

Trinity School

Ryedale Court, Sevenoaks, TN13 2DN

Inspection dates 23–24 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The Sevenoaks Christian Education Trust (SCET) has created a positive solution to the shortage of good secondary education provision in the local area.
- Leaders have established, in a relatively short time, a fully-functioning school and demonstrated the ability to oversee its proposed expansion successfully.
- Governors know the school well and know what it needs to do to continue to flourish.
- All leaders have cooperated well to establish a 'Trinity way' which underpins all of the school's work. The 'Trinity way' is founded on admirable values with a strong Christian emphasis of truth, excellence, love, leadership and service.
- The vast majority of parents are delighted to have chosen Trinity for their children. All members of the community are committed to enabling all students equally to achieve the fullness of their academic and human potential.'
- Students are proud of their school. Many act as ambassadors and are able to explain clearly what their class is learning. They wear their traditional uniform well and look very smart.
- Students are kept safe at the school because leaders manage the challenges of a developing site very well. Students feel safe and their parents are fully supportive of the safeguarding arrangements.
- Teaching over time is usually good and some of it is outstanding. There are strengths in art, mathematics and religious studies.
- Most students behave consistently in an exemplary fashion. They are polite, courteous, respectful and caring towards each other. When teaching is good or better they show real interest in their learning.
- On the few occasions where students behave less well, the school effectively uses a system of restorative practice in a positive approach to discipline.
- The school has chosen sensibly to use the previous National Curriculum so that it can compare the progress of its students against other schools locally and national averages.
- The great majority of students make expected levels of progress in all subjects. A good proportion of each year group exceeds national expectations in many subjects.
- Disadvantaged students and those with disabilities or special educational needs often do as well as their classmates and, in some subjects, they do even better.
- Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Through a coherent programme of religious education, they study the beliefs and practices of a wide range of people.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always challenge the most able to attain the highest levels in every subject.
- Staff are well-prepared for their current roles, but further opportunities are needed for them to learn from outstanding practice in other schools.
- Leaders have created impressive systems to track students and check progress. Teachers do not always use them enough to inform their practice.
- Sometimes teachers' performance is judged over-generously and without precision or accuracy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 19 parts of lessons. Six of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors observed learning in physical education away from the main school buildings and surveyed the location of the school's new premises.
- Inspectors met with governors, one of whom is a director of the Sevenoaks Christian Education Trust (SCET), the founding body for the school. Inspectors also met senior leaders, all of whom have more than one role in the school.
- The lead inspector met with a group of parents. Inspectors also took account of the 136 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They considered the contents of 10 letters or emails from parents which were received during the inspection.
- Inspectors also considered 23 responses to a confidential staff survey.
- Eight students met inspectors to give their views of the school formally. Many others, often bearing the title 'ambassador', greeted inspectors around the site. They spoke clearly and confidently about what they were learning.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of the school's documentation, including reports from external visitors to the school. Inspectors examined information about attendance, the work of governors and development plans for the school's re-location to new premises. Inspectors scrutinised carefully the school's records of students' achievement. They looked in great detail at a wide range of the students' books.

Inspection team

Dr Simon Hughes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Newberry

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Trinity School is an expanding school which currently educates children in Years 7 and 8. At the time of the inspection, it had 236 students on roll. It is smaller than average-sized secondary schools.
- Trinity School is oversubscribed. It has enrolled more than its stated number of students as it has lost a number of parental admissions appeals. The school accepted a number of students into Year 7 during the course of its first year of operation and grew quickly from an original intake of 89 to its full capacity of 120.
- Trinity School is scheduled to move into temporary accommodation in July 2015, on the same site as its new premises, which are due to open in September 2016. Trinity School plans to open a sixth form in September 2018.
- The large majority of students are from White British backgrounds. The very large majority of students have English as their main language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government) who attend the school is well below the national average.
- The number of disabled students and those with special educational needs is also well below the national average.
- The school is situated on the outskirts of Sevenoaks, approximately 12 miles from the nearest secondary faith-based school. The trustees of Trinity School are committed to ensuring at least good-quality faith-based education for a maximum of 50% of its cohort. Admission criteria are clearly set out and strictly enforced.
- Leaders have begun to form productive links with a local teaching school alliance.
- Currently no students are educated off site at alternative provision.
- Publicly-held data are not available for this school. It is not possible to report, therefore, on whether or not the school meets the government's current floor standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers challenge the most able students to aspire to and achieve even higher levels of attainment.
- Simplify all management systems so that leaders and teachers have instant access to accurate and precise information, so that they are able to:
 - identify quickly any emerging issues in students' well-being or achievement
 - more accurately track teachers' performance over time
 - target resources effectively to areas of greatest need.
- Strengthen the school's arrangements for staff training so that all receive appropriate and regular professional learning opportunities, so as to help staff do their jobs even more efficiently and effectively.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have worked closely with the trustees and governors to provide a solution to the availability of good or better secondary education places in Sevenoaks. In a relatively short space of time, they have created a fully-functioning school. They have demonstrated the ability to oversee its proposed expansion successfully.
- The trustees and governors have appointed a team that they believe will help realise their vision of a highly ambitious and vigorous learning community for Christian families. They are committed to making available up to 50% of their places for students from families, not necessarily church-going, supportive of the ethos of the school.
- Leaders have chosen to adopt the old National Curriculum to ensure that the standards at Trinity compare favourably with other schools locally and national averages. The content of the curriculum is broad and focused on traditional academic subjects. The most able students are able to study philosophy and an additional language in Years 7 and 8.
- Leaders have also created a unique 'Trinity way'. This is the school's core set of values of truth, excellence, love, leadership and service. This is fully in keeping with the Christian vision of the founding organisation SCET. There is a strong sense of purpose for the school. Since the school opened, leaders have created sophisticated, technology-driven systems for checking students' achievement, monitoring teachers' performance and recording incidents. They do not always provide clear information for teachers to use. For example, it is not clear how many children are in each category of special educational needs. As the school grows it will be necessary to analyse the performance of such groups.
- The staff is currently too small for there to be a postholder for each area of responsibility. There are no middle leaders as such, so middle leadership functions are carried out by senior staff. All leaders are passionate and enthusiastic and have made substantial progress in establishing a good school. Leaders should focus on working with outstanding schools to further improve the school.
- Leaders had made an over-generous assessment of the effectiveness of the school in its current stage of development.
- The school's work to keep students safe meets statutory requirements and is effective.
- Leaders are committed to achieving excellence for all members of the community. They are currently exploring appropriate training for many of the staff. Leaders are also committed to reducing any weaknesses in teaching. Systems for checking the performance of teachers over time are in place and are being strengthened all the time. Currently they lack precision and accuracy so that judgements of teachers' performance are sometimes over-generous. Occasionally resources are not targeted, therefore, at the greatest needs. Staff told inspectors that they are keen to get as much training as possible to be able to improve the school further for the students. They want to see even more examples of outstanding practice so they know better what to aim for.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium, additional funding from the government for eligible students, to good effect. It has been used to bring about rapid rises in standards of reading and to narrow the gap between disadvantaged students and their classmates in other subjects. This is happening quite well in mathematics, for instance.
- All members of the Trinity School community are committed to enabling all students equally to achieve the fullness of their academic and human potential. They have created a full programme of curricular and extra-curricular activities which contribute well to students' personal, spiritual, health, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching in religious studies celebrates the diversity of belief in modern Britain. Students have regular opportunities to explore their faith and to share collective acts of worship. In art, they are able to explore their own creativity. In some English lessons, they are able to discuss enduring moral issues. Prayer is at the heart of the free school's work.
- The 'Trinity way' also enables students to develop appropriate attitudes to democracy and the rule of law. Students are committed to equal opportunities themselves and are quick to note any behaviour which falls short of this ideal.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are fully supportive of the school. They challenge leaders to make it the best it can be. Governors visit the school regularly and oversee aspects of its work which best fits their own interests and experiences. Governors had an over-generous understanding of the quality of teaching and level of students' achievement, but have acted efficiently to adjust their assessment. Currently, they have a realistic view of how well the school is doing overall.
 - Governors have worked well with funding agencies and other external bodies to ensure the financial

security of the free school. They have a good understanding of the budget and appropriate principles which control this aspect of school life. Governors afford the headteacher appropriate freedom to use the budget wisely. They hold the headteacher to account for the impact of his actions.

- Governors are clear that only good or better teacher performance will be rewarded. They are ensuring that a consistently applied and robust system for tracking teachers' performance develops. Currently, they are supporting senior leaders' work to challenge any weaker teaching.

The behaviour and safety of students are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Conduct around the school and in lessons is generally good. Lessons are rarely disrupted.
- When teaching is good or better, students exhibit real enthusiasm for learning. Some ask their teachers probing questions because they want to know more.
- Students generally take pride in their work, although sometimes boys' presentation is not as good as it could be. They all take pride in their appearance and look smart in their traditional uniform.
- Students told inspectors that sometimes bullying occurs, including the use occasionally of homophobic language. Students also told inspectors that such behaviour is challenged by teachers, who require the perpetrators to follow restorative practices. This is an effective, values-driven system that the school uses to manage discipline.
- Students generally arrive on time and regularly. Their attendance is good, apart from a tiny minority.
- The school provides many opportunities for students to exhibit appropriate leadership behaviours. The 'ambassador' role is a good example. On entering lessons, 'ambassadors' greet visitors warmly and set out clearly what the class is learning. They are able to talk enthusiastically about work they and their peers have produced.
- Parents are positive about the behaviour of students in and around the school. They expressed a few reservations, for example in relation to the way in which the school addresses bullying.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school checks carefully anyone wishing to work or volunteer, and governors ensure that this takes place.
- The school is currently located on a site which has some real challenges. Leaders have made all reasonable endeavours to ensure that the students are safe. For example, leaders require students to line up outside the buildings between lessons to reduce crowding in the narrow stairways.
- Physical education teachers take all reasonable precautions when delivering lessons away from the main school site. Risk assessments are robust. Safe vehicle driving, on and off public highways, is evident and effective, as is teachers' safe management of students moving to such lessons.
- Students receive effective training about how to keep themselves safe online. This is important because they use mobile technologies frequently to support their learning. Students told inspectors that they feel safe generally at the school.
- The vast majority of parents are fully supportive of the school's efforts to keep the students safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is usually good. There is some strong practice in the school especially in art, mathematics and religious studies.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well. Teachers are able to promote learning effectively, even in lessons which are not their specialism. Many have acquired new knowledge or skills quickly to be able to support this activity.
- Where teaching is less effective, leaders arrange work to ensure any gaps are made up. For example, in English, additional sessions on literacy have contributed to good progress for a substantial minority of students who had fallen behind.
- The development of students' reading is enhanced through the use of an accelerated reading programme. This has proved to be highly effective. Leaders are now focusing the use of this technology on those whose need is greatest or who need to catch up most.
- Teachers use technology well to support their work. In mathematics and numeracy, students follow a sophisticated accelerated mathematics program which provides them with exercises and tests. They move

on at their own pace when they have completed objectives. This appeals particularly to boys' competitive nature and means boys keep up their interest even in long sessions.

- Parents commented that girls, in particular, spend long periods of their spare time on homework. 'They have to be told to stop.' This is because the school encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers use a range of methods to encourage learning. The most effective lessons are characterised by skilful questioning which deepens and extends students' knowledge. The extremely positive classroom culture means that students feel able to ask probing questions. This often leads to a good dialogue where ideas are explored openly. In a religious studies lesson, students debated the Christian influences on Nelson Mandela's life. They examined the concept of love and related it to the 'Trinity way'.
- Teaching is sufficiently effective to ensure that all students are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Plans are in place to develop a curriculum for Key Stage 4, which will enable all to be ready for sixth form life by 2018.

The achievement of pupils is good

- There are no publicly-held data available for this school. Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 cannot, therefore, be taken into account.
- Inspectors looked carefully at the school's own records of students' attainment, progress in lessons and the quality of work in students' books so as to be able to judge the progress of all students and all groups of students.
- Leaders have sensibly adopted the old National Curriculum assessment model so that they can compare students' work with other schools locally and against the national averages. As a result, leaders were able to show reliable evidence of how well students are doing.
- Leaders have also asked teachers from outside the school to check the standards of work. They are confident that their assessment of students' work is accurate and robust. Inspectors reviewed a large quantity of students' work and agree.
- Leaders expect all students to attain at least two old National Curriculum sub-levels per year in every subject. In English, in 2014, most Year 7 students achieved this standard and a good proportion exceeded it.
- In mathematics, achievement is stronger. In 2014, 93% of Year 7 students attained two sub-levels of progress and 67% achieved even more. The progress has remained good in the current year, so that 76% have already made the expected level of progress. Over a third has exceeded the expectation.
- Progress in other subjects, such as art and the humanities, is close to and, in some cases, above national averages. This shows evidence of good progress across the curriculum.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs compares well with their classmates and sometimes exceeds national averages. The school describes these students as vulnerable and provides intensive support for their learning.
- Disadvantaged students do at least as well as their classmates, and frequently do better. With support for their literacy, the same students in Year 8 are on track to make similar rates of progress as in Year 7. Half the new cohort of Year 7 students are on track to make expected progress and nearly a third to exceed the expected standard, and this compares favourably with national averages.
- Leaders have committed resources to improving reading. As a result, reading ages across the school have risen by an average of 22 months since the school opened 21 months ago. This means that reading is improving steadily when compared to national averages. Students were clear that they like to read and that the school supports them well to do so.
- The most able students do not do as well as they should in all subjects. In art, the gifted students were seen to make exceptional progress well in excess of expectations nationally. However, in other subjects, teaching lacked the rigour and precision to really extend and challenge those more able. In some cases they had exactly the same work as all other students and found it too easy.

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	139554
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	450049

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Bill Latimer
Headteacher	Mr Matthew Tate
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01732 469111
Fax number	N/A
Email address	headmaster@trinitysevenoaks.com

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