

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust

INSPECTION REPORT

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

Name of school:	Elsworth House School
DCSF number: FOCUS number:	372/6003 215
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mrs M A Buckingham Supporting Inspector: Mr M Bradley Mr N Grenyer Lay Inspector: Mr D Kilbey
Dates of inspection:	2 nd – 5 th October 2007

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Elsworth House School	
Address of the school:	Rother Way, Hellaby Estate Rotherham S66 8QN	
Telephone number:	01709 533770	
Fax number:	01709 739471	
Proprietor:	Target Learning Trust	
Name of Chief Executive Officer:	Stephen Smith	
Name of Senior Teacher:	Matthew Goodwin (secondary school) Dorothy Hewitt (primary school)	
DCSF number:	372/6003	
FOCUS number:	215	
Type of school:	Independent school affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust	
Age range of pupils and students:	7-18	
Gender of pupils:	Male and female	
Total number on roll: (Full time)	Boys: 40	Girls: 51
Number of post-16 students:	Boys: 4	Girls: 8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need:	Boys: 0	Girls: 1
Annual fees:	No fees charged	
Type of inspection:	Section 162A of the Education Act 2002	
Inspection Team:	Reporting Inspector: Mrs M A Buckingham Supporting Inspector: Mr M Bradley Mr N Grenyer Lay Inspector: Mr D Kilbey	
Dates of inspection:	2 nd – 5 th October 2007	

PART A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection:

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

Information about the school:

Elsworth House School is an independent day school for girls and boys aged between seven and eighteen years in Rotherham, South Yorkshire. Pupils travel to school from Rotherham, Doncaster, Sheffield and Chesterfield. It is registered with the DCSF as a school with a special religious character and is affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) established by The Brethren. The Christian ethos, based on the teachings of the Holy Bible underpins all aspects of school life. In 2004 the school moved to its present site and provided full time education for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and students in Year 12. In September 2007 the school extended the age range with the addition of a Year 13 and opened a primary school for Key Stage 2 on the same site. The primary and secondary schools have different lines of management, a senior teacher for each and a designated Trustee for primary. There is one named Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Summary of findings:

Elsworth House School provides a generally good curriculum that meets the range of needs and aptitudes of pupils. This, together with good teaching, enables all pupils to make good progress. Currently there are some areas of weakness in the Year 13 curriculum provision. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour is good and their welfare, health and safety are considered very seriously. It is a time of significant change for the school, staff are committed and senior teachers have identified appropriate plans for development. The school complies with all but one of the regulations.

What the school does well:

- it provides good teaching with some being outstanding;
- it provides a caring and family atmosphere with good relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves; and
- it promotes a strong moral and spiritual framework for pupils' learning and personal development.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

- ensure that there is always a designated person present who has responsibility for safeguarding children in school when it is in session, and that this information is made known to all staff and others.

Next Steps

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

- review the curriculum for Year 13 so that it is implemented as intended and that it is more clearly part of a coordinated 14 -18 provision; and
- clarify for all staff the management relationship between the primary and secondary schools and ensure more effective communication throughout all parts of the school.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good overall and provides a secure basis for teaching and learning so that all pupils make good progress. The curriculum policy reflects the school's Christian ethos and is well supported with appropriate schemes of work that are implemented effectively. These are based on those from the FLT and teachers add other subject documentation taking account of the National Curriculum and examination requirements. All pupils throughout the school are taught Bible Studies by volunteer members of the Brethren community. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is continually being reviewed both at secondary and primary level. In the primary school, which is Key Stage 2 only, the curriculum coverage is good and planning is detailed.

Regular curriculum review in primary is already established at this early stage. In Key Stage 3 pupils are taught Bible Studies, typing and the National Curriculum subjects both core and foundation with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT). In September 2007 the curriculum was extended to provide for the first time design and technology (resistant materials) (DT), food and textiles lessons for both boys and girls, giving all pupils access to a broader range of learning.

Planning for food and textile lessons is not yet sufficiently coordinated and documented in Years 7 to 9. In Key Stage 4 pupils follow a compulsory programme of General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) courses in English, mathematics, history, geography, dual award science, typing, book keeping and a short course in citizenship. In addition, GCSE design and technology (resistant materials) is a new course currently studied by boys while girls follow the FLT textiles courses.

It is planned to be available to both in the future. All pupils study physical education (PE) and music.

The school expanded its post-16 provision with the addition of a Year 13 at the start of this academic year. The aim is to offer some element of choice and a wider range of courses to better suit the range of abilities and aptitudes of students. This will make available either the equivalent of three Advanced level subjects or additional vocational courses, through full time provision for both Years 12 and 13. This laudable aim set out in the school development plan for September 2007 has not yet been fully achieved. Business & Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses are firmly established and students achieve well. Currently, other examination courses offered are GCSE level law, DT, business English, typing and Advanced Supplementary (AS) accounts, mathematics and English. All students study music, PE, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and current affairs. Additional support is provided for some students with a reduced timetable.

Year 13 students are not full time, attending either two or three days a week and are taught along side Year 12 when in school. The number of private study lessons varies and students use their initiative to find places to study. The current provision in Year 13 is not sufficiently planned and coordinated to give all students the intended full programme.

All pupils throughout the primary and secondary schools study PSHE. Careful mapping of the secondary PSHE curriculum has identified links between its elements and those of other subjects including citizenship and law. The curriculum is further enhanced for older pupils with

careers education following the FLT guidelines and with work experience for pupils in Key Stage 4 and post 16.

Pupils needing additional help are well supported. They do not study a modern foreign language but receive extra individual help. These pupils make good progress and a pupil with a statement of special educational need achieved particularly well at GCSE. Provision for pupils identified as being able, gifted or talented is at an early stage and largely related to academic subjects with opportunities for example, to study additional subjects early such as GCSE law in Year 10. The secondary school has highlighted personalised learning as an area for development to maximise the potential of all pupils, which is one of the school's aims. The introduction of computers across the school is almost in place and facilities for other ICT in the form of a 'virtual classroom' have just been fitted. Pupils and staff are eager to use these additional aids to teaching and learning.

The quality of teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment is good overall with some outstanding teaching at both primary and secondary levels contributing to pupils' good progress. Most lessons are well planned and taught by teachers with appropriate subject expertise. In the best lessons teachers share their obvious enthusiasm for their subject with pupils and employ a good range of appropriate teaching and learning activities. This enables pupils to quickly grasp the point of the lesson, and encourages them to think, to ask questions and to investigate for themselves. In Year 3, outstanding mathematics teaching was associated with 'pupils thinking through problems' in a carefully structured lesson. In Years 8 and 9 tasks are structured so that all pupils are challenged appropriately by the problems they are asked to solve, the presentations they are asked to make, or the questions they have to investigate, for example, in science, history and geography. In all good lessons pupils are seen to gain in confidence and skill, and to work happily at a good pace. Less successful lessons tended to move at a slower pace with pupils working at insufficiently challenging problems, or where pupils had to listen for too long before getting down to work. Where teaching is satisfactory pupils are attentive and their positive attitudes to the work contribute to their good progress.

Pupils are generally keen to learn and to make good progress. Mostly they do and this matches the good quality of the teaching seen. In the school orchestra, pupils made very audible progress and improvement, playing with enjoyment. Resources are used effectively to support teaching and learning. Visits and visitors to school extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. A visit by the Army during PSHE time successfully increased pupils' knowledge and was described by Year 10 boys as '*awesome*'. However, the presentation to primary classes was a little above the pupils' level of language. The pupils were commended by the speaker for their mature attitude and pertinent questions.

There is a framework and policy in both the primary and secondary schools for regular and thorough assessment, including formative marking. This is not always consistently applied. However, in the primary school some outstanding practice of formative marking, especially in the joint Years 5 and 6 class is linked to the rewards system. A framework to evaluate pupils' performance in relation to the school's aims and national norms is being put in place. The primary school is in the early stages of target setting but staff already know the pupils well as individuals and tailor work to their needs.

The secondary school is developing pupils' target and tracking for the current academic year, which was identified as an area for development in the 2006 audit. All pupils have had a record sheet since July 2007. The school is at the stage of agreeing end of Key Stage targets with all groups, which explains the varying nature of these at present. Pupils say they are beginning to understand how the targets will be helpful to them to know what they have to do to improve. This term pupils' targets are appropriately being modified in the light of recognised external baseline tests and teachers' input. The school is using report forms with targets identified for the first time this year and is at the stage of evaluating these. Teachers as yet vary in the

manner and style with which they have identified targets on the reports. The secondary school is usefully reviewing pupils' progress on the basis of its assessment and will modify its policy in the light of the evaluation.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual and moral development is good and closely linked with Bible study; for example, Year 7 considering the concept of mercy. Pupils are well supported by a consistent approach to promoting self awareness and self esteem by valuing the ideas and needs of other people. Self confidence is also promoted effectively with individuals' contributions being valued and acknowledged. Pupils are confident to speak with adults and listen carefully to the views of others. In a primary lesson each pupil's contribution was sensitively considered and praise was given for the ways in which thought had been given to the idea. The pupils felt able to contribute without fear of being inaccurate.

Social development throughout the school is good, with careful consideration being given to enabling pupils to distinguish between right and wrong and to take responsibility for their own behaviour. They show initiative and contribute to community life. Pupils develop a broad knowledge of public institutions and services. In an effective current affairs lesson, Year 12 and 13 students considered issues arising from a recent economic situation involving the role of government and the Bank of England; personal equity was explained and financial investment issues discussed. The primary and secondary schools each have their own student councils which meet regularly and whose members are identified in displays in the respective schools. Through PSHE and citizenship courses pupils gain an awareness and consideration of other cultures in terms of traditions, food and customs. The impact is developing and is satisfactory.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school strongly promotes the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. It takes the government initiative on *'Every Child Matters'* seriously. In its stated aims, it places an emphasis on ensuring that every child can achieve the highest educational standards, and feel safe. The school handbook has the national bullying and child protection helpline number. On the pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire, eight pupils mentioned bullying. However, when raised by inspectors with pupils during the inspection, they felt that when it occurred, it was generally dealt with effectively. Bullying is a topic within the PSHE programme. The school has a new admissions register and this and the attendance registers are kept in line with regulatory requirements.

The school has devised a healthy school programme and promotes a healthy lifestyle through PSHE lessons, healthy meal menus and sporting activities. All staff have had training in safeguarding children and the school holds good and effective records of where and when this was undertaken. The senior school has an active designated person for child protection in the form of the CEO. He keeps an incident book which is up-to-date and also pupils' files. However, at present the designated person is a trustee of the school but is not shown on the school's line management chart as responsible within the primary school in this respect. He is also not on site all the time and neither is his deputy. The health and

safety officer is effective and diligent and has copious files with the appropriate risk assessments. The school has appropriate arrangements for first aid.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

What does the school need to do in order to fully meet the requirements?

- *ensure that a designated person with responsibility for safeguarding children procedures is on site at all times to fully comply with DCSF guidance Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007) (paragraph(2)(b)).*

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school uses the central FLT recruitment, interview and appointment policies. The school has in place the required procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with children meeting the most recent requirements, and all have had enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school occupies recently constructed secure modular buildings. The primary and secondary parts of the premises are linked. The primary school opened at the start of the present term. Together they provide a high quality learning environment. The outside play facilities have two hard surface play areas and a well-used and attractive planted space with picnic tables. As seen during the inspection, regular fire drills ensure that the premises can be evacuated swiftly by all pupils. There are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill.

Good quality lunches are prepared by parents two days a week. The school is kept tidy and clean. As the premises are relatively new and the staff and pupils take care of them, the standard of decoration is good providing an attractive learning environment. Care has been taken to ensure that furniture is of high quality and appropriate for the age and needs of pupils. Informative display in many classrooms supports pupils learning and celebrates the achievements.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The quality of information for parents

Parents have access to all the information required by the regulations. This is to be found in the three documents which they receive: the handbook 2007-2008, the primary school prospectus and the secondary school prospectus. Some inconsistencies exist; basic information such as the name of the CEO is found in the secondary but not the primary prospectus. Parents are supportive of the school in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires. A few parents voiced concerns about bullying echoing those from pupils. Pupils asked during the inspection commented that staff deal with any instances quickly. Parents are kept well informed through regular written reports about their children's progress. They were involved in the good new initiative in the secondary school of pupils' target setting days with teachers.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school's procedures for handling complaints follow closely the recommendations of the FLT and meet the requirements fully.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART C: ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

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

The quality of the organisation and management of the school

The trustees are to be commended on having established a primary school and Year 13 simultaneously. The school development plan, prepared by the secondary senior teacher, has been approved by the board of trustees and provides an appropriate way forward on many matters regarding secondary education. It is to be the basis for Trust meetings attended by the senior teachers from both the primary and secondary schools. This school development plan has yet to relate fully to the primary school. The document '*Trustees Working Together*' prepared in January 2007 is a good initiative and a basis for future working of the trustees. Good records are kept of meetings, and actions on decisions are monitored.

At present there are only five trustees, fewer than is usually found and which places a heavy load on those serving. They take seriously any issues raised. The work could be lightened by a complement of seven. The extension of the age range has proved challenging for the trustees. At present there is no trustee responsible for post-sixteen education, as there is for the primary school.

The roles and responsibilities of the senior teachers and the named chairman of the board of trustees are confused. The CEO is not the chairman of trustees but is the named contact for legal matters such as registration with the DCSF. The lines of management responsibility are not clear enough to all staff. The senior teachers in both primary and secondary are working effectively, and each has a clear vision for the development of their respective parts of the school. As yet, there are no regular programmed meeting between these senior managers and both would welcome such an arrangement.

The effective staff recruitment to the primary school has shown the value of the FLT input and advice, which has contributed to the particularly good start in Key Stage 2. The FLT support for the newly qualified teacher is appreciated.

Communication within the school as a whole needs clarification. The introduction of the primary phase is at an early stage. However, the current organisation militates against effective communication between the primary and secondary schools. The schools are run by one Trust but each has its own daily administration, although designated administrative support is limited in the primary school. These separate administrations must not be allowed to cause divergence in outlook, effort or cooperation amongst the trustees.

Could the organisation and management of the school be improved?

- roles and responsibilities amongst the trustees and lines of management responsibility should be clarified; and
- communications should be improved across the school.

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust. Further copies of the report are available from the Operations Manager of the Focus Learning Trust, Siskin House, Siskin Drive, Coventry, or from the Focus Learning Trust website:

www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk