

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:	Breckland Park
DfE number: FOCUS number:	926/6153 417
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Mr Peter Jones Supporting Inspectors: Mr Ted Cohn Mr Mike Thirkell Additional Inspector: Mr Simon Bennett
Dates of inspection:	12 to 15 March 2012

CONTENTS OF THE REPORT

Section A: Introduction and summary

Section B: Compliance with regulations for registration

Section C: The quality of organisation and management

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Breckland Park

Address of school: Turbine Way
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Swaffham
Norfolk PE37 7XD

Telephone number: 01760 336939

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Proprietor: Medeshamstede Educational Trust

Name of Chief Executive Officer: Mr Gordon Fentiman

Name of Senior Teacher: Mrs Sally Garrett

DfE number: 926/6153

FOCUS number: 417

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: 74	Girls: 71
(Part time)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0

Number of post-16 students: Boys: 8 Girls: 8

Number of pupils with statements of special educational need: Boys: 2 Girls: 0

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

Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector: Mr Peter Jones

Supporting Inspectors: Mr Ted Cohn
Mr Mike Thirkell

Additional Inspector: Mr Simon Bennett
(responsible for Section C)

Dates of inspection: 12 to 15 March 2012

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 an additional 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:

Breckland Park School was formed in September 2005 through the amalgamation of two registered schools, Medeshamstede and Beechcroft. It is administered by the Medeshamstede Educational Trust. The school is affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust and follows its policies and ethos. The school's principal aims are to have a family-oriented atmosphere where all individuals are equally valued, to encourage and enable all individuals to achieve their full potential and to equip pupils for adult life. Pupils come from the Brethren communities in Peterborough, Norwich, King's Lynn, Lowestoft and Swaffham, and admission is non-selective. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs and 35 have been identified as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). There are no pupils for whom English is a second language. There are 145 pupils on roll aged from seven to eighteen, of whom 74 are boys and 71 girls. The school admitted pupils from the age of seven for the first time in September 2008. The school has plans to expand its accommodation and numbers over the next academic year. The school was last inspected in March 2009.

Summary of main findings:

Breckland Park is a thriving school which meets its aims very effectively, provides a good quality of education and has made good progress since the last inspection, meeting each of the points for development from the last inspection report. The curriculum, which is now excellent, is broad and balanced, and teaching is good overall and often outstanding; it is well planned, takes good account of pupils' varying needs and successfully promotes rapid learning so that pupils make good and often excellent progress overall. Assessment is accurate and sets clear targets so that pupils know what they must do to improve, and marking is good in the primary phase, although secondary marking sometimes lacks consistency of presentation. There is also a small proportion of teaching where the structure of lessons and the checks made on pupils' understanding are insufficiently robust. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now excellent, as pupils are willing to take responsibility and to play a full part in the life of the school, and their behaviour is excellent. Provision for welfare, health and safety is good with a number of outstanding features, and all the required policies and checks are in place, including those in relation to safeguarding and child protection. Accommodation is of a very

high standard. Parents are kept suitably informed about their children's progress, and their view of the school is overwhelmingly positive.

What the school does well:

- it ensures good management, which has led to systematic improvement in the educational provision;
- its pupils achieve very well in lessons and in national tests and examinations;
- it provides a good quality of teaching, which makes a major contribution to the very rapid progress that pupils achieve and the high standards they attain;
- it enables pupils to show increasing confidence in answering questions and expressing ideas and opinions;
- its pupils value greatly the very good support given by their teachers, and this plays a key role in their outstanding personal development; and
- its premises provide an excellent learning environment.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

The school meets all regulatory requirements.

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

The school complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Next Steps:

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

- ensure that marking is consistently effective in supporting pupils' progress and learning;
- extend the high quality of presentation of pupils' work to all parts of the school; and
- make all teaching good or outstanding throughout the school.

SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

Breckland Park School provides an excellent curriculum, which meets the relevant key aspects of its aims very well. The broad and balanced curriculum meets the needs of all pupils at least well. It provides good opportunities for individual pupils of all abilities to achieve their full potential and equips them very effectively for adult life. It also provides good opportunities for independent learning.

The Key Stage 2 curriculum places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and includes a full range of National Curriculum subjects and French. Citizenship and personal, social, and health education (PSHE) are also taught as separate subjects. The Key Stage 3 curriculum also covers all the National Curriculum subjects and Bible Studies. Following the National Curriculum closely and including PSHE and citizenship across the school ensure that pupils gain good experience of all areas of learning. The Key Stage 4 curriculum remains very broad and all pupils study mathematics, science, history, geography, craft design and technology (CDT), music, physical education (PE), citizenship, PSHE, careers education and Bible Studies, with many pupils also studying French, which provides great strength and breadth. The post-16 curriculum has a vocational emphasis, reflecting the needs of pupils in the adult world, and provides an excellent range of courses for a sixth form of its size, and pupils expressed great satisfaction with the range of choice and its relevance to their own perceived needs. The school also uses a virtual classroom, video-linked to other Focus schools, to extend provision in examination courses such as Accounts and English. The combination of courses of different types and levels, such as Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), the National Certificate in Business, City and Guilds English for Business, General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), Advanced Supplementary (AS) and Advanced level courses, ensures that the varied learning needs, interests and future adult needs of pupils are met very well. It also allows the curriculum to be closely tailored to individual need, an important requirement in an open entry sixth form where all pupils stay on from Year 11.

The curriculum caters very well for the development of pupils' skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy, which is supported by the very high levels of success achieved in GCSE English and mathematics and the excellent results of pupils in earlier, nationally standardised tests. The early and clear diagnosis of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), combined with well-focused, individual education plans and close collaboration between learning support staff and class and subject teachers, ensures that the curriculum is made accessible for those with LDD and that the able, gifted and talented are appropriately challenged. Similarly, pupils with formal statements of educational needs benefit from the clear analysis and very careful planning to address their needs, as well as a close monitoring and review of their progress.

Curriculum planning is extremely strong and nearly always of an excellent quality, particularly in the junior school. Much of the planning in the senior school is of a similar quality, identifying very clearly what is to be learned, the progress in learning

and how this will be monitored and assessed. In doing this, many staff have made very effective use of National Curriculum levels to determine ladders of progression in learning. Occasionally, these have not been used as systematically, and progression in learning is not always so clearly identified.

The development of economic understanding and the world of work are strong features of the curriculum. Work on economic understanding is introduced from an early age, covering financial capability, competence and understanding. It deals, for instance, with matters such as personal and family budgeting and consumer rights. In the sixth form it is developed further through accounts and business studies courses. Work experience also enhances economic understanding and helps to prepare pupils for adult life. As part of the experience, pupils learn about all aspects of the company that they are working in and record this in the diaries that they keep. Valuable experience and understanding of the world of work are also gained through the talks and mock interviews that members of the Brethren community carry out. The learning to learn course undertaken in the sixth form similarly provides some splendid learning opportunities, such as that of a local company who gave pupils the opportunity to research how marketing could be exploited for a new product. The project required pupils to research an area of production with which they were unfamiliar, to collaborate closely with each other in a competitive environment where a prize was on offer and to present their ideas to the company.

The quality of teaching and assessment

Teaching is good overall and is often excellent. Teaching enables pupils to make good and often excellent progress in learning. There is a significant proportion of excellent teaching, and a small proportion of teaching which, while not poor, is less effective than it might be. Teachers have good, secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, and use well-chosen teaching and learning resources. Relationships in lessons are excellent. Assessment is accurate and supports the excellent progress pupils make. Marking in the primary school is well organised and presented, but the presentation and quality of marking is less consistent in the secondary school.

The good teaching is characterised by high-quality planning, making good use of pupils' prior learning and very clearly focused on ensuring that pupils make excellent progress. Lessons start quickly, move at a good pace, and emphasise the active participation of all the pupils. A notable feature of teaching is the emphasis on the development of pupils' thinking skills. Teachers structure their lessons to ensure that there is a regular demand on pupils to offer solutions and express ideas and opinions in written and oral form. There is consistently good use of skilled questioning, reflecting high expectations, and an emphasis on the accurate and inventive use of language by pupils. Teachers listen very carefully to pupils' spoken contributions to lessons and give timely and accurate feedback to help them improve their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Teaching is good and often very good at meeting the learning needs of pupils with different levels of ability, with consistent use of group work based on ability level, with good support for SEND pupils. Paired work and group work, for example in primary literacy and in Key Stage 3 mathematics, are well planned and encourage good responses from pupils. There is less evidence of collaborative and group work in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

There is a small proportion of less effective teaching, where there is some lack of secure command of subject material, objectives are not entirely clear, lessons are not consistently structured to ensure pace and engage pupils' interest, and there is a lack of accurate checks on pupils' gains in knowledge and understanding.

Classroom resources are generally of good quality and quantity, with up-to-date teaching and learning materials. Teachers often use inventive and interesting resources, for example in Year 9 English, where a song lyric was a very effective resource which pupils analysed to give insights into the use of metaphors. At times there is pressure on book resources for some GCSE courses where several year groups are involved. There are adequate information and communication technology (ICT) resources, but arrangements for day-to-day ICT troubleshooting are not always good enough to ensure continuity of access to computers for pupils during lessons. Classrooms are bright, welcoming and well organised, and displays, including those which celebrate pupils' work, provide excellent teaching and learning resources.

The progress pupils make is good and often excellent. Primary pupils achieve excellent results in nationally standardised tests. Secondary pupils generally achieve well in Key Stage 3, and by Key Stage 4 they achieve very high levels of success in GCSE examinations. Post-16 achievement is good overall across a range of different examinations and qualifications. Pupils perform consistently well in lessons, showing a very keen interest in learning and displaying intellectual curiosity. Primary pupils progress very well as a result of their involvement in lively and interesting lessons, and their achievement is enhanced by working very well together in groups and pairs. Their achievement in literacy and numeracy is very good and shows that they learn quickly and make very good progress. Written work in the primary school is of good quality and is well presented, supported by good handwriting. In the secondary school, although the content of written work is generally good and frequently excellent, presentation across a range of subjects is untidy and on occasions poorly organised, making books and files more difficult to use as a learning and revision source.

Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress is accurate and well managed. Pupils know what they have achieved and know how to improve on their work. Good oral feedback to pupils on their progress in lessons is a strong feature of teaching. Marking is good and effective in the primary school. Secondary marking, although contributing to accurate assessment, lacks consistency of presentation. Records of pupils' progress are comprehensive, with good use made of standardised tests, routine teacher assessments and public examination results, to provide accurate tracking of progress over time and to identify targets for improvement.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and has improved since the last inspection. By the time that pupils leave the school, they have become confident, mature young people, with strong moral values, a clear understanding of their responsibilities to each other and the wider school community, a good understanding of public services and institutions and of the importance of tolerance of other cultures.

The Christian values of the community in which they live enhance pupils' spiritual awareness and give them a strong moral compass and set of social values to guide and influence their behaviour in a very positive manner. Pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and of the importance of being law-abiding. They recognise that they must take responsibility for their behaviour from an early age and show great respect towards each other and teachers, behaving with a natural grace and courtesy that creates a harmonious school community. This is reflected in the excellent behaviour of pupils in classrooms and around the school, and also in the comments that pupils make about the school community. Teachers also provide good models for pupils to follow and there is a strong bond of mutual trust and respect between teachers and pupils. The school's rewards scheme, based on the house system, is valued and enjoyed by pupils and reinforces the strong sense of community.

Pupils gain a good understanding about the public institutions and services in England, as a result of the citizenship programme that runs throughout the school, and this is reflected in the excellent results achieved in GCSE citizenship. The junior and senior school councils and the sixth-form councils provide vivid examples of community democracy in action, with members of the councils and committee elected through secret ballot. The pupils greatly appreciate their work in the school councils and the serious manner in which their suggestions are considered.

In the junior school, pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is enhanced through topic weeks, which explore life in different cultures, such as those focusing on life in China and India. In the senior school, groups of pupils visit France, and children come from other countries, such as Sweden and France, to the school and share their different cultural experiences. In geography, pupils study the cultures of lives of people in Kenya and Japan. They also learn about other countries through activities such as the literacy unit in the junior school, dealing with books from different cultural traditions and a visit to the Holocaust exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in the senior school. Fund-raising activities, such as those for Read International, providing books for Tanzania, and the Japanese tsunami and the Haiti earthquake appeals, increase understanding of the plight of those less well-off. Current affairs and debates provide pupils with knowledge and understanding of important current issues.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The quality of welfare, health and safety is good and has a number of outstanding features, ensuring that pupils are well cared for. All the required policies are in place, including those which relate to child protection, behaviour and dealing with rare instances of bullying. Policies relating to welfare, health and safety are based on Focus Learning Trust guidance and supplemented by helpful additional documentation, strategies and guidance developed by the school. Strategies for ensuring that all policies are implemented effectively are good, although on occasions procedures for their oversight lack clarity. Procedures to ensure the safeguarding of pupils are thorough. Staff receive very good levels of guidance and,

where appropriate, training on dealing with all matters relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

Pupils of all ages say that they feel safe in the school. Their understanding in relation to staying safe has been enhanced by a range of organisations associated with national safety, such as the police and fire brigade, who have visited the school. In addition, opportunities have been provided for pupils to learn about road safety. Pupils are encouraged to live healthy lives, and parents to provide them with healthy food in lunch boxes. There are good opportunities for physical activities on the school site and, where necessary, to extend opportunities through the use of local sports facilities. Risk assessments in relation to trips out of school are similarly thorough.

Fire safety and related matters are dealt with thoroughly by individual trustees. All the required checks in relation to fire safety in the school are undertaken by appointed specialist companies, including the checking of fire appliances. Fire drills take place regularly and are carefully recorded. The records of fire assessments that have taken place meet the regulations fully, but the evaluations of these practices are relatively brief. Risk assessments for each part of the school are thorough, including the specific risks linked, for example, to activities in science. Records relating to a range of matters, including, for example, sanctions, detentions, accidents and occasional relatively minor incidents of silly behaviour, are thoroughly maintained. Staff are provided with good guidance about procedures relating to safety of pupils on school trips, and effective records are maintained by the school.

Staff are suitably trained to undertake their responsibilities in relation to welfare, health and safety. A good range of resources is available in the school to guide teachers in dealing with issues such as bullying, pupils' behaviour and child protection, including booklets provided by the Department for Education (DfE). All the appropriate courses have been completed by those with responsibility for child protection and first aid. Good links are maintained with the local authority in this respect and with regard to a number of other matters. The school fulfils its duties with respect to Equalities legislation.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

The school has clear administrative procedures for checking that staff and others are suitable persons to work with children. Records of all checks completed are kept in a register as required.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school provides accommodation of a very high standard. All aspects of the premises and accommodation are well maintained and are in good decorative order. Generally, classrooms are spacious and enable teachers to employ a range of teaching strategies. Wide corridors allow ease of movement of numbers of pupils,

including in relation to access or evacuation in case of emergency. Lighting, heating and ventilation meet modern standards, and furniture and fittings are suitable for the range of sizes of pupils. There are ample washrooms and toilets, and good facilities for pupils who may become ill during the school day. Areas where food is prepared have been checked relatively recently by a local environmental health officer to ensure the suitability of the provision.

The school provides a range of good quality specialist accommodation, including libraries in both primary and secondary departments, an ICT room, a science laboratory, a woodwork workshop, a cookery room, hard and soft areas for games, and a gymnasium and school hall. Facilities for PE and games are supplemented by visits to local sports facilities. The sixth-form accommodation and its good facilities, including a well-ordered galley kitchen, support their status at the top of the school. Good use is made of the neighbouring Ecotech Centre for a range of activities, including gardening during the summer months. The ample outdoor space available for play is well used by the pupils. Good staff supervision is provided to ensure safe play.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 6 - The quality of information for parents

The provision of information for parents is of good quality. The school prospectus, which is provided for all parents and prospective parents, includes all the required information and policies, including those for admissions, uniform, discipline, attendance and child protection. The prospectus also makes it clear that other policies, such as anti-bullying and complaints procedures, as well as particulars of pupils' academic performance, are available at the school on request. Regular consultation sessions and thorough and informative interim and annual reports keep parents well informed about their children's progress.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 7 - The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The complaints procedure meets the regulatory requirements. There were no complaints in the twelve months preceding the inspection.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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 an additional Inspector, who has written this section of the report.

The quality of the organisation and management of the school

Breckland Park is a well-run school with a strong team spirit and clearly defined areas of responsibility. All involved work hard for the benefit of the school community as a whole and lines of communication are effective. The headteacher and the Key Stage 2 senior teacher work closely and constructively together. The trustees offer counsel and support, and themselves meet on a regular basis. Their meetings are fully minuted and appropriate responsibility for action is recorded, but timelines have not always been included. All the recommendations from the previous inspection report have been addressed successfully. Full attention has been given to strengthen the process of transition from primary to secondary and this not only applies to educational matters but to the practical aspects of daily life, whether learning to use lockers or to plan thoroughly for the requirements of the next day's work. Senior pupils have been given increased responsibility for such areas as ensuring good behaviour on buses. Parental questionnaires expressed high levels of support for all aspects of the school's provision. The school is fully committed to the process of implementing the move towards the One-school vision. Meticulous care is given to the policies relevant to welfare, health and safety and their implementation. Fire drills are well recorded, but more detailed circulation of their effectiveness is required.

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:

- ensure that minutes of their meetings always include timelines for actions; and
- improve arrangements for the circulation of records of the effectiveness of fire drills.

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