

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:	Wilton Park School
DfE number: FOCUS number:	865/6037 617
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mr Peter Jones Supporting Inspectors: Mrs Meg Buckingham Mrs Cecile Corfield Lay Inspectors: Mr Colin Blake Mr Philip Hutchinson
Dates of inspection:	10 th to 13 th October 2011

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Wilton Park School

Address of school: The Hollows
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP3 0JE

Telephone number: 01722 741910

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Email address: wilton.park@focus-school.com

Proprietor: Wessex Schools Trust

Name of Chief Executive Officer: Mr Richard Beesley

Name of Headteacher: Dr Paul Evans

DfE number: 865/6037

FOCUS number: 617

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

Age range of pupils and students: 11 to 18

Gender of pupils: Male and female

Total number on roll: 163 (Full time) Boys: 88 Girls: 75

Number of post-16 students: Boys: 27 Girls: 18

Number of pupils with statements of special educational need: Boys: 2 Girls: 1

Annual fees: No fees charged

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

Inspection Team:

Reporting Inspector: Mr Peter Jones

Supporting Inspectors: Mrs Meg Buckingham
Mrs Cecile Corfield

Lay Inspectors: Mr Colin Blake
Mr Philip Hutchinson

Dates of inspection: 10th to 13th October 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 two lay inspectors who looked at agreed aspects of the school's management and ethos and reported on these to the Focus Learning Trust. 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:

Wilton Park School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between eleven and eighteen in Wilton near Salisbury. The school is owned by the Wessex Schools Trust. It is affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) and follows its policies and principles. The school opened in September 2011, following the amalgamation of Tisbury School and Allbrook School, and is housed in a renovated former middle school. Pupils come from families of the Brethren communities in seven surrounding towns. Admission is non-selective. Of the 163 pupils, 88 are boys and 75 are girls. There are 45 pupils above compulsory school age. Three pupils have statements of special educational need, and twenty-three pupils have been identified by the school as having additional learning needs and/or difficulties. Eighteen pupils have been identified by the school as being able, gifted and talented.

Summary of main findings:

Wilton Park School is a new school, which has made an excellent start, and the quality of education it provides is good. As a result of very thorough preparation by staff and the Brethren community for the school's opening, pupils are already enjoying a positive and productive environment and are making good progress. The curriculum is good, with outstanding features in the sixth-form provision, where the school offers a very broad range of courses. Teaching is of good quality; it is well planned, shows secure subject knowledge and ensures that pupils enjoy learning and work hard, and very effective provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment is very good, identifies accurately how well pupils achieve and sets clear targets for improvement. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, and although willing to participate, there is not always demand for them to develop confidence in speaking in class. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and provision for pupils' welfare gives a high priority to their well-being and is of good quality, with comprehensive policies and procedures to safeguard pupils and thorough checks on the suitability of staff, trustees and volunteers. The accommodation and grounds are of excellent quality and greatly enhance pupils' learning. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress and the vast majority of them are supportive of the school's work.

What the school does well:

- it has quickly established itself as a thriving school;
- it provides excellent accommodation and premises;
- its pupils enjoy their new school and are making good progress; and
- its teaching and assessment are good and support learning effectively.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

The school meets all regulatory requirements.

The school complies with the regulations and meets the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010**Next Steps:**

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

- develop pupils' confidence in expressing ideas and opinions orally to enhance their skills as independent thinkers.

SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum provision is good with outstanding features. It enables pupils in all year groups to make at least good progress. Considerable time has been spent successfully developing the curriculum to meet the pupils' varying needs. The curriculum is based on guidance published by the FLT, the National Curriculum and other approved published schemes. Long and medium term planning is thorough, and provides relevant experiences to enable pupils to make good progress in the important areas of literacy, numeracy, science, technology, physical and aesthetic areas of development. The curriculum now includes music lessons and provision for team games, and physical education has been extended to four periods a week. Personal, health, social education (PSHE) and citizenship are timetabled for each year group and have a positive impact on the pupils' personal development.

In Key Stage 3, pupils follow the National Curriculum and Bible Studies. Bible Studies is taught by members of the Brethren community. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught within FLT guidelines. Lessons for Years 7 and 8 on Learning Skills, such as how to revise or to summarise, have been introduced to help pupils learn more effectively. The curriculum is also extended to include French and resistant materials, textiles, food and nutrition, and art. The curriculum for this age group is broad and balanced with most time allocated appropriately to literacy, numeracy and science.

In Key Stage 4, pupils are prepared effectively for General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations, with a further range of opportunities available to study resistant materials, and food and nutrition. Bible Studies continues throughout the key stage. The pupils follow a similar curriculum to Key Stage 3. Pupils in Year 10 have careers experience with a one-week work placement. Future plans include theme days when the curriculum for Key Stages 3 and 4 will be suspended with the intention to develop cross-curricular links between subjects.

Post-16 pupils are able to access an excellent curriculum that is interesting and challenging. Provision for post-16 pupils is mainly business related, but the school has worked hard to provide a wide range of options to meet the pupils' interests and needs. There are two strands of business-related subjects; one is academic and the other is vocational. The academic route leads to Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced Level (A2) examinations. The vocational route involves a twelve-unit Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) course. Pupils can study bookkeeping, accounting or Business English and they can pursue a GCSE in Law. BTEC pupils can also study for A2 levels in English, economics, geography and art. The pupils are expected to engage in a recreational activity each week making choices from cookery, construction or photography. All post-16 pupils are taught Bible Studies, current affairs and a certificated computer skills course. An interesting and purposeful sponsorship scheme has been organised with local Brethren businesses. Pupils undertake five days a year work placement linked to a project from school. Their progress in business skills is noted by a business mentor. The pupils gain points for employability which are then related to their eventual starting salaries. Pupils in Year 13 are given the opportunity to develop their telephone

communication skills. This enjoyable, interactive course has proved to be constructive and useful for those entering the world of work. All Post-16 pupils are expected to enter an essay competition which includes participation in public speaking.

The curriculum is enhanced by out-of-school visits which support and extend the pupils' course work. For example, this term, the pupils in Year 11 visited Studland Bay for geographical fieldwork and Year 8 pupils visited Roche Court for their art work. Extra-curricular activities are provided for pupils at lunchtime. These include board games, running, cricket, knitting, football and choir.

Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is excellent. The school plans well to meet the specific needs of pupils who need extra support. A clear framework provides effective strategies to identify pupils who need further challenges or extra support with their learning. The SEN facilities, in terms of staffing, accommodation and resources, are excellent. The SEN staff consists of a qualified teacher, a higher level teaching assistant and three teaching assistants. One of the deputy headteachers has oversight of SEN as one of their responsibilities.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress in learning. Teaching is characterised by secure subject knowledge, thorough and methodical preparation and sound understanding of pupils' attainment and aptitudes. Pupils enjoy the positive atmosphere teachers establish in their classes, and this has helped them to achieve much in the short time they have been at the school. Teachers' insistence on good presentation helps pupils organise their work well. Pupils benefit from the variety of teaching methods used, and teachers make good use of learning resources and display to enliven their lessons. In lessons, pupils are attentive and keen to learn. Very good use is made by teachers of the practical facilities, which the new school offers in art, construction, design and technology, games, music and science to enhance the quality of teaching in those subjects. Teachers manage behaviour well, acting quickly on the very few occasions when pupils do not respond appropriately. Although teaching encourages pupil participation, teaching strategies do not do enough to promote extended oral responses which challenge pupils to think on their feet and develop as independent thinkers.

Teaching at Key Stage 3 is characterised by lively approaches well suited to the age group. Teachers make the lessons interesting and offer good support and encouragement. Pupils, and in particular the girls, are reticent about speaking at any length during lessons. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is well targeted to meet examination requirements. Teachers know the syllabuses well; they choose the content of the lessons with care and good assessment systems are in place. As with Key Stage 3, there is not always enough emphasis on the development of extended talk in lessons.

Post-16 teaching shows good, confident subject knowledge and ensures that students are attentive and motivated to apply themselves to their work. Teaching helps pupils consolidate their knowledge and gain new knowledge. Relationships between staff and post-16 pupils are good, and pupils are courteous and show respect for staff and visitors. Although pupils are often articulate when speaking one-

to-one with adults, they are too often reticent, especially the girls, to answer questions at length and are not confident speakers. Teachers do not always challenge pupils to give the extended answers that might be expected at Post-16 level.

Assessment is well organised, and careful records of pupils' progress are maintained. The school has made excellent transitional arrangements to ensure that records of pupils' achievement have been brought forward from the previous two schools, and pupils' ability levels and prior attainment are well known to teachers. This has allowed teachers to establish lesson planning which meet pupils' learning needs. Marking is of very good quality and provides pupils with clear targets for improvement. The school makes a concerted effort to involve pupils in the assessment process, guiding them carefully in evaluating and assessing their own and each others' work to help them understand how they can improve.

The teaching of pupils with SEN is very well organised and is of good quality. Pupils receive either individual teaching in the Learning Support area or work alongside a teaching assistant during class lessons. The staff have a weekly meeting to discuss the progress that pupils make and if any changes to the provision are needed. A wide range of assessments is used conscientiously to assess pupils' needs. Detailed Individual education plans (IEPs) are drawn up and reviewed regularly. Documentation relating to statements of special education need is thorough and the recommended provision is in place. Pupils who are identified as being able, gifted and talented are provided with extra challenges in their class work.

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

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school provides many opportunities to enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through the strong Christian ethos of the school. The pupils develop respect for themselves and others and acquire a set of values, principles and beliefs. The pupils demonstrate a willingness to take responsibility for their own actions. Bible Studies is taught regularly throughout the school and plays a large part in the pupils' spiritual development. Bible readings at the end of assemblies are well chosen and link closely to the theme of the assembly.

Spiritual development promotes moral development, which is good overall. The pupils clearly distinguish between right and wrong. PHSE and citizenship contribute effectively to moral development and both are taught throughout the school. The pupils realise that breaking the school's strong code of conduct results in appropriate sanctions.

Social development is good and results in a school culture that is harmonious. Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. The pupils state that they enjoy school and the vast majority are highly motivated and enthusiastic about both their academic and social life in school. There is a strong sense of belonging. The pupils take part in fund-raising events for local charities and the school. They are aware that there are others less fortunate than themselves. Work experience involves many placements in the community. The school council is active and pupils say that they feel their views are listened to and acted upon.

The pupils are prepared very well for their future economic well-being. An emphasis on literacy and numeracy gives the younger pupils a firm foundation on which to build an

understanding of economic wellbeing. Topics in PSHE, citizenship and, in particular, the curriculum for post-16 pupils, prepare them well for the world of work. The business sponsorship programme plays an important part in preparing pupils for future economic well-being.

The pupils have a broad understanding of public institutions in the United Kingdom through their studies in PSHE and Citizenship. For example, pupils in Year 8 will have an introduction to a Law and Crime topic which includes study of the civil and criminal law system and procedures in the Magistrates Court. A topic on 'Who governs Britain?' includes study of Parliament and the role of an MP and a councillor. These topics are studied at greater depth in Year 10 where pupils take a GCSE short course in citizenship.

The pupils' awareness of their own culture is strong and, through PHSE, citizenship, geography and history courses, they are beginning to be aware of other cultural and ethnic groups living in the UK. This is at an early stage of development, and most of the work on this aspect is to be covered in the spring and summer terms. Clear planning for this is in place. There are opportunities for learning about other cultures in art and music. English literature also provides different views, for example, in 'To Kill a Mocking Bird'. An interesting wall display of 1930s America during racial segregation indicates that pupils study themes at an appropriate level.

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good with their safeguarding and wellbeing given a high priority. In a short time the new school has successfully established its stated values of care and compassion by creating an ethos in which pupils feel known as individuals and safe within the family atmosphere of the school. All the required policies and procedures are in place using the FLT guidance, and are being implemented effectively.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, as seen in their very good attendance and positive attitudes to learning in lessons; they are keen to learn. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and pupils understand the clear expectations of the school on how they should conduct themselves. Inappropriate behaviour is rare and when it occurs it is managed appropriately by staff.

Pupils are well supervised and say they are confident in going to members of staff should they need help or have a concern, and they know they will be listened to. Pupils are made aware of both the first aid arrangements and the designated child protection staff, together with external helplines, through notices around the school. These factors contribute to pupils saying they feel safe at school.

Safer recruitment procedures take account of recent guidance and both the head teacher and a trustee have undergone safer recruitment training. The child protection policy and procedures are in place and training has been undertaken by staff. The designated child protection officer has been trained to an appropriate level and is well aware of her responsibilities regarding the local safeguarding children board (LSCB). New members of staff are inducted into the school's procedures by the designated person.

The school makes it clear that any form of bullying will not be tolerated through the implementation of the anti-bullying policy. Pupils say bullying is rare and they are clear that the few instances that have occurred have been dealt with effectively. The school's immediate response to one such recent instance has been very thorough. The school followed its procedures closely, working with parents and individual pupils, as well as bringing forward a planned anti-bullying week, assembly and tutorial work to help pupils understand the nature of bullying and how it will be tackled.

The school has good regard to health and safety, working with an experienced designated trustee who carries out this responsibility effectively. Thorough risk assessments contribute to the safety of the pupils in school and on educational visits. Appropriate records were kept for the two recent educational visits for geography and for art. Fire risk assessments are carried out and fire-fighting equipment is regularly checked and maintained by specialist providers. Fire safety drills have been carried out and recorded. The school has a written First Aid policy that is supported by qualified members of staff and a suitable medical room is available should a pupil be taken ill at school. Admission and attendance registers are kept in good order.

Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles, learning about healthy eating, for example, in food and nutrition and science. They understand that exercise is an important part of healthy living and have good opportunities, with two sessions of physical education each week, to develop skills and fitness and enjoyment. Pupils participate with enthusiasm and enjoyment in games, making good use of the school's good quality playing fields and gymnasium.

The school took account of the need for accessibility when planning the refurbishment of the new school and this is monitored as part of the regular risk assessments. The school has drawn up the required three-year plan to provide equal access to the curriculum for any pupil with disability. The plan sets out clearly what provision the school will make, and that it will be kept under review.

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

The school carries out checks on staff, trustees and volunteers, and meets the requirements, including those for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. The school keeps the required Single Central Record (SCR) of appointments.

PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The quality of the premises and accommodation is excellent. A derelict school building was purchased about eighteen months ago. Since then a great deal of energy and considerable resources have gone into the thoughtful refurbishment of the school to a high standard, both inside and out. The result is an attractive and well-organised learning environment that is fit for purpose.

Classrooms are well decorated, light and airy with good quality furniture and fittings appropriate to the age range of pupils. The sixth-form area provides suitable accommodation including well equipped areas for making drinks.

Pupils' learning in all key stages benefits from good quality specialist subject accommodation in science, ICT, design and technology (D&T); food and nutrition (F&N), art, music and construction together with a library. Subject-specialist classrooms already have well-presented displays that inform pupils about the topics being studied, as well as celebrating examples of their work. The very good provision of showers and spacious changing rooms give a positive health message.

The extensive grounds are attractively landscaped with good provision for outside activities. The good games facilities, including both grassed and hard surfaced areas, are well used. Picnic benches, for example, further enhance the grounds for relaxation at break and lunch times.

Students appreciate their new school and its facilities. One pupil remarked that it was what they had always wanted.

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

The school has provided at this early stage the necessary information required for parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils, and complies with the regulations. The school has clear procedures in place to extend this, including the provision of regular parent-consultation meetings, as the school establishes itself over time. An information handbook is sent to all parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils with details of the school provision and arrangements. In addition there have been meetings at both of the two original schools preceding amalgamation, at which parents were able to discuss the operation of this new school in advance. The school has so far issued three weekly 'Wilton Park School News' publications giving parents information about its work and activities in a colourful and attractive format. The vast majority of parents confirm that they are satisfied with the level of information provided.

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

The school has formally adopted the FLT complaints procedures and practices and this policy is stated in the essential information handbook as being available to parents on request.

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

Wilton Park School is the result of a well executed integration of two previous secondary schools into one combined establishment. The premises have been renovated and refurbished over the preceding months to a good standard. The school stands in extensive grounds. Accommodation is provided in good-sized rooms which are well equipped, and the pupils express themselves as being happy to be at the school. Some pupils in the middle years of the school express the feeling that they are not clear as to which subjects to study and as to their future opportunities but this uncertainty may be as a result of the recent amalgamation. The school has the support of the parents.

Wilton Park is controlled by Wessex Schools Trust with eighteen trustees who also have three separate primary units under their control. The catchment area comprises seven neighbouring towns with pupils travelling by mini-bus to and from school. A management team meets regularly to respond to operational issues comprising both trustees and headteacher and deputies. These meetings are minuted as are the main Trust meetings. Minutes of the Trust meetings do not adequately record how action points are responded to subsequently, and are not signed off by two trustees at the subsequent meetings.

A lack of clarity in demarcation of duties and communication between the trust and the school's senior team causes some confusion in policy implementation and practical operations. The number of trustees in total and the number of trustees on the management team is unusually high.

Could the organisation and management of the school be improved?

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

- improve and extend trust minutes by recording the resolution of matters left for action from a previous trust meeting and by ensuring that minutes are signed off by two trustees at a subsequent meeting;
- Improve the clarity between the respective responsibilities of the trust and the school by ensuring that the distinction between policy responsibility and governance of the school operations is understood by both parties; and
- improve operational efficiency by reducing the total number of trustees and number on the management team, and by making better use of specialist input as and when required, with improved reporting.

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