

# 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:	Whinfield
DCSF number:	888/6054
FOCUS number:	214
Inspection team::	Reporting Inspector: Dr Martin Bradley  Supporting Inspector: Mrs Meg Buckingham  Lay Inspector: Mr David Kilbey
Dates of inspection:	28 - 31 January 2008

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## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Whinfield School		
Address of the school:	Oak House 317 Golden Lane Leyland, Lancashire PR25 2YJ		
Telephone number:	01772 455378		
Fax number:	01772 454927		
Proprietor:	Whinfield Study Trust		
Name of Chief Executive Officer:	Mr A Pringle		
Name of Senior Teacher:	Mr C Ainsworth		
DCSF number:	888/6054		
FOCUS number:	214		
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: 22	Girls: 22
	(Part time)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0
Number of post-16 students:		Boys: 4	Girls: 2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need:		Boys: 0	Girls: 0
Annual fees:	No fees are charged		
Type of inspection:	Section 162A of the Education Act 2002		
Inspection Team:	Reporting Inspector: Dr Martin Bradley Supporting Inspector: Mrs Meg Buckingham Lay Inspector: Mr David Kilbey		
Dates of inspection:	28 - 31 January 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 (FLT) and agreed with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). It was conducted by independent professional inspectors who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations. The professional inspectors were accompanied by a trained lay inspector who looked at agreed aspects of the school's management and ethos and reported on these to the Focus Learning Trust. His findings are summarised in Section C of this document, but this section is not a statutory part of the inspection process.

### **Information about the school:**

Whinfield School is an independent day school in Leyland, Lancashire for boys and girls aged between seven and eighteen. It is affiliated to the FLT and follows its policies and principles. The school opened in its present premises in October 2003 and first admitted pupils aged seven to eleven in September 2007. Pupils come from families of the Brethren communities in Preston and Lancaster. Admission is non-selective. Of the 44 pupils, 22 are boys and 22 are girls. There are six pupils above compulsory school age. No pupil has a statement of special educational need, although three have been identified by the school as having additional learning needs and/or difficulties.

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

The overall quality of the curriculum is good and provides a sure foundation for teaching and learning so that pupils make good progress. The overall quality of teaching is good; in a minority of lessons it was satisfactory, and a similar proportion was outstanding. Most lessons are well organised. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and behaviour is good. They make good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The Christian foundation contributes to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and are taught to take responsibility for their actions. Social development is good; pupils enjoy school, get on well together and appreciate the positive family atmosphere. Pupils' cultural awareness is developing well. The school occupies a converted house which was formally a nursing home. The buildings have been thoughtfully converted for their present use. The school is well managed.

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

- its curriculum is broad and relevant;
- its quality of teaching is good overall;
- it provides a safe environment; and
- relationships are generally good and pupils support one another.

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

- address the issues on staff checks and the single central record, referred to in section four of this report; and
- ensure that parents and prospective parents are provided with all the information referred to in section six of this report.

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

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

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

The overall quality of the curriculum is good and provides a sure foundation for teaching and learning so that pupils make good progress. Currently, the school does not have pupils in each National Curriculum year group; there are no Year 8 or Year 11 pupils and some classes are very small. Classes which contain mixed year groups are working well. Key Stage 2 classes were introduced at the start of the present school year and are well organised. The curriculum is broad and relevant at Key Stages 2 and 3 and mirrors the National Curriculum with the exception of some aspects of information and communication technology (ICT). However, typing includes use of the recently introduced WordEx system. This is developing well with pupils, for example, already showing competency at word processing and preparing graphs to enhance the presentation of their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) coursework. In addition all pupils study personal, social and health education (PSHE), as well as elements of citizenship, cookery and textiles. In design and technology (DT) they study resistant materials.

At Key Stage 4, pupils are prepared for a wide range of GCSE subjects and continue to have opportunities for cookery, physical education (PE), textiles, music and DT. They follow a short GCSE course in citizenship. Throughout the school, the relatively high proportion of part-time teachers and the use of a large number of volunteers to teach Bible Studies causes discontinuities in pupils' learning. The school has plans to address these matters.

Year 13 was added in September 2007 with a clear rationale aiming at providing a full time programme including a core of academic Advanced Supplementary (AS) courses together with equivalent level business qualifications. After some initial amendments to the intended range of subjects, the current curriculum largely meets this aim. The school provides additional 'options' following non-certificated courses such as technical drawing, cookery, textiles and, in one case, a horticultural course including work placement, adding to the breadth of pupils' experience. This illustrates the care which is taken to tailor the courses and options to the aptitudes and interests of pupils following consultation with them and their parents. The school is seeking to extend its provision using the virtual classroom in collaboration with other Focus schools.

Curriculum planning draws upon FLT and National Curriculum documentation. These provide a sound basis for teaching and include aspects of coverage and progression but with varying detail of planning for pupils of differing abilities. The two Key Stage 2 classes interpret the guidelines flexibly in order to meet the individual needs of pupils. This is very effective. However, this approach is not universally adopted in classes with older pupils.

Thoughtful support is given to pupils with additional learning needs and/or difficulties. Their progress is carefully monitored. Coordinated provision for those pupils identified as being able, gifted or talented is at an early stage of implementation.

PSHE is based on the FLT programme and contributes effectively to pupils' overall personal development. In Key Stage 2 particularly good provision is made for PSHE and citizenship. This has helped to reinforce the school's expectations regarding pupils'

attitudes and behaviour. In the sixth form the programme includes the FLT life skills course.

Careers guidance is satisfactory overall with work experience for example, in Key Stage 4. In addition, pupils in the sixth form have opportunities to increase their understanding of the world of work through the recently introduced FLT short course on careers guidance. A good feature is that these experiences are to be built upon within the business studies courses in Year 12. Careers guidance has yet to be coordinated across the curriculum for the full fourteen to nineteen age range.

Limitations in the accommodation and the space available restricts the range of extra-curricular experiences available, and to some extent constrains practical opportunities in art and technology. The curriculum is enhanced with opportunities in all key stages to visit an interesting variety of historical and cultural venues.

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

The overall quality of teaching is good; in a minority of lessons it was satisfactory and a similar proportion was outstanding. Most lessons are organised effectively and the purpose of the work is made clear to pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Generally pupils have positive attitudes to learning; they enjoy their work, are attentive in class and behaviour is generally good. Particularly effective teaching with outstanding features is based on teachers' thorough knowledge of pupils' abilities. Learning is managed carefully with a good variety of activities to ensure that the work is challenging for all pupils and consequently, they make good progress. In Year 9 French the work is especially well targeted to match individual pupils' abilities. The good pace, effective use of resources and variety of engaging activities, both as a whole class and in paired conversations, enable all pupils to participate fully as well as to make good progress. Thoughtfully directed encouragement helps both boys and girls to gain self confidence in speaking a foreign language. Pupils respond well when given the opportunities to think and explore ideas for themselves. During a very skilfully handled discussion on bullying in a Year 5/6 citizenship lesson pupils demonstrated a mature level of understanding in the emotions involved and learnt quickly to listen to each other's different views.

In the satisfactory lessons, pupils are aware of the topic and build upon the previous work. However, they are not always fully engaged nor are they given sufficient opportunities to contribute and develop their own thinking. Questioning does not allow pupils to give extended answers and their progress is lessened.

Resources are sufficient for the present numbers and curriculum although there is a heavy reliance on photocopied worksheets. Pupils' questionnaires indicated that some wanted more books in the library. The inspectors concur with this view in terms of the quantity and variety of the library stock.

Monitoring pupils' progress is firmly established through regular assessment, and recording of attainment through internal and external testing and examination. Target setting and tracking is developing well and is clearly programmed throughout the year and reviewed by teachers with pupils. Targets are not yet consistently referred to in all reports. All the data available is not yet presented in readily accessible overall pupil profiles. The quality of marking is inconsistent; in some subjects, such as English and French, it is detailed and helps pupils to understand how they can improve. In other subjects it is cursory.

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

Yes.

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The Christian foundation contributes to pupils' good spiritual and moral development. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and are taught to take responsibility for their actions. Behaviour is good overall, although occasionally over-boisterous or immature conduct, often resulting from limited concentration, distracts pupils from their learning. When given the opportunity pupils readily take on responsibility, for example in running the stationery shop, and becoming school and library monitors.

Social development is good. Pupils enjoy school get on well together and appreciate the positive family atmosphere. The pupils who joined at the start of the school year have settled well and several parents commented on their children's improved behaviour and consideration for others. Pupils readily help each other in class. A visit to a mountain rescue centre was greatly enjoyed and developed pupils' self-confidence and team work. Collections for charity, the school council and pupils' care of the classrooms provide opportunities for service to others. Older girls enjoy helping at the breakfast club, although such opportunities are limited at present. Pupils show confidence and are courteous to visitors. Citizenship and current affairs lessons together with visiting speakers, such as members of the fire brigade, make major contributions towards helping pupils to develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the public services in England.

Pupils' cultural awareness is developing well. For example, projects on other countries in geography, French, and music help pupils gain an insight and consideration of other cultures, traditions and customs. The cookery course makes a particularly good contribution to pupils' appreciation of food from around the world. Occasionally literature gives opportunities to be more aware of people from differing backgrounds. For example, Year 10 pupils showed sensitivity to issues facing black Americans when considering a story in English.

***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 good overall. Health education is particularly well supported through work from Years 5 to 9 on nutrition and cookery, which the pupils greatly enjoy. Healthy lifestyles are also promoted in games and sports activities as well as in the breakfast club for Key Stage 2 pupils, the encouragement to parents to provide healthy lunchtime snacks and when Year 9 prepare lunch for the whole school once a fortnight. The Focus Learning Trust policies for welfare, health and safety have been adopted effectively.

Care has been taken to address safety issues, with good updated checks on fire risks and related matters. Staff take good care to follow health and safety procedures when on trips or on visits to local leisure facilities. An appropriate number of staff are trained in First Aid and child protection procedures are in place. Staff are generally well-deployed. Whilst attendance registers meet the regulatory requirements, the

admissions register does not always record that pupils' dates of birth have been checked, nor is their previous school recorded. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

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

Yes.

**Suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The school meets nearly all of the requirements for registration. A good range of checks are made carefully before staff are appointed. A particular feature of the school, along with others linked to the Focus Learning Trust, is its use of a wide variety of volunteer staff from the Brethren Community. However, full checks on these volunteers, on peripatetic music staff and on supply staff are not yet included in the single central record of staff, although all volunteers are well known to the Trustees.

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

No.

***What does the school need to do in order to fully meet the requirements?***

- *ensure that all staff, including volunteers and peripatetic music staff, are included in the single central record (paragraph 4C(2 and 3));*
- *ensure that the single central record contains details obtained from the employment business confirming that checks have been made and the date of these (paragraph 4C(2 and 3)); and*
- *ensure that all trustees have been subject to an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau(CRB) check (paragraph (6 and 7)).*

**Suitability of the premises and accommodation**

The school occupies an Edwardian house which was formerly a nursing home. The primary classes are in the detached former nurses' residence. The buildings have been thoughtfully converted for their present use. The available space is used effectively to support the pupils' learning. The accommodation is adequate for the current numbers of pupils. At present not every year group is represented in school and there would be difficulties in accommodating all year groups. There are specialist rooms for science, cookery, ICT and DT, and rooms are designated for other subjects. The primary classes for Years 3/4 and 5/6 respectively are adequate for the present numbers, but space is limited. The outdoor play area is well managed to enable the senior and primary pupils to use it separately, but again it is relatively small. The school uses local authority sports and leisure facilities for physical education and games. These are of high quality and usefully extend the pupils' learning experiences.

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

Yes.

**The quality of information for parents**

The school provides generally clear and up to date information to parents and prospective parents. However, this does not at present make clear the address or

telephone number of the Whinfield Study Trust, as the school's proprietor, nor the address for correspondence of its chair. The school does not make it clear that details of its child protection procedures are available on request. Reports are sent to parents half termly and there is also a more detailed annual report. At present Bible Studies is not reported on as each class is taught by several people, making coordination difficult.

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

No.

***What does the school need to do in order to fully meet the requirements?***

- *provide parents and prospective parents with the address and telephone number of the registered office of the Whinfield Study Trust (paragraph 6(2)(b));*
- *provide parents and prospective parents with the address for correspondence of the chair of the Whinfield Study Trust (paragraph 6(2)(c)); and*
- *indicate that parents and prospective parents can receive details of the school's child protection procedures if they wish (paragraph 6(2)(h)).*

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

The school has adopted the Focus Learning Trust policy for dealing with complaints. This fully meets the regulatory requirements.

***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 trustees, as the Board of Governors, have done well to develop the school to its present state, including opening the Junior Department and extending work at Year 13 in 2007. The Board is fulfilling its duties to the FLT, the Charity Commission and others to whom it is responsible. The desire to find suitable premises in a more convenient location is a present concern, but the Board's success in developing the school thus far should be an encouragement in this fresh move forward.

There is a clear management structure covering essential duties. The trustees work together well, complementing one another's skills. There is no specific reference to CRB checks nor to the pastoral care of pupils in the list of activities which the trustees undertake. If their number was increased or if others were brought into the management, there would be scope to relieve the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of his heavy load of management duties. The teaching staff spoke positively of their contacts with the trustees, and good working relations and trust prevail in the school.

The Focus ethos is respected and adhered to by the management and the staff. As the school is small in number, pastoral care may not be seen as a pressing need, but there is scope for greater deliberation in providing this vital necessity. Boys and girls have separate common rooms. Pupils are supervised when they arrive at school on buses, but their departure is not always supervised, nor are they always supervised in the playground at break times. The school is aware of this and has taken active steps to address these issues.

Behaviour management has improved considerably since the appointment of the present Senior Teacher, although parents' comments provided for this inspection still expressed concerns in this regard. The inclusion of primary school children has had a beneficial influence on the behaviour of older pupils and students.

The appointment of a full-time secretary is helping to improve the school's organisation of its records and to relieve the management, particularly the CEO. The frequent contact between the CEO, the Senior Teacher and the teaching staff is a great help towards effective communication in school.

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

Yes.

- the responsibilities of the trustees should be spread across more of their members and possibly by adding to their number.

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

