

# 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:	Elsworth House
DFE number:	372/6003
FOCUS number:	215
<b>Inspection team:</b> Reporting Inspector: Supporting Inspectors: Lay Inspector:	Simon Bennett Meg Buckingham Peter Jones Douglas Siderfin
Dates of inspection:	4 to 7 May 2010

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## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Elsworth House School

Address of the school: Rother Way  
Hellaby Estate  
Rotherham  
South Yorkshire  
S66 8QN

Telephone number: 01709 533770 (Secondary)  
01709 549059 (Primary)

Fax number: 01709 739471

Email address: [ehss.admin@focus-school.com](mailto:ehss.admin@focus-school.com)

Proprietor: Target Learning Trust

Name of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs): Stephen Smith  
Michael Thomas  
Bernard Hoare

Name of Senior Teacher (Senior): Mrs Pam Storey  
Name of Senior Teacher (Primary): Mrs Dorothy Hewitt

DFE number: 372/6003

FOCUS number: 215

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: 44	Girls: 60
	(Part time)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0

Number of post-16 students: 15

Number of pupils with statements of special educational need:

	Boys: 0	Girls: 1
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Annual fees: No fees charged

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

Inspection Team:

Reporting Inspector: Simon Bennett  
Supporting Inspectors: Meg Buckingham; Peter Jones  
Lay Inspector: Douglas Siderfin

Dates of inspection: 4 to 7 May 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 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:**

Elsworth House School is an independent day school for girls and boys aged between seven and eighteen years in Rotherham, South Yorkshire. Pupils travel to school from Rotherham, Doncaster, Sheffield and Chesterfield. It is registered with the DCSF as a school with a special religious character and is affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) established by the Brethren. The Christian ethos, based on the teachings of the Holy Bible underpins all aspects of school life. In 2004 the school moved to its present site and provided full-time education for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and students in Year 12. In September 2007 the school extended the age range with the addition of a Year 13 and opened a primary school for Key Stage 2 on the same site. The primary and secondary schools have a senior teacher for each. There are three named Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), one of whom is designated for primary.

### **Summary of main findings:**

Elsworth House is highly successful in fulfilling its aims. It provides an education of good quality, and some of the provision, particularly in those areas relating to pupils' personal development and their welfare, health and safety, is outstanding. The school has made substantial progress since the last inspection in meeting the recommendations put forward at that time. This is most evident in the improved levels of communication between the two parts of the school, and between the senior teachers and the now established triumvirate of CEOs. Lines of responsibility are clear, routine personal and long term communication are more effective, and there is a strongly shared and underlying sense of purpose. Teaching is good, and nearly a third of lessons was outstanding. This excellence was seen in a range of subjects and across the year groups. Pupils set and exhibit high standards of behaviour and work positively with each other and with staff. They enjoy responsibilities and that enjoyment is clear in their learning and their conduct around the school. They think for themselves, behave with openness, but display a strong work ethic. The curriculum is relatively broad and balanced up to GCSE, and much thought has been given to widening access to A Levels. The whole school site offers a bright and lively environment for learning.

### **What the school does well:**

- The enjoyment, conduct and enthusiasm of the pupils;
- Teachers' strong knowledge of pupils as seen through the classroom, through assessment and through social interaction;

- The school's emphasis on the welfare, health and safety of the pupils;
- The good use of the learning environment and of space;
- It is a strong community with a real sense of purpose.

### **Next Steps**

Although not obliged to do so, the school is recommended to consolidate provision in Key Stage 5 and consider further ways of matching provision to the needs of individual pupils at that level.

### **What the school must do to comply with the regulations:**

The school is compliant with all regulations.

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

- The school complies with the DDA.

## **PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION**

### **The quality of education provided by the school**

#### **The quality of the curriculum**

The curriculum provides a good framework through which pupils learn effectively. It is generally broad and provides an interesting learning experience. The school achieves its aim to provide a curriculum that *'... is designed to provide for all students, in a safe and secure environment conducive to learning, the opportunities to study a broad and balanced curriculum... give them experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education...'* meeting the requirements in full. The curriculum is based on the national curriculum and that of the Focus Learning Trust (FLT). It is supported by an appropriate range of documentation including schemes of work for all age groups. These are based on those of FLT subject manuals and commercial schemes.

The primary curriculum this year has included all the National curriculum subjects with the additions of personal, social and health education (PSHE), Bible studies, with French being taught by a specialist modern language secondary teacher. At Key Stage 2, a strong emphasis is given to literacy and mathematics reflecting the National Curriculum Primary Literacy and Numeracy strategies, and these areas have an appropriate allocation of time. Enrichment activities, including visits and topic-based art and craft, using a variety of materials and gardening, form an integral part of the curriculum. Often a cross curricular approach is taken with topics helping pupil to make links in their learning. For example, a visit to Creswell Crags by pupils in Class 3 helped their learning, not only in geography and history but also enhanced their creative skills, with their evocative ink drawings of the crags.

Primary planning is methodical, over a two year cycle, using FLT and commercial schemes within the ethos of the school. Teachers annotate these materials in keeping with the class and individual pupils' needs. The senior teacher in the primary section checks planning weekly, and there is a good climate of monitoring and review. Teachers act upon pupils' assessment information and this influences their subsequent planning.

Increasingly, pupils are assisted in the transition between Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils in Year 6 say they enjoy using the specialist design and technology (D&T) facilities in secondary section. An interesting induction programme in the summer term gives them a useful insight into a secondary lesson. There is good liaison between teachers in sharing assessment information about individual pupils as they move into Key Stage 3. Furthermore, in Year 6, lesson objectives are shared with the pupils in a way akin to that in secondary subject lessons.

At Key Stage 3 learning includes all the subjects in the National Curriculum with French, the single modern foreign language. In addition, pupils continue to benefit from PSHE, citizenship lessons and Bible studies. Suitable specialist accommodation enables pupils to undertake practical investigation, for example, in science, and to hone their information and communication (ICT) skills using computers. Since the last inspection, D&T learning is now more firmly established at this Key Stage as all pupils have lessons in food or textiles and resistant materials.

At Key Stage 4, all pupils follow GCSE courses in English, mathematics, science, French, geography, history, a short course in citizenship, as well as an examination in ICT. In addition, pupils can choose between D&T (Resistant Materials) or Graphics and the well-established FLT Textiles course. Pupils' personal development continues to be well supported with lessons each week in non-examined subjects such as music (singing) PSHE, Bible Studies and physical education (PE).

Secondary subject planning is based on FLT and National Curriculum materials and at Key Stage 4, examination syllabi. While varying in format, they are used effectively to support learning.

There have been significant improvements in post-16 provision since the last inspection. All students are now full time and additional subjects are on offer. The clear aim is to provide a curriculum so that students can study '... a combination of courses to meet their individual learning needs and academic targets, to attain university entrance levels...' Currently, students have options to study a combination of advanced level (AL) and vocational and business orientated courses, in keeping with this aim. Choices include English (AL or Business English), construction (Year 13) and AL courses in geography, history, mathematics, physics and D&T - Product Design. In addition, City and Guilds Culinary skills; a Certificate in Personal Effectiveness (COPE) course can now be studied. All students have lessons in PE, Bible studies, current affairs, PSHE and music.

This phase continues to be a priority for the trustees and senior management as they seek to offer courses that meet the needs of students' varying abilities and in line with pupils' preferences to provide a personalised curriculum, albeit within the constraints of resources, including staffing and the very small cohort numbers. In meeting the school aims, planning will involve consolidating this improvement, in the range and level of courses on offer to meet the economic changes and challenges in employment for students in the future.

The curriculum enables all pupils to gain skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They have a good start in the primary, and by the time they leave the sixth form pupils are confident and lively communicators. Together with their excellent personal development pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their lives.

Careers education is developing well. Pupils gain an insight into the world of work through work experience in Years 10 and 11. Post-16 students feel they are given good opportunities in preparation for the next stage of employment. They practise writing CVs and are interviewed in work-like conditions for the post of prefects, gaining valuable experience. Post-school study through, for example, distance learning is encouraged.

Additional opportunities are available for students by Virtual classroom links, and they enjoy advanced courses in physics and accounts, being taught by specialist teachers from other Focus schools.

PSHE is taught throughout the age range in keeping with the ethos of the school, and makes a good contribution to pupils' knowledge and their excellent personal development.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in after school activities such as making music in choir and orchestra, as was demonstrated in the music concert. Primary pupils

enjoy homework clubs. A wide range of educational visits effectively support learning. For example, primary pupils visited Abbeydale industrial hamlet and this brought Victorian life alive for pupils. Older pupils have visited the Houses of Parliament. All this supports learning in class and extends pupils' horizons.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

The teaching enables pupils to acquire knowledge and make progress according to their ability. There was a great deal of evidence across the school in a wide range of subjects of pupils applying themselves and contributing actively to the development of lessons with enjoyment often evident. Overall, teaching was good, with just under a third of lessons excellent, and again, these were across a range of subjects and year groups. The characteristics of the best lessons were evident in good clear planning, interaction between pupils and staff, active participation by pupils, and by staff attention to the needs of individuals through variety of tasks and pace, and a strong sense of enjoyment. The handful of lessons which were judged to be satisfactory lacked vitality and a range of pace and activities. Pupils are encouraged to think and learn for themselves. Teachers know them well and use the information they have about pupils' aptitudes to good effect. Subject knowledge is strong and backed by great enthusiasm. Classroom resources and displays throughout the school are of good quality, and space is used to good effect. This contributes to enhancing the environment for pupils' learning. The school is well lit and bright. Senior management in both parts of the school are highly supportive and encouraging of the teachers.

The school has in place a range of appropriate assessment policies and practices. These ensure that pupils' work is well marked and assessed, that progress is carefully monitored, and that assessment information is used to help plan lessons which meet the collective and individual learning needs of pupils.

The FLT assessment policy provides the school with a framework of bench-mark assessments including the Suffolk Reading Test, PIE and PIM (Progress in En and Ma), and CATs. These are used increasingly by the school to predict pupil performance in Key Stage 3, GCSE and AS/A2. The imminent FLT move to SIMS Assessment Manager will support this use of data to track progress.

Teachers have good and secure knowledge of individual pupils' aptitudes, learning needs, and attainment and progress over time. The school makes careful records of pupils' progress and these are shared to ensure continuity, including across the transition from Year 6 to Year 7. The consistency with which teachers record progress helps assessment to be good, and effective in the different subject areas. Good use is made of National Curriculum (NC) Levels to identify levels of attainment and to help pupils understand how to improve. The school uses examination assessment criteria very effectively to support older pupils, including those who are identified as performing at grade boundaries. This attention to detail, applied as it is to small groups well known to the teacher, underpins good teaching. In the primary school, pupils have individual target books so they know for what they are aiming. These books are used effectively in assessment and planning.

Weekly staff meetings are used to good effect to note and comment on individual progress, with particular attention to those pupils who are identified as having difficulties and being in need of support. Termly targets, shared with parents, are set for pupils in the secondary school, and these indicate clearly how pupils can improve across subject areas.

The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The Focus Learning Trust (FLT) SEN policy provides a suitable structure for the management of SEN provision. The one statemented pupil has FT TA support. Pupils with SEN make good progress as a result of the school's approach to accurate tracking of progress. An in-house FLT inclusion register and IEPs enable the school to pay close attention to the progress of SEN pupils.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

### **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The school enables pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. This is evident in their conduct in class, their contribution to the life of the community, their enjoyment of responsibility and their behaviour round the school. They respect each other and the staff, know what is expected of them and distinguish right from wrong. They contribute to the world around them, raising funds for charities and visiting a local care home. They are well aware of pupil institutions and services, and appreciate and respect their own and other cultures. They were well informed about current political issues, and deeply interested in the possibility and potential impact of a hung parliament. Their awareness of the world around them is evident in prominent displays about the school, through the content of the curriculum and its application, and in every day conversation.

Links have been made with other schools through video-conferencing, pupils have visited the House of Commons and been visited by the local Member of Parliament. The cultural development of the school is evident in the pupils' art, their music and their ability to communicate articulately. Their sense of right and wrong is strongly reinforced by the interaction between home and school.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

### **The welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Pupils have regular PE and games sessions. Younger pupils use on-site areas with older pupils using local sports facilities. A suitable range of activities includes tag rugby, football, hockey, cricket and cross-country running. They enjoy their games sessions, and participate in an organised sports day. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily. They eat a good quality hot meal together twice a week and the school encourages healthy packed lunches on other days. Pupils prepare healthy recipes in cookery lessons, and learn about nutrition in Science. In PSHE they learn about the dangers to their health of smoking and drugs, including alcohol.

The school has thorough and up-to-date policies to ensure provision for welfare health and safety. Focus Learning Trust (FLT) policies and documents are in place covering all the key areas of welfare, health and safety referred to in the regulations. The school has well-established strategies, supported by recent staff training, to combat bullying. Pupils know about and are confident in the schools' approach to bullying. Suitable training in safeguarding has been undertaken by staff and trustees. The school has a comprehensive range of health and safety checks and policies in

place. Risk assessments for school visits are well organised. Arrangements for risk assessment and safety checks, including COSHH regulations, are thorough and up to date.

The school has a suitable policy and arrangements for accidents and First Aid, including trained First Aiders and First Aid boxes checked monthly. Individual Health Care Plans and Epi pens are kept centrally. Fire safety arrangements are in place, with suitable procedures and log books for fire evacuation, fire risk assessments and checks on fire alarms and extinguishers. The school has a behaviour policy known to all, and keeps good records of any sanctions

The school keeps a suitable admissions register. Attendance registers are kept well, and recording of absences has been rigorous, but this has raised the matter of how to record days when the school is not in session. This has been discussed with the school and with FLT. The school has a policy and procedures that meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, focused on meeting the needs of pupils to ensure that they have good access to the buildings and the curriculum.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

### **Suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The school fully understands the requirements relating to the CRB checks. They follow CRB procedures closely and adhere to the FLT policies and guidance. Checks are completed appropriately, and the Central Register is in order and is maintained systematically. The school meets all the regulations relating to the suitability of the proprietor and staff, and has worked hard to ensure that all procedures are followed.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

### **Suitability of the premises and accommodation**

The school makes good use of its premises and accommodation. All the required facilities are in place throughout the school. The primary section is well organised; the good sized classrooms and other areas are arranged to provide an environment that supports pupils' learning. In the secondary phase the more compact accommodation is well used. In consequence plans are in hand to modify some existing spaces to increase their size, while the trustees have active plans for alternative premises. All areas of the school are bright, clean and tidy and pupils of all ages respect their environment. The standard of display is high throughout; pupils' achievements and work are celebrated and informative posters assist pupils' knowledge.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

### **The quality of information for parents**

All the requirements of "Information to Parents and Carers" are met. The prospectus and handbook provided contain information as to where the regulatory policies can be located. The policies are readily available and were checked and found to be operating and current.

An illustrated newsletter is sent out every half-term (copies are filed), and likewise the necessary and full annual pupil reports. These communications are augmented by Target Setting letters, Parents Evenings, Presentation Evenings, and Open Afternoons throughout the year.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes

### **The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure**

The complaints procedure is clearly shown in the prospectus and handbook, and the accompanying documentation was found to be in order. There have been no formal complaints lodged.

The Parents' Questionnaire revealed no evidence of dissatisfaction in this area.

***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**

Since the previous inspection in 2007, it has become clear that the triumvirate of CEOs in conjunction with the senior teachers of both primary and secondary schools, has now gained full control and a firm grip of all aspects of the school organisation. An agenda and minutes of each weekly meeting of the above coupled with daily staff briefings by the Senior Teachers and monthly full trustee meetings, gives little room for any area of the school to be overlooked.

The facts presented and ascertained confirm that the corporate management of Elsworth House is operating to the best advantage for the pupils with little scope for error. The frequent orderly meetings ensure that cross communication at all levels is thorough and weaknesses in the academic area, or staff needs or in the practical premises area are dealt with quickly, with due follow-up.

The financial position is under constant surveillance and, after the cost of the recent addition of the Primary School, is again running on a more even keel. The management are, however, trying to find ways and means of increasing the classroom size within the constraints of the site.

The careful following of FLT guidelines and suitable spread of defined responsibilities is providing an atmosphere for steady forward growth. All the staff appreciate this atmosphere.

The Senior Teacher has the confidence of the trustees, the staff, the parents and the students which greatly facilitates the day to day running; this includes a relaxed working relationship between the secondary and primary sections.

### ***Could the organisation and management of the school be improved?***

Further research and activity is envisaged for the post-16 and careers opportunities.

A site is being pursued for alternative new premises.

**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](http://www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk)**