

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:	Surrey Hills School
DfE number: FOCUS number:	936/6073 513
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mrs Eileen McAndrew Supporting Inspectors: Mr Brian FitzGerald Mr Peter Jones Lay Inspectors: Mr Douglas Siderfin Mr Colin Blake
Dates of inspection:	8 - 10 November 2011

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Section C: The quality of organisation and management

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Surrey Hills School	
Address of school:	Little Woodcote Centre Telegraph Track Carshalton Surrey SM5 4AZ	
Telephone number:	020 8 773 9966	
Fax number:	020 8647 7101	
Email address:	surrey.hills@focus-school.com	
Proprietor:	Oakhill Education Trust	
Name of Chief Executive Officer:	Mr Neil Hardwick	
Name of Head Teacher:	Mr Khushbir Sodhi	
DfE number:	936/6073	
FOCUS number:	513	
Type of school:	Independent school affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust	
Age range of pupils and students:	7-18	
Gender of pupils:	Male and female	
Total number on roll: (Full time)	Boys: 69	Girls: 60
Number of post-16 students:	Boys: 12	Girls: 8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need:	Boys: 0	Girls: 1
Type of inspection:	Section 162A of the Education Act 2002	
Inspection Team:	Reporting Inspector: Mrs Eileen McAndrew Supporting Inspectors: Mr Brian FitzGerald Mr Peter Jones Lay Inspectors: Mr Douglas Siderfin Mr Colin Blake	
Dates of inspection:	8-10 November 2011	

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 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 (FLT). Their 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:

Surrey Hills is an independent day school for girls and boys aged from seven to eighteen, situated in rural surroundings near Carshalton in Surrey. It consists of a secondary school established on the present site in 2003 and a primary school opened in September 2007 on a site about a mile away. All of the pupils are from families within the Brethren community and the school is affiliated to FLT and is registered as a school of Special Religious Character. There are currently 129 pupils on roll, of whom 78 are in the secondary school and 51 in the primary. Admission is non-selective. One pupil of secondary age has a statement of special educational needs. The mission statement of the school makes clear that the school *'subscribes to a Christian ethos intended to support parents seeking an education for their children based on Scriptural values and Christian beliefs'*. Pupils travel to the school from homes in Croydon, Reigate, Sutton and south London.

The school was last inspected in October 2008.

Summary of main findings:

Surrey Hills School succeeds in providing a good quality of education characterised by significant outstanding features. It achieves its stated aim as the trustees and headteacher have established a pervading Christian ethos which directly guides and influences all aspects of the school's life and work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The curriculum is good with specific areas of strength. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Assessment is outstanding and, as a consequence, pupils become effective learners, who make good and often excellent progress and achieve very well. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and contributes significantly to their learning. Procedures and practice to safeguard pupils' welfare are outstanding and pupils feel safe and secure in school. Pupils of all ages said in discussion that they really enjoy coming to school, and parents are unreservedly supportive of the school and the education it provides for their children.

The school has continued to improve since its last inspection.

What the school does well:

- it encourages all pupils to become active, participating learners;
- it uses assessment data very effectively to inform lesson planning, identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses and track their progress;
- it fosters the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school very effectively so that pupils settle swiftly and are ready to learn; and
- it promotes and fosters the professional development of teaching assistants extremely well, contributing significantly to pupils' good progress.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

The school meets all regulatory requirements.

What the school must do to comply with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets all requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

Next Steps

Although not a requirement, the school might like to consider the following point for development in order to improve its provision further:

- improve medium-term planning in Key Stage 2 to extend and enrich the basic schemes of work through increased subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

PART 1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum overall, including all required areas of learning and with particular strengths in Key Stage 3 and post-16. The decisions the school has made about the curriculum reflect the guidance it receives from FLT as well as the preferences of the pupil and parent community.

The curriculum documents set out the subjects to be taught and show how the school achieves a generally broad and balanced provision. Schemes of work are closely based on FLT guidance and examination syllabuses and they systematically identify the range of topics to be covered in each subject. Some schemes of work include valuable additional curriculum materials, drawing on the subject expertise of the teachers and helping to ensure that the provision is tailored to meet the needs of particular age groups. Schemes of work, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4 and post-16, lead to consistently good lesson planning which is thorough in identifying precise learning objectives. The overall curricular provision includes specific accelerated learning courses for more able pupils helping to ensure that they make rapid progress.

Specialist provision enriches the curriculum in music. Opportunities for instrumental music tuition are extensive and a large proportion of pupils benefit. The school orchestra gives members opportunities for performances to use their skills for the enjoyment of their peers and the community. The school choir enhances pupils' aesthetic learning through the development of high standards in singing. The school makes very good use of its location for visits out of school which add depth to pupils' learning through the immediacy of first-hand experience. The range of visits includes an environmental focus at Woburn Safari Park to study endangered species at home and abroad, visits to sites of historical interest like Hampton Court as well as an exploration of institutions which play a key role in modern-day life, such as the Houses of Parliament and Sandhurst Military Academy.

The Key Stage 2 curriculum closely follows the schemes of work provided by the FLT and gives pupils satisfactory experience in all the required areas of learning, including literacy, numeracy and science, technology, the arts and humanities. In some areas of the curriculum, for example, in accelerated mathematics, which extends from the primary into the secondary school, the subject expertise of the teacher is used effectively to boost the quality of provision. In other subject areas such as art, geography and science too much reliance is placed on the published schemes of work and not enough is done to use subject expertise to enrich or enliven these schemes, with the result that teaching in these subjects is not always as vigorous as it might be.

In Key Stage 3 the curriculum makes good use of teachers' subject expertise to provide a broad and well-judged curriculum covering all the required areas, and includes art, music, French and personal, social and health education (PSHE) with citizenship. Pupils' learning experience in food and nutrition is of a high quality and rightly gives them a sense of achievement and great enjoyment. Similarly, pupils

enjoy the good programme of work in design and technology and gain good experience in physical education (PE) and office and communication skills. Bible Studies help to ensure that pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of the principles and values upon which their beliefs are founded.

In Key Stage 4 the curriculum continues to provide an appropriate range of core and foundation subjects as well as PSHE and citizenship, Bible studies, construction for boys and food and nutrition for girls. In addition, in Year 10 pupils study a useful course in office skills. Some pupils take Level 2 Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) in business studies in place of French or history, as this option better meets their needs. The school does not offer music at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), although opportunities for non-examination music continue to enrich the curriculum. The absence of art at GCSE level and post-16 limits the scope the school has to extend pupils' art experience beyond Key Stage 3.

The post-16 curriculum is well suited to students' learning needs and to their post-sixth form destinations in business, reflecting as far as possible the stated preferences of students. The range of subjects includes English, mathematics, PSHE, games, Bible Studies, construction for boys and food and nutrition for girls. Current affairs and public speaking add a significant dimension alongside geography, accounts, business studies, office skills and BTEC business and BTEC law. Appropriate careers advice and opportunities for work experience form an integral part of the curriculum. An interesting development is the innovative biomedical science course for pupils in Year 12 which gives sixth form students an understanding of disease and the way it is treated and controlled.

Pupils of all abilities make good and often outstanding progress in learning. Over the last three years, attainment in literacy, numeracy and science at the end of Key Stage 2 has consistently improved, and in 2010 to 2011 the majority of pupils' attainment was above the national average. GCSE results show improvement over the three years from 2008 to 2010, with 100% A*-C grades in 2010, with a dip in 2011 reflecting a slightly less able cohort. Good progress is made in the sixth form with exceptional attainment at BTEC Level 3 and Advanced Level.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding and practice in assessment is outstanding. These factors ensure that pupils acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding and make good and sometimes outstanding progress according to their ability across both the primary and secondary schools.

Good policies are in place for teaching, learning and assessment and classroom practice implements them effectively. Individual lesson planning is consistently good because teachers make productive use of the high quality assessment information to meet the differing needs of pupils. Lessons are well organised and structured in all key stages. Teachers employ a good range of strategies and make good provision through differentiated tasks for those pupils who have specific difficulties and those who are particularly talented or gifted. A high level of additional classroom support is given to pupils who experience learning difficulty by the well-trained and effectively briefed teaching assistants.

The number of pupils in classes is small, allowing swift and direct support for individuals and groups. In a Year 3 lesson in literacy, the two learning assistants were very well deployed to support a group of pupils, listening to them read and then helping each child to adopt the part of one of the characters and the narrator. Each group then gave a performance to the rest of the class. They did this with remarkable aptitude and achievement; acting out the characters' feelings of fear, surprise and suspense. A good range of published texts and subject-specific materials support learning in all key stages and the library supports the curriculum well and encourages pupils' continued reading. The school has increased computing facilities for use in teaching, especially in the business courses in the secondary school.

Teachers in the primary school are experienced and confident in teaching literacy and numeracy and as a result pupils make good progress in these key areas of learning. Teaching in some other subjects in the primary school relies too heavily on the FLT schemes of work and is not sufficiently extended for these pupils. This limits the scope and variety of learning experience in some of the lessons. Teachers in the secondary school are mainly subject specialists with good subject knowledge and the skill and enthusiasm to engender effective learning. This was particularly apparent in a Year 10 history lesson on the topic of the rise of Hitler to power. The teacher was skilled in challenging the pupils to think carefully, to use their knowledge and understanding of Germany in the 1930s to explore possible explanations for the Reichstag fire. They responded very well to the searching questions from the teacher and pupils of all abilities made very good progress.

Teachers across the school have generally high expectations which they communicate to the pupils so that they are clear about what is expected of them. Very good relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils contribute to the very productive learning atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are highly motivated; able to concentrate for extended periods and work hard at the tasks they are given. Good teaching encourages and contributes to pupils' outstanding behaviour and in consequence lessons have a brisk pace and progress is rapid.

The marking of pupils' work throughout the school is generally good and supportive, especially so in literacy in the primary school and in the majority of subjects in the secondary. In the best examples, marking explains to pupils why aspects of their work are good and gives them clear guidance on the next steps for improvement. In some instances marking is cursory and limited to ticks, which gives pupils insufficient feedback on their work.

Assessment procedures and practice are outstanding. The school has a very good framework to assess pupils' performance on a regular basis and the data produced is used very effectively to inform teachers about pupils' performance; to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to track their progress. Very good use is made of target-setting at the end of units of work, closely involving the pupils themselves and helping them to monitor their own progress. Procedures to identify those with special needs and those who are gifted or talented are excellent, enabling teachers to plan appropriately for them. Individual education plans are written for pupils with special needs throughout the school, with manageable targets which are regularly reviewed. An enrichment course for those with particular abilities and a 'fast track' course in mathematics provide good quality extension for the more able pupils in the primary and secondary schools.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Spiritual development is strongly supported by the Biblical values emphasised by the school's ethos and the policies and practice which underpin all aspects of its provision. Extensive provision for instrumental music and the very high quality of pupils' singing contribute significantly to their aesthetic development.

Pupils' moral development is outstanding. They have an increasing understanding of right and wrong through the ethos of the school, which is based on Christian values and is supported by the curriculum and assemblies. In the primary school pupils extend their classroom rules which help them to reinforce their understanding of good conduct, reflect the ethos of the school and respect authority. Older pupils have a clear sense of the best behaviour and, without any loss of spontaneity, respond with consistent excellent conduct in class and around the school. Pupils relate harmoniously to one another and show consideration and care in their everyday relationships.

The social development of pupils is outstanding. They enjoy school and this is demonstrated by their outstanding behaviour, particularly when teaching is engaging and imaginative. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and their attendance is good. Pupils of all ages consistently work very effectively with each other, sharing knowledge and ideas and encouraging each other during paired and group work. In all key stages they collaborate well and are able to listen to each others' views, wait their turn and learn from one another. They are increasingly able to accept responsibility, as for example in the primary school, where prefects see their role as helping other pupils to behave well, observe the rules and contribute to the settled and secure atmosphere for learning. This was evident in their confident, mature participation in assembly where they awarded prizes to other pupils whose efforts were most notable.

Pupils' secure competence in basic and social skills supports their growing economic awareness and older pupils study business-related subjects which help to prepare them effectively for the world of work. Students and pupils show concern and compassion for others, helping to raise funds for various charities and displaying an increasing understanding of how they can contribute to the well-being of others. Secondary pupils vote for class representatives for the school council, helping them to understand the basic notion of democracy and their rights and responsibilities as individuals in society. The school council reflects the voice of the pupils and students to the trustees and pupils take this responsibility very seriously. They increasingly appreciate the notion of being a representative of the views of others and see it as their responsibility to contribute constructive ideas to improve aspects of school life. In citizenship pupils learn about public services and institutions in England, reinforced by visits to the Houses of Parliament and by a visit to the school from their Member of Parliament. These visits give pupils the valuable opportunity to ask direct questions of those who govern and to learn something about the complexities of democracy in action. During the inspection, the level of knowledge evident from the questions asked by older pupils exemplified their acute awareness

of the serious fiscal and political issues facing governments around the world and showed their maturity and understanding in identifying these so precisely.

The curriculum in geography, citizenship and PSHE helps pupils learn to increase their knowledge and appreciation of some aspects of other cultures and traditions. For example, in food and nutrition, pupils study the cuisine of various countries and students in Year 12 are shortly to visit the Good Food Show and see at first hand more of culinary traditions around the world. As yet, pupils are less knowledgeable about the values and achievements of the cultures represented in present-day multicultural Britain. The school is aware that this dimension is still developing and has rightly included this for continuing improvement in its development plan.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The trustees have ensured that all the required policies and procedures are in place and that everyday practice secures their effective implementation. The explicit Christian ethos and the sense of community create an environment in which pupils say that they feel safe and secure.

All aspects of safeguarding procedures are thorough and the school benefits from training and advice from the Local Authority. The headteacher is the designated person and he and all staff have been trained to the appropriate level. Procedures for staff recruitment are carried out rigorously. The effective implementation of the behaviour management policy by staff across the school strongly promotes pupils' outstanding behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to try hard through awards for effort and they greatly appreciate the celebration of their achievements in assemblies. Strategies to prevent bullying are well established. In discussions, younger pupils said that bullying was rare and that if it occurred they knew what to do and were confident staff would deal with it. Work in PSHE and themes in assembly contribute to pupils' understanding of the different manifestations of bullying and of action to combat it.

Supervision of pupils is assiduously organised and carried out conscientiously. The school's procedures for ensuring that routine checks are undertaken are meticulous. All aspects of site safety and maintenance are identified and regularly scrutinised to help ensure the safety of pupils and staff. First-aid procedures are clear and well understood. Fire safety is supported by policies and practice which ensure that required risk assessments are completed and that all fire warning and fire-fighting equipment is regularly tested and maintained by a specialist company.

The school encourages pupils to eat healthily through the curriculum in science, PSHE and food and nutrition. All pupils bring packed lunches which parents are encouraged to check contains a good balanced variety of foods. Pupils develop a growing awareness of the dangers to health from smoking and the misuse of alcohol. All pupils understand that exercise is an important part of healthy living and the curriculum for PE and games supports this aspect of development effectively and enjoyably.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school carries out all required checks on staff, trustees and volunteers, including those for the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). The single central record meets requirements fully.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation

The premises on both sites are suitable for their purpose. The quality of the accommodation in both school buildings is good although space is limited in the secondary school such that, for example, art and geography are taught in the same room. All buildings are maintained to a good standard.

The classrooms in both the primary and secondary schools provide good environments for learning and pupils' work and teaching materials are used to promote and celebrate learning. The primary school has a grassed area for sporting activity and play and, although the secondary school has no playing fields, very good use is made of a local sports centre. The secondary school utilises a small number of 'cabins' that are satisfactory but space for storage of materials in the woodwork room is limited. The adjoining room used for food and nutrition is spacious, well equipped and well suited for the purpose. Facilities for pupils in the primary school who may become ill are very good and those in the secondary school are adequate.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 6. The quality of information for parents and other partners

The school provides parents with clear and useful information through its prospectus and the good range of policies which support provision. The twice-termly newsletter helps to keep parents informed about the recent day-to-day school activities and forthcoming events. The Year Book is a published record of excellent quality which displays the wide range of activities, endeavours and achievements of pupils of all ages throughout the year. It also includes interesting and informative input from trustees, the head teacher and staff so that the voices of whole of the school community are represented.

The high proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire was overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. They believe that the school provides very well for their children. Detailed twice-yearly reports for each subject keep parents well informed about their child's progress.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

The school's complaints policy meets requirements fully. There were no complaints during the last year.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART C: ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT (SCHOOL ETHOS AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES)

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 was purpose built in 2003 for Sutton area pupils but since 2008 has been extended to accommodate the addition of pupils from Reigate, Croydon and south London. As a result, the premises have become somewhat cramped. However, all staff seem to accept the resultant constrictions happily because the classrooms and facilities are bright, cheerful and well ventilated and the whole atmosphere excellent.

The primary school, one mile away, is a well-adapted, more spacious building, completed in 2006, housing the 51 pupils and coming under the direct supervision of the head teacher. The transfer to the secondary school is a seamless operation.

The headteacher, while taking full care of all aspects of the daily running of the school, is happy to defer to the six trustees and is well respected at all levels. He is ably supported by the trustees and all members of the teaching and administrative staff. Relationships at all levels are relaxed and the communication system operates well with staff meetings and briefings held weekly.

The busy administration office is run very efficiently by a full-time secretary.

The trustees hold regular meetings which are fully minuted and the management responsibility chart is set out clearly. There is a comprehensive school improvement plan.

Discipline and pastoral care are handled by the form tutors via one-to-one conversations where required. Reports to parents are regular and other communications, including an attractive illustrated newsletter, are sent out twice-termly. In addition, a very good, extensive Year Book is produced, full of interesting information and photographs about the life and work of the school.

The prefects in both secondary and primary schools carry out their duties well. The senior prefects also provide valuable assistance as necessary in the primary department. The school council has members elected by each class and conducts its own meetings with prefects, a trustee or a teacher present. These meetings are minuted with responsibility and action columns included.

Could the organisation and management of the school be improved?

The trustees might like to take into consideration the following suggestion as to where a specific improvement could be made:

- improve the minutes of trustees' meetings by including a column for responsibility and an action completed date.

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