

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, Gloucestershire
DCSF number: FOCUS number:	916/6078 606
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mr Simon Bennett Supporting Inspectors: Mrs Meg Buckingham Mrs Cecile Corfield Lay Inspector: Mr Philip Hutchinson
Dates of inspection:	1 st to 4 th February 2010

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Eastbrook College

Address of school: 7 Eastbrook Road, Gloucester, GL4 3DB

Telephone number: 01452 417722

Fax number: 01452 317944

Proprietor: Eastbrook Education Trust

Name of Chief Executive Officer: Mr Paul Knappett

Name of Head Teacher: Mr Paul Evans

Email Address: paul.evans1@focus-school.com

DCSF number: 916/6078

FOCUS number: 606

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

Age range of pupils and students: 7 to 18

Gender of pupils: Male and female

Total number on roll: (Full time) Boys: 91 Girls: 77

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

Annual fees: No fees charged

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

Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector: Mr Simon Bennett
Supporting Inspectors: Mrs Meg Buckingham
Mrs Cecile Corfield
Lay Inspector: Mr Philip Hutchinson

Dates of inspection: 1st to 4th February 2010

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 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

Eastbrook College is registered with the DCSF as a 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. The school is based on two sites which are a short distance apart. The age range was extended in 2007 to include a Year 13, and a primary school starting with Year 3 was added in purpose-built premises in the autumn of 2008. The head teacher took up his responsibilities in January 2010 just prior to the inspection.

Summary of main findings

Eastbrook College continues to provide a good curriculum overall. The quality of teaching is strong, with at least one-third excellent and nothing unsatisfactory. Pupils make good progress. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, as is pupil behaviour, and provision for pupils who need additional support is good. Provision for welfare, health and safety is satisfactory, with good features, most noticeably in pastoral care. The newly appointed head teacher has a clear vision for the future and is liaising closely with the senior teacher of the primary section and with the head of the sixth form to implement continuity of the curriculum and consistent provision throughout the school. He, in conjunction with the trustees, is determined to ensure that all regulations are consistently met and that the splendid new buildings are used to full effect for the benefit of the pupils. The school has addressed most but not all of the regulatory non-compliance issues identified at the last inspection.

What the school does well

- it provides a good quality of education;
- its spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) provision is strong and the pupils have positive attitudes to learning;
- it provides good creative opportunities for its pupils; and
- its teaching is strong, and the behaviour of pupils is excellent.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations

- take action to ensure that attendance and admission registers are correctly completed at all times.

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

- it is now compliant.

Next Steps

- The school should strengthen further the coordination of careers advice and provision.
- It should take steps to provide a specific library area for the sixth form (Years 12 and 13).

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum makes good provision overall for pupils because it provides a broad range of subjects that allow them to make good progress and is generally matched well to their abilities and aptitudes. It enables pupils with learning difficulties to make sound progress. Pupils gain effective skills in literacy and numeracy and this potentially contributes to their future economic well-being. The school has a clear vision about the direction of the curriculum across all key stages.

The curriculum for Years 12 and 13 is aiming to provide a wide range of courses that best match pupils' needs. A strategy is being put in place to address this in full. Pupils themselves have voiced a wish to be able to choose geography and history at A Level and to have more advice on choice. The school has expressed the intention of enabling pupils to become independent in their learning and to develop a wider range of research skills. To supplement this, the school is aware of the need for more consistent application and maintenance of information and communication technology (ICT).

The school has the specific aim of moving to a curriculum which ensures graduated progression from Year 3 to Year 13. It is effectively implementing plans for strengthening the creative curriculum with more cross curricular work, and a successful start has been made with this through the Victorian project. Since the last inspection the school has strengthened the modern foreign language teaching and has provided qualified teachers for art and design and technology. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of good literacy and numeracy skills and the provision of a stimulating course in citizenship.

The curriculum in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 is broad and generally balanced, and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, as well as Bible Studies. Appropriate time is allocated to all subjects.

In Key Stage 4 there is a broad core of English, mathematics and science, to which is added physical education (PE), games, Bible Studies and short citizenship. Options for the general certificate in secondary education (GCSE) include geography, history, music, design and technology, food, French and ICT. Careers education uses the guidance from Focus, but plans to expand it with input from employers. The Year 12 curriculum has a vocational element, such as business, construction, and the teaching assistants' course, where pupils do their work experience in the primary school.

At the core of Year 12 are Bible Studies, PE and singing. Provision for ICT is inconsistent, but there are A-level courses in English, mathematics, accounting, law and economics. New courses this year include food, nutrition and health, and vocational options in catering, construction and teaching assistance. Currently, there are no science subjects on offer, but the timetable consists of a full programme of taught lessons. The school has identified the need for independent learning skills to be developed more fully and is expanding the curriculum with the specific aim of matching every pupil's needs. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and given excellent support. Staff are well qualified and have developed effective systems so that these pupils make good progress.

There is a good range of activities covering sport, drama, music and educational and cultural visits in both the primary and secondary sections of the school.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The standard of teaching is strong. Of over thirty lessons seen, one third were adjudged excellent and of the remainder, all but three were good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. In terms of regulatory requirements, teaching and assessment are fully compliant. The teaching enables pupils of all ages and abilities to make progress and acquire new knowledge commensurate with their ability and often beyond it. This was evident in class and over time as seen in pupils' books. Evidence of the development of specific skills, whether subject specific or generic, such as analysis, note making and note taking, and working cooperatively, was seen in the majority of lessons. These are reinforced by displays of work, and exhibitions of particular artefacts, artwork and textiles, and in a wide range of subjects.

Intellectual, physical and creative endeavour is encouraged and supplemented by performance in class. Pupils are articulate and numerate. This was evident in their participation in mathematics and science lessons, in contributions to word work in French, in a balloon debate in English and in the preparation of talks on chosen charities in citizenship. The scrutiny of work and the verbal contributions of pupils interviewed emphasised that pupils generally endorse the school's provision and its impact on them.

Lesson planning is good and thoughtful. Most lessons were intelligently planned and contained a variety of activities and approaches. These qualities were evident, whether venturing on new ground, opening up more complex ideas and complicated techniques and theories or refreshing pupils' knowledge and learning techniques through revision or recapitulation.

Teachers know their pupils well, and planning sheets often identified and took into account the specific needs of individual groups of pupils, whether with learning difficulties and disabilities or gifted and talented. Pupils with special educational needs are very well catered for, and correct procedures are followed. Teaching assistants have been trained by the assistant special needs coordinator in attending to the needs of specific pupils, and this is done well. Subject knowledge is good, and at times exceptional.

Classroom resources include electronic whiteboards in the primary department, overhead projectors in a variety of subjects in the main school, and the controlled use of laptops in citizenship. These were all seen being used to good effect. In the sixth form, virtual classroom links with Keystone and Copsewood add to the practical experience of accounts, and issues to do with consistent connection led to assured implementation of contingency plans. Music disks were used in the primary school to good effect for rhythm and repetition. Pupils themselves regret the lack of a library in the sixth form and limited access to the books in the main school. Provision in this respect in the primary school is good.

Teachers are aware of behaviour patterns of particular year groups, and evidence was seen of sensitive but firm handling of lively pupils in Years 7 and 9. Most lessons included some group or paired working, and teachers were firm in insisting on cooperative and positive behaviour. Good use of humour was seen.

Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good throughout the school. They are used regularly in order to check that pupils achieve their potential. Assessment is conscientious and effective. Teachers often use challenging questions to check if pupils understand the lesson. This is one of the strengths of the school's assessment procedures. When Year 3 pupils join the school, assessments of their abilities in English, mathematics and reading are undertaken. This enables teachers to plan work that is matched closely to the range of ability. Assessments also help to identify pupils who may need extra support with their learning. Pupils undertake a range of useful assessments throughout their time in the primary department. These include national and standardised tests. Primary teachers undertake conscientious continuous assessments. This useful information is collated into a tracking grid to monitor progress over time.

In the secondary department, formal standardised assessments for pupils in English and mathematics are undertaken in September each year by pupils in Years 7, 10 and 12. These are used to set end of key stage targets and to identify pupils who may need extra support, either for learning difficulties or to extend talents. Recently, the secondary department has introduced appropriate tracking procedures to monitor progress and compare performance with targets. Although at an early stage of development, the documents provide useful information on pupils' progress. The system has the potential to be an effective tool in providing useful information on pupils' needs.

Reading tests have indicated that more progress could be made by some students and the special needs co-ordinator has carefully trained a group of volunteers to provide extra support for pupils. Useful tests to monitor progress in English and mathematics are taken each summer term by Key Stage 3 pupils to identify strengths and weaknesses in the provision and to inform future planning. In Year 12, there are assessments in each subject every half-term. All data from the tests are collated by the head of department and staff predict potential grades and set targets. The GCSE examination results are analysed carefully and compared with those of national schools. Students are provided with a report each half-term to inform them of their progress. Both the primary and secondary departments have appropriate plans to further improve the provision for assessment.

Although there is an FLT whole school marking policy to support consistency in assessment, the quality of marking is variable throughout the school. Some very good examples of marking were seen. These inform pupils of how to improve their work. Teachers make helpful comments when returning marked work, but although all marking is supportive, written comments do not always point out areas for improvement.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for SMSC overall continues to be outstanding. This is specific to spiritual, moral and social, but in cultural terms is at least good. In terms of cultural development and awareness, pupils expressed the wish to have further opportunities to develop their understanding in this respect. However, a highly successful initiative in the primary school consisted of a Global Citizens' week, where the pupils studied the cultures of a wide range of other countries. Stories and poems from other cultures are much appreciated, as is evident also in music. Awareness of the world beyond is developed in the school through art, geography, English, citizenship, and case studies in law. Further emphasis was provided in the stark notices in the main hall reminding the community of the disaster in Haiti and consequent needs of its inhabitants.

Pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence are strong and are firmly supported by the prevailing ethos of the school and by the community's emphasis on shared values and family life. Pupils are able to distinguish right from wrong, and to respect the law, and this was reinforced by the high standard of behaviour round the school and in classes and in interviews with them. They enjoy responsibility and wear their badges of office with humility. They look after each other and take seriously any incidents relating to property. Their knowledge of public institutions and services is good and reinforced by visits to places of local interest. They collect for the RNLI, are researching their favoured charities and provide food and music for local care homes. They enjoy school. They take opportunities for research and prepare carefully for their future economic well-being, while expressing a wish for more consistent preparation for A-level choices and a more coherent programme of work experience.

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, with some good features, notably the pastoral care of pupils. Although there is a range of appropriate policies and procedures for the care and protection of pupils, for example, child protection, a number of health and safety checks have only been addressed sporadically. The trustees have now drawn up an appropriate action plan to deal with the issues as soon as possible. The school has a fully trained child protection officer and staff are up-to-date with relevant training. The school follows carefully the FLT approach to behaviour management and has produced its own discipline and class behaviour policy which it implements effectively. The pupils fully understand the system's rewards and sanctions. As a result, the pupils' behaviour is excellent both in lessons and around the school. The school keeps a record of any incidence of unacceptable behaviour and parents are informed. There are sufficient staff trained in First Aid procedures and the policy is implemented well.

Several subjects place appropriate emphasis on the pupils' health and encourage pupils to take care of their bodies and keep safe. Healthy eating is promoted and drinking water is available throughout the day. Pupils have appropriate physical exercise each week. Primary pupils started swimming lessons in the autumn term.

The pupils say they feel safe in school. An independent company carried out a fire risk assessment in December 2008. The fire officer visited the school in December 2009 and judged the fire risk at both buildings to be low. The school holds fire drills each term and details are recorded correctly. Health and safety building risk assessments and checks on fire safety have been carried out for all areas of the school, but these are not always checked or reviewed rigorously enough.

Pupils are well supervised at all times when they are on school premises. All pupils' visits out-of-school have thorough risk assessments. The admission and attendance registers are not kept according to regulations, as some of the attendance registers have unclear alterations. The school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002. This is an improvement from the last inspection.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets all the requirements except one.

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

- *maintain an admission register and an attendance register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).*

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has gradually moved towards the correct recording of recruitment procedures and has instituted a centralised register, which has been kept up-to-date. It is aware that administratively it is easier for this to be done effectively with clear lines of communication and responsibility. Currently, all checks are being made and recorded appropriately.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are suitable for purpose and meet all of the requirements for registration. The primary department opened successfully in September 2008 in a well-planned, attractive purpose-built building close to the secondary department. The sixth form shares the primary building, but has its own appropriate accommodation. The school provides an effective learning environment for all its pupils. All classrooms offer displays of pupils' work and posters which enhance the learning environment and signals to pupils the importance and relevance of their work. There are useful libraries in both buildings which provide suitable opportunities for independent study. However, the sixth form does not have a designated library. The school benefits from having a large hall for PE and performances. A workshop for design and technology located in the vicinity of the school is used by secondary pupils. Boys and girls have separate common rooms in the secondary building to enable them to socialise and relax. A lift is available to the first floor in the primary building.

The toilet and washing facilities meet requirements for the age and number of pupils on roll in both departments. Medical rooms meet requirements well. The fire officer has approved the emergency evacuations routes throughout the school. Classrooms are spacious and well-lit, although the music room is rather cramped for appropriate organisation. The school benefits from air-conditioning. Good use is made of the dining facilities, especially for the primary Breakfast Club. Cleaning of all areas is thorough.

Both departments have adequate hard-surfaced areas for outside play. The school makes good use of the playing fields, owned by the local council, at the rear of the primary department. Effective use is made also on a regular basis of council owned indoor and outdoor recreation facilities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The quality of information for parents

The school provides parents with detailed information as to its work and the subjects taught and policies adopted. In addition through newsletters and communications through the year, parents are made aware of the school and its day-to-day activities. However, there was a minority of parents who indicated ignorance of their pupil's progress. Pupils receive two reports each academic year followed by the opportunity for parent/staff meetings and discussions. There are plans for pupils to receive three reports each year in the future. Reports on pupil's progress in both departments are detailed, informative and of good quality. The prospectus has been consistently upgraded to ensure compliance with the regulations.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school has formally adopted the FLT complaints procedures and practices and this is stated in the school prospectus. This fully meets the requirements. In addition, the prospectus states that a copy of the school's policies may be obtained by parents on request.

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 includes primary, secondary and sixth form departments and operates an integrated establishment controlled by a Trust with seven trustees who meet on a monthly basis with minutes taken. There is also a management team comprising the head teacher, the chief executive officer and two other trustees. The head teacher has recently been appointed but is already having a beneficial effect and impact on the school and has the support of trustees, staff, parents and pupils. Trustees have supporting sub-committees where appropriate, but the extent of the responsibility of each trustee and how these responsibilities connect with those of others is not always clear. The general judgement is of a happy school where the children are well cared for and well behaved, housed in good quality accommodation, and that learning is proceeding.

The formal responsibility structure of the Trust requires more clarification to ensure all the necessary functions are adequately covered on a regular and consistent basis and for trustees to ensure that duties are properly attended to in order to maintain consistent compliance with the regulations.

The school has managed effectively the extension of its intake to include primary children effectively and the two units in which the school operates will benefit from the closer supervision of the head teacher to ensure integration.

Could the organisation and management of the school be improved?

The improvements in systems, reporting and general overview instigated by the head teacher should be pursued vigorously and the integration of the two units in operational terms maintained.

The Trust could:

- have trust meetings organised to include the trustees acting collectively which will increase awareness of personal and collective accountability and responsibility. The head teacher could attend as required to deal with matters within his remit, and the presence of others, as necessary, be included by invitation;
- ensure compliance on statutory requirements as a matter of urgency. To assist in this a named trustee could be assigned the responsibility for compliance;
- ensure that Trust minutes should be extended to indicate that matters where an action has been indicated at a previous meeting are followed up at the subsequent meeting;
- extend the Development Plan to provide for continuity of operation in the light of the relative short term tenure of the primary building and that a legal agreement should be entered into for this building to provide certainty; and
- expedite the sixth form integration under the overall control of the head teacher to provide for senior pupil assistance, timetable accountability within the school and continuity and consistency of learning through 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.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk.