

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:	Highview School, Crewe Campus
DfE number:	895/6036
FOCUS number:	209
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Dr Martin Bradley Supporting Inspector: Mrs Cecile Corfield Lay Inspector: Mr Doug Siderfin
Dates of inspection:	14 th to 16 th June 2011

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Highview School, Crewe Campus

Address of school: The Stables,
Warmingham Road,
Crewe, CW1 4PP

Telephone number: 01270 250933

Fax number: 01270 215583

Email address: willowview@focus-school.com

Proprietor: Mereside Education Trust

Name of Chief Executive Officer: Alistair Simpson

Name of Senior Teacher: Maria Austin

DfE number: 895/6036

FOCUS number: 209

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

Fees: No fees charged

Age range of pupils and students: 7 to 11

Gender of pupils: Male and female

Total number on roll: (Full-time) Boys: 21 Girls: 13

Number of pupils with statements of special educational need: Boys: 0 Girls: 0

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

Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector: Dr Martin Bradley
Supporting Inspector: Mrs Cecile Corfield
Lay Inspector: Mr Doug Siderfin

Dates of inspection: 14th to 16th June 2011

SECTION 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 Education (DfE). 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:

Highview School, then called Willowview School, opened in 2007 to provide primary education for pupils who would go on to the Riverside Study Centre in Liverpool. In 2010, Riverside joined Highview School in Stockport and since then Willowview, renamed Highview School, Crewe Campus, has been run and managed by Mereside Educational Trust in Stockport, with the property and capital expenditure being the responsibility of Allerton Educational Trust. At the time of the inspection there were thirty-four pupils on roll, aged from seven to eleven. None had a statement of special educational needs and none had English as an additional language. The pupils come from families of the Brethren communities, mainly in Chester and Crewe, and from Year 7 attend the Stockport school, which is separately registered with the DfE and so is not part of the present inspection and report. The school was last inspected in 2008.

The school's trustees' duty is 'to ensure that all aspects of school life are in accord with the Holy Bible'. The school aims 'to provide the best opportunity to acquire knowledge and develop skills in a safe and protected learning environment enabling students to become motivated, mature, self-disciplined, effective managers of themselves, their time and their finances; able to think morally, logically and clearly; with a determination never to give up but to win'.

Summary of main findings:

The quality of education at Highview School, Crewe Campus is good. Teaching is good overall, although it varies between the classes, so that pupils' progress is good by the end of Year 6. The best lessons promote good behaviour and in these the pupils make good progress. Elsewhere, lesson objectives consider areas besides the lesson's subject matter, diverting pupils' attention from the lesson's theme, leading to a slower pace of work and restlessness. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good, and the school has sought to develop their awareness of other cultures. This has improved since the last inspection. Arrangements for pupils' safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are good and all policies and procedures are followed conscientiously. The premises meet the regulatory requirements, apart from that relating to provision for children who are unwell. Relationships with parents are good, although several commented that they would like to have more regular information about their children's progress, particularly in terms of National Curriculum levels of attainment. All those associated

with the school have worked hard to promote effective links with Highview School's secondary department in Stockport.

What the school does well:

- it provides a good learning environment;
- its curriculum is extended effectively with French, citizenship, swimming and gardening;
- it ensures that pupils' behaviour is generally good; and
- its charitable work is a significant feature.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill.

The school complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Next Steps

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

- raise the quality of the teaching; and
- develop further pupils' awareness of a range of cultures.

SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of education is good overall, although a number of aspects are only satisfactory. The curriculum is of good quality. It is broad and balanced and includes linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative aspects. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and for citizenship is satisfactory with good elements, and the school's Christian ethos contributes to this effectively. By the end of Year 6 the pupils make good progress, which provides a good basis for future life. The school follows the National Curriculum, supplemented by French and swimming. It also encourages pupils to tend the well-planned garden area where vegetables are grown. Science is also supplemented by the use of effective hides from which birds can be observed. History and geography are taught through topics.

Although the two classes contain mixed-age groups, these are sometimes reorganised, as when some younger pupils join Years 5 and 6 for mathematics. This is appropriate provision which is managed effectively. In a numeracy lesson for the older pupils, good mental arithmetic skills were shown when the pupils quickly converted fractions into percentages and decimals. This practical work reinforced the computational exercises in their books. All pupils were involved, including some Year 4 pupils who had joined the older ones.

There is a variety of good support for pupils' individual learning needs. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and provided with additional one-to-one and small group support, as are those with learning difficulties. Individual learning plans are carefully prepared and reviewed by the senior teacher. The special educational needs teacher follows effectively a published programme for learning support.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is good, and pupils make good progress by the end of Year 6. In the older class, teaching is good, and in the younger class much of it is satisfactory, sometimes lacking in rigour. The best teaching is well paced with clear and manageable objectives; pupils are able to focus on their tasks and work with enjoyment and good concentration. Their response in such lessons is good and occasionally outstanding, and their achievement is particularly good. Where lessons are satisfactory, the objectives are insufficiently specific, the pace of work is slower and the tasks do not address the lesson's themes. Although the pupils remain interested in their work, they easily become distracted and their efforts do not address the main purpose of the lesson.

The teaching encourages the pupils to make intellectual, physical and creative efforts. They are able to think and learn for themselves and use reference materials to support their learning. The teachers know their pupils well and carefully plan to meet the needs of the different age groups in their classes. In most lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge and use resources effectively. This is

demonstrated most clearly when materials of good quality and quantity are prepared before the lesson, so reducing the time spent by pupils waiting to start work.

The pupils are set targets which are revised during the year. These relate to the core subjects as well as to aspects of presentation. They are not linked to National Curriculum levels, although the pupils are aware of the level at which they were working as indicated in their last annual report. They also do not have a clear view of how they might raise their achievement to higher National Curriculum levels, although the targets and comments in their exercise books provide general indications of ways of improving. Most subjects' exercise books are marked, often with useful comments, although a number of errors go uncorrected.

A range of assessments is used, including reading, writing and number tests, together with predictive assessments relating current achievement to potential achievement by the end of Key Stage 2. In some cases the teachers' initial assessments of achievement are rather lower than the test results. The results of the range of assessments are used to identify pupils' needs for support, as where twenty-one receive one-to-one support using a computer program to aid spelling and word memory. This has enabled the school to predict pupils' progress, with nearly all achieving at or above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 2 - The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. Their attendance is very good and they grow in self-confidence during their time in school. Parents say that their children enjoy coming to school and the pupils agree very strongly. Through the school's religious ethos, pupils are given clear social and moral guidance. They have a clear understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and this results in good behaviour in lessons and at break times. However, a group of boys in Year 3/4 showed signs of restlessness which hindered their learning. The attention given to pupils' spiritual development in and out of school has a strong, positive influence on their personal development.

The pupils are taught to value their own culture and are provided with some experiences to promote awareness of different cultural traditions and backgrounds. This aspect of the school's provision has improved since the last inspection. The pupils have studied musical instruments from around the world. They have enjoyed a Chinese workshop involving a visit of four members of the Confucius Centre, Manchester. Opportunities are provided for stories, songs and poems from around the world and the pupils have experienced working in the style of aboriginal art. Interesting discussions took place when the pupils looked at the symbolic representation of the aboriginal environment. The school recognises that, despite improvements, this remains an area for further development.

Fund-raising for charities here and overseas is a regular feature of school life, often organised by the pupils themselves. They are fully aware that there are those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils and their families have donated clothing for the

needy in Africa, and generous donations are made to a range of charities which include the Royal National Lifeboat Institute, Guide Dogs for the Blind and the British Heart Foundation.

Pupils' social development is good. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to collaborate in lessons. Pupils have a full range of responsibilities, which include bird feeding, pencil monitors, bins, library and storeroom. They are proud to talk about their tasks. The school council has a voice in the running of the school. The council is currently discussing new playground equipment. Pupils are aware of the benefits of recycling. Weekly assemblies are mainly led by pupils. Topics covered recently include environmental issues, such as litter, anti-bullying and friendships. This helps pupils to develop a clear awareness of the effect their actions have on themselves and others. Pupils have discussed the New Zealand earthquake and the Chilean mining disaster. They have a good awareness of institutions and public services in the United Kingdom.

