

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:	Eastbrook College
DCSF number: FOCUS number:	916/6078 606
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mrs M A Buckingham Supporting Inspectors: Mr S Bennett Dr M Bradley Lay Inspector: Mr M Thomas
Dates of inspection:	22 – 25 January 2008

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Eastbrook College	
Address of the school:	7 Eastbrook Road Gloucester GL4 3DP	
Telephone number:	01452 417722	
Fax number:	01452 317944	
Proprietor:	Eastbrook Educational Trust	
Name of Chief Executive Officer (CEO):	Mr P Knappett	
Name of Senior Teacher:	Mrs G Lauriston	
DCSF number:	916/6078	
FOCUS number:	606	
Type of school:	Independent school affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust	
Age range of pupils and students:	11 - 18	
Gender of pupils:	Male and female	
Total number on roll:	Boys: 46	Girls: 39
Number of post-16 students:	Boys: 14	Girls: 10
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need:	Boys: 1	Girls: 0
Annual fees:	N/A	
Type of inspection:	Section 162A of the Education Act 2002	
Inspection Team:	Reporting Inspector:	Mrs M A Buckingham
	Supporting Inspectors:	Mr S Bennett Mr M Bradley
	Lay Inspector:	Mr M Thomas
Dates of inspection:	22 - 25 January 2008	

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 (FLT) 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 FLT. 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:

Eastbrook College was registered in 2004 with the DCSF as a secondary school with a special religious character. It is affiliated to the FLT and based on a Christian ethos '*...committed to a way of life which is governed at all times and in every detail by the Holy Bible...*' It provides education for the children of Brethren families living, not only local to the school in Gloucester but further afield in Hereford, Stow, Swindon, and Worcester. Consequently, some pupils travel long distances to school by mini bus. The age range was extended to include a Year 13 in September 2007 and the plan is to open a primary school starting with Years 3 to 6 in autumn 2008 in a new purpose built school close by. Currently, the sixth form is taught on a separate site two minutes walk from the main school. The senior teacher joined the school two terms ago and the Chief Education Officer (CEO) took up his responsibilities in January 2008, just prior to the inspection.

Summary of main findings:

Eastbrook College provides a good curriculum overall. The quality of teaching is good, never less than satisfactory and on occasions outstanding. This results in all pupils making good progress. Overall the quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they enjoy school. Provision for their welfare, health and safety is satisfactory with some good features. The senior teacher has led the staff effectively over recent months to improve aspects of the curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning and to seek to meet the regulations. With action ongoing and recent changes in membership of the trustees, the school is at a transitional stage of its development. However, the trustees, together with the school's senior management, have yet to evaluate systematically what is required to sustain improvements, fully meet the regulations, inform planning and secure its implementation. The school complies with many but not all of the regulations.

What the school does well:

- it provides a good quality of education;
- it promotes a strong moral, social, and spiritual environment helping pupils to thrive in their personal development which results in their positive attitudes to learning and respectful and considerate relationships with others; and
- it provides pupils with good opportunities for creative experiences through music and art.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

- take action on those points that do not meet the regulations as outlined in section 3; and

- as a matter of urgency, take action to ensure that all the regulations are met as detailed in section 4.

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

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

- devise a three year plan, with timescales, to fulfil its duties.

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 with some elements, however, meriting review. It provides a sound basis for teaching and learning so that pupils make good progress. The curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 is broad and closely reflects subjects of the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 3 pupils study most aspects of the National Curriculum. In addition, the curriculum includes personal, social and health education (PSHE) and typing. The latter includes some elements of information technology (IT)¹ using the recently introduced Wordex system with appropriate software.

In Key Stage 4 pupils follow a suitable range of General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) courses including English, mathematics, science, history, geography, French, food and nutrition and a course in citizenship. GCSE Art is successfully taught by Brethren volunteers. In addition, PSHE, games, typing, as in Key Stage 3, business studies/ textiles, and music are studied.

The school expanded its post-16 provision with the addition of a Year 13 at the start of the academic year. The aim is to offer choice and a wide range of courses tailored to individual students' abilities and aptitudes, with either advanced level subjects or vocational courses. The provision is to be full-time for both Years 12 and 13. This aim has not yet been fully realised as over half of Year 13 students are not full-time. They attend either three or four days a week and are taught alongside Year 12. The initial intended provision had to be reviewed at the beginning of the academic year with readjustments being made to the range of subjects that could be offered. Currently, students have options to study mainly vocationally orientated subjects such as Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) accounts, law, economics, business English, business studies, as well as advanced supplementary level in English, geography, physics and mathematics. All students study music, games, a PSHE unit on careers, current affairs and IT. The use of virtual classroom with other Focus schools has begun with school in the United Kingdom and overseas, for example, Canada. The introduction of the FLT teaching assistant course this term is proving popular with Years 12 and 13 girls. The one day a week placements in maintained primary schools are particularly enjoyed. Students are already realising the benefits to their broader personal development.

The curriculum policy reflects the school's Christian ethos and all pupils throughout the school are taught Bible Studies by volunteer members of the Brethren community.

Curriculum planning is based on FLT materials with additional National Curriculum subject documentation and examination requirements, resulting in appropriate schemes of work, largely implemented effectively. However, the planning for food and nutrition and textile lessons, based on detailed FLT courses is not yet sufficiently coordinated, year-on-year, in Years 7 to 9. At Key Stage 3 a 'prep' lesson has been introduced with the aim of giving pupils an opportunity to do their homework in a busy week. In practice this is not always supervised appropriately, or time used as intended.

The school is seeking to develop further ways to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Provision for pupils identified as being able, gifted or talented is at an early stage with the recent introduction of 'accelerated groups', for example, in mathematics. Pupils with additional learning needs are well supported in class or individually by the sympathetic and well-targeted learning support provision.

¹ Nomenclature used by the school.

PSHE is based on the FLT programme and contributes effectively to pupils' overall personal development. Careers guidance is satisfactory and includes work experience for Year 10 pupils and a PSHE unit in Year 12. For older pupils and students in the sixth form PSHE, citizenship, current affairs and business courses contribute to their understanding of the world of work but careers guidance has yet to be coordinated throughout the school.

Staffing changes in several subjects have occurred over the last terms with a detrimental impact on aspects of the organisation of the curriculum. For example, at Key Stage 3 there is a clash with some science and design and technology (D&T) lessons. Courses in D&T have been interrupted, and examination provision at Key Stage 4 has been lost. A timely review and evaluation of the curriculum and staffing across all key stages is to start this term to reflect on the past year's curriculum initiatives and to inform planning.

The quality of teaching and assessment

Teaching is almost always good, never less than satisfactory and at times outstanding. Teachers exhibit strong subject knowledge and are aware of the individual needs of their pupils. Lessons are measured and clear, and facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge. Pupils make appropriate progress and at times exceed expectations. The best lessons are characterised by clarity, pace, variety and opportunities for pupils to respond. Questioning is open-ended. Pupils' understanding and skills are developed carefully, and their confidence reinforced. Intellectual, creative and physical efforts are encouraged. Particularly in evidence are progress, enjoyment and understanding in creative areas of the curriculum, such as art and music. Pupils exhibit the ability to think for themselves. This quality was exemplified in a Year 7 English lesson, where a pupil illustrated the difference between the function of a dictionary and that of a thesaurus.

Lessons are generally planned effectively, activities are varied and time is used to good effect. Support for pupils with particular needs is increasingly well targeted. Attention has been given to providing a curriculum that meets their needs, instils confidence and develops self-esteem, with support provided where appropriate. Pupils are positive about their learning and enjoy opportunities for research.

Assessment procedures are in a transitional phase, and emphasis is appropriately being placed on developing consistent systems to ensure tracking of pupils' progress from the moment of entry. Information from previous schools is collected, and the school records carefully results from internal examinations and certification, and externally moderated results.

Marking at its best, is helpful and analytical but it is not always clear that this system is being employed consistently in all subjects. Work is usually marked promptly. There is a standardised grade sheet that gives clear definition of the significance of grades. Positive evidence of its application was seen in Year 7 English exercise books.

For pupils with learning difficulties, a carefully differentiated programme is being developed. A pupil in the process of receiving funding from a local authority has appreciated the targeted support received in mathematics and the care devoted to developing skills in art. This pupil expressed real satisfaction at beginning to enjoy school for the first time.

Classrooms are thoughtfully laid out and subjects are well resourced. The computer units are particularly inventive providing good support for learning. Every classroom, and in particular the English room, reflects learning and stimulates it through supportive, informative and illustrative displays.

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 of high quality and is adjudged to be outstanding overall. Pupils' spiritual development is underpinned by the prevailing ethos of the school, and by the attention given to the fulfilment of its declared aims. Pupils' spiritual development is reinforced by strong parental support. Pupils exhibit powerful moral awareness and are well able to distinguish right from wrong. They are given opportunities for responsibility and this has been strengthened by their role in the school council. This was established by a group of girls on their own initiative, who were concerned with the impact of low level, verbal bullying. They meet regularly to discuss matters in general and to address particular issues. They have widened their remit to include environmental awareness and responsibility for the quality of the school's ambience. Attention is paid to details such as energy saving and cleanliness of washrooms. They are looking to find ways of including boys and younger pupils on the council.

Pupils' social development is promoted through their daily contact and activities. They relate well to each other and to adults. They are serious about service to others and wish to maintain an attractive and functional working environment. Often pupils show enthusiasm and self-expression, both as individuals and in groups in their musical performance, their art, their games (and even table football), and most strongly in their participation in lessons. Conduct and deportment around the school is generally exemplary.

The cultural opportunities given not only further pupils' development in this area, but also strengthen their social and spiritual development. The school is working to further extend cultural opportunities. Pupils are aware of other cultures and of the great institutions of this country, and take a keen interest in extending their knowledge and understanding. The sixth form shows an active interest in and awareness of the world beyond the school. In a current affairs lesson they were particularly interested in the recent economic turbulence and showed a mature understanding of the issues and their implications, the Bank of England being the object of particular interest. Pupils have visited the Royal Courts of Justice, and there are current plans to visit the Houses of Parliament. More trips to local industries are in the process of being arranged, such as to a coal mine in the Forest of Dean.

Pupils produce *'The Eastbrook Outlook'* at regular intervals. It is lively in content and well illustrated. It serves as a record of what has been achieved. For example, Year 9 have visited the Imperial War Museum, and Year 8 have gone to the Commandery Museum in Worcester. Year 11 and their parents have ascended the Brecon Beacons, and sports day was a great success. Overall, this area is a strength of the school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The measures taken to promote the welfare, health and safety of the pupils are satisfactory overall, with some good aspects, and some which do not meet the requirements.

The school has successfully adopted policies prepared by the FLT for health and safety. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily, for example in the Year 9 food and nutrition course, and in the citizenship projects, which include preparing meals for the Brethren community. Healthy eating awareness has been identified by the school council as an area which they wish to develop. Medical and first aid provision is good. Risk assessments are generally rigorous and fire risk assessments are good. Some health and safety matters were drawn to the attention of the school, which has begun to address them.

At present the admission register is incomplete in not recording all of the required details and daily attendance registers are not completed at the start of the afternoon session, although the

school has begun to address this. The planning for staff deployment is satisfactory. However, this is not sufficiently closely monitored to ensure that classes are adequately supervised when there are problems with the planned arrangements. As a result, the regulatory requirements are not met. There are no written rotas for supervision at break and lunchtimes, and the present informal arrangements do not always ensure that staff are on duty.

The school has produced a brief plan to address the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, but this does not provide any timescales for reviewing the current provision and for considering the new building.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets most but not all of the requirements.

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

- *ensure that staff are deployed in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of pupils (paragraph 3(7)); and*
- *maintain an admission register and a daily attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).*

What does the school need to do to comply with the DDA?

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

- *devise a three-year plan, with timescales, to improve the accessibility and review current provision.*

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school does not fulfil the requirements in respect of checks on suitability of the proprietor and staff. The evidence is not available to show that all staff have undergone the required checks of their suitability to work with children. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks have been made on most staff, including trustees and volunteers but the list is incomplete for current teaching staff. Similarly, evidence is not available for all staff and those serving as trustees and volunteers, that other checks (as relevant) have been made, including medical fitness, identity, previous employment history, character references, right to work in UK and verification of qualifications. The school has not compiled the register, known as a single central record, documenting in the required manner that checks have been carried out.

The school has not followed the guidance offered by FLT on these matters. There is a lack of clarity about who is responsible for undertaking and documenting these checks and current records are poorly organised. The school is aware of these matters and has begun to take urgent action.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

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

- *prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, appropriate checks must be carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references. Such information must be taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(2)(a));*
- *CRB checks must be obtained and recorded for all teaching staff (paragraph 4(2)(b));*
- *the chairperson of the proprietors must ensure that as well as CRB, the other checks listed (as relevant) have been made for all trustees (paragraph 4B(4) and (5));*

- *a register (known as a single central record) must be kept to show that the required checks on all staff, including volunteers have been made. The register must include the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(2 and 3));*
- *each member of the trustees must be included on the register (the single central record) and show that all the checks listed have been made. The register must also show the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained (paragraph 4C(6 and 7)); and*
- *if it is decided to keep the register in electronic form, it must be capable of being reproduced in a legible form (paragraph 4C(9)).*

Suitability of the premises and accommodation

Overall the premises and accommodation support learning effectively. The school currently occupies two premises close to one another on an industrial estate. The main building has been very thoughtfully adapted for its use by Years 7 to 11. It is maintained carefully with specialist accommodation for most subjects, including science, IT (Wordex) and domestic science, as well as general classrooms. This provides a particularly good learning environment. A demountable classroom is used for resistant materials in D&T. The sixth form provision is temporarily located in nearby business premises and some adaptations have been made to ensure that it is suitable for teaching purposes. The school is in the process of building accommodation for the Key Stage 2 primary classes, which are due to start in September 2008 and which will also house the sixth form.

Outdoor provision is satisfactory. The school makes good use of local authority sports facilities for games.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The quality of information for parents

The school provides the required information for parents about school policies and other matters. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through regular, helpful reports and with opportunities to meet teachers, for example, at parent' and teacher' consultation days. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires parents expressed overall positive support for the school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school follows the FLT guidance for handling complaints and fully meets requirements.

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

A new CEO, with previous experience in this position in another Focus affiliated school, has very recently been appointed. This follows the appointment of a new and experienced senior teacher in spring 2007. These appointments provide an opportunity for review of management strategies to develop and take forward what had already been achieved.

Much good work had already been done by the senior teacher to initiate change with positive results, not only in recent improved academic achievement but in a vibrant enthusiasm amongst the pupils. There are timely plans for this work to be developed in more detail in conjunction with the CEO and with the support of the other trustees. The allocation of tasks within the existing management structure is not clear and is currently being reviewed. Defined division of duties with job descriptions is not in place, nor is a rigorous system to monitor the implementation of policy and performance. This has resulted in a lack of attention being given in some areas, for example to meeting the regulatory requirements at the appropriate time. In addition, the effective use of resources and current and longer term staffing requirements are not yet systematically considered at the trust level at regular management meetings, where problems could be aired and eliminated.

Communications are not always reliable due to a lack of known and understood procedures. This is acknowledged and is beginning to be addressed, for example, in organising pupils' records. This has yet to be extended to other areas of record keeping and administration

The Focus ethos is welcomed and practised wherever possible and pastoral care of pupils is good.

Could the organisation and management of the school be improved?

Yes.

- *roles and responsibilities amongst the trustees and lines of management responsibility should be clarified, implemented and monitored;*
- *together with the school's management, the trustees should work towards more strategic planning for the future, in the short and longer term; and*
- *communications should be improved in order for all to know and understand procedures and policy 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 Focus Learning Trust website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk