

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:	Tisbury School
DCSF number:	865/6037
FOCUS number:	617
Inspection team::	Reporting Inspector: Mr D. Coe Supporting Inspectors: Mr N Grenyer Mr M Thirkell Lay Inspector: Mr D. Siderfin
Dates of inspection:	26 - 29 November 2007

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Tisbury School

Address of the school: Weaveland Road, Tisbury, Wilts SP3 6HJ

Telephone number: 01747 873077 / 01747 873044

Fax number: 01747 870912

Proprietor: Quantock Education Trust

Name of Chief Executive Officer: Mr Tony Hooper

Name of Senior Teacher: Dr Paul Evans

DCSF number: 865/6037

FOCUS number: 617

Type of school: Independent school affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust

Age range of Pupils: 11 - 18

Gender of pupils: Male and female

Total number on roll: (Full time) Boys: 44 Girls: 31
(Part time) Boys: 18 Girls: 15

Number of post-16 Pupils: Boys: 18 Girls: 15

Number of Pupils with statements of special educational need:
Boys: 0 Girls: 0

Annual fees: No fees charged

Type of inspection: Section 162A of the Education Act 2002

Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector: Mr D. Coe
Supporting Inspectors: Mr N. Grenyer
Mr M. Thirkell
Lay Inspector: Mr D. Siderfin

Dates of inspection: 26 - 29 November 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:

Tisbury School was registered as an independent school in September 2005 having been formed through the amalgamation of three schools. It is affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) and follows its policies and ethos. Effective use is made of good quality, purpose-built educational premises on the northern edge of the Wiltshire town of the same name. Pupils come from the families of Brethren communities in Andover, Salisbury, Yeovil and Chippenham. Admission is non-selective. There are 108 pupils on roll, of which 33 are above statutory school age and attend part-time.

Summary of main findings:

A suitable learning environment has been established. The curriculum provided is of a good quality and is appropriate to the needs of the pupils. Teaching is well-planned, effectively delivered and enables all pupils to make good progress. Pupils respond sensibly in class. They willingly take responsibility when opportunities are given, and behave appropriately at all times. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and their well-being whilst in school assured.

What the school does well:

- its welfare, health and safety is of a high quality and pupils respond to this level of care with excellent behaviour;
- its pupils make good progress supported by effective teaching;
- its premises and facilities are good, are effective in serving the needs of a learning community, and are well-used;
- it ensures that the pupils take the opportunities that are presented to them to contribute to their own learning and willingly respond to requests to support charitable activities;
- it is held in high esteem by its community.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

- The school fully complies with regulations.

What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002:

- The school fully meets the requirements of the Act.

Next Steps

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

- ensure that the best practice in assessment is common throughout the school;
- establish ways to ensure that the most able are suitably challenged in all lessons and seek to provide more opportunities for pupils of all abilities to have a higher profile in their own learning;
- determine a strategy for the delivery of information and communication technology through the curriculum;
- decide how current affairs lessons can be improved.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. Its organisation enables all pupils to make good progress. The provision meets effectively the learning needs of pupils of all abilities and supports the aims of the school as set out in its mission statement. All pupils attend for five days each week, with the exception of the Years 12 and 13 who have a four-day timetable in school. The curriculum policy is set out in a clear statement and supported by Focus Learning schemes of work, by teachers' own planning, and by a suitable range of other appropriate published material.

At Key Stage 3 the curriculum ensures that pupils experience a suitably broad and balanced range of learning experiences. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study all the subjects required by the National Curriculum with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT). The weekly programme includes Bible Studies taught by members of the Brethren community. For Years 7 and 8, a course in morphographs is provided. This is designed to support and improve pupils' use and understanding of English, in particular their comprehension and spelling skills. Pupils may choose to take individual music lessons. In Year 9 they begin a course in keyboarding skills. All Key Stage 3 pupils have opportunities to develop creative and artistic skills together with aptitudes, through work with resistant materials or by work in food and nutrition. Art has been introduced into the timetable this academic year. French is studied at Key Stages 3 and 4 although pupils requiring additional learning support are withdrawn and receive help in mainstream subjects from specialist teaching staff.

In Key Stage 4 pupils study a similar and suitably broad core curriculum that also includes Bible Studies. They too can learn to play a musical instrument and their weekly programme also includes opportunities to develop creative and aesthetic skills. As a result of the introduction of art this academic year a number of Year 11 pupils have enthusiastically taken up the option of studying the subject for one year prior to taking the general certificate in secondary education (GCSE). Pupils at this key stage may choose to take either a double or single science course. The latter is a temporary arrangement as it is the school's intention to provide double science for all from next academic year.

All pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 have a suitable programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship and team games. Careers education is provided and this includes a two week work experience in Year 10. The curriculum provision for games is supported by good indoor and outdoor facilities. In view of the distances travelled to get to Tisbury, extra-curricular activities and opportunities are provided within the school day. In addition, visits linked to curriculum subjects are arranged.

Business-related subjects form the core of the post-16 provision in the school. The current Year 13 pupils commenced a programme of one-year courses in September 2006 in the expectation that they would be leaving the school at the end of that school year. A change of circumstance has resulted in their remaining part of the school for a further year. As a result, there has been an element of discontinuity in their post-16 experience. However, the curriculum arrangements that have been made on their behalf are suitable and have provided a choice of learning experiences leading to external or professional examinations. The arrangements are satisfactory and the

pupils' experiences are good. In Year 12, there is the opportunity for pupils to opt into one of two strands of business-related subjects, one of which is essentially academic and one mainly vocational. The range of subjects within each strand and the opportunities for studies of a more general nature within the total programme of learning are appropriate. Bible Studies and current affairs taught by members of the Brethren community are an integral part of the timetable. Pupils take part in a sponsorship scheme organised with local businesses and this provides opportunities to extend the work experience begun in Year 10.

The provision for learning support is good and has some outstanding features. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special learning need. Pupils identified as having particular needs also include those designated as gifted and talented. The school has experienced some difficulties in obtaining information about pupils prior to their entering Year 7. New strategies are now in place and this should ensure an adequate flow of information in the future. Induction days for pupils prior to starting at the school do provide an opportunity for diagnostic testing. Hence, appropriate steps are being taken to ensure that the necessary information to support the school's planning for pupils with learning difficulties or special needs is in place. Regular assessment and testing enables the school to monitor pupils' progress and to modify the nature of the individual support provided. Information to inform and guide support is carefully maintained and independent learning plans are suitably detailed and provide helpful information to guide planning and support. Specialist support, in particular for learning difficulties, is insightful and well informed.

The quality of teaching and assessment

Lessons were observed across the full range of the curriculum. All lessons were considered to be satisfactory or better; the great majority were good and a significant number, outstanding. Teachers displayed appropriate levels of knowledge. Lesson planning was of a consistently good quality with clear aims and objectives established for all lessons. The aims and objectives were shared with the pupils at the outset of the lesson and effective use was made of them to establish what had been learnt at the close of the session in most of the lessons seen. Noticeably, across the school, the organisation of the session end was sometimes less effective than the beginning thereby failing to create an effective 'springboard' into the next lesson in that subject. A programme of staff development operates through the year and is proving effective in maintaining common standards.

Pupils responded very well in lessons and were seen to make good progress. Throughout the school, they are willing to take responsibility for their own learning. In a French lesson, pupils were given the opportunity to influence the pattern and development of their learning experience within what was a very carefully structured and extremely well conducted session. There were many instances where teachers provided opportunities for their learners to play a meaningful part in a lesson. Question and answer was used widely and effectively with some astute use of open questions to promote discussion in the best examples. Role play of a good quality was observed with a particularly powerful learning experience seen in a history lesson where young pupils took on the roles of accuser and accused in a medieval enactment linked to a lesson entitled 'crime and punishment'. Given the high levels of self-esteem displayed by the pupils and the goodwill shown by them towards the school and their teachers, they are able to take on an even higher profile in their own learning.

Pupils at Tisbury School have done well in the most recent series of external examinations. Everyone who was entered for GCSE in 2007 achieved five or more grades A*-C and most of those in Year 12 achieved a distinction in their BTEC examinations.

The support provided to pupils with identified learning difficulties is carefully co-ordinated and there is much evidence to show that the practice is proving successful. In a small group in mathematics, pupils who had struggled with a topic in a whole-class lesson were seen to make good progress when the material was revisited. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified and teaching staff made aware. Recognition of the needs of these pupils was observed in a small number of classes where differentiated outcomes and challenges appropriate to their level of ability were set. However, it was more common that the very able were expected to simply complete more examples or to have finished an exercise before their colleague learners.

Assessment is good and the school's management understand the importance of assessment in securing pupils' progress. The teachers currently work to the July 2007 marking policy and this is being revised to include the setting of targets incorporating the new pupil tracking system, which is already working very successfully. As yet not all teachers are using targets or marking with total internal consistency. Tests are frequent. All pupils, with their strengths, their weaknesses and foibles, are all very well known by their teachers and this new assessment system should support this knowledge very well.

The school has recently acquired sufficient computers such that every member of a class using the facility has access to a terminal. At present, these machines are being used effectively to extend the keyboarding work that was previously done on typewriters. The school regards as a matter of priority, the establishment of a policy for computer use along with aims and objectives detailing the competencies in the use of software that pupils should have acquired by the end of each key stage and at age eighteen.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. The school is successful in developing pupils' self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem. This is because pupils feel valued and are well supported through the opportunities they have to learn and to develop skills through the broad range of subjects and activities available.

The development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem is central to the aims of the school. Pupils demonstrate, through their demeanour, that they enjoy being at school and this is confirmed by questionnaires completed by both the pupils and their parents before the inspection. They are happy and relaxed as they move about the school. They respond well to the learning opportunities provided, in particular where the teaching sets high expectations, the topic is interestingly delivered and the lesson proceeds at a good pace, for example in history, French and citizenship. The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. School documentation sets out clearly expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well to these expectations. Their positive attitudes and behaviour are supported by their generally positive relationships with their teachers and

with one another and the generally calm atmosphere in the school. The positive relationships observed between pupils of different age groups reflect their good social development. Pupils' spiritual development is supported by Bible Study. Moral education is good and pupils of all ages show a thorough understanding of the difference between right and wrong. This aspect of their development is further supported by the PSHE course, other aspects of the curriculum and the example set by staff.

Pupils throughout the school readily accept responsibility and show through their actions, that they are prepared to contribute to the school and wider community. They take part in various fundraising activities and have raised considerable sums to support the Wiltshire air-ambulance. They take responsibility for different aspects of the life of the school, such as keeping the site tidy and acting as sports captains. A group of pupils is currently working on a school Year Book. Older pupils accept supervisory roles. They take responsibility for organising and running the school council, with a boy and a girl representative elected from each form and age group. They have good opportunities for developing skills to support their future economic wellbeing, through working together in groups, developing good social skills and through the range of opportunities for work experience provided in Years 10, 12 and 13.

Pupils generally show an above average knowledge of public institutions and services in England. This is developed successfully through the curriculum and through school activities and visits, for example visits to the Houses of Parliament and local sites of historical interest and aspects of the curriculum such as law for older pupils. The effective citizenship course taken by pupils throughout the school forms the foundation of this very positive aspect of their development. Pupils gain a good knowledge of other cultures. They consider multi-cultural issues through aspects of citizenship and English literature courses. The school is in the process of considering how the current affairs course for older pupils can be improved so that the provision contributes to enhanced personal development, including debating skills.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of pupils

Pupils' welfare, health and safety are very well safeguarded by the school. Its stated aims and ethos adopt the phrase that "*every child matters*" and this is clearly evident in practice. The school has an effective anti-bullying policy and the bullying register is very well kept. Bullying is listed as a regular topic covered in morning assemblies. Pupils in their questionnaires reported that there was very little bullying. The school has appropriate arrangements for child protection with up to date training being diffused among all members of staff.

The school takes its health and safety responsibilities very seriously and applies them very sensibly. It has an effective policy, well written and up-to-date. There are useful risk assessments for science, resistant materials, and food and nutrition as well as the provision for educational visits and activities outside school. There is a very good and very detailed fire risk assessment, with all this year's recommendations met and fire drills logged and evaluated. The school has a good and effective policy on First Aid with a range of appropriately qualified First Aiders, and up-to-date training records. First Aid boxes are in place and their contents are regularly checked. School staff are

employed in such a way as to ensure proper supervision by adults. Two teachers are on duty each break and lunchtime. The school keeps proper records of sanctions imposed on pupils for serious offences and there have been six temporary exclusions over the past year. There are good records kept of attendance plus a well kept admission register in a specially prepared Focus folder. The school has devised a good and appropriate plan for the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school's senior management team and Trustees work well together. A well-organised and effective learning environment has resulted. The importance of undertaking thorough checks on all school staff prior to their appointment is understood. The administration and the procedures for undertaking these checks meet the requirements in all respects.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. Suitability of the premises and accommodation

Very good use is made of purpose-built premises which previously accommodated a Wiltshire Local Authority middle school. Although the existing accommodation has no major drawbacks for the number of pupils on role at the present time, the school's Trustees are currently pursuing plans to enlarge the building so as to provide an additional common room, two extra classrooms and a store room. Classroom sizes are all appropriate for the number of pupils using them; specialist teaching rooms are fit for purpose and there is a sufficiency of administrative accommodation. Daytime use is made of a large hall which was donated by the school to the local community. This space can accommodate the whole school for the regular assemblies, is well-used for badminton at lunch-time and is a valuable alternative location for team games on days when it is not possible to use the adjacent sports field or hard-surface areas. The building is well-maintained and all the rooms are clean, light and adequately ventilated. Pupils make good use of the facilities that are provided and show respect for the building's fabric. Work produced by the pupils is celebrated through displays in classrooms and on the walls of the main corridors.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents

A weekly news-sheet is provided to every parent and there is a half-termly edition of *Tisbury Times* which has a wider circulation within the local Brethren communities. The latter is a high-quality, well-illustrated, school-produced but professionally finished and colour-printed journal which charts changes within the school and details events and activities. Parents receive reports on the progress of their children twice during the course of the academic year and opportunities are provided for visits to the school to talk with subject tutors and/or school managers. The main contact, when pupils live at such a distance from the school, is the homework diary but not all of these were seen to be equally well kept or up to date. Considerable efforts have been made to ensure that

parents are aware of the channels of communication that are available to them both with the school and with Trustees.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

7. The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school's complaints procedure is suitably documented, is appropriate and meets the requirements for registration. It has been made clear to parents how they can make a complaint and the procedures to be followed. No complaints have been received in the twelve months leading up to the inspection.

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 school is very well led and managed with purposeful support from the Trustees. It gives every impression of being a co-ordinated whole moving steadily forward with each department operating in its own right but within a clear mandate from the senior management team. There is a clear management structure.

The recognition and acceptance of the school ethos by members of staff along with an understanding of the areas of responsibilities together with effective administration help considerably in its smooth running. There is a good intercommunication system operating. Trustee and other personnel meetings are documented and filed. All policies are up-to-date.

The Senior Teacher, with the help of his deputy, has secured a good team of teachers who are sympathetic with a general desire for continued improvement. He teaches sufficiently often to know all pupils but leaves himself enough time to administrate. The chief education officer and his team who are behind the scenes at all times maintain balanced support across the board.

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