The emphasis placed on speaking and listening helps pupils to develop good communication skills and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Good work, good behaviour and helpfulness are rewarded with stars and comments in work books. Special pieces of work are included in the Golden Book. If the pupils have worked hard and shown acceptable behaviour, they can take part in enrichment activities on a Friday afternoon, which include, for example, gardening, baking, sewing, weaving and table top games. The pupils appreciate these opportunities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good and meets all of the regulations. Safeguarding of pupils is good. All of the required policies are in place and procedures are effective. Building and fire risk assessments are carried out conscientiously, as are risk assessments before out-of-school visits. Only one member of staff has a qualification in first aid, but she and the teaching assistant are booked to undertake further training at the end of this term. Trustees, teachers and volunteers undertook appropriate child protection training in March 2010.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know that there is always an adult to whom they can turn if they have a problem. Rare instances of bullying are mainly verbal and are dealt with promptly. Accidents in school are managed effectively and details are logged appropriately. Supervision throughout the school day is good and the pupils state that they feel well cared for.

The pupils are encouraged to develop healthy life-styles in PSHE, science and cookery. Healthy eating and the need for physical exercise are given a high priority during the school day and in the curriculum. Swimming lessons are much appreciated by the pupils. The behaviour policy specifies the range of rewards for good work and effort, and sanctions are detailed for unacceptable behaviour. The school has a book in which to record any incidents of misbehaviour, and there are no inclusions to date.

Fire drills are held regularly and appropriate records are kept. All fire equipment, including alarms, is checked thoroughly. The school has had a fire risk assessment undertaken by a commercial company. The school is aware of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 as amended by the Equality Act 2010, and has an appropriate policy and statement of how the provision can be improved over the next three years.

The admission register and attendance registers contain all the required information.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 4 - Suitability of the staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has updated its details of the checks conducted on all staff and volunteers and these are contained appropriately in a single central register. Safeguarding checks are fully carried out.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The premises were converted to their present use about eight years ago. They are appropriate for the numbers of pupils and are clean and well-maintained. Good displays enhance the learning environment. Classrooms and other areas are clean and generally tidy. The school has extensive grounds, including a large field, a gardening area and hard-surfaced play areas. These are used well.

The premises have been carefully designed to allow all pupils, including any with special needs, to enter, work in and leave the school in safety and comfort. Hot meals are provided one day a week, and facilities for their preparation, serving and consumption are hygienic.

Pupils who are ill have a folding bed in the staffroom and use the adult female washbasin and toilet. This shared washroom provision is inappropriate.

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 School Standards Regulations 2003, the school should:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 23(k)).

PART 6 - The quality of information for parents

The school meets all of the regulatory requirements. Parents are generally satisfied with the quality of information which they receive, although a minority commented that they were not as aware of their children's progress as they would wish, especially in relation to National Curriculum expectations. Reports are provided once a year and there are two parents' meetings each year. Again, some parents would prefer more opportunities to meet with staff to discuss their children's progress.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 7 - The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school has adopted the Focus Learning Trust's complaints procedures, and the arrangements fully meet the regulatory requirements. There were no complaints in the last year.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

SECTION C: ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT, AND MAINTENANCE OF THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

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 recent amalgamation of Riverside and Mereside schools, along with their primary schools and Willowview Primary (the one currently inspected), into one school known as Highview School has resulted in a temporarily very large number of trustees, nineteen in all. There are currently two trusts operating - the Mereside Education Trust, which runs the schools' operations, and the Allerton Education Trust, which controls the property and facilities.

This school is under the daily management of a local trustee (titled the Primary Manager) with the assistance of a senior trustee with whom he and the senior teacher have regular very well-minuted management meetings covering all aspects of the daily needs. They are joined three or four times a term by the head/senior teacher from Highview Secondary School. Regular contact is made with the senior teacher of the primary school at Stockport and others as necessary. Both trustees do, of course, attend the full six-weekly trustee meetings at Stockport.

The school is set in ample grounds. There is good tarmac and grass apportionment with a wide, safe, well marked entrance, a separate exit, pick-up points, parking and well fenced recreational areas. There is also a two-acre playing field, with separate areas for gardening and other outdoor training pursuits. The whole appearance is clean, tidy and well cared for.

The two teachers, together with an assistant, a part-time special educational needs qualified teacher, a part-time music teacher and a number of volunteers, provide a happy and relaxed atmosphere. All thirty-four parents confirmed that their children like this school. There is clearly a suitable and well-led dedication to the prosperity of the school by all concerned with it.

Focus Learning Trust procedures and guidelines are respected, adopted and practised.

Can the organization and management be improved?

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

- delegate to another employee the many clerical tasks (including filing, typing, writing letters, sickness monitoring) presently undertaken by the senior teacher; and
- keep parents more informed as to the progress of their children, such as by the provision of an extra report per year and having additional opportunities for parent-teacher meetings.

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