



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR FOCUS SCHOOL READING PRIMARY CAMPUS

DfE No: 872/6231

The key inspection judgements for this school are:

The quality of education	Good	2
Pupils' personal development	Outstanding	1
Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety	Outstanding	1
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: 6-7 June 2018

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Focus School Reading Primary Campus meets all the independent school standards and its own aims well. It provides a good education for its pupils, who make good progress and achieve well, particularly in mathematics and reading. They develop strong independent learning skills. Progress in the writing of older pupils, whilst age-appropriate, is not as strong, and for some lower attaining pupils this hinders their progress in other subjects too. Teaching is good, particularly so for younger pupils and in mathematics across the school. However, there are some weaknesses in teaching, where lesson time is not well-managed, instructions lack clarity, or where teachers do not intervene promptly enough to guide pupils effectively. Assessment in English and mathematics is very good; in other subjects it is at an earlier stage. Marking is generally good, but in some cases it is not precise enough to help pupils improve their work. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) which helps them to make good progress. The curriculum is outstanding. It places a strong emphasis on English and mathematics, but also provides excellent learning opportunities for pupils across a wide spectrum of topics. It is greatly enhanced by many trips and visits which often provide excellent starting points for cross-curricular discovery projects. The relatively new Learning Centre also encourages pupils to carry out collaborative and individual research and develop their information and communication technology (ICT) and independent learning skills. Pupils' personal development is outstanding in all respects, as is the safeguarding of pupils' welfare health and safety. Leadership and management are good and have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. The monitoring of teaching and learning, however, sometimes lacks the sharpness to be fully successful in improving them. Trustees and the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) work in harmony to ensure that the school meets all its statutory requirements and that pupils are safe, happy and make good progress in their learning. The trustees monitor provision closely and through the school improvement plan, developed in conjunction with staff and managers, provide clear direction and focus for the school to make further improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- Improve the progress that older pupils make in their writing by increasing the structure and complexity of writing tasks and giving them more practice in writing at greater length;
- help older lower-attaining pupils to make consistently good progress by concentrating on improving their basic writing skills;
- ensure that teachers manage time efficiently, provide concise instructions, intervene promptly and give precise feedback to pupils on how to improve their work; and
- focus monitoring and evaluation more sharply on improving teaching and marking.

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 and scrutinised pupils' work; conducted interviews with the acting headteacher, other staff holding key responsibilities in the school, the campus administrator and other key trustees; reviewed school documentation, talked to pupils, analysed responses to the parental questionnaires and reviewed the school's website.

The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Mr Ted Cohn
Team inspectors:	Mr Martin Cragg

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

Focus School Reading Primary Campus is a small non-selective, co-educational school for the children of Brethren communities in the local area. The school is part of a network of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) and caters for pupils between the ages of seven and eleven years old. Most pupils come from families in the city of Reading, but a few come from further afield, such as High Wycombe. The school is owned by the Fulmer Education Trust, as is the Focus School Stoke Poges Campus, where all pupils transfer for their secondary education. The two schools work closely together, share headteacher and deputy headteacher roles, and secondary teachers come to the primary school to teach physical education and the health and well-being part of the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) also has responsibility for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and their learning support on both campuses. The school currently has 37 pupils, of whom four are identified as having significant LDD and six are identified as able, gifted and talented. The school has no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The aims of the school are to provide an education based on the Christian beliefs of the Holy Bible and uphold the values of integrity, care and compassion, respect, personal responsibility and commitment to the pursuit of excellence.

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Pupils' learning and achievement

Pupils' learning, progress and achievement are good. The outcomes of the national standard assessment tasks (SATs), which are officially verified, indicate that achievement has risen over the last three years and was last year well above the national average. Results were particularly strong in mathematics, reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling, but weaker in writing. The school's own evaluation of the progress of pupils between Years 3 and 6 indicates strong progress in mathematics and reading, but broadly average progress in writing.

Evidence from lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work support the test results in the core subjects. Achievement in mathematics is high across the school, as it is in reading. Younger pupils make rapid progress in writing, excited by the wide variety of opportunities provided in English and through the discovery projects across art, design technology, geography, history, science and PSHEE. Older pupils make less consistent progress because their writing is often less complex in structure than might be expected for their ability, and they frequently do not write at sufficient length to explore in detail what they have investigated through SDL tasks. Some work is excellent, but other work is not well presented and on occasion incomplete. A few lower attaining pupils struggle to apply subject knowledge and skills well because of limited literacy skills. The discovery approach to learning has encouraged productive use of the new student self-directed learning centre, enabling pupils to hone ICT and research skills and develop strong independent learning skills.

The quality of teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment are good overall and have improved since the last inspection, with fewer examples of teaching that is only satisfactory and several examples of excellent practice. Lessons are generally well planned and organised, benefiting from the excellent supporting curricular material from the FLT. Learning tasks are appropriate and effective use is often made of the Learning Centre to support independent learning. Similarly, there are good examples of tasks tailored specifically to the needs of gifted and talented pupils. This is a particular feature of the teaching of mathematics across the school and more generally the teaching of younger pupils. The school prepares pupils well for the Key Stage 2 Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs).

Most of the time teachers provide clear and lively explanations, combined with the effective use of questions to test and consolidate understanding, as well as to explore ideas. Some lessons contained a wide variety of activities that sustained the pace of learning very well and kept the full interest of pupils all the time, such as work done on prisms in mathematics. Generally, lessons are managed effectively, with individual activities well designed to challenge pupils and ensure at least good progress in learning. However, this was not always so and occasionally, for instance, an introductory activity went on too long, blunting pupils' enthusiasm and leaving too little time for the main activity of the lesson.

Instructions to guide learning tasks were usually clear and precise, but occasionally they lacked clarity so that pupils did not understand what they had to do. Younger pupils are given stimulating opportunities to write in various genres and, with very effective interventions from teaching staff, produce some excellent work, notably on the Anglo-Saxons. Higher up the school opportunities for this type of work are not exploited as effectively so that older pupils' writing is less complex in structure. The needs of pupils with SEND are met well. Intervention and support for other pupils, particularly older lower-attaining pupils, is much less effective, so that the quality of their writing does not improve at the same rate and their limited literacy skills hinder their progress in other subjects. At times insufficient attention is also paid to the presentation of pupils' work.

The provision for pupils with SEND is good. Staff ensure that pupils are identified as early as possible, usually on transfer to the school. The SENDCO takes care to establish accurately pupils' exact needs through a range of well targeted assessments. These provide a very detailed profile of the pupils' abilities, and identify clearly specific barriers to learning. This leads to well-planned action to support these pupils in class and, where appropriate, in small groups or individually through withdrawal. The SENDCO works closely with teachers and teaching staff to ensure that teaching assistants provide effective support. The school has also identified pupils who are gifted and talented and teachers are encouraged to set appropriately challenging and stimulating tasks for them.

Marking and assessment have improved since the last inspection and, with FLT support, a very effective assessment system of measuring achievement in English and mathematics is in place. This is generally helping to inform planning to address individual needs well. Assessment of progress in other subjects, such as art and design, geography, history, science and technology, is at an earlier stage because it often does not make sufficient use of subject criteria to identify what has been achieved and the next learning target for pupils. Marking is of a high quality in mathematics and in English, for the younger pupils, where it is frequently encouraging and supportive, identifying well what individual pupils have achieved and what they need to work on to improve their work. This is not always the case for older pupils who require more precise feedback on how to improve.

Teaching staff strongly support British values and these underpin all their work in the classroom, which reflects the ethos of the school.

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is outstanding and meets the aims of the school very well. It is broad, balanced and closely linked to National Curriculum requirements. There is a strong emphasis on the development of mathematical and literacy skills, which is well planned. The FLT provides excellent long and medium-term planning documentation to assist the school. The development of self-directed learning and the use of 'discovery' topics drawing on several subjects provide an innovative and very effective approach to learning which pupils value highly. These have encouraged pupils to take responsibility for their own work, produce work collaboratively as well as individually and developed their independent learning skills. This has led to some excellent work, such as the art work depicting the Blitz as part of a project on the Home Front during the Second

World. Much of this work stems from or is supported by the extensive range of trips and visits that enhance the educational experience of pupils significantly.

The curriculum is carefully planned to address the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities, including the mixed age classes in this school, and ensures progression in learning and no unnecessary repetition of content. Under-pinning the curriculum is strong belief in the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, freedom and respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. These values are reflected through the curriculum and its content, as well as in the high expectations of the school and its community.

2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Personal development is outstanding. By the time that pupils leave the school they are confident and mature for their age, well prepared for the next stage of their education, willing to take on responsibility and contribute positively to the school community and the wider world.

Pupils develop strong self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem from an early age, which is developed particularly well among younger pupils and built on as they grow older. The ethos of the school is reflected in the school's great concern with the personal development of individual children. Aesthetic development is strongly encouraged through music and the various discovery topics, such as the work of the Victorian designer/craftsman, William Morris.

Pupils' moral and social development is excellent. Pupils come to the school with a strong set of Christian values on which the school builds very well. Staff provide excellent examples of courteous and respectful behaviour for pupils to imitate. From an early age, pupils are expected to take full responsibility for their own behaviour. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school was exemplary during the inspection. This excellent behaviour is also supported by the paucity of incidents, particularly of bullying, in the school's incident book. Pupils make friends easily and have excellent relationships each other. Older pupils are given specific responsibilities to help and support younger ones, not just in resolving issues but also in helping those who feel sad or lonely. Younger pupils report that this is done very well. Older pupils also organise assemblies, such as the interesting and informative one on plastics and plastic pollution observed during the inspection, or events such as a mathematics day for the whole school. The strong emphasis on independent learning develops to develop personal responsibility in a powerful way.

Through assemblies, visiting speakers, such as the local Member of Parliament, members of the Fire Service and police force; work done in PSHEE and in discovery projects, pupils gain a good age-appropriate understanding of British institutions and services, including investigating important current issues, such as plastic pollution. They also learn about the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and support them practically by organising a foodbank for the local

area. The pupils also support organisations such as the RNLI and a local children's hospice.

Through the school's and community's values pupils quickly learn about right and wrong and, as a result of the many visits and investigations they carry out, they learn much about different views of society and different faiths across space and time. The school actively promotes British democratic values such as the rule of law, individual liberty and responsibility, equality and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs. Through the school council pupils have an opportunity to experience democracy in action. As a result of all of these activities and the learning that pupils derive from them, they are well placed to move on to the secondary school. A detailed and interesting range of activities inducts pupils into the secondary school.

3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Welfare, health and safety

The arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The school puts pupils' well-being and safety at the heart of everything it does. Safeguarding is a priority. The school's policies and practice fully meet statutory requirements. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and her deputy have done all the required training and up-dating courses. All staff and trustees have up-date training as required and at least annually. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at staff meetings. Induction includes full safeguarding training, staff are required to sign that they have read the key safeguarding documents and they can consult the excellent FLT safeguarding handbook. The staff are also familiar with Prevent strategies and are alert to any possibility of radicalisation, as are trustees. The safeguarding trustee is well informed, works closely with the DSL, and has the same level of training as the DSL so that he is well-qualified to carry out his monitoring role effectively. Pupils feel safe and their parents agree with this. Staff are well briefed about e-safety and ensure that pupils are kept safe online. As part of achieving this, pupils have produced perceptive computer generated posters supporting their safe use of the internet. The school, working closely with trustees, has ensured that parents and the community are very well briefed about the advantages and potential dangers of electronic devices. Pupils clearly understand how to protect themselves when using computers and in relation to fire and bicycle safety. They understand exactly what constitutes bullying, including cyberbullying, know how to report any concerns and trust their peers or adults to resolve any problems. They say that bullying is rare, low-level and promptly resolved.

Pupils feel that the excellent relationships and the increasing opportunities for older pupils to work alongside younger ones are strengths of the school. They approach learning with enthusiasm and commitment and show excellent qualities of persistence and effort. They enjoy physical activities in PE and at breaks. They understand healthy eating and have strong concerns for the environment.

Procedures for health and safety are very effective. Appropriate risk assessments are in place, especially for school trips and external events. These risk assessments are reviewed and used to improve safety, for example in the addition of arrangements on trips if a terrorist incident occurs. All required safety checks are undertaken regularly; records are kept rigorously. Many staff have currently valid first aid training and the school is well resourced with first aid equipment. Senior staff and trustees review regular reports on safeguarding and premises.

4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The leadership and management of the school are good and have improved since the last inspection. The school has coped very well with a long transitional period without a permanent headteacher and is now moving forward again through the initiative of the acting headteacher and the support and foresight of the trustees. The acting headteacher has responsibility for both the secondary school at Stoke Poges and this school. When she is not present in school the lead teacher takes on the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school. Some time is allowed for the lead teacher to carry out this multifarious role, but she is hard pressed to do this well in addition to her current teaching duties, given the time she is allowed. Those with responsibilities across the secondary and primary campuses generally carry them out effectively in the primary campus, whether managing or teaching. The school's premises and accommodation comply with the requirements of the independent school standards and parents have access to all the information to which they are entitled. The school's complaints procedure meets requirements. Leadership and management have ensured that all the independent school standards are met and the school meets its own aims well.

The system of performance management has improved since the last inspection and is now more rigorous and effective. Nevertheless, the lead teacher has a job description that does not fully reflect her current responsibilities. The monitoring of teaching and learning also lacks a sharp enough focus on how to improve teaching and assessment, and so some issues related to these matters have not yet been addressed fully and successfully.

Governance

The acting headteacher works closely with the trustees and the FLT to sustain and improve the school. The trustees are well qualified, strongly committed to the school and have done appropriate training courses to ensure that they fully understand their roles and can carry them out effectively. They also have the support of a detailed handbook and discussions at regular meetings with colleagues, so they have a good understanding of the independent school standards. Trustees are kept well informed about all aspects of the school through regular meetings with colleagues and senior managers, discussions with staff in relation to their own specific roles and their own observations. They recognise their important roles in the school and fulfil them well, with the campus administrator taking a prominent role in this. Future planning for the direction of

the school's development is well-organised through the school improvement plan, which draws on the views of staff, managers and trustees. It is purposeful, comprehensive, realistic and ambitious but would benefit from more sharply focused success criteria and closer identification of what still needs to be done, where progress against specific targets is ongoing.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Focus School Reading Primary Campus			
Address of school:	401 Old Whitley Wood Lane Reading RG2 8QA			
Telephone number:	01189 312938			
Email address:	reading.primary@focus-school.com			
Web address	readingprimary.focus-school.com			
Proprietor:	Fulmer Education Trust			
Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4:	Mr Craig Gulley			
Acting Head Teacher:	Mrs Tamra Bradbury			
DfE Number	872/6231			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	Charged internally			
Age range of pupils	Age 7-11			
Gender of pupils	Male and Female			
Total number on roll	full-time	37	part-time	0
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	18	Girls:	19
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.