

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

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| Name of school: | Surrey Hills |
| DCSF number: | 319/6073 |
| FOCUS number: | 513 |
| Inspection team: | Reporting Inspector: Mike Thirkell Supporting Inspectors: Cecile Corfield Dr Roy Long Lay Inspector: David Kilbey |
| Dates of inspection: | 13 – 16 October 2008 |

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Section B: Compliance with regulations for registration

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SCHOOL DETAILS

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| Name of school: | Surrey Hills | |
| Address of the school: | Little Woodcote Centre, Telegraph Track, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 4AZ | |
| Telephone number: | 020 8773 9966 | |
| Fax number: | 020 8647 7101 | |
| Proprietor: | Oakhill Education Trust | |
| Name of Chief Executive Officer: | Mr Kevin Stanley | |
| Name of Senior Teacher: | Mr Khushbir Sodhi | |
| DCSF 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: 76 | Girls: 54 |
| Number of post-16 students: | Boys: 5 | Girls: 10 |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational need: | | |
| | Boys: 0 | Girls: 0 |
| Annual fees: | No fees charged | |
| Type of inspection: | Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 | |
| Inspection Team: | Reporting Inspector: | Mike Thirkell |
| | Supporting Inspectors: | Cecile Corfield Dr Roy Long |
| | Lay Inspector: | David Kilbey |
| Dates of inspection: | 13 – 16 October 2008 | |

PART A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service in accordance with Section 162(A) (1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by the Service and the Focus Learning Trust 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:

Surrey Hills is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between 7 and 18. It is situated on two sites in a rural location of the outskirts of Carshalton in Surrey. The school, which is affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, was registered with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in 2005 as a school of Special Religious Character. The mission statement reflects its special character, emphasising 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*'. The school draws its pupils from the surrounding areas of Croydon, Reigate, Sutton and South London.

The school extended its existing provision in September 2007 to include a primary department for pupils aged between 7 and 11 and at the same time extended the sixth form to include a Year 13. The primary department is located in buildings a short distance from the secondary school. At the time of this inspection there was a total of 130 full-time pupils attending the school, 56 of whom were in the primary department. This is the school's first regulatory inspection undertaken by the School Inspection Service (SIS). It received a routine monitoring visit by SIS in March 2006 and a further visit in June 2007, on behalf of the DCSF, to assess the suitability of accommodation for the proposed expansion of numbers to include primary aged pupils and the extended sixth form.

Summary of main findings:

Surrey Hills is a successful school where pupils are well cared for, receive a good quality of education and, as a result, make good academic progress. The achievements of pupils in public examinations at the end of Key Stage 4 are well above the average for schools in England. The staff work hard to support the pupils. Relationships between staff and young people are notably good and this has a significantly positive impact on the generally high quality of learning environment in both primary and secondary aspects of the school. Pupils are friendly and notably articulate relative to their ages. They say that they like being at the school and their parents unanimously support this view. The strong leadership and clear guidance provided by the headmaster and the trustees have supported the school in successfully establishing a flourishing primary department and a Year 13 provision. The school is meticulous in its attention to all administrative matters. It meets all the required regulations for independent schools in England.

What the school does well:

- its curriculum is thoroughly planned and effectively delivered;
- its teaching is good and frequently outstanding; its overall high quality is well supported by an effective programme of monitoring and professional development;
- its assessment strategies are used effectively to identify the individual learning needs of all pupils, including those who experience difficulties or who are very able;
- its provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is excellent; and
- its staff and the community work well together which supports the development of a positive ethos at all levels and which in turn reflects the strong ethos of the school community as a whole.

Next Steps:

Although not a requirement, the school might like to consider the following points for development as it seeks to improve its provision further:

- strengthen reporting procedures to parents in the secondary school;
- further develop tracking systems in the primary department; and
- develop the Year 13 curriculum in order to increase the range of subjects available.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is good and the provision has a number of outstanding features. It is suitably broad and is delivered effectively. The provision is supported in all respects by rigorously applied strategies for monitoring together with the effectiveness of whole school planning. Whilst ensuring that pupils of all ages and abilities receive a good education, the school management has a clear view where continuing development is needed.

The school has adopted the common policy of the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) and full details of this are set out in documentary form. This is available to all teachers and is used as a basis and as guide for their planning. The curriculum in both primary and secondary departments is supported by well thought out and appropriately detailed schemes of work which are subject to regular review. This practice reflects the close attention that is given to monitoring and review throughout the school. A summary of the curriculum for the secondary department is laid out in the current prospectus, and details of the primary curriculum are set out separately for parents in relation to younger pupils.

The primary curriculum is very good and closely follows the National Curriculum, although the teaching of literacy and numeracy makes use of commercial texts. Long term planning is based effectively on FLT documents. Medium and short term planning is of very good quality and is regularly and consistently monitored. It is a strength of the school that the head teacher visits the primary school regularly and takes a full part in the planning and monitoring of activities. This helps greatly to ensure curriculum continuity and smooth transition between the primary and secondary departments. The way in which staff work together in planning and delivering the primary curriculum is especially good.

In Key Stage 3 there is a core curriculum which consists of English, maths, science, history, Bible Studies, French, Geography, citizenship, food and nutrition or construction, physical education and games. All pupils have a weekly tutor period. In addition, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have lessons in art, music and office skills. In Key Stage 4 the curriculum contains a similar range of subjects, with the exception that art, office skills and music are not currently available. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is provided across the curriculum, but particularly in timetabled citizenship lessons, and its provision is carefully monitored. The evidence available during this inspection indicates that PSHE is effectively delivered through the curriculum.

The curriculum in Years 12 and 13 reflects recent changes in thinking by the FLT about post-16 education. Until a year ago, no students stayed at the school beyond Year 12, but a suitable course of study in Year 13 has now been introduced. In Year 12 there is a core curriculum of Bible Studies and current affairs, PSHE, office skills, public speaking, communication and learning and physical education (PE). In addition, students are able to take advanced supplementary (AS) courses in English, law, accounts, French and business studies. This programme is augmented in Year 13 with a limited range of advanced level (A2) subjects. A recent innovation has been the introduction of a biomedical science course for students in both years which aims at giving them some medical knowledge and an understanding of the long and short term

implications of some diseases. This course is still in the pilot stage and its progress and usefulness being carefully monitored.

All pupils will normally proceed from the school into business within the supporting community. Nevertheless, the school provides them with good support in preparing them for their adult lives and the world of work. At present, there are careers interviews for all students in Years 12 and 13, and it is anticipated that this practice will be extended to include Years 9, 10 and 11 in the near future. All the pupils in Year 10 have two weeks of work experience, one week of which is in school time and one during the holidays.

The curriculum throughout the school makes provision for all levels of ability and aptitude. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Planning for the needs of those pupils who experience learning difficulties is very effectively planned and co-ordinated across the school, thus ensuring continuing and well informed support. The school highlights the need for further curriculum planning to guide provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is good throughout the school. A significant proportion of teaching is of outstanding quality or demonstrates outstanding features. Teachers plan their lessons effectively. Lessons are predominantly well structured and pupils challenged appropriately according to their ability. The careful use of data, as well as an understanding of its implications, is reflected in good lesson planning and practice which generally supports all pupils effectively.

Lessons usually proceed at a good pace and demonstrate the use of a range of relevant teaching strategies. Good practice throughout the school is typified by very positive interaction between the teachers and their pupils. They are engaged quickly by the thoughtfully planned activities and high expectations shown by the teachers of what is to be achieved in the available time. In a Year 10 science class the teacher's planning related appropriately to a real life research scenario. Pupils responded very well to the teacher's high expectations, the pace of the lesson and range of opportunities provided for learning. Learning built very effectively on earlier work, questioning challenged pupils to think independently and to communicate using appropriate scientific terms. The lesson related well to aspects of PSHE. In Year 3 in a guided reading lesson as part of the literacy course, the teacher explained the tasks to the pupils clearly and effectively. The lesson was well managed and the tasks challenging within the realistic expectations set. The very positive relationships between teacher and pupils, which are a feature of learning throughout the school, ensured pupils' engagement with the activities. A Year 13 lesson in public speaking made effective use of available time and resources and successfully engaged the students who responded with corresponding enthusiasm.

Most teachers are experienced and are specialists in their subjects. Lessons are conducted in manageable sized groups. The high quality of teaching and learning is further supported by a thoughtfully structured programme of professional development and training for teachers. Procedures for monitoring teaching are good and feedback through regular meetings and one to one professional dialogue reflects an insightful approach used by the school management to maintain and improve the standard of teaching and learning. Teachers appreciate the quality of support and professionalism

that they experience in this respect. Pupils' positive response in the majority of lessons is a key factor resulting from effective teaching throughout the school.

The quality of assessment is good overall and outstanding in a number of respects. The school has established a high quality framework to assess pupils' performance regularly and thoroughly. Information derived from assessment and monitoring is used notably well to inform teachers' planning. The school's use of data is informed which secures its effective use. Information, derived from a series of tests and observations, is used effectively to track the progress of pupils, to identify strengths and weaknesses and to support learning for pupils of all abilities throughout the school. Data is used carefully to identify those young people who have particular learning needs or who have high abilities, referred to as gifted and talented, and to closely track the progress of these as well as other pupils. Targets are effectively set for each pupil and good use made of one to one discussions. End of topic assessments are used very effectively in the primary department to assess learning. Tracking records are retained by the school from year to year and subsequently used to predict GCSE grades which demonstrate close correlation. Despite the predominantly strong features of assessment, marking, whilst always completed regularly, in the secondary school is occasionally of inconsistent quality. Reports to parents provided for primary aged pupils are of high quality because they are clear about the achievements of individual pupils and set clear targets for improvement. In the secondary school reports do not always reflect the notably high quality of assessment established in all other respects.

Pupils identified as having special learning needs receive very good support. Individual education plans (IEPs) provided for these pupils throughout the school are well written and are effective documents. The school utilises a commercial package effectively to analyse pupils' particular needs and to pass relevant information to class teachers to support their planning and teaching practice. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the information provided is used well by subject teachers in their planning to support pupils' particular needs. Learning support assistants are used very effectively to support individual pupils and were actively but unobtrusively present in a number of lessons observed. They maintain regular and appropriately detailed notes which are used well to monitor progress and identify need for additional support.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with a number of very positive features. The ethos of the school reflects the beliefs and practice of the supporting community. The aims and ethos are clearly described in the prospectus, and the trustees and the staff work hard to see that they are reflected in the school's life and in the experience of the pupils. As a result, pupils work in a stimulating environment where they feel safe and secure and in which spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is actively fostered. Pupils throughout the school are notably poised, self-confident relative to their ages and well able to communicate with each other and with adults, are helpful to others, and behave very sensibly.

Central to the school's ethos is an emphasis on behaviour which is good and is based on a clear understanding of right and wrong. This is reinforced through lessons and the expectations usually set by teachers. Opportunities for developing their knowledge of

the law and a basic knowledge of legal and government institutions in England is further enhanced through studies in citizenship throughout the school.

Pupils say that they enjoy their life in the school and are very supportive of its aims and objectives. Throughout their school life, they are encouraged to take responsibility and to exercise initiative. The school council, consisting of a male and female representative from each year group, serves as a useful channel for bringing pupils' and students' concerns to the attention of the staff and trustees. Its meetings are properly chaired and minutes taken. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and in both the primary and secondary departments there are prefects who are given specific responsibilities, including for example acting as 'buddies' for new or younger pupils.

Pupils are encouraged to understand that they live in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-faith nation. This is achieved effectively through citizenship lessons as well as throughout the curriculum. The school tracks very carefully where and when appropriate topics occur within the curriculum to enhance this aspect of young people's development. Pupils gain their knowledge of these matters through a range of learning experiences. For example, pupils who have been studying the *Merchant of Venice* have produced good pieces of work about the history of Jews, and these are displayed well in the school. Pupils gain further knowledge of other cultures through their studies in food and nutrition, where they have learned about concepts of *kosher and halal*. The school is actively developing links with a Brethren school in southern Sweden and although these links are, at present, embryonic, effective strategies are being made to develop them, for example through a video link which took place during the inspection. The school has developed a strong tradition of drama and music, and regularly stages plays, reviews and concerts, which are attended by members of the community. Pupils love to sing and groups of them may burst into spontaneous song, for example during the inspection, on a bus ride to games. The high quality of the singing reflects the time all pupils spend singing in a choir.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. There is a strong sense of care and concern for the pupils on the part of staff. Policies on matters such as health and safety and child protection have been carefully prepared and staff have received the necessary training. The head teacher is appropriately designated as the child protection officer. The policy relating to bullying is supported by teachers who deal rigorously with any instances. Questionnaires completed by pupils indicate that the vast majority feel safe in the school and are not worried about bullying. Break and lunch times are supervised effectively and pupils know to whom to turn for help at any time.

Fire drills are held regularly and an appropriate record is kept. Current arrangements for First Aid support in the school are good. Regular and rigorous fire and building risk assessments are in place, as are those for educational visits out-of-school. The school meets fully the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Healthy living is promoted very well. In the primary department, milk and fruit is provided at break time and drinking water is freely available throughout the day for the whole school. Physical activity is encouraged throughout the curriculum and by games which the pupils enjoy together at break times. In the primary department, each day commences with physical activities designed to support learning. Interactive white

boards, including music, are used effectively to support these activities. Each class is fully engaged and the activities provide a refreshing start to the school day. The development of a healthy life style is supported well for older pupils by guidance on alcohol and drug awareness as part of the PSHE programme and notably through aspects of the science provision.

Attendance is monitored carefully and registers completed twice daily and the admission register contains all of the required information.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school takes care to make all the required checks to ensure that staff and adults are appropriate people to work with children and young people. The school is alert to any modifications that may be required by regulations. It maintains a single central record which provides details of all required checks on staff, trustees and volunteers.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school provides good accommodation in most respects in both primary and secondary departments. Facilities meet the regulations in all respects, but aspects of the otherwise high quality purpose built secondary school are now showing signs of needing further development and expansion. For example, lack of space results in art and geography sharing the same accommodation which is not ideal and constrains opportunity within the art curriculum in particular. Space for PE on the primary school site is good and has been carefully considered to provide good opportunities for a range of games. Outside space on the secondary school site is adequate in most respects, but limitations lead the school to hire facilities at a nearby sports centre. The facilities provided in this respect are excellent and as a result provide a rich range of opportunities for games and sporting activities including community occasions such as sports day and for the pupils to experience inter-house competition.

The school is maintained in very good condition and all furnishings and decoration are of excellent quality. Classrooms in general provide a high quality learning environment and this is further enhanced by the high quality of display throughout in all aspects of the school. All issues related to pupils' and students' safety are monitored rigorously, and procedures, for example with regard to emergency evacuations, appropriately implemented. Facilities for pupils who may become ill during the school day meet the requirement adequately.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The quality of information for parents

There is an effective range of information for parents provided by the school. The prospectus contains useful details relating to the ethos of the school and curricular provision as well as helpful information about acceptable behaviour, examination results

and staffing details. Appropriate reference is made to child protection, special educational needs and equal opportunities.

The school's Year Book is of high quality with an interesting foreword, staff and trustees' photographs, and, importantly, the pupils' visions of the school. School productions and visits are valued with text and photographs. Funding and sponsorship details inform parents clearly of the school's financial position. Whilst the current prospectus meets the requirements it does not match the high quality of the Year Book.

Reports on the pupils' progress are sent to parents twice a year, with good opportunities being provided for parents to meet with teachers at the secondary school twice a year and three times a year at the primary department.

Trustees meet with parents of different year groups at least twice a year to update them on any changes in the curriculum and developments in relation to the work of the Focus Learning Trust. Parents value these opportunities. Their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that parents feel that they are kept fully informed about all aspects of school life, including the complaints procedure.

Reading diaries are used well in the primary department and homework planners in the secondary school to inform parents of their child's commitments. School events, such as the Wizard of Oz production, sports day and inter-house competitions, are very well attended and fully supported by parents.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school's complaints procedure reflects the guidance received from Focus Learning and meets the requirements in all respects.

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 Board of Trustees, consisting of nine members, is well organised with clearly defined responsibilities. Trust meetings are held approximately every six weeks and include the head teacher for most of the proceedings. A capable chairman ensures that all proposals are actioned or reviewed until completed. The Board is reviewing plans for the future in the light of diminishing numbers of children from part of the catchment area.

The Management Structure of the trust is clearly displayed in a meticulously prepared document which covers all the responsibilities required, although there is no trustee with specific oversight of pastoral care. The management is in the process of modification and updating as a consequence of the retirement of one of the trustees, who has been a very active participator in the work. As a consequence there has been some reallocation of duties. A notable feature of the management is the 'Rapid Response Team' comprising four trustees who can deal quickly with day to day matters as they arise. In effect this is a Management Team and works effectively.

The running of the school has, and does, benefit from the dedication of the CEOs, past and present, and the professionalism of the head teacher. The head teacher and his staff appreciate the support given by the CEO and trustees, which promotes a positive atmosphere within a context of order and security. There is a strong commitment to counter any sign of poor behaviour or bullying and consequently both are rare, the fruit of the collective prominence given to the pastoral care of pupils and students by trustees and staff. There has been willing help from parents at lunch and break times, and this has now been put in the hands of learning assistants and classroom assistants to ensure effective control.

The trustees and head teacher are concerned that good communications should be maintained both between themselves and with parents. In this respect, despite the strengths referred to elsewhere in this report, there might be some scope for improving the prospectus and handbook describing school activities with fuller details of the school's activities.

In the interests of promoting science at advanced level a course in Biomedical science fills a gap which could well be of interest to other schools, especially if it stimulates interest in medical and science subjects.

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust. Further copies of the report are available from the Operations Manager of the Focus Learning Trust, Siskin House, Siskin Drive, Coventry, or from the Focus Learning Trust website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk.