



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR FOCUS SCHOOL STOKE-BY-NAYLAND CAMPUS

DfE No: 935/6082

The key inspection judgements for this school are:

The quality of education	Good	2
Pupils' personal development	Outstanding	1
Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership, management and governance	Good	2

Compliance with the Independent School Standards:

The school meets the regulatory requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Compliance with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Date of inspection: 31 January – 2 February 2017

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Stoke-by-Nayland Campus provides a good quality of education for all its pupils. It fulfils its aims to provide an education based on scriptural values in an environment in which pupils are valued and respected. The school is making good progress towards achieving its challenging vision to 'produce outstanding self-directed students through visionary learning'. Pupils make good progress in almost all age groups, abilities and subjects. In some subjects at GCSE, such as mathematics, the pupils do not achieve as well as in others. Although the majority of pupils achieve standards that are above national expectations, fewer pupils attain the higher levels and make exceptional progress. Assessment procedures reflect the current requirements of the national curriculum and those of Focus Learning Trust (FLT). These procedures are becoming more securely embedded in teaching so that pupils' progress can be accurately assessed, but the data is not used consistently to identify how pupils could make even better progress. The quality of teaching is good. It enables pupils to acquire knowledge and skills in all subjects and apply these effectively to their self-directed learning (SDL). The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides good opportunities for pupils' personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education. Opportunities to develop SDL within the curriculum are not always clearly identified as an integral aspect of teaching and learning. Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective and there are good procedures in place to identify quickly those who need support. Behaviour is excellent and pupils treat each other with care and respect. Personal development is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' understanding of their own community and the wider world. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are excellent. Staff and volunteers receive training in current child protection guidance and are regularly updated on the latest developments. Leadership and management are good and some aspects of the work of senior leaders and trustees have had an excellent impact on the quality of the school's provision. The headteacher has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve. He has established a clear leadership structure through which the school's performance is evaluated accurately and makes an impact on the quality of teaching and learning including raising expectations of pupils' achievement. All of the independent school standards are met.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- increase the challenge for pupils so that more of them are able to reach higher levels of attainment, particularly in mathematics;
- improve the use of assessment data so that teachers use it more effectively to plan lessons and improve pupils' progress; and
- extend the impact of the innovative approaches to teaching and learning developed through SDL so that they are integral to all curriculum planning.

SECTION B: INFORMATION

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE). The school was given two days' notice of inspection.

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed lessons across a range of subjects and areas of learning. Examples of pupils' work were examined and data regarding pupil achievement were analysed. Discussions were held with members of staff and trustees and inspectors spoke with groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the life of the school, including break and lunch times. They scrutinised the school website and other documentation and records. Parents' and pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were taken into account.

The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Mr Andrew Rickett
Team inspector:	Mr Peter Jones

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

Stoke-by-Nayland is a non-selective independent day school for boys and girls aged between seven and eighteen years. The school is owned by the Larchcroft Education Trust. It is registered with the department for education (DfE) as an independent charity being a school with a special religious character. It serves families of the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church through the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) which provides support and direction for the school's management and development. The school's vision is to 'produce outstanding self-directed students' in a school community underpinned by five core values; integrity, compassion, respect, responsibility and commitment. These values reflect the school's Christian ethos. The school has 155 pupils, including 23 in the sixth form. At the time of the inspection one pupil had an educational health care (EHC) plan and eight had been identified as having a special education need and/or disability (SEND). There are no pupils with English as an additional language. The school was last inspected in April 2014.

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Pupils' learning and achievement

Pupils achieve well with outcomes that for almost all groups and ages are above national expectations. The number of pupils achieving higher levels at both GCSE and A level is lower than expected and, although progress exceeds national expectations and the school's own predictions, too few pupils make exceptional progress because they are not challenged to reach the higher levels. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points to attain results in public examinations that compare favourably with national averages and particularly well against other schools locally. There are some inconsistencies in attainment with, for example, fewer pupils achieving higher grades in mathematics at GCSE compared with other subjects. However, the number of pupils achieving A*-C at GCSE, including English and mathematics, exceeds national figures by approximately 20% and this represents good progress from the end of Key Stage 2. There is a similar picture at A level although historically the large number of subjects pupils have been expected to take means that, for some, results have not been as good as expected. The school has addressed this and pupils at Key Stage 5 are now encouraged to follow a more flexible programme of courses with fewer A levels supplemented by other academic courses. This is making a positive impact on the quality of the A level courses being taken and the engagement of pupils in their learning.

The majority of pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 are working at least at levels expected for their age and make good progress. Pupils in Key Stage 2 acquire a good subject knowledge and vocabulary and apply this well. They have a secure foundation in numeracy and literacy and use this well across the curriculum. This is built upon through Key Stage 3 so that pupils are well prepared to begin GCSE courses in Year 9.

Pupils are highly motivated to learn and engage in their lessons. They respond eagerly when asked questions and readily work in groups or independently. From Key Stage 2, pupils are acquiring the skills that enable them to successfully develop independent learning through research and initiating their own enquiry. This often produces work of high quality. Pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities from SDL to apply their knowledge and understanding in challenging and creative ways across all key stages. They are increasingly using their knowledge to make links between subject areas to enhance their understanding of what they are learning. Opportunities to study in the sixth form are enhanced through good quality distance learning provided through virtual classrooms. Sixth form students speak highly of these opportunities as they help prepare them for working life in the community when they leave school.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Teaching has improved since September 2016 when lesson observations carried out by the Extended Leadership Team (ELT) identified areas to improve its quality particularly with

regard to raising expectations of pupils' achievement. School monitoring and evidence from the inspection indicate that there is now a greater consistency of good teaching seen across the school. The majority of lessons observed during the inspection were of at least good quality. This included those seen in the virtual classrooms whose quality is also monitored by the ELT. There were few examples of outstanding teaching although, when these were seen, they made a significant impact on the progress pupils made because carefully planned learning activities challenged pupils of all abilities.

Teachers plan lessons well with clear objectives which build on previous learning to ensure pupils make progress. Clearly differentiated work in a number of lessons enabled pupils to engage in their learning at an appropriate level and make good progress. In some of these lessons, the teacher worked closely with the teaching assistant so that support given to individual pupils focussed on their specific needs and therefore was more effective in moving their learning forward. Teachers have good subject knowledge and deliver lessons that provide opportunities for pupils to engage in their learning through a range of strategies which, at their best, had an emphasis on pupils thinking for themselves through open-ended activities that challenged their understanding. On some occasions, teachers spent too long at the beginning of a lesson explaining the content of what was to be taught rather than allowing pupils to engage in their learning. As a result, opportunities were lost for pupils to make progress. By contrast, the most effective teaching immediately captured the pupils' interest through innovative activities to which they responded enthusiastically. An art lesson, for example, provided pupils with creative experiences to manipulate images and photographs that produced high quality artwork. These lessons incorporate SDL as an integral aspect of teaching and learning and not something which has been 'added on'. In lessons where links between teaching and learning and SDL have not been identified in planning, opportunities are missed to extend the pupils' understanding and raise expectations of achievement.

The quality of marking has improved since the previous inspection. An effective marking policy has been introduced which is now being used across the school and has improved the quality of marking in both primary and secondary phases. There is some inconsistency in how well it is implemented. When used effectively marking included comments that used subject specific language. It identified how pupils could improve their work often by giving them examples of further questions to explore that challenged pupils to deepen their understanding of what they were learning. Where marking was less effective, comments were not specific to the learning and gave no indication of how pupils could do better. Regular assessments, including diagnostic tests together with ongoing teacher assessment, are carried out across the school. Data from these assessments is monitored by the two Progress Leaders who are developing their skills to identify trends in progress and use this to inform areas for improvement. At present, all subject leaders and individual class teachers do not use data effectively to identify how they can challenge pupils to raise their levels of achievement.

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and is well suited to the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupils, and plays an important role in the good progress pupils make. Curriculum planning includes clearly defined progression, strongly supporting teaching and learning of good quality. Focus

Learning Trust curriculum materials provide a secure written curriculum policy supported by well-planned schemes of work throughout all subjects and age ranges. From Key Stage 2 onwards the curriculum ensures that pupils develop good speaking, reading, writing and numeracy skills and understanding in all subject areas and apply these with increasing confidence as they move through the school. This effectively supports learning and the development of aesthetic and creative skills as well as scientific and technological knowledge and understanding. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 gives a good range of subjects followed by options at Key Stage 4 to provide for some specialisation, with sixth form students able to follow individual programmes of academic or vocational options suited to their needs. The curriculum is broadened by access for sixth form students to virtual classroom tuition from teachers at other FLT schools.

Awareness of the importance of mutual respect and tolerance for all is developed within the school through its caring ethos, and more widely through, for example, Key Stage 2 pupils' work on the various faiths and cultures of the UK. Opportunities to explore global issues are evident in, for example, Key Stage 4 geography through research into the statistics of immigration. Teachers add value to the curriculum by well planned projects using local knowledge such as when upper primary age pupils visit a local archaeological dig to enhance their study of the Anglo-Saxon period.

Emphasis is placed by the school on self-directed learning (SDL) as part of the national FLT initiative. This underpins the school's aim to develop a 'visionary learning methodology' and is making an impact on the curriculum and its delivery. Teachers are increasingly planning innovative approaches to problem solving, group work, information and communication technology (ICT)-based research and the development of thinking skills. Recent changes to the design of classroom spaces are key to the delivery of the new curriculum approach by providing hubs, booths and flexible working spaces, all with ICT connectivity. Pupils relish the opportunities SDL provides to work as part of a team, use ICT skilfully and learn quickly. This approach is well suited to preparing pupils for life and work in contemporary British society.

The curriculum is enriched through exciting opportunities to learn beyond the timetabled curriculum. For example, a languages week and a good programme of visits out of school contribute to the pupils' appreciation of the rule of law, democracy and British values.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are well supported through effective and early identification of their needs, with appropriate plans in place to meet individual requirements. The one pupil with more specific needs has her needs met as specified in her EHC plan.

2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is excellent. They are committed to concepts such as justice and the need to be tolerant of others. Indeed, many pupils spoke with considerable concern about the need to be more than 'just tolerant' but to be able to appreciate others. They have a mature understanding

of how moral and social issues are not always simple to resolve and need to 'give and take' as a means of coming to an agreement. Pupils engage in discussions about these issues with confidence and a commitment to making the world a better place. They have many opportunities through art and music to respond to the beauty of the world and appreciate the wonders around them. Moreover, pupils care about the world they live in and what happens to it.

The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) provided makes a significant contribution to the development of the pupils' wellbeing and understanding of relationships. Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary and is reflected in the high quality of care and concern given to each other. Pupils are polite and respectful. Younger pupils understand the need to look after others and not just think of themselves and the school has a fine tradition of supporting charities. Pupils' respect for each other goes beyond the life of the school and includes an understanding of the need to respect the law and institutions that uphold them and the diversity of traditions that underpin modern British society.

An important aspect of the pupils' personal development is the encouragement given them to make a contribution to the life of the school. An outstanding example of this is the work of the Student Leadership Team. Their work and impact on the life of the school are excellent. The work they do is integral to the life of the school and they are afforded a high status as part of the overall leadership team because of this. They have their own section in the school improvement plan. Other pupils contribute through the school councils and take responsibility for a range of school initiatives such as ensuring the school is eco-friendly.

The school provides a wealth of options for older pupils to experience future employment opportunities. Through the Career Advancement Programme (CAP), pupils in the Sixth Form receive bursaries generously provided by the community to support them in their studies and undertake workplace experience chosen from a very wide range of companies. These range from design and art to construction, accounts and marketing. This is coupled with the Young Enterprise initiative to prepare pupils for the world of work. The careers advice offered meets the needs of pupils within the context of the community in which they live and will work when they leave school. An important aspect of this provision is its flexibility whereby pupils can try a number of career options.

3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Provision for the safeguarding of pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school has a culture of care for pupils embedded in its pastoral systems and the processes in place to be vigilant about their wellbeing. This is reflected in the regular meetings held by staff to identify pupils who need support with their learning or pastorally. There is a good relationship between the school and the pupils' families and communication between them is strong.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know that there are adults in school who they can talk to for help and advice. Incidents of misbehaviour are rare and attendance is good compared to national averages. The school has an

appropriate anti-bullying policy and a behaviour policy that emphasises positive strategies to respond to the rare incidents that occur.

The school has an experienced designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who ensures that all staff and volunteers have up to date training in the latest safeguarding guidance and receive regular updates so that they are kept informed of safeguarding developments. All staff and volunteers have undertaken training in the requirements of '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*' (September 2016) and have also received training in the identification of risks concerning the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. Pupils have been made aware of the need to be mindful of staying safe when being online. The school has systems in place to ensure that its provision is secure when pupils use electronic media. Staff have undertaken training in e-safety and pupils and parents have been made aware of its dangers.

Checks made to ensure that the school employs suitable staff meet requirements and leaders ensure that appointment panels include at least one person who has recently undertaken safer recruitment training.

Policies for health and safety are in place and appropriate measures are taken to ensure they are implemented. Risk assessments are of a good quality and carried out for practical activities and off-site visits. Fire regulations are met. Fire equipment is regularly checked and drills are carried out each term. The school has appropriate medical facilities that are well maintained. The first aid policy meets requirements and is supported by several trained staff.

Attendance is in line with national averages. The school keeps admission and attendance registers that meet requirements.

4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management are good. Some aspects of governance are excellent. The leadership is committed to the promotion of the school's ethos and is passionate about developing each pupil's ability to direct their own learning within the context of the school's Christian vision. Improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, and to the learning environment, have been put in place to ensure that there is a focus on delivering SDL so that they support and enable pupils to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. The school is making good progress towards achieving this aim through the rigorous leadership of the headteacher.

The headteacher has quickly identified the school strengths and areas to develop. He has accurately identified where improvements need to be made to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Priorities for development are fully detailed in a robust school improvement plan that includes challenging targets and a realistic time frame to achieve them. The implementation of a new leadership structure at the start of the academic year has brought clarity to the roles of senior leaders with clear lines of responsibility between the operational and strategic aspects of leadership. This is particularly effective in the excellent

communication between the senior leadership team (SLT), the extended leadership team (ELT) and the campus administration team (CAT). The role of trustees is an integral aspect of the leadership and management structure. The ELT includes two Progress Leaders who are quickly developing their skills to use data effectively to hold staff to account for pupils' achievement and progress. The measures the headteacher has put in place to raise the quality of teaching are having a positive impact. Robust procedures to monitor the quality of teaching show that the quality of teaching across the school is now good which represents an improvement from September 2016. The leadership and management have established a good relationship with the recently appointed FLT regional principal who provides effective support and challenge and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and those that require improvement. The full impact of these strategic improvements has yet to be fully embedded.

Professional training for staff has a high priority. Staff receive excellent support centrally from FLT which reflects their commitment to SDL. This is effectively disseminated to staff at all levels under by the deputy headteacher who has overall responsibility for the development of SDL throughout the school. Pupils speak very highly of the opportunities to direct aspects of their own learning. The role of performance management is becoming more central to school development. Closer links between individual staff targets and school improvement priorities is resulting in a stronger sense of purpose to overall staff development.

Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that an overwhelming majority are very positive about the quality of education provided and support the direction that the leadership and management, including governance, is taking.

The premises are of a high standard. They include specialist facilities for science, design and technology, physical education, music and art. Substantial refurbishment of the school to provide excellent provision for SDL has enhanced the learning environment. The school meets the requirements for the information it provides for parents and in how to handle complaints. There have been no formal complaints in the last twelve months.

The commitment of members of the community to the life of the school makes a huge impact on the school's provision.

Governance

The quality and effectiveness of governance is excellent. The trustees are committed to the work of the school and in providing an education of high quality. They work closely with the campus administration and leadership teams and provide the school with effective support and challenge. They have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and provide a robust level of challenge which links to school development priorities. Trustees each have clearly defined responsibilities that ensure all aspects of compliance are covered. They uphold fully the Christian ethos of the school and its five core values.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Focus School Stoke-by-Nayland			
Address of school:	Sudbury Road, Stoke-by-Nayland, Colchester, Essex CO6 4RW			
Telephone number:	01206 264230			
Email address:	stokebynaylandcampus@focus-school.com			
Web address	http://styokeybynayland.focus-school.com/			
Proprietor:	Larchcroft Education Trust			
Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4:	Andrew Bradshaw			
Head Teacher:	Ivan Mulinder			
DfE Number	935/6082			
Type of school	Independent school of special religious character			
Annual fees	Fees are charged internally			
Age range of pupils	7 - 18			
Gender of pupils	Co Educational			
Total number on roll	full-time	155	part-time	0
Number of children in registered nursery	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of children under-5	Boys:	NA	Girls:	NA
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	61	Girls:	71
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	17	Girls:	6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	0	Girls:	1
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Type of inspection	Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008			

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk.