

Trinity School, Belvedere

Erith Road, Belvedere, DA17 6HT

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- GCSE examination results have declined since 2011. In several subjects, particularly English, mathematics and some sciences, students do not make enough progress.
- The sixth form requires improvement because the overall progress students make is below average.
- The percentage of GCSE and A level A* and A grades is very low in quite a few subjects.
- Teaching, especially in Years 7 to 9, does not provide enough opportunities for students to write at length and to widen their vocabulary.
- Students in Years 10 to 13 do not always have enough opportunity to practise answering examination questions under timed conditions.
- Not all teachers set homework regularly and, on occasions, it is not marked with advice for improvement.
- Students, in particular the most able and those with special educational needs, are not always given work which matches their abilities.
- Senior and middle leaders have not analysed information on students' standards and progress well enough to identify underachievement early and tackle it fast.

The school has the following strengths

- The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students mature into considerate and thoughtful young adults.
- Students work well in lessons and their behaviour around the school is excellent; they feel safe and happy, and want to learn. One student describes the school as 'an all-round lovely place to work'.
- Vulnerable students and those who need learning support gain confidence by receiving sensitive, high quality pastoral care.
- Students eligible for pupil premium funding do better than similar students nationally.
- With very good careers advice and guidance, whether for education or employment, practically all Year 11 and Year 13 students have their next steps planned and secure before they leave.
- Senior leaders and governors are fully aware of the areas where significant improvements are needed. The directors of the Trinitas Trust and the school governors are determined to see rapid development in students' achievement.
- Examples of outstanding, imaginative and enjoyable teaching and learning are evident in several subjects and in all years. Creative and expressive arts are enjoyed by many students.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 52 part-lessons, several of which were jointly observed with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed assemblies and morning registrations.
- Inspectors held meetings with several groups of students, members of the senior leadership team, leaders in charge of subjects or other aspects of the school's work and other staff with positions of responsibility. The lead inspector met with two members of the Trinitas Trust board who are also on the school's governing body. The lead inspector also met with the local authority deputy director of education, and the executive headteacher of the Trinitas Trust primary schools, and held a telephone conversation with the director of education for the Rochester diocese.
- Inspectors discussed lessons they had seen with teaching staff and examined a range of documents, including the school's own evaluation, improvement plans and data about progress, standards, exclusions, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students' work in lessons.
- Inspectors took into account 84 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and questionnaires completed by 41 members of staff.

Inspection team

Clare Gillies, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Corish	Additional Inspector
Jackie Jones	Additional Inspector
Clifford Walker	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Trinity School, Belvedere converted to an academy school in April 2011. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- There are more boys than girls.
- About three out of every five students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is increasing; the largest of these groups is from a Black African heritage.
- A small proportion of students speak English as an additional language, of whom only a very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- A lower than average proportion of students is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for specific groups, including looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families. The school has a very small number of looked after children and children of service families.
- Close to 40 students are eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding, which is for students who did not achieve the expected standard in reading or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is a little below the national average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The most common needs relate to autistic spectrum disorder and to speech, language and communication.
- The school runs a resource provision for 14 students on the autistic spectrum.
- One day per week, about 20 students in Years 10 and 11 and a few in Year 12 attend 'Construct', which is an alternative, off-site education provision.
- The school is the lead sponsor in a Multi-Academy 'Trinitas' Trust incorporating two local Church of England primary schools with the Rochester Diocesan Board of Education as co-sponsor. The Trinitas Academy Trust was fully functional from August 2013.
- The school has several links with local schools: its sixth form is part of a consortium with two other secondary schools and it contributes to an Anglican Schools Partnership with nine primary schools. It also works collaboratively in the Bexley Education Improvement Partnership, a cluster of three secondary and 14 primary schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve the quality of teaching so that more is good or better and increase the progress students make so that they attain higher GCSE and A level results:
 - give students, particularly in Years 7 to 9, more opportunities to develop skills in extended and accurate writing
 - extend students' general and subject-specific vocabulary in all lessons
 - ensure teachers prepare work matching students' abilities, even in classes which are set by ability
 - improve teachers' skills in asking questions so that as many students as possible answer questions and the pace of lessons does not flag during questioning sessions

- set worthwhile homework as planned, mark it with clear advice about what needs to be improved and make sure that students absorb the comments and learn from them
 - in Years 10 to 13, blend revision of subject knowledge and understanding with clear guidance on how to answer examination questions and practise in doing so under timed conditions.
- To strengthen leadership and management, particularly of teaching and learning:
- respond quickly to data analysis which reveals any underachievement and ensure all middle leaders and teachers challenge students to achieve the highest possible grades
 - improve the guidance for learning support assistants so they are as effective as possible in lessons
 - improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments of standards and progress and senior and middle leaders' assessments of the quality of learning so that any underachievement can be identified quickly and put right.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The percentage of students attaining five GCSE A*-C grades including English and mathematics declined in 2012 and did not recover in 2013. Although practically all the most able students achieved this benchmark, too few other students did so.
- In 2012 and 2013, based on their English and mathematics levels when they entered the school, at least one-third of students did not make the progress they should have made, particularly in English. The small minority of students who took biology, chemistry and physics as separate GCSEs made excellent progress in 2013 but students taking other science courses did not do as well.
- In some subjects, including art, product design and geography, GCSE results improved in 2013, particularly the proportion of students getting A* and A grades. In many other subjects, far fewer students were awarded these top grades than the national average. The most able students do not attain enough of these grades.
- Year 11 students eligible for pupil premium funding make almost the same progress as others and the gaps between their GCSE results and other students' have been lower than those seen nationally for three years: less than one-third of a GCSE grade in English and around half a grade in mathematics
- Within the groups of White British students, lower attaining students and those with special educational needs, some do not make enough progress to fully meet their potential; Black African students make relatively better progress than others.
- The reading ages of pupils entering the school in Year 7 have declined recently, with over one-third of present Year 7 students having a reading age of below 10. Many benefit from pupil premium and catch-up funding which is spent increasingly effectively, especially on high quality reading programmes. Most of these students' reading improves rapidly within six months.
- Reading support was not so strong in the past, one of several reasons why some older students underachieve. Many of them also have weak writing skills and, as one middle leader observed: 'Students are knowledgeable by Year 11 and know what they want to say but cannot put it down well enough or go beyond the basics.'
- Progress for AS and A level students improved in 2013 but remains below average. Progress in the popular subject of psychology has been strong for several years, and progress was good in mathematics in 2013. For the first time in 2013, all students passed all their A levels but the percentage of high grades remained well below the national average. Students in Years 10 to 12 attending the off-site Construct provision do very well; all achieved distinctions in 2013.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- A key reason why teaching requires improvement is the lack of development of students' writing in the majority of subjects. Students gain confidence in speaking but do not write at length often enough, particularly in Years 7 to 9. During examination revision sessions, some lessons focus on knowledge at the expense of practising answering examination questions under timed conditions.
- Some teachers make a point of discussing word definitions, not just subject-specific ones, but this is not done consistently. Few teachers correct students' spoken grammatical errors.
- Homework is not set regularly by all teachers. When teachers mark students' work, they do not automatically suggest ways it could be improved. When they do, students rarely have time consider the comments they receive. A few teachers do not mark work regularly.
- For example, simply commenting that a student confuses the spelling of 'their', 'they're' and

'there' does not help the student unless the teacher checks that the point has been understood. In the sixth form, technical and subject-specific vocabulary is not reinforced consistently.

- As most teachers ask for hands up when posing questions, often slowing down the pace of lessons, some students avoid contributing or getting involved in learning. Learning also slows when a whole class is given the same work – the most able find it easy and others, particularly those with special educational needs, struggle; neither group learns enough.
- The impact of learning support assistants in lessons is variable. Checking students' understanding helps them to keep up in lessons but, on occasions, teachers do not tell assistants how they can best support learning.
- The outstanding teaching and some of the good teaching incorporate a focus on developing students' writing and extending their vocabulary, as well as keeping up a good pace. Features of the most successful lessons include students' evaluating their own or each other's work, collaborative work in groups, imaginative tasks, short, stimulating video clips, high expectations and a fast pace. Students say they learn best when lessons are active and teachers do not talk for too long.
- In the best sixth form lessons, the quality of discussion is sophisticated, generated by teachers' enthusiasm, subject expertise and clear explanations and subtle probing and extension of students' comments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Practically all students are keen to learn, to do well and to gain qualifications that lead to work in the future. Students' attendance is very high, reflecting how much they enjoy school life. They behave well and are attentive in class, although a few of them lose focus at times, mainly when the teaching is not stimulating or the work does not match their needs. The majority of students present their work neatly.
- In form time, assemblies, free time and when moving around the narrow corridors, students' behaviour is excellent. This reflects how well they get on together. Short-term exclusions are uncommon, with no permanent ones in recent years.
- All sixth formers undertake voluntary work, for example by helping elderly people with computer skills or supporting younger students. Many take on leadership roles. Senior prefects make an excellent contribution to school life.
- Students attending the Construct off-site course attend regularly and behave well. Staff monitor their progression towards BTEC qualifications and oversee their future career plans.
- Students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is underpinned by high quality assemblies and registration sessions where topical issues are discussed. The school has a strong moral ethos and promotes equality for all in all its work. Citizenship and religious education lessons include discussion of moral and cultural issues. Students value the chaplain's supportive work and have much respect for staff.
- Bullying happens extremely rarely but students are totally confident that it is dealt with quickly and firmly. Assemblies tackle sensitive issues such as homophobia and cyber-bullying so that students talk about them without embarrassment. Students know that discrimination is not tolerated.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Improvements which have been put in place over the last two years, such as better data collection about new students' abilities, and clarity about middle leaders' accountability, have the potential to raise standards but have not had enough impact on examination results. Underachievement is being tackled more energetically this year, for example by an after-school club for gifted Year 7 mathematicians, and better support is in place for those who need it.
- All teachers working with groups of students meet and evaluate whether their progress is good

enough. Middle leaders and teachers are now confronted with data about their subjects' and classes' progress relative to others'. These data are linked to their performance management and pay levels. The headteacher acknowledges that performance management targets must be more precise and challenging than in the past.

- Staff morale is very high, with questionnaire comments such as 'The school is a vibrant, creative and caring place to work.' All staff, including newly qualified teachers and those new to the school, are pleased with the professional development they receive.
- The headteacher knows that there has not been a strong enough focus on literacy or the performance of the most able students. A senior leader observed that 'wheels are moving much faster than in the past'; analysis of progress by groups is already happening at a more analytical level. The school's development plan lists all the right priorities.
- Senior leaders' assessment of the quality of learning is not as sharp as it needs to be, just as middle leaders' and teachers' assessments of standards and progress have not been totally accurate in predicting previous examination results. Some recently appointed teachers and middle leaders are injecting a keen understanding of what students need to do to achieve a particular grade.
- Personal education plans for looked after children, and support plans for any disadvantaged students include details of how the pupil premium funding will be allocated to ensure they participate in activities, learn a musical instrument if they wish and receive pastoral as well as academic support.
- For a few students in Years 10 and 11, the curriculum they follow means they do not spend enough time on improving their literacy skills in preparation for GCSE examinations. Early entry in GCSE mathematics in 2012 did not lead to any higher grades so it has not been repeated.
- For those students who do not participate in the numerous after-school sports, one hour per week's physical education in Years 10 and 11 is low. School productions and after-school clubs, cultural and subject-led outings and trips, plus visits at home and abroad, all enrich the curriculum.
- Work experience is tailored to students' future plans, such as placement in a primary school for those interested in health and social care. To raise students' aspirations, university visits start in Year 9. Careers advice in the sixth form is well organised and students receive practical, supportive advice about their options. Many proceed to university and others move on to training or employment.
- The sixth form consortium works well and generates a wide choice of academic and vocational routes at several levels. About 75% of students opt for a full academic programme. Leaders have responded well to the requirement to provide English and mathematics lessons for all those who have not yet gained a C grade in one or both subjects.
- Learning support assistants support students with autism and/or medical needs well. Students with special educational needs receive detailed career guidance. Pastoral leaders all contribute effectively to students' academic and personal wellbeing.
- Over 90 percent of parents who responded to the questionnaire would recommend the school. They strongly agree with statements about good behaviour and students feeling safe and happy but are slightly less convinced that students are taught well and make good progress. The school continues to be very popular and oversubscribed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors receive information about the school's results with national figures so they are fully aware that achievement requires improvement. The recent restructuring of the governing body, linked to the new Trinitas Trust, has generated a sharper focus on standards; governors know they are accountable for the success of the new arrangements.
 - Governors are determined that the support given to the Trust's two primary schools will benefit Trinity's teaching and generate a greater understanding of what pupils achieve by the end of primary school. Governors realise that elements of Trinity's teaching need to be sharper and have been fully involved in performance management arrangements to link teachers' performance with their salary progression.

- Governors keep an astute eye on financial management, checking that the pupil premium is allocated wisely and that it is generating improved outcomes. They ensure that all child protection and safeguarding procedures are meticulous and meet statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136538
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	429600

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

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Academy converter
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	1129
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon David Herbert
Headteacher	Ian Collins
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01322 441371
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