



## **SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE**

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

**DfE No: 816/6012**

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

<b>The quality of education</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</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>Good</b>	<b>2</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: 20-22 March 2018**

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

Focus School York Campus meets all the independent school standards and its own aims. It provides a good education for its students. Students' learning and achievement are good although achievement is better in the secondary phase than in key stage 2. Students achieve well in GCSE examinations and the proportion of students achieving their predicted grades at A Level has increased over the last three years. The provision made for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including those with education health care (EHC) plans is outstanding. The school does not analyse data from tests and examinations in sufficient detail so senior leaders cannot be sure that all students achieve well. Teaching and assessment are good overall, but teaching is more effective in the secondary phase than in key stage 2. The curriculum is of good quality. It provides students in Years 7-13 with a very good choice of subject options and develops their enterprise skills. The curriculum provided for students in key stage 2 is appropriate but an overuse of undemanding worksheets limits their progress. Students' personal development is outstanding. They are courteous, tolerant and thoughtful young people who are sensitive to the needs of those who are less fortunate than themselves. 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 good. The campus administrators and headteacher have taken prompt and effective action to eradicate weaknesses in the school. This has led to improvements in most aspects of the school's work. The remaining issues are being tackled effectively but it is too early to see the impact of the actions taken. The Springwell Learning Centre provides students with an excellent environment for learning.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- further improve the provision made for students in key stage 2 so that all students make good progress; and
- provide a detailed analysis of test and examination data so that teachers and senior leaders can identify the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision and ensure that all students make at least good progress from their individual starting points.

## **SECTION B: INFORMATION**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT 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. 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, key stage 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' and students' questionnaires completed before the inspection. The inspectors carried out these activities on both school sites.

The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Mrs Christine Graham
Team inspectors:	Mr Chris Hall, Mr Dilip Kadodwala

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:**

Focus School York 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. It is one of 24 schools in the United Kingdom. The school opened in 2014. It caters for students from 7-18 years. Students come from a wide geographical area in the north of England. In order to reduce travelling times for students living the greatest distance from York the school opened the Springwell Learning Centre, Springwell village, Tyne and Wear in October 2016. Twenty one students living in the north-east are taught in the learning centre three days each week, they join their classes in York for the remaining two days. Parents have the option of transporting their children to the main site in York should they wish to do so. Students working in the learning centre are taught using Zoom (virtual classroom) technology and self-directed learning (SDL). There are 156 students on roll, 47 are in key stage 2, 56 in key stage 3, 25 in key stage 4 and 27 in the sixth form. Twelve students have been identified by the school as having SEND and one has an education health care (EHC) plan. Twenty- three students are identified as being additionally gifted and talented (AG&T). There are no students with English as an additional language. All students go onto employment and/ or training at the end of their time in school. The school's motto is '*Learning to Learn*' and the York Campus maxim is '*Order and Respect*'. The proprietor is the Northumbria Education Trust.

## **SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

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

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

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

Students' learning and achievement are good. Their achievement is better in the secondary phase than in key stage 2. The outcomes of national curriculum assessments taken at the end of key stage 2 declined in 2016 and 2017, particularly in writing, where in 2017 they were exceptionally low, and in mathematics. The headteacher and campus administrators took prompt action to improve matters and students' work seen during the inspection indicates that the achievement of students in Year 6 is now broadly in-line with national expectations. While this is positive there is still more to do. Students have effective learning skills but they do not progress well enough in Years 3 -6 because the pace of learning is too slow and there are too few opportunities for them to apply their knowledge and skills in investigative and problem-solving tasks. Students think that they should cover more topics in a term and that they should work faster; inspectors agree. Students' achievement accelerates in key stages 3-5. They are given very good opportunities, through SDL, to deepen their knowledge and understanding and apply their learning skills. They are confident learners demonstrating excellent practical and intellectual skills when carrying out their tasks, these include building websites and organising information in a way which best meets their learning style. The outcomes of GCSE and A Level examinations are good. Cohorts are small so caution is needed when analysing the school's examination data but results over the last three years indicate that students' achievement is at least in-line with and often above the national average at GCSE. In 2017 94% of students achieved a Grade 4 in both English and mathematics and a third of the results were at Grades 7-9. The school's value added score was above average and a very high proportion of students achieved the EBAcc measure of Grade 4/C or above in a range of subjects including a modern foreign language. The outcomes of A Level examinations have improved in recent years, the proportion of students achieving A\*-E grades is in-line with the national average although outcomes in other measures are slightly below. Students at the learning centre said that they learned very effectively in its well- structured and technologically advanced environment. Students with SEND are given very effective support in all key stages so they progress well from their individual starting points. The most able students, including those that are additionally gifted and talented, do not progress well enough in key stage 2 but their progress accelerates rapidly as they enter the secondary phase.

#### **Quality of teaching and assessment**

Teaching and assessment are good. In key stages 3-5 teaching is at least good and often outstanding. Teacher subject knowledge is good and they have high expectations of what the students can achieve. The pace of learning is brisk. SDL is used very effectively to deepen and extend students' knowledge and understanding and it provides them with highly effective learning skills. Teachers ensure that all students, including those with SEND and the gifted and talented receive tasks and support which meet their learning needs so they all

make progress from their individual starting points. Teaching in key stage 2 is not yet good enough. The pace of learning is too slow and there is too much repetition of previously mastered tasks. Students have too few opportunities to carry out their own investigations and record their results or to write independently. Too much learning is consolidated by undemanding worksheets. Teachers do not make enough use of data from assessment to plan tasks which meet the needs of individuals so although students may sometimes receive different work from their peers it does not always provide sufficient challenge. On some occasions the tasks that students are given do not enable them to achieve the objective of the lesson. The provision made for older students at the Springwell learning centre is very effective, the use of technology means that students participate fully in lessons delivered at the York site. Students in key stage 2 participate fully in lessons and they progress at the same rate as their peers.

The school has a well-structured assessment framework. There are internal subject based assessments, a range of baseline assessments (INCAS, Midyis and Yellis), national curriculum assessments at key stage 2, and GCSE and A Level examinations. The school's analysis of test and examination results does not provide sufficient detail about the performance of subjects, cohorts and groups of students or about subject performance. Marking is regular, but some marking in all key stages does not provide sufficient guidance to help students improve. All teachers provide very effective oral feedback during lessons and this helps students to make progress.

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

The curriculum is of good quality. It meets the school's aims and prepares students well for their future lives. It is based on the national curriculum and examination specifications. There is a good range of subject options available at GCSE which allow students and the school to reach national benchmarks such as the EBacc measure and Achievement 8. The good range of A Level options and recently introduced vocational qualifications, prepare students well for their future lives. The introduction of new courses, such as digital and creative media meet students' needs and interests and provide qualifications and experience which are valued by potential employers. Schemes of work and curriculum planning documents provide effective guidance for staff. Lesson planning, particularly at key stage 2, is of variable quality. Where plans are most effective they are based on information from previous teaching and assessment data and demonstrate the teacher's high expectations of students. Cross-curricular links are developed very effectively in key stages 3-5 through SDL and this makes a very strong contribution to students' achievement. Opportunities for cross-curricular work in key stage 2 are limited as are opportunities for writing across the curriculum.

There are a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, including exchange visits to France and Germany. Enterprise activities are strongly promoted within the school and opportunities to compete in a range of national and regional competitions are valued by students. There are excellent opportunities for students to apply their learning skills in real life situations, for example, during the recent business development day. The use of technology is

a major part of the school's curriculum. This both facilitates learning and enhances student's employability.

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

Students' personal development is outstanding. They are courteous, tolerant and thoughtful young people. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme helps students to make sensible decisions about their current and future lives. They gain a very good understanding of British values and British institutions. Students understand that the rights of people are protected under British law and they show respect for lifestyles different to their own. Enterprise activities and the school's very successful participation in competitions such as the Student Investor Competition enhance their enjoyment of school and ensure that they have a secure understanding of budgeting, financial management, working to deadlines and creating a product. Careers education is very effective. The careers advice programme (CAP) is very well structured and organised. Students are sponsored by local business and undertake self-study courses, for example in sales, marketing or accounts. The business event, organised by Year 13 students, which took place during the inspection provided an excellent opportunity to bring students and potential employers together. Every student in the school was able to attend the event and consider a range of potential careers. Students in Years 5 and 6 were asked to identify the skills needed in a range of careers. Two students, rightly, decided that the ability to take risks was a positive attribute in fashion design but was much less desirable in dentistry

Students' social development is outstanding. They have, from an early age, a good understanding of social and personal responsibility. They care about the difficulties faced by others in the wider community and they have raised a great deal of money for their chosen charities. Their behaviour both in class and during social times is exemplary. All students have opportunities to carry out leadership roles and this is particularly the case for students in Year 13, sports leaders and those working at the Springwell Learning Centre. Year 13 students have carried out a wealth of activities which have enhanced the provision made for younger students. Year 13 see this as their 'legacy' and the school feels that Year 13 are a bridge between the staff and younger students. Students at the Springwell learning centre said that they and the staff work together to improve the centre and that they feel that they are a valued part of the team. The house system provides opportunities for students to take on leadership roles and houses compete against each other, this is relished by students of all ages. Older students show a great deal of care for younger students and younger students in their turn see older students as a role models.

Students' moral development is outstanding. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong and they are self-disciplined, managing their own behaviour very effectively. Students' spiritual development is outstanding. They have a secure understanding of other faiths and cultures, gained through work in lessons and visitors to the school. They show respect for those that are different to themselves and recognise the key similarities and differences between communities. Students' cultural development is outstanding. The

curriculum provides them with good opportunities to further develop their interest in art and music, around 20 students learn instruments in school and there are a number of bands formed by students. Short story and poetry competitions promote students' creative skills.

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

The quality of safeguarding students' welfare health and safety is outstanding. Senior leaders and the campus administrators and trustees ensure that the school's procedures are very effective. Students say they feel safe and secure in the school and they demonstrated a very good understanding of the role of key personnel such as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The school has very well-established procedures to keep students safe. 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 2016, as well as setting out child protection procedures. The policy emphasises the importance of safeguarding for the whole school community and the fact that it is everyone's responsibility. Suitable training is undertaken by staff responsible for the different aspects of welfare, health and safety. Staff are trained in child protection and are aware of the signs which may indicate abuse of children. The school has clear procedures for the reporting of child protection issues. 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.

There is a DSL on both sites and there is also a trained deputy DSL. They work very closely together. The DSLs 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. Two campus administrators have received safeguarding training. The school's arrangements to keep students safe on-line are very robust. Students of all ages know about e-safety. Secondary students do much of their learning on-line using a range of new technologies. There is a central Focus monitoring system which tracks all on-line activity including email. The system identifies inappropriate activity or websites but also identifies the use of websites which may indicate serious issues, for example, a student suffering from stress. The school makes students aware of the dangers of abuse and sexual exploitation and of radicalisation and extremism. The school's anti-bullying strategies and behaviour policies are very effective and successfully promote positive behaviour. Students say that any bullying which does occur is dealt with effectively by staff.

Staff recruitment procedures are robust and the single central record (SCR) meets the standard.

The school has compliant policies for health and safety and risk assessments for buildings and activities on and off site meet requirements. The health and safety officer ensures that the school is a safe and secure environment for

students and staff and that any issues are identified and dealt with very promptly.

The carefully planned deployment of staff ensures that students are always properly supervised. 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. There is appropriate provision and access for disabled students, parents or staff.

First aid procedures are very effective. There are qualified first aiders, all of whom have up to date training. The first aid policy shows the procedures to follow in the event of a medical emergency. The school has an effective system which ensures that staff are aware of students with medical conditions and of any necessary treatments. Policies and procedures for all aspects of fire safety meet requirements, are well organised and consistently implemented. Fire risk assessments are carried out regularly, recorded and reviewed. Fire equipment, including alarms, detectors and extinguishers are regularly checked by qualified contractors. The local fire service does an annual check of the learning centre.

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

Leadership, management and governance are good. The campus administrators team and headteacher have worked together very effectively during the last three years, they have identified the most important challenges facing the school and have taken robust action to bring about improvement. The success of their actions can be seen in the outstanding contribution the school makes to students' personal development, the rigour with which it safeguards students and the strength of the provision made for secondary students, including the school's very successful implementation of SDL and new technologies. The provision made for students in key stage 2 is not yet good enough but some early impact from the measures taken by the leadership team can be seen in the improved achievement of Year 6 students. The leadership team are realistic and well-informed and they are aware that there is more still to do. During joint lesson observations carried out with the inspection team the judgments made by senior leaders were accurate and perceptive. Plans made to improve the school focus on the most important priorities and identify the actions the school will take. The campus administrators, trustees and headteacher are excellent role models for staff and students. The school's vision is understood by all. Effective induction and support are provided for staff new to the school so that they settle in well. The training provided for staff is of very good quality. Performance management is used effectively to improve teachers' performance. The school meets the standard for premises and accommodation. The main school is very well resourced and provides a very good environment for learning. The Springwell learning centre, initially conceived as a way to reduce students' travel time, has evolved into an effective and innovative learning environment. The need to embed new ways of working such as Zoom and Canvas so that students at the learning centre could access learning delivered in York led to the early adoption and effective implementation of new technologies on both sites and this has been of great benefit to students.

Most parents are very happy with all that the school provides. Parents' are provided with a very good range of information and parents have good opportunities to meet with school staff on both sites. Parents of students in the secondary phase are full partners in their children's on-line learning. They receive a daily report which includes the websites visited and the suitability of the sites, this includes the number of visits. They also receive screen shots of their child's on-line work so they can check their child' progress and provide support and encouragement where needed. The school meets the standards for handling complaints, although there have been no formal complaints in recent years.

### **Governance**

Governance is good. The campus administrators have a very good understanding of the independent school standards (ISS) and their expertise and very effective management of resources ensures that the school meets the standards and provides an excellent environment for learning. The provision made for students with SEND is of exceptionally good quality. The campus administrators and trustees have a clear vision for the school. They have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which they carry out very effectively. There are regular, formal and informal meetings with the headteacher and, separately, with the regional principal. This together with information provided by the school helps them to monitor the effectiveness of the headteacher and senior team. The campus administrators carry out learning walks and lesson observations with senior staff. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and they take prompt and effective action to correct any areas of concern. The campus administrators provide very effective support and challenge to the school.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Focus School, York Campus			
Address of school:	Bishopthorpe York YO23 2QA			
Telephone number:	01904 663300			
Email address:	<a href="mailto:yorkcampus@focus-school.com">yorkcampus@focus-school.com</a>			
Web address	<a href="http://york.focus-school.com/">http://york.focus-school.com/</a>			
Proprietor:	Northumbria Education Trust			
Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4:	Mr Neil Trevitt			
Head Teacher:	Mr Paul Easton			
Early Years Manager	na			
DfE Number	816/6012			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	£2,750			
Age range of students	7 - 18			
Gender of students	Male & Female			
Total number on roll	full-time	156	part-time	0
Number of children under-5	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of compulsory school age students	Boys:	64	Girls:	65
Number of post-compulsory students	Boys:	18	Girls:	9
Number of students with statements of special educational need	Boys:	0	Girls:	1
Number of students with English as an additional language	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Type of inspection	Section 109(1) and (2) 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](http://www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk).