

Trinity School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131790
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	360326
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Christine Raeside HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	790
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	102
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Mrs J Graves
Headteacher	Executive headteacher Mr P Dick Associate headteacher Mrs C Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
School address	Love Lane Newbury RG14 2DU
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 29 teachers and 30 lessons, three of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body, staff and a local primary headteacher. The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at its analysis of student progress and attainment. They also scrutinised the school development plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner, policies and records of school improvement work. They considered responses to questionnaires completed by 358 parents and carers, 98 students and 66 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively all leaders in the school are taking consistent action to reduce the variation in students' achievement between subjects.
- How effectively systems for tracking, monitoring and target setting are securing equal progress for all groups of students, particularly those of lower ability.
- The extent to which effective action has been taken to share and develop good practice in teaching so that it is consistently good across the school.
- The extent to which students' behaviour and attitudes hinder their progress and how effective the school has been in combating this issue.
- The success of the school since the last inspection in raising the profile of the performing arts specialism through improved teaching, leadership and outcomes.

Information about the school

Trinity is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Most of its students are White British and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A higher than average proportion of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the majority with a specific learning difficulty, and an above-average number of them have a statement of special educational needs. There is designated provision for around 30 students with specific learning difficulties (the ACE unit). In 2009 an executive headteacher and an associate headteacher were appointed, and an interim executive board (IEB) replaced the previous governing body. Trinity has been a specialist school for the performing arts for 10 years and holds Artsmark gold status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Trinity is a good and rapidly improving school where adherence to the guiding principle, that 'student achievement will be at the heart of all we do', is driving up progress and raising aspirations. The school is a well-ordered, purposeful and safe community where students feel valued as individuals and challenged to achieve the best they can. Their good behaviour around the school and in lessons is making a strong contribution to their learning, as is their greatly improved attendance. Students feel extremely safe at school and are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Their parents and carers strongly agree that the school keeps them safe. The school has effectively reduced exclusions and there have been none this year. Rigorous monitoring and targeted action have also been effective in reducing persistent absence.

The progress made by students from their below-average starting points is good and at times outstanding, but attainment, although improving rapidly, remains below the national average. Senior leaders robustly evaluate provision and performance and make prompt changes, where necessary, to close gaps in achievement between groups of students. Where achievement is outstanding, for example, in English or for students accessing the specialist provision in the ACE unit, senior leaders have effectively identified success and shared it in staff training. The positive impact of this approach can be seen in mathematics, where progress for GCSE students was significantly better than expectations in 2010 and is also improving rapidly for younger students.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection and the large majority, including that in the sixth form, is now good, with some that is outstanding. Senior leaders are tackling areas of weakness effectively through well-targeted training and by using the best teaching in the school as a model to develop others and raise confidence and expectations. They evaluate and adapt the curriculum offer routinely in order to ensure that Trinity includes all students. They have created a climate of self-belief and high expectations for both staff and learners. The concise and keenly focused school development plan guides and helps monitor improvements in the overall quality of provision.

The school has a good capacity to improve further. The executive and associate headteachers and senior leaders, supported by an increasingly strong group of middle leaders (heads of curriculum area and heads of year), convey an ambitious vision for improvement and have been effective in eradicating previous underperformance. They routinely engage in self-evaluation and take effective action based on a clear and accurate picture of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses. Leaders and managers regularly collect assessment data to track students' achievement against their individual targets and plan effective support for individuals when required. As a result of this, students understand their targets well and can explain how they intend to meet or exceed them.

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Careful tracking of individual progress is used to plan in the better lessons so that the level of challenge is high for all students. Activities are designed carefully to secure excellent progress from a range of starting points. This is not, however, consistent in all teaching, and in some satisfactory lessons teachers have not taken enough account of individual learning needs. Although some teachers give clear and helpful advice to students about how to improve their work, this is not consistently the case across the school.

Students, parents and staff overwhelmingly express the view that the school is much improved under the current leadership. One parent said that her daughter 'is now feeling very confident about her final results and knows that she can achieve these thanks to the fabulous support network'. Senior leaders rightly believe, however, that there is more to be done. Standards of attainment and rates of progress are not even across all subjects, including in the sixth form, and a small minority of satisfactory rather than good teaching remains. Middle leaders are an increasingly cohesive group and share the headteachers' commitment to ongoing improvement, but their leadership is not yet consistently effective in rigorously monitoring and evaluating provision and outcomes to achieve the best outcomes right across all subjects and groups of students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons in order to raise students' attainment, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers make effective use of data to plan and teach lessons that are sufficiently challenging for all students
 - all lessons proceed at a brisk pace and no time is wasted
 - all teachers consistently give high quality feedback to students about how to improve their learning.
- Reduce variations in achievement between subjects in all key stages by ensuring that all middle leaders rigorously monitor and evaluate provision and outcomes and continue to drive improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In the large majority of lessons observed, positive relationships and a calm, purposeful atmosphere supported good learning. Students applied themselves well and enjoyed being challenged to develop their thinking. From lower than average starting points, they make progress that is good overall and sometimes outstanding. There is a sustained pattern of outstanding progress in English and rapid improvement in mathematics. Teachers and other adults share high expectations for all students, including those who face the greatest challenges. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and progress for some, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is outstanding thanks to a combination of carefully targeted teaching and specialist support. Students of lower ability are making better progress. Other groups of students are making excellent progress for example, those in Years 7 to 9 in mathematics and middle- and higher-ability GCSE students. These achievements, although significant, are not yet consistent or fully embedded enough to ensure that all attainment meets or exceeds the national average. Students are proud of their achievements and show an

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enthusiasm for learning. Their growing self-belief is a significant factor in their good progress.

Students at Trinity feel that staff listen to them and support them well. Senior leaders carefully monitor the implementation and impact of systems to encourage and reward good behaviour and communicate clear expectations to all staff that they should be a routine feature of lessons. Consequently, students are considerate and respectful to each other and to adults. They increasingly show initiative in supporting one another, for example, in a French lesson when a reluctant girl was helped to answer by another student saying, 'Come on, have a go, it's all about participation.' Their good behaviour, punctuality and willingness to work collaboratively, combined with rapidly developing basic skills and above-average attendance, all equip students well to move on to the next stage of their education or into the workplace.

The performing arts specialism provides opportunities for students to participate in physical activity, for example, through the popular house dance competition. Such activities, along with focus days on healthy living, are improving students' understanding of health issues.. Students of all ages, including those in the sixth form, enthusiastically participate in a wide range of opportunities to contribute to the community and to take on roles of responsibility. Sixth form 'dance ambassadors', for example, help to promote the performing arts both within school and the wider community. A recently improved school council is active, if not yet fully influential in school life. During an assembly about the Haiti earthquake crisis, students reflected with quiet concentration, showing an understanding of social and moral responsibility beyond their own experience.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of teaching and learning is good and some is outstanding because teachers know their subject and their students well and plan the work carefully so that it challenges everyone. In the better lessons activities are imaginatively prepared to hold students' interest and proceed at a lively pace. There is a combination of meaningful dialogue and helpful marking to support students to move to the next stage of learning. There is a focus on learning rather than teaching. Teachers use carefully targeted questioning to probe students for further thoughts and ideas. Where learning is not as strong, it is often because teachers do not use assessment information to plan lessons which match students' differing abilities and understanding. Consequently, not all students are equally or effectively challenged and the pace of learning slows. Although some marking is constructive and helpfully linked to learning, the quality of written feedback is too variable overall.

In Years 7 to 9 the curriculum has a clear and appropriate focus on developing students' skills in literacy and numeracy, with 40% of curriculum time being allocated to these subjects. There are good opportunities for more able students to start GCSE courses early, with some students starting examination courses in humanities and information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 9. The Key Stage 3 curriculum also reflects the school's specialist status, with all students studying dance and Year 9 students following a BTEC course in performing arts. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and developed in

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order that it better meets students' needs. For example, in recent years a number of courses in Years 10 and 11 have been changed in order to secure better student progress. A broad range of academic and vocationally based courses is now offered to students in Years 10 and 11 which helps them to remain interested and make better progress. A broad range of extra-curricular activities involving a wide range of subjects such as English, humanities, performing arts, modern foreign languages and physical education contributes positively to students' enjoyment of school and their personal development.

Arrangements to support and care for students are especially well targeted and provide further evidence of the school's commitment to the achievement of every individual. The focus of special provision, such as the internal inclusion room, is on maintaining learning. The successful use of the internal inclusion room, for example, is actively reducing the number of exclusions. Students who have experienced challenging circumstances speak warmly about the support they have received at school and some have overcome significant barriers to continue their education as a result. The school works effectively with outside agencies to provide additional support for students with social, emotional or learning needs. One boy said that he is making good progress because 'teachers understand my learning disability now'. Careers education and guidance is effective in Year 11 and the sixth form. It is also now a central, if not fully embedded, feature of the curriculum for younger students.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive and associate headteachers, together with their senior team, have effectively communicated a clear sense of purpose and a strong vision for the school to become an outstanding place of learning. Middle leaders share this vision and have a clear sense of their accountability for driving up student achievement. They are supported to tackle weaknesses in provision through clear and consistent line management and are beginning to be independently pro-active in driving improvement. Leaders at all levels share a determination to achieve ambitious attainment targets for all and have successfully tackled weaknesses in teaching, such that it is now good, in order to do so. They demonstrate the school's commitment to equality of opportunity by effectively analysing data about the performance of different groups of students to identify any gaps in achievement and by providing rapid intervention to close them. The school development plan has been devised through consultation with all members of the school community, including parents and carers, and is sharply focused on the core principle of raising student achievement. The impact of this shared and coherent approach is growing but not fully consistent across all subjects or for all students.

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The interim executive board provides effective interim governance and comprises a small but expert group of committed people who use their specialist knowledge to support the drive for improvement. This has included a robust and proactive approach to budget management, so that good management of resources is helping to achieve good outcomes for students. Systems for seeking and acting upon the views of parents are less well defined within the interim executive board. Although the very large majority of parents are happy overall with their child's experience of school, several commented that they would like more information about their child's progress and help to support their learning. The school has made judicious use of partnerships to support it through a period of rapid change, and although wider partnerships have not been established, for example, to enhance curriculum provision in the sixth form, current work has made an effective contribution to raised achievement. The school meets all the statutory requirements for safeguarding. Staff and the interim executive board member responsible for child protection are appropriately trained and have clear procedures for reporting concerns.

The school has a clear grasp of its context and effective plans to promote community cohesion, evident in how well students of different backgrounds get on with one another and contribute to the community. The school enhances students' cultural and religious understanding through planned activities such as the 'World Challenge' visit to India, although the impact of this work has not been fully evaluated.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

In this small, friendly sixth form students achieve well and develop good personal skills. They make good progress in their learning, attaining standards which are broadly similar to the national average on both A-level and A-level equivalent courses. However, there is variation in the progress made between subjects. For example, students make better

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progress in arts-based subjects such as art and design, English literature, history and media studies than they do in mathematics and science subjects. Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about teaching their subject. Students are appreciative of the additional support that teachers give them outside lessons. A satisfactory range of subjects is offered to students.

The sixth form leadership team has established a culture of high expectations and this is reflected in the challenging targets that are set for students. An effective system is in place to track the progress of students towards these targets and underachieving students are quickly identified and provided with support. As a result of the good advice and guidance they receive, many students are successful in securing places in higher education or on apprenticeships. The sixth form has grown in size in recent years and the accommodation is no longer large enough for the number of students on roll. However, this situation is being managed well through the use of additional rooms. Students welcome and respond readily to the opportunities they are provided with to take responsibility and contribute to the life of the school, for example, by being involved in the sixth form council, managing the prefect team, acting as house captains and helping to organise whole-school events such as the local citizenship ceremonies.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A higher than average proportion of parents responded to the questionnaire. The very large majority of those responding are happy with their child's experience at school and feel that the school keeps their child safe. Several commented on how much the school has improved under the current leadership and on the good progress made by their children, views supported by inspection evidence. Some also, rightly, felt that the school could communicate more effectively with them, especially in ways which would help them to support their child's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Trinity School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 358 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 790 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	113	32	206	58	32	9	6	2
The school keeps my child safe	109	30	236	66	9	3	3	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	93	26	217	61	38	11	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	116	32	199	56	38	11	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	80	22	233	65	30	8	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	68	19	217	61	62	17	4	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	13	235	66	63	18	7	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	76	21	233	65	31	9	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	93	26	219	61	33	9	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	81	23	218	61	38	11	9	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	17	216	60	46	13	11	3
The school is led and managed effectively	109	30	218	61	18	5	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	109	30	224	63	17	5	5	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 January 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Trinity School, Newbury RG14 2DU

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your teachers.

Trinity is a good school. We were particularly impressed by your good behaviour and the good progress you are making. You show pride in your school and in yourselves and some of you told us how you were meeting and exceeding challenging targets the school has set for you. You think that the school is a very safe place and you know exactly who to turn to if you have a concern. We agree with you, as do your parents and carers, that you are safe at school.

Your teachers and other staff know you well and they want you to do well and have high expectations. This shows in lessons where good teaching is challenging you to think and to take an active part in your learning. Many of you take on additional responsibilities both in school and in the community. Sixth form students set a good example in this respect, as well as leading and supporting younger students, for example by being 'dance ambassadors'.

Although many things about your school are good, there is still room for improvement. We think that some teachers could make better use of the assessment information they have about you to plan lessons which challenge everyone. Not all subjects get equally good results and we have asked your school leaders to work hard on making them all equally successful.

You can help by:

- continuing to have high expectations of your achievement
- taking advantage of opportunities to get fully involved in lessons
- challenging yourselves to get better examination results.

Yours sincerely

Christine Raeside

Her Majesty's Inspector

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