

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: | Breckland Park |
| DCSF number: | 926/6153 |
| FOCUS number: | 417 |
| Inspection team: | Reporting Inspector: Mr Peter Jones Supporting Inspectors: Mrs Cecile Corfield Dr Martin Bradley Lay Inspector: Mr Douglas Siderfin |
| Dates of inspection: | 2 nd to 5 th March 2009 |

CONTENTS OF THE REPORT

Section A: Introduction and summary

Section B: Compliance with regulations for registration

Section C: The quality of organisation and management

SCHOOL DETAILS

| | | |
|---|--|---------------------|
| Name of school: | Breckland Park | |
| Address of the school: | Turbine Way Ecotech Business and Information Park Swaffham Norfolk PE37 7XD | |
| Telephone number: | 01760 336939 | |
| Fax number: | 01760 336990 | |
| Proprietor: | Medeshamstede Educational Trust | |
| Name of Chief Executive Officer: | Mr Stephen Hynd | |
| Names of Senior Teachers: | Mr William Dashley and Miss Donna Abbott | |
| DCSF number: | 926/6153 | |
| FOCUS number: | 417 | |
| Type of school: | Independent school affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust | |
| Age range of pupils and students: | 8 to 18 | |
| Gender of pupils: | Male and female | |
| Total number on roll: (Full time) | Boys: 75 | Girls: 65 |
| Number of post-16 students: | Boys: 11 | Girls: 11 |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational need: | | |
| | Boys: 1 | Girls: 0 |
| Annual fees: | Fees are not charged. | |
| Type of inspection: | Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 | |
| Inspection Team: | Reporting Inspector: Mr Peter Jones | |
| | Supporting Inspectors: Mrs Cecile Corfield | |
| | Dr Martin Bradley | |
| | Lay Inspector: | Mr Douglas Siderfin |
| Dates of inspection: | 2 nd to 5 th March 2009 | |

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:

Breckland Park School was formed through the amalgamation of two registered schools: Medeshamstede and Beechcroft. It is administered by the Medeshamstede Educational Trust. The school is affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust and follows its policies and ethos. Pupils come from the Brethren communities in Peterborough, Norwich, Kings Lynn, Lowestoft and Swaffham, and admission is non selective. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. There are 140 pupils on roll aged eight to eighteen of whom 75 are boys and 65 girls. The school admitted pupils from the age of eight for the first time in September 2008.

Summary of main findings:

Breckland Park School is developing successfully and has made good progress since its last monitoring inspection. It has added a sixth form and a Key Stage 2 phase, both of which are becoming established as thriving additions to the school. The school provides a secure, well-balanced curriculum which meets effectively the needs of its pupils. Teaching is good and often outstanding. Lessons are lively, well planned and encourage active participation, reflecting the expertise and commitment of the staff. Pupils throughout the school make good and often excellent progress. They are keen to learn and enjoy the well organised and productive lessons. Pupils show excellent personal development, and are well behaved and socially aware. The school has good policies to ensure the safety and well being of its pupils. The school's accommodation and grounds are of particularly good quality and give pupils a pleasant and welcoming environment well suited to their learning needs. Parents are very supportive of the school and its work with their children.

What the school does well:

- it provides a good quality of education which enables pupils to make consistently good progress throughout the school;
- its pupils are well motivated and enjoy their learning;
- its good and outstanding teaching ensures that lessons are enjoyable and productive;
- its support for pupils with particular needs is well organised and effective;
- it has enhanced its provision through the successful addition of primary and sixth form years; and

- its provision the for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

The school fully meets the regulations.

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

- The school complies.

Next steps

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

- ensure that pupils have further opportunities for appreciating cultural diversity and their understanding of other peoples' values, beliefs and traditions; and
- strengthen the pupils' capacity in Key Stage 2 to draw inferences from practical situations.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is of good quality throughout the school. The curriculum in Key Stage 2 gives a good balance of provision for literacy, numeracy and the full range of National Curriculum foundation subjects. It makes use of good lesson planning to meet the differing needs of pupils. It includes practical learning activities and experiences and shows clear learning objectives.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum covers a suitably broad and balanced range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, as well as a range of other subjects which both meets regulatory requirements and is well suited to the aims and aspirations of the school. The effectively planned curriculum ensures that pupils make good progress in core and foundation subjects such as French, history and geography. Aesthetic and creative development of pupils is catered for thoughtfully through art and music. Provision for music is particularly strong, and ensures that pupils participate fully and enjoy singing and playing instruments. Pupils learn useful information and communications technology (ICT) skills through office studies. In both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 the physical, spiritual, moral, social and cultural educational development of pupils is effectively catered for by compulsory lessons in physical education, Bible studies and citizenship. The Key Stage 3 provision includes food technology, textiles and craft, design and technology which although offering good opportunities to develop practical skills, does not do enough to promote pupils' design skills. The school is successfully using early entry to some modules for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) to motivate and accelerate the learning of pupils in Year 9. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational need, are met very successfully, and the school is beginning to identify ways in which provision for the most able pupils can be enhanced.

At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is well suited to pupils' needs, and provides a secure basis for the pupils' good achievement at GCSE. The subjects taught at GCSE, include English, mathematics and science for all, while allowing pupils a suitable option of choices in humanities and arts subjects.

Over the eighteen months since the sixth form began, the post-16 curriculum has been successfully developed to provide a suitable range of subjects, including examination courses in art, English, geography, law and physics, as well as building studies, office skills and textiles and with a good selection of different types of qualifications. The sixth form curriculum benefits from the prior experience and subject expertise of teachers who have been able to put in place suitable content and approaches to teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make good progress. The school has selected a range of academic and vocational qualifications suitably matched to the career prospects of its pupils. The curriculum is enhanced by bringing in teachers from City College, Norwich for some vocational provision. The school has usefully developed a course to allow sixth formers to gain a vocational qualification for teaching assistants.

For the most part, subject schemes of work in the senior school reflect detailed planning by teachers. Materials are generally well adapted to suit the needs of the full range of ability, as for example in English and mathematics.

The school's day-to-day extra-curricular provision is satisfactory, with unavoidable constraints imposed by the short lunchtime and the need for pupils to leave school on time to travel often considerable distances home. The school uses other opportunities to provide extra curricular experience through out of school visits where possible; for example to the Imperial War Museum, the National Space Centre and the local EcoTech wind turbine. Visitors to school provide breadth of experience, for example visits by a well known artist and themed days such as Viking and International Days. Pupils also gain from work placement in local businesses in Year 10 and Year 12, and are involved in fundraising for charities. They have recently collaborated with a local school on a science and technology day.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils throughout the school are good with some outstanding features. Teachers have very high expectations, excellent subject knowledge and have both the skills and the patience to work rigorously with pupils. All pupils are expected to concentrate in lessons and they do so. This is seen, for example, when teachers ask questions of individual pupils and give them ample time to formulate their answers in depth. This aids both the development of their thinking and capacity to explain their thoughts. Teachers are well qualified to teach the curriculum provided. They are up-to-date on subject content and teaching methods and they use a good variety of interesting and probing activities to stimulate pupils to think and to convey a deep sense of enthusiasm for learning. A consistent feature of lessons throughout the school is good use of time and pace, so that each period is used to best effect. Pupils are very well engaged by the teaching and are motivated and conscientious throughout lessons. The quality of the pupils' work displayed in corridors around the building is good and provides a clear indication of the interesting work they have undertaken.

Lesson planning is thorough with clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils at the start of each lesson. Pupils who need extra support or attention are identified in lesson plans and are given good support both in group and individual sessions. This applies to those with learning difficulties and a statement of special educational need.

Teachers make good use of resources and although text books form a foundation to lessons, many practical tasks and investigations enable pupils to experience at first hand the theory behind their activities in, for example, science and physics. In a Key Stage 4 French lesson, the pupils worked enthusiastically in pairs to role-play ordering a meal from a menu. In an excellent mathematics lesson, also in Key Stage 4, the pupils were fully engaged in a fun activity to further their understanding of simultaneous equations. Pupils in Year 12 experienced interesting virtual fieldwork by measuring pebbles located at different parts of a beach. An outstanding music lesson with Year 7 pupils resulted in a good standard of performance from all the pupils and extended their confidence in their musical ability. In an outstanding literacy lesson in the Year 5/6 class, the teacher's enthusiasm, use of praise and questioning and effective class management enabled pupils to make rapid progress.

Procedures for the marking of work, testing attainment and checking progress are good in their thoroughness and detail. These arrangements allow teachers to make

accurate judgements about pupils' attainment and progress in relation to National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades, and to provide useful targets for achievement. This provides a very firm foundation on which academic rigour is secured in the teaching. Good use is made of marking to plan future learning and teachers set clear targets for pupils to achieve as they move onwards. Very helpful guidance is given to ensure that progress is continuous and strong and this is appreciated by the pupils. They say that any concerns they may have with their academic work are dealt with quickly.

Evidence from a variety of sources in all classes confirms the high standards which pupils attain. They undertake a range of assessments throughout their time in school. At Key Stage 2 the school carries out diagnostic tests and teacher assessments which provide a clear picture of pupils' ability, and show that they are making good progress. At Key Stage 3 the school uses standardised and national tests. At Key Stage 4 and Post-16, end of unit and modular assessments, together with self-assessment helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve. The results are all carefully monitored by teachers and by the examination officer. Examination results are analysed carefully and the school's GCSE results are compared with those of local and national schools. The school has recently introduced an assessment and tracking system to monitor pupils' progress over time. The system has the potential to be a useful tool in providing important information on each pupil's predicted grades and progress towards these.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils are enthusiastic and very well motivated learners, and show real enjoyment in their education. Their spiritual awareness is powerfully developed through their own faith community involvement, through Bible studies in school and through for example, literature in English and through musical performances. Pupils show good and often outstanding behaviour and social awareness, and treat visitors, staff and each other with politeness and respect. The pupils have a well developed awareness of right and wrong. The school ensures successfully that pupils show a strong sense of responsibility for their school community and the contribution they can make to it; for example, when they participate in the school council, or take responsibility for each other during journeys to school. Pupils have an adequate knowledge of public institutions in this and other countries through Citizenship lessons. Pupils have good awareness of some aspects of culture through, for example, art, music and literature. However, pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity and their understanding of the range of values, beliefs and traditions of people in this and other countries is less well developed.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school's policies and procedures for promoting welfare, health and safety are clear and understood by the

staff and students. The policies are implemented effectively and are reflected in the mutual support and consideration shown by the pupils and staff for each other both in lessons and around the school. The introduction of a course for teaching assistants in the sixth form has enabled pupils to develop skills which they are beginning to use to extremely good effect in the Key Stage 2 classes. Whilst bullying is not a significant concern, staff and pupils are aware of procedures to deal with any minor instances where this arises. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are good, with members of the teaching staff and trustees being identified as reference points. The pupils independently identified the designated staff as people to whom they could turn in case of concerns.

Good risk assessments are made for visits outside school. Where possible, use is made of assessments provided by the places visited, with additional checks and references being made by the school. Behaviour policies are comprehensive and the school has a good scale of procedures for dealing with any misdemeanours. Detailed records are kept of any sanctions imposed on pupils for disciplinary matters.

A useful fire risk assessment has been made and the Fire Authority has visited but not reported in writing. Several members of staff have designated responsibility for First Aid. At present the number of fully qualified First Aiders is limited, but plans are in place for two more teachers to be fully trained at the end of the present term. Staff are deployed effectively to support pupils. Admission and attendance registers are well maintained.

At present the school has a detailed plan to improve accessibility, and is developing this further.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has good arrangements for checking the suitability of staff, volunteers, supply staff and other support workers prior to their appointment. Similar checks have been made with regard to the trustees. Where required, enhanced criminal record checks have been made. Checks are retained on a single central register in electronic form.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school opened in September 2005, and early in 2008 received planning permission for major construction work to provide a gymnasium and senior school teaching block. This enabled the school to admit pupils in Key Stage 2 in September 2008 using the original classrooms. The classrooms and facilities are of a high standard. Key Stage 2 pupils have their own fenced, grassed area for activities when the weather permits. They make good use of the hard-surfaced areas for lessons and play. The sixth form, housed in the original building, has ample accommodation and facilities, including an ICT suite and refreshment facilities.

The new gymnasium and senior teaching block provide good quality accommodation including a useful library and spacious laboratory. Suitable provision for home economics, a music room and a canteen are situated in an adjoining building. The provision enables pupils to learn effectively. The school has had appropriate fire safety checks and risk assessments. Washroom facilities are appropriate for the number of pupils on roll. Interior and exterior decoration and maintenance is to a high standard. A dedicated outdoor area is provided in the grounds to enable pupils to experience bricklaying and other building skills.

The school has a football pitch and a hard-surfaced netball pitch. It makes good use periodically of Swaffham Town Football Club's pitches a short distance away from the school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The quality of information for parents

The provision of information is good and meets the requirements. Appropriate information is in the school prospectus and currently includes details of school policies on admissions, uniform, discipline, attendance and complaints. Additional information such as details of the curriculum and results of public examinations is available and the school intends to include details of the full range of policies in future prospectuses. Parents receive regular half-termly interim reports and full reports each term on their child's progress.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The comprehensive complaints procedure fully meets the regulatory requirements. There were no complaints in the twelve months prior 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

Breckland Park gives an overall impression of being a good school where authority with a team spirit pervades. The atmosphere under the daily supervision of a hard working head teacher, along with his staff, is relaxed, but controlled. The primary school, which opened in September 2008, is led effectively by its own senior teacher. The seven trustees have overseen successfully all aspects of the school development, with three senior trustees operating a management committee meeting about once a month with a full trustee meeting considerably less often. The trustees may wish to consider meeting more often. All meetings are minuted with personnel responsibility made clear and action times included. The trustees have been extremely busy over the last year organising well arranged and newly furnished accommodation including new classrooms, a gym, play areas and the entirely refurbished primary school and sixth form block with comprehensive facilities.

All policies are fully in place and implemented. These are well organised and looked after by the secretary; as are all other records. The facilities are above average and give safe and ample room for both work and play. This latter is thoroughly supervised, as are the transport arrangements. Communication within the school is adequate. The ongoing presence of voluntary assistants is a noticeable and valuable feature of the school. The two schools work amicably side by side with shared facilities. These include the staff room. Both Senior Teachers meet regularly and at least once a week.

Can the organisation and management be improved?

Now that the new school premises are fully operational, there is a need to reorganise and coordinate the management structure as a whole, with dedicated responsibilities in order to take the school forward. To facilitate a seamless move from primary to secondary in September, and ongoing harmony, it will be necessary to set up clear definitions of integration and boundaries as soon as possible.

An omission in the prospectus has been rectified by the inclusion of a leaflet indicating to parents and prospective parents that all policies are available from the school office.

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.