

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust

HANDBOOK FOR INSPECTION: SECTION 3g(i)

Date of this document: 01 September 2009

INSPECTION REPORT

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

Name of school:	Copsewood School
DCSF number:	331/6027
FOCUS number:	305
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Eileen McAndrew Supporting Inspectors: Cecile Corfield Peter Jones Lay Inspector: Mike Thomas
Dates of inspection:	6-8 October 2009

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Section C: The quality of organisation and management

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Copsewood School

Address of the school: 168-170 Roland Avenue
Holbrooks
Coventry
CV6 4LX

Telephone number: 024 7668 0680

Fax number: 024 7668 6369

Proprietor: Copsewood Education Trust

Name of Chief Executive Officer: John Gates

Name of Senior Teacher: Kulwant Atkar

DCSF number: 331/6027

FOCUS number: 305

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

Age range of pupils and students: 7-18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Total number on roll: (Full time) Boys: 64 Girls: 51

Number of post-16 students: Boys: 19 Girls: 12

Number of pupils with statements of special educational need:
Boys: 1

Annual fees: No fees charged

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

Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector: Eileen McAndrew
Supporting Inspector: Cecile Corfield
Peter Jones
Lay Inspector: Mike Thomas

Dates of inspection: 6-8 October 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 Part C of this document, but this section is not a statutory part of the inspection process.

Information about the school:

Copsewood School is an independent day school for pupils aged between seven and eighteen years of age who are the children of Brethren families. The school is situated on two sites five miles apart in Coventry in the West Midlands. The secondary department was registered in 2003 as a school of special religious character having a Christian ethos. The primary department was registered in September 2007. The school is affiliated to Focus Learning Trust whose aims it supports. Admission is non-selective. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. At the time of the inspection there were 115 pupils on roll. The school aims 'to provide our students* with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum in a caring and secure Christian environment.'

The previous inspection was carried out in 2006.

*Throughout the report the word 'pupil' is used except for those young people aged sixteen years and above, for whom the word 'student' is used.

Summary of main findings:

Copsewood School achieves its aim, providing a good quality education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with some outstanding features. Predominantly good and sometimes outstanding teaching results in pupils of all abilities making good progress. They become effective learners who apply themselves well to their work. Assessment is well established but the quality of marking is variable in the secondary department. Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory, although some weaknesses were identified and partially addressed during the inspection. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They enjoy school and parents are strongly supportive of the school, pleased with the education their children receive. The school identifies pupils who are able, gifted and talented but acknowledges that the provision of enrichment and extension activities for them is an area requiring further development.

What the school does well:

- it provides an effective foundation for primary age pupils preparing them well for the next stage of their education;
- it provides a good and developing curriculum;

- it promotes good quality teaching;
- it encourages pupils to become active, participating learners, and
- it fosters and supports outstanding behaviour.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

- ensure that the health and safety improvements required in the craft room are completed; and
- improve accommodation in the science laboratory so that practical work may be undertaken safely.

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. It is broad and balanced, meets the needs of its pupils and is implemented effectively. The school's curriculum policy is clearly set out in the Focus Learning Trust's curriculum documents and is effectively supported by its schemes of work. The curriculum is strong across the school in providing for the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy.

The curriculum in the primary department is good with some outstanding features. It is effectively organised through an interesting two-year cycle in all subjects. This ensures a progressive learning experience for all pupils as they move through Key Stage 2. Planning pays close attention to the needs of pupils in the mixed-age and mixed-ability classes. A high priority is given to independent learning and to practical activities, contributing strongly to pupils' development as highly effective learners.

The curriculum in the secondary department is good, and is methodically planned to meet the needs of the full age range of pupils. Good provision is made for pupils' linguistic, mathematical and scientific learning, building effectively on the skills developed in the primary department. The curriculum in mathematics in the upper end of the school is well suited to students' career needs and includes business and accountancy courses as well as Advanced Subsidiary (AS-level) and Advanced level mathematics courses in the General Certificate of Education (GCE). The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' technological development. The recent addition of a graphics course in information and communication technology (ICT) gives sixth-form students valuable experience of business-oriented ICT skills.

Pupils gain good experience of aesthetics and technology, learning through opportunities for making in both craft and textiles, although their design skills are less well developed. The humanities subjects are enhanced by engaging practical activities, for example, through regular field work in geography and the use of simulation and role play in history. Pupils' aesthetic and creative development is greatly enriched through the excellent curricula in art and music. The range of activities in these subjects ensures the acquisition of good technical skills and valuable scope for personal expression. The school works hard to provide for pupils' physical development, and although there are no school playing fields, good use is made of local facilities to ensure pupils have opportunities to participate in a range of sport.

Pupils' personal development is productively fostered through personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship and assemblies. Provision for the small number of pupils with special educational needs is good in all key stages.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching is predominantly good and a significant proportion is outstanding, resulting in commensurate progress by pupils. The majority of teachers, particularly those in English, science, art and music, have a thorough knowledge of the subjects taught and the expertise to use it to plan interesting lessons which motivate pupils. Good quality lesson planning is securely established throughout the school. The intended learning is clearly identified and shared with

pupils helping them to understand what they are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the lesson. Teachers are increasingly adept at including links to other related areas of learning, broadening pupils' knowledge and helping them to understand how one area of learning supports and extends another.

In the best lessons, the tasks challenge pupils of all abilities to participate wholeheartedly and to think beyond the superficial. Good quality questions help to ensure that pupils refine and extend their own and others' learning. Teachers develop and foster pupils' self-confidence by encouraging them not to be afraid to make mistakes and to try out solutions. For example, a mathematics lesson in Year 11 explored and analysed incorrect answers in a highly effective strategy, as a result of which students made rapid progress. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, classroom management is effective and pupils expect to work hard. In the small number of lessons where teaching was satisfactory but less than good, the teaching failed to capture and hold pupils' interest and the pace of the lesson flagged, and as a consequence progress was slower.

All pupils have frequent opportunities to work in pairs and groups cooperating and collaborating in their learning. In the primary department pupils have regular opportunities to work independently but this is less evident in the secondary classes. In all year groups the strong focus on speaking and listening helps pupils to become increasingly articulate and confident speakers, eager to express a view, engage in role play or explain what they think to others. Pupils are lively and enthusiastic learners, able to work hard and take satisfaction from their achievement.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties is good across the school. The number of pupils in each class is small, teachers know individual pupils well and they are able to give them precise, targeted support. Individual education plans are compiled for these pupils. These are of good quality in the primary department but targets set for older pupils are not so precise, making progress more difficult to ascertain. In-class support offers additional assistance to individual pupils. A few pupils are withdrawn from class for individual targeted teaching.

Some lesson planning identifies pupils who are able, gifted or talented and in some lessons extension work is planned for them. This aspect of provision is at an early stage of development.

Systems for assessment are satisfactory and are effectively implemented. Marking is regular and conscientious, but not yet consistent in quality in the secondary department. In the best examples teachers' comments make it clear to pupils why their work is good. In addition, teachers follow the marking policy consistently, using the *How to Improve (HTI)* strategy to identify what needs to be done next. The best marking provides a good model for wider dissemination. In the primary department pupils are learning to evaluate their own work effectively and secondary age pupils extend this skill to include assessing each other's work. Pupils are set targets for improvement in all subjects and their progress is regularly and methodically assessed against National Curriculum levels of attainment and the results recorded. These assessments are collated and analysed so that individual and class performance at any one time can be scrutinised and interrogated. However, there are no centralised data management systems to allow for the effective tracking of pupils' progress over time.

The pupils' national test results from Key Stage 2 help to establish a baseline from which to measure their progress through Key Stage 3. In addition, cognitive ability

tests undertaken in Year 7 provide a useful set of indicators for individual pupils' projected attainment at the end of the key stage and at General Certificate of Secondary Education level. The school also makes effective use of other standardised tests to provide additional information on individual and group progress. These national tests and examinations enable teachers to compare pupils' performance with that of pupils nationally.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good with outstanding features. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour is outstanding. In discussion, pupils stated that bullying is very rare and that they are confident that the school would deal with any incident immediately. The school has excellent procedures for rewarding effort and good behaviour, and well understood strategies to deal efficiently with unacceptable behaviour. The pupils' efforts, achievements and good citizenship are celebrated with oral and written praise and at the prize-giving and class assemblies.

Pupils' social development is outstanding. They show consistently amicable co-operation with one another to very good purpose through paired and group work, as was evident in lessons observed in all the key stages. Positive relationships between pupils and staff are apparent in both the primary and secondary departments. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and their high attendance levels support this. These aspects contribute strongly to the firm foundation for the development of the pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem from Key Stage 2 onwards. Pupils in Year 7 stated that they were made to feel welcome when they joined the school and this helped them to settle quickly.

Pupils' spiritual development is promoted effectively through weekly Bible Studies and class assemblies which take place regularly. Themes in assemblies include issues relevant to pupils such as bullying, and those exemplified in Aesop's fables which further develop the pupils' understanding of moral issues. Pupils raise funds for those in need through a variety of activities, for example, through an interesting and well-planned *Africa Day* which included pupils, staff and parents.

The sixth form peer mediators and school council representatives help to promote the pupils' understanding of social responsibility and what it is to make a positive contribution to the wider community.

As part of their introduction to the world of work, pupils in Year 10 and 11 undertake work experience in local Brethren businesses and students in Years 12 and 13 undertake business studies and accounting. Pupils are encouraged to research fundamental matters such as cost, durability, reliability and the appropriateness of purchases for the school. These valuable experiences contribute to the development of pupils' future economic well-being. The consistently good provision for literacy and numerical skills contributes strongly to this fundamental aspect of pupils' development.

The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. Curricular planning includes regular visits to places of interest linked to work in different subjects, especially for example, history and geography. *Africa Day* played a prominent part

in this work, but pupils have also studied African and Asian music, aboriginal art and the Jewish Holocaust. Opportunities also are taken, where appropriate, to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures. In a Year 8 English lesson, for example, the pupils displayed a very good understanding of race relations in the United States between black and white people in the early twentieth century. In the primary department, in geography, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 increased their knowledge of the different foods eaten around the world. They researched thoroughly different holiday destinations and discussed cultural differences in ways likely to add to their understanding of others. An interesting display of their findings usefully consolidated their investigations.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is satisfactory, although some weaknesses were identified during the inspection. A range of appropriate policies and procedures supports the welfare, care and protection of pupils. However, a number of health and safety issues relating to provision in the craft room gave rise to some concern. The trustees have taken immediate action so that unreliable machine tools have been taken out of use and the fire exit made accessible. They have drawn up an appropriate action plan to deal with the remaining issues imminently.

Safeguarding arrangements are in place as required. The designated child protection officers have undertaken appropriate recent training and all staff training is up-to-date. The behaviour policy emphasises a positive approach to managing behaviour and as a result, the pupils' conduct is outstanding both in lessons and around the school. All pupils' visits out-of-school are thoroughly risk assessed.

The science and PSHE curricula place appropriate emphasis on the pupils' health and encourage pupils to take care of their bodies and stay safe. Healthy eating is promoted in the curriculum and drinking water is available throughout the day. Pupils are encouraged to undertake physical exercise at break times and have an appropriate programme of physical exercise each week. The primary pupils are to start swimming lessons this term and this should provide another form of healthy exercise.

The pupils stated that they feel safe in school. The school is vigilant in ensuring the fire equipment and alarms are checked regularly. An independent company carried out a fire risk assessment in July 2009. The school holds fire drills each term and details are recorded correctly. Health and safety risk assessments for the buildings have been carried out for all areas of the school, but these have not always been checked or reviewed rigorously enough. Good provision is made for First Aid with a detailed policy and three fully-trained staff. Pupils are well supervised at all times when they are on school premises. The school works effectively with parents to promote pupils' well-being by, for example, sharing relevant information on any medical conditions.

The admission and attendance registers comply with regulatory requirements. The school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets all but one of the regulations.

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

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools' Standards Regulations 2003 the school should have regard to the DCSF guidance Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Powers (DCSF 0803/2001) (paragraph 3(4)).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has robust employment procedures to ensure that all staff have satisfactory clearance with the Criminal Records Bureau at an enhanced level and that other essential checks are carried out before appointments are confirmed. The single central register contains all the information required by the most recent regulations.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school is located in one-storey former business premises suitably converted for their present purpose. It has a reasonably sized tarmac area providing pedestrian and vehicular access and a separate, safe play area. The school has no playing fields but good use is made of local sports facilities. Most classrooms are compact but adequate, given the sensible way the pupils use the space. In two classrooms in particular there is limited scope for movement around the room once pupils are seated. In the science room the lack of space means that some practical experiments are potentially hazardous. The school is actively considering solutions. The buildings are well looked after and are generally in good decorative order. The primary site is five miles away and is located in a secure and self contained site. It is well resourced and provides a pleasant environment for learning.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school complies with all but one of the regulations.

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

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools' Standards Regulations 2003 the school should have regard to the number, age and needs (including any special needs) of pupils, and ensure that all classrooms are appropriate in size to allow effective teaching, and ensure that no areas of the school compromise health or safety (paragraph 5(j)).

The quality of information for parents

The school provides parents with clear and useful information through its prospectus and the range of policies which support provision. The termly magazine provides an attractive and good quality record of the school's most recent work. It also includes information updating parents on new developments in the curriculum alongside photographs and accounts of pupils' work and activities across all age groups. The school also produces a regular 'interim newsletter' which is distributed twice each half term.

The high proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire was overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. They believe the school provides

very well for their children. Detailed thrice-yearly reports for each subject keep them well informed about their children's progress. Reports contain National Curriculum grades for each subject and constructive comments on the pupil's attitude and effort, as well as targets for improvement.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school's policy and procedures for handling complaints meets the requirements in full.

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 governed by the board of Copsewood Education Trust (CET) consisting of nine trustees. CET is affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust and all trustees are committed to the Focus ethos. Although there is no fixed term, trustees are not generally expected to serve for a protracted time and a number of new trustees have joined the board this year.

CET is responsible for the secondary department on the main site in Coventry, the primary campus in Coventry and the primary campus in Stafford. This inspection did not cover the primary unit in Stafford.

The board meets monthly, although due to the distances involved meetings are sometimes by teleconference call. Their purpose is to discuss current aims for the school and the strategies and resources to achieve them. All trustees normally attend the board meetings. Signed minutes are kept of these meetings and are distributed to all trustees.

The secondary department's premises are now barely adequate and limit the opportunities to provide a full curriculum for the pupils in a safe and stimulating environment. The trustees have opened negotiations for a new school building in Coventry to cater for all secondary and primary pupils. This will have obvious benefits and trustees should prepare for this now by adopting a "one school" strategy and approach to management decisions.

The management of the school is led by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the three Senior Teachers (STs). The senior management team (CEO, secondary ST, and two or three trustees) meet monthly to discuss issues relating to the day-to-day school organisation, and minutes are kept. Formal meetings with primary STs are held half termly. Groundwork for the coming campus unification should now be laid by the attendance of the primary STs at combined monthly Management Meetings.

All trustees have areas of management for which they are responsible and on which they report to the CEO. A summary report of progress and issues in their areas of responsibility is issued by the CEO each half term. The CEO visits the campuses regularly and is in constant touch by telephone, email and video conferencing. He has a good working relationship with the STs and the staff and is considered by all to be doing his job well. He has the vision to advance teaching and learning practices in the school.

The secondary ST has led the raising of standards of professionalism and teaching practice in the school. There are, for example, regular in-service training days, a performance management programme, lesson observations and a distributive leadership policy. Fortnightly staff meetings are held at the secondary department which are attended by all full-time teachers and the CEO when available. There is a comprehensive school improvement plan which is currently being updated with contributions from the staff. Following the departure of the primary (Coventry) ST at the end of the last academic year, the present acting ST has ensured the maintenance of a high standard in all areas including organisation and management. Part-time staff are kept updated by a weekly staff briefing. Regular joint staff

meetings including primary staff would be another constructive way to promote positive and consistent working relationships and practices throughout the school.

The provision of pastoral care is underpinned by the respect for and implementation of the Focus policies and the strong Christian ethos. All staff contribute to this care which includes each year group having a weekly timetabled meeting with their year tutor. Any concerns arising are handled quickly and sensitively to achieve a positive outcome.

School administration is efficient. Audited financial records were found to be up-to-date and had been submitted to the Charity Commission along with the Trustees Report within the specified time limit. An annual budget and monthly management accounts are prepared and distributed. Fundraising is managed and supported well.

Finally, excellent service is provided by the site manager and the school secretary, who both contribute well to the smooth functioning of the school.

Could the organisation and management of the school be improved?

The trustees might like to take into consideration the following suggestions as to where specific points for improvement could be made:

- improving whole school management by putting in place structures and systems which help to create one school, looking to the future when the whole school is located on one site, so as to enable a coherent 'one school' strategy and approach to management decisions; and
- establishing the groundwork for the coming unification of the Coventry campus by the attendance of the primary STs at combined monthly management meetings and by regular joint staff meetings, including primary staff, so as to promote positive and consistent working relationships and practices throughout 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 School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk