

Durham Trinity School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114349
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	357524
Inspection dates	15–16 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Michele Crichton

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	23
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Karen Cromarty
Headteacher	Miss Julie Connolly
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2008
School address	Flambard Premises Akeley Heads, Durham County Durham DH1 5TS
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons and observed 17 teachers and one higher level teaching assistant. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and governors. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including that relating to self-evaluation, pupils' progress and safeguarding. They also took into account the views of 67 parents and carers and the staff and pupils who returned questionnaires.

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

- How effectively the school evaluates its performance.
- How effectively the school is led and managed at all levels, especially regarding pupils' outcomes.
- The challenges the school faces being on three sites and how these are addressed, especially regarding safeguarding, care, guidance and support and pupils feeling safe.

Information about the school

Durham Trinity School and Sports College is a larger than average special school which is situated on three sites, although two are very close together. It provides for pupils with a wide range of moderate learning difficulties to profound and multiple learning difficulties, including specialist autistic provision for 18 pupils. Approximately a third of the school population is diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A good proportion of pupils travel a long way across County Durham to get to school. A number of pupils also have medical problems; some pupils have associated emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils join the school at different times during their education, increasingly so at Key Stage 3. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A few pupils are looked after by the local authority. Since the last inspection the school has maintained its range of quality marks and was designated as a Specialist Sports College in September 2010.

A federated governing body was formed in April 2010, known as Durham Framwellgate Campus. This includes Durham Trinity School and Sports College, Framwellgate Moor Primary School and Framwellgate School Durham. The school is currently at a transient time with uncertainty regarding the three school sites coming together in one location.

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

This is a good school. It deserves its good reputation with parents and carers. Typical of their comments are, 'My child's confidence and self-esteem are increasing all the time'. Parents speak highly of the 'very good transition arrangements' and are pleased that their children are 'safe and happy'. Some aspects of the school's work are outstanding which include pupils' behaviour and the extent to which they feel safe.

Throughout the school, from start to finish, the majority of pupils make good progress from their individual starting points, and some make outstanding progress. This is as a consequence of the good teaching and assessment, and the engaging curriculum. However, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, on occasions, activities are not well matched to the needs and interests of individual children.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. This applies from the time children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, through the primary and secondary stages and including in the sixth form provision. High quality relationships and the commitment of all staff lead to pupils feeling extremely safe, and contribute to their outstanding behaviour. Pupils' responses to the school's provision for developing a healthy lifestyle are outstanding. They enjoy learning about a healthy diet and regularly engage in a wide variety of sporting activities. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and the local community, resulting in them growing in confidence and self-esteem. There are good relationships with parents and carers and exceptional partnerships with a wide range of professionals and other agencies. Pupils enjoy all the school has to offer and their attendance is good.

Currently, leadership and management are in a period of change and there are inconsistencies in the monitoring of provision and outcomes across the school. The leadership team and the governing body work well together to drive the school forward and have successfully improved areas of weakness identified at the last inspection, such as the use of assessment information to plan effectively. The school's self-evaluation procedures are effective and it understands its strengths and areas in need of development. Taking these factors into consideration, the improvements since the last inspection and the commitment of all staff to provide the best education for each individual, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - – promoting middle leaders' roles in consistently monitoring the effectiveness of whole-school initiatives

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- – evaluating these initiatives in relation to pupils' outcomes.
- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - – improving the quality of activities provided and their match to children's needs
 - – ensuring assessments are recorded more regularly and used to identify the next steps in children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In lessons, all pupils enjoy their learning and want to develop and succeed. This is because their outstanding behaviour makes a significant contribution to their learning and helps to create an extremely positive school ethos where students are accepting of each other. In the best lessons, pupils are active, the rhythm of participating and listening is enjoyably achieved and learning is fun. As a consequence of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities, attainment is low, and for some very low, on entry to school. However, all groups of pupils at all stages of learning make good and occasionally outstanding progress, particularly in personal development. This good progress enables those pupils who are capable of doing so to improve their attainment and, where appropriate, gain accreditation. In discussions with pupils, they say they feel very safe and secure. This is because staff are consistent in their approach and have very good relationships with pupils. Pupils speak confidently about the safe use of mobile phones or using the internet. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, most notably through links with other schools and with the community. This is often via emails to other pupils in classrooms in different parts of the world. Pupils' understanding and their participation in a wide range of activities relating to the adoption of healthy lifestyles are outstanding. For example, pupils are involved in a wide range of activities including basketball, volleyball, swimming and athletics. Pupils regularly represent the school at a number of national and local events and awards are gained in recognition of their achievements.

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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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

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?

Consistent features of all lessons are the very good relationships between staff and pupils. There are impressive occasions when teachers' questioning extensively challenges learners to justify their views, develops their ability to explain in greater detail or ensures students use specific vocabulary. However, on occasions when work sheets fail to capture pupils' interest, lessons lack pace and activities do not appropriately match the needs of pupils. Progress is slowed at these times. Assessment procedures have developed systematically since the last inspection. Targets for pupils are challenging and the monitoring of achievement is increasingly focused and robust. The school plans the curriculum well to ensure pupils enjoy learning. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy. However, cross-curricular links and activities involving the use of information and communication technology are less well developed. Staff are aware of these aspects and the curriculum is evolving further. Plans are in place to focus more on enquiry-based learning, but these are at an early stage of development and have not been fully implemented. Consequently, they have not had sufficient time to have an impact on pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and contribute very significantly to pupils' outstanding behaviour. High quality relationships are a key factor to the successes achieved within the school, helping to build important personal and social skills, such as self-esteem and tolerance. There are embedded systems in place for the care of students in the school and the vast majority of parents and carers are highly supportive of the

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arrangements that are made. Arrangements for pupils to transfer to the next stages of their education are good and so pupils, regardless of their needs, settle quickly and happily into the next phase of their learning.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a strong ethos of commitment and dedication throughout the school. This is shown, for example, in the drive for school improvement, where senior leaders recognise potential in teachers and support staff and 'grow' and develop them within the school. This is done through the provision of relevant training and giving staff additional responsibilities. There are plans and systems for review in place across the school that are the responsibility of middle leaders, but there is a lack of consistency and evaluation between them. Leaders and managers have also developed a strategy to sustain and further promote good leadership and management, including planning for succession.

The governing body has both a supportive and challenging relationship with the school. It has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and its areas to develop. It has worked well with leaders at all levels to ensure that areas for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed effectively. Safeguarding procedures are appropriately in place. The school has very thorough documentation and procedures are reviewed robustly to ensure effectiveness. Value for money is outstanding. Community cohesion is good and there is effective and interesting engagement with a range of communities, such as joint activities with other pupils in the Durham Framwellgate Federation, to involvement in a 'connecting classrooms' project in Jordan. Promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination are good. Even though there are many different groups of learners within the school, the progress of them all is carefully tracked to ensure they all make the progress of which they are capable. Partnerships with parents and carers are good and this is reflected in the very positive responses in questionnaires. There are outstanding partnerships with a wide variety of agencies which make an excellent contribution to pupils' well-being. For example, there are regular visits from an extensive range of medical personnel, including therapists, oral dental team, and speech and language specialists. These help to underpin pupils' understanding of keeping themselves safe and adopting a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, since the school's designation as a sports college, much work has been done. For example, there are more opportunities for in-school sports both within and beyond the school day and a specialist physical education teacher is working in a local primary school for two sessions each week.

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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	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents are happy with the care and support their children receive at this early stage of their learning. The good leadership and management that are present throughout the school are also present here; so, too, is the prevailing importance of the welfare of the children. Due to the unpredictable numbers of children that can start at this stage, leaders include different groups of pupils to share in the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, where this is appropriate to individual pupils' needs. The environment is bright and cheerful. Staff work together well and relationships are very positive. There are personalised programmes of learning in place with good learning and progress overall taking place. However, on occasions activities provide too little stimulation, and lack a focused match to the age, interest and needs of the children. Additionally, there are some inconsistencies in the recording of children's progress and the use of assessment information to help plan the next steps in children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Sixth form

Students in the further education unit make good progress overall because of good teaching and a good curriculum. The provision is well led and managed. Students have weekly links with local colleges and facilities to further promote their development of skills. For example, agricultural studies at Houghall are much enjoyed by students. Students follow and show success in a range of accredited courses and other awards, which includes work-related learning. Staff and students make the best of the accommodation. For example, students move between school sites to access food technology sessions. Relationships are very good and are supportive and caring. The atmosphere is relaxed, but occasionally, so, too, is the pace in lessons and learning becomes passive. Students cooperate well together and behaviour is exemplary. Students are respectful of staff and are considerate to each other. Students enjoy many of the active parts of the curriculum, such as the drama sessions.

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

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires are very positive about the quality of education the school provides for their children. A very small number of parents and carers expressed concern about their children enjoying school, behaviour at school, the progress their children make and helping them to support their children's learning. The inspection found that pupils make good progress, attend well, have outstanding behaviour and that there is good engagement with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Durham 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 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 185 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	57	24	36	5	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	57	26	39	1	1	2	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	34	51	26	39	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	37	34	51	3	4	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	34	51	25	37	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	46	28	42	3	4	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	45	33	49	1	1	0	0
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)	33	49	25	37	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	55	23	34	3	4	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	49	25	37	2	3	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	45	28	42	4	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	38	57	24	36	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	63	20	30	4	6	0	0

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.



18 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Durham Trinity School and Sports College, Durham, DH1 5TS

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me about your work and your school. I am also grateful to those of you who completed the questionnaire.

It was clear from the discussions we had that you think a great deal of the staff at Trinity and you are learning well. It was also clear from the responses from your parents and carers that they are happy with the progress you are making overall and think you are safe and well cared for. We believe that the care, guidance and support you receive are outstanding. As a result, you feel very safe. You behave extremely well. You also make an outstanding contribution to your school, gaining awards through representing it at national and local events. You have a very good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and do your best to put this into practice.

Trinity is a good school but it can become even better. To help make this happen, I have asked your teachers and other adults to make some changes to the early years part of the school. This means keeping the things that work well, but also making sure those children at this stage are making the best progress. I have also asked your teachers to look at how they are checking on their own work and making sure that all pupils benefit well from the things they are doing.

I know that you will do all you can to help your teachers and wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Michele Crichton

Lead inspector

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