDL is developing well in key stage 2 and older

students have some opportunities to work independently in a small learning centre near to the classroom. A good range of subject options is available at GCSE and A level, this ensures that students can reach national benchmarks such as Attainment and Progress 8 and the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). The school makes special arrangements to allow students to take combinations of subjects which would not normally be available to them. This leads to very high outcomes at GCSE and all students reach their predicted A Level grades. Schemes of work and curriculum planning documents provide effective guidance for staff and lesson planning is consistently very good. Good opportunities for cross phase working and cross curricular work, for example during science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) days enrich students' learning and ensure that they understand the links between subjects. SDL is very well developed, with no distinction between self-directed learning and more traditional lessons so the focus in all lessons is on students' independent learning. Extended project qualifications (EPQ) give older students opportunities to pursue topics which are of interest to them. There are a good range of enrichment activities and enterprise activities, including a day visit to Lille for the sixth form and visits to places of interest for other year groups. There are a very good range of sporting activities and students enjoy participating in competitions including sporting events and the Junior and Senior Maths Challenge. These add interest to students' learning and allow them to practise their skills in real life situations. All students make very good progress during their time in school because they have very effective learning skills and they enjoy and participate fully in all the opportunities available to them.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF STUDENTS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Students' personal development is outstanding. They are articulate, courteous and self-assured young people. All students say that they like being at the school and this was confirmed by the views of their parents. Students develop very responsible attitudes and make an excellent contribution to the school and to wider society. They volunteer their help willingly for the benefit of others, for example, by fund raising, giving concerts, visiting the children in a local hospice and raising funds for a school overseas.

Students value their education: attendance is above the national average and there have been no unauthorised absences. They are punctual when arriving at lessons; settle quickly and work hard throughout the lesson. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. The overriding atmosphere in the school is one of calm, order and co-operation. There are excellent relationships between staff and students and students collaborate well in pairs, groups or with the whole class. Students are sensitive to the needs of others, make friends easily, show empathy and are inclusive when carrying out activities. Their positive attitudes to learning and very well developed learning skills ensure that they make very good progress.

Students have strong moral values which influence all aspects of their conduct. . They have a very good understanding of British values, the rule of law and individual liberty. They understand that the rights of people are protected under

British law. They are tolerant and show a good understanding of, and respect for the beliefs, cultures, opinions and lifestyles of other people. One student commented that if they did not respect others, how they could expect to be respected themselves. Parents strongly agree that the school helps their children develop positive attitudes and values. The very effective personal, social, health and economic education programme (PSHEE) and assemblies, which fully reflect the school's aims and ethos, help students to make well-informed choices. For example, in Year 8 a unit on British justice and public services is covered in the citizenship programme and students can talk eloquently about the importance of democracy and freedom of speech. The PSHEE programme is audited every year to ensure it is fully up-to-date and that high standards are maintained.

Students' cultural awareness is well developed through the taught curriculum and enrichment activities. There are regular performances and celebrations of learning throughout the school year which provide good opportunities for students to present information to their parents and peers or to demonstrate their talents, including those developed outside of school.

Students have a strong voice in the school. They are able to raise concerns and put forward suggestions via the School Council – an elected body with representatives from each year group. This allows the students to take responsibility and develop leadership skills. They are able to organise themselves and develop strong personal qualities within a democratic framework. Older students have designed and constructed, with adult help, some of the learning centres and a group of students spent part of their summer holidays carrying out minor refurbishments to one of the centres, demonstrating their commitment to the school and to their peers.

There is a high-quality programme of careers advice that enables students to make informed choices about their future careers. In key stages 3 and 4 careers education is covered in PSHEE and Citizenship courses which are run in conjunction with the community Careers Advantage Programme (CAP). In Year 12 the Careers Fundamentals Programme is supported by an annual careers event for Year 12 and 13 students. Year 13 students may also present their EPQ projects to business leaders on a separate occasion. The students also learn to track their skills and progress and how to write curriculum vitae (CVs). By the end of Year 13 they are well prepared for the world of work.

### **3. SAFEGUARDING STUDENTS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Provision for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety is outstanding. All of the students, staff and parents who completed the questionnaires said that the students feel safe in the school and that they are very well looked after by the staff. Students demonstrate a very good understanding of the role of key personnel such as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). There is a strong culture of vigilance and students' welfare is actively promoted. The school's policies are comprehensive and of good quality, they are regularly reviewed and

understood by all staff. There is a comprehensive, compliant child protection and safeguarding policy which takes account of the latest government guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018*, as well as setting out child protection procedures. The policy emphasises the importance of safeguarding for the whole school community and that it is everyone's responsibility. Suitable training is undertaken by staff responsible for the different aspects of welfare, health and safety. Staff, trustees and volunteers receive annual training. Staff work closely with the DSL and the deputy DSL and know the procedures for reporting any concerns.

The DSL and deputy DSL have up-to-date training and a secure understanding of their role. They understand their responsibilities in relation to child protection conferences and record keeping. The Safeguarding Trustee is kept fully up to date with all legislation and any concerns that may be raised. There are very good links with all the relevant local authorities and staff are aware of the procedures which must be followed in the case of an incident. The school's records are clear, easily followed and appropriately filed.

The school has robust procedures for recruiting and vetting all teaching and ancillary staff, trustees and volunteers. The Single Central Record (SCR) of staff appointments is properly maintained and is fully up to date.

Students do much of their work online and the school's arrangements to keep students safe when on-line are very robust. Students have a very good understanding of e-safety because they receive regular training. The trustees provide training for parents so that they are aware of potential risks. There is a central Focus monitoring system which tracks all on-line activity including email, and importantly, the system identifies inappropriate activity or websites. Everyone in the school works hard to prevent all forms of bullying and prejudice, including the misuse of electronic and social media. The students report that bullying of any kind is very rare and that any incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively. Appropriate and detailed records are kept. Students say that there are always adults for them to talk to if they have any concerns. The school's anti-bullying strategies and behaviour policies are very effective and successfully promote positive behaviour. The school makes staff and students aware of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

The school pays full attention to promoting students' welfare, health and safety in school and when away on visits. Risk assessments are carried out and these clearly identify any issues that might prove hazardous, for example, the use of chemicals in science or the use of machinery in design technology (DT) and define the action that should be taken to avoid or minimise the risks. All electrical equipment in the school is regularly tested. Policies and procedures for all aspects of fire safety meet requirements, are well organised and consistently implemented. Fire risk assessments are carried out, recorded and reviewed. Fire equipment, including alarms, detectors and extinguishers are regularly checked by qualified contractors. An unexpected fire evacuation drill occurred during the inspection and was completed rapidly and safely. There is a written



first-aid policy, a number of staff are trained first aiders and there is an appropriately equipped first-aid room. Detailed records of all accidents are kept and any treatment is administered in a timely manner. The minibus drivers are all fully vetted volunteers who are appropriately trained by the minibus company to ensure that students are driven safely to and from school.

The carefully planned deployment of staff ensures that students are very well supervised at all times during the day in a way that is appropriate for their age and stage of development. The school has a fair system of sanctions to encourage positive behaviour and keeps detailed records. Attendance and admissions registers are accurate, up to date, and meet requirements. Students' attendance is very good.

#### **4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. The headteacher, CA team and senior leaders have an ambitious vision for the school. Rigorous self-evaluation and the ability to identify potential issues and take swift and decisive action to improve them, have helped the school to make very good progress since its last inspection. The headteacher and CA team have created an effective team of assistant headteachers and phase leaders who play an important part in the improvement process. They monitor the effectiveness of key stages and analyse data very robustly so any dips in students' performance are identified and addressed. The senior team monitor all aspects of the school's work very effectively. During joint lesson observations carried out with the inspection team, the judgments made by the headteacher and assistant headteachers were accurate and showed a very good understanding of the curriculum provided for each year group. Plans made to improve aspects of the school's development, focus on the most important priorities and identify the actions the school will take to bring about improvement. Students' achievement and their personal development are at the heart of the school's work. The ethos and culture of the school ensures that the achievements of all students are valued and that they all, whatever their starting points, develop the knowledge, skills and personal qualities which will support them well in their future lives. The headteacher and senior staff use teacher performance management procedures well so teaching is consistently good or better in all subjects and key stages. Staff are provided with very good quality training and development and they value the support they receive. Induction procedures for new staff are very effective so they understand and share the school's vision. Teamwork and shared values are a strong feature of the school, and students and staff are very loyal to the school and are proud of its success. The school building is bright and attractive and the school makes the most of the somewhat limited space. There is appropriate provision and access for disabled students, parents or staff. The school meets the standards for handling complaints. There have been no formal complaints in recent years.

##### **Partnership working**

The school has strong partnerships with other Focus schools and there are partnerships within the local community, for example with a local hospice and with charities particularly those which support children. The school uses local facilities for a number of sporting events. Relationships with parents are very strong and parents are overwhelmingly positive about all that the school provides. They receive a very good quantity and quality of information from the school. The weekly newsletters keep them informed about school events and the outcomes of examinations and provide gentle reminders about important matters such as attendance. The relatively new parent app ensures that parents are well informed about their children's achievement. Parents and students are positive about the app but a very small minority said they missed having a paper diary in which to access information and some students said they would like to be able to see their citations while in school.

### **Governance**

Governance is outstanding. The CA team have a very good understanding of all aspects of school life and of the independent school regulations. All members of the CA team have clearly defined responsibilities and they are actively engaged in meetings and training which take place in school. The headteacher provides the CA team with a very good quantity and quality of information, as a result they have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They monitor the work of the school very effectively and, in partnership with the headteacher, they take prompt and effective action to correct any areas of concern. The lead CA and another member of the CA team meet formally with the headteacher each week with an agenda for the meeting and the minutes of all meetings recorded. The CA team also meet with the regional principal to who provides them with an objective and informed view of the school, this allows them to provide appropriate levels of challenge and support to the headteacher and senior team. The trustee with responsibility for safeguarding visits the school regularly, receives full updates about changes to statutory guidance and plays a full part in implementing policies and keeping them fully up-to-date.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Focus School, Dunstable Campus			
Address of school:	Ridgeway Avenue, Dunstable Bedfordshire LU6 3EA			
Telephone number:	01582 665676			
Email address:	sceptre@focus-school.com			
Web address	www.dunstable.campus@focus-school.com			
Proprietor:	Sceptre Education Trust			
Chair of Trustees:	Alvin Clarke			
Head Teacher:	Mr Toby Nutt			
Early Years Manager	n/a			
DfE Number	823/6019			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	Fees charged internally			
Age range of students	7-18			
Gender of students	boys and girls			
Total number on roll	full-time	199	part-time	0
Number of children in registered nursery				
Number of children under-5	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of compulsory school age students	Boys:	103	Girls:	96
Number of post-compulsory students	Boys:		Girls:	
Number of students with education and health care plans (ECH)	Boys:	0	Girls:	1
Number of students 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.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk](http://www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk).**

