

Inspection of Trinity School and College

9–13 New Road, Rochester, Kent ME1 1BG

Inspection dates: 7–9 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an improving school with dedicated and caring staff. The pastoral development and welfare of pupils are given the highest priority. As a result, pupils are happy here. They feel free from the anxieties and problems that many of them have experienced in other settings prior to joining Trinity. They behave well because expectations are high, and staff are skilled at identifying and de-escalating serious problems before they arise.

Aspirations are high across all phases of the school. The newly acquired college building provides modern accommodation and excellent facilities for students in the sixth form and beyond to support their academic and vocational studies.

Leaders and staff constantly consider the delicate balance between providing academic challenge and nurturing pupils' emotional well-being. Developing pupils' confidence and resilience are both seen as equally important. One pupil told the lead inspector, 'This school is my hope.' Other pupils who were present smiled and agreed.

All parents and carers who spoke to the lead inspector and the very large majority who expressed an opinion through emails or Ofsted's parent questionnaire were extremely positive about the school and the support it gives to pupils, as well as their families.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are open minded and experienced. They are constantly looking for ways to improve the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need to be developed further. The vast majority of parents feel that the school is very well led and managed.

Those in positions of governance know the school well. Directors' monitoring of the school is well established. Their support has ensured that the school continues to meet all the independent school standards. Importantly, directors have a very clear strategic plan to improve the school further, including the curriculum offer the school provides.

The school's curriculum is fit for purpose. It caters well for the ever-changing cohorts of pupils attending the school. No year group is the same. All pupils have very specific and complex needs. This means that staff have to constantly tailor their teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils of different abilities. This is made more difficult by the turbulence, instability or gaps that some pupils have suffered in their past education.

Recent changes to the senior leadership structure of the school are embedding well. The executive principal and heads of both the school and the college are an experienced and effective team. The addition of the 'college' building has brought a

new dimension to the culture and ethos of the school. Directors and school leaders have identified that the curriculum can now evolve to provide more breadth and depth of study. This is particularly the case for the growing number of pupils capable of achieving GCSE qualifications, and in further developing the school's vocational education offer.

English and mathematics are taught well here. Pupils enjoy reading. Leaders understand that reading is the key to pupils' future success across the curriculum. However, staff expertise in teaching phonics needs to be refreshed so that pupils' phonics and early reading skills are developed more effectively. As the school expands, an increasing number of pupils are hopeful of achieving GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics. Leaders understand this, and their aspirations for more pupils to follow this pathway are clear to see.

The nurture and pastoral care of pupils are exceptional at Trinity. Despite pupils' very complex needs, their personal development is served particularly well. The school's programme to deliver personal, social, health and citizen education (PSHCE) is designed well. It gives pupils an excellent range of opportunities to learn about the world around them. Their engagement and contribution within the local community are impressive. Their work as Anne Frank ambassadors, aiming to promote social justice, tolerance and equality, is particularly noteworthy. Discrimination is not tolerated here. Equality and respect for different cultures, lifestyles and diversity are promoted well.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally good. This is particularly the case with pupils who have settled and developed a deep trust in staff. Relationships in classrooms are strong. Older pupils are increasingly confident and work well together when given independent tasks. Younger pupils feel protected and told inspectors that they enjoy the friendships they have made since joining the school.

The school provides many extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. Many of these are aimed at developing their life skills. Careers guidance is effective and supports older pupils well in their plans for the future. Visits into the local community to learn about using public transport and the opportunity to take part in residential visits are the norm. Specialist staff support pupils well to develop their communication skills. Speech and language therapists help older pupils to understand and use key language that will help them in day-to-day life in the local community. Support is also available within classrooms to help develop pupils' comprehension and improve their engagement in learning.

Preparing pupils for life after leaving Trinity is given a high priority. This is a particular passion of school leaders and directors. Consequently, the sixth-form provision has been strengthened and vocational elements of the curriculum consolidated. Hair and beauty and construction courses are now taught in-house in purpose-built facilities by qualified staff. 'Enterprise Friday' is a favourite with older students, who enjoy running the modern café and restaurant facility established in the college. Directors and the executive principal have well-developed plans to enhance this already excellent provision in the sixth form with options for

horticulture and animal husbandry, as well as learning in the outside environment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and all staff know that it is their collective responsibility to keep pupils safe. Consequently, the culture to keep pupils safe is strong. All aspects of the independent school standards regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils are met.

Leaders have ensured that systems and procedures to keep pupils safe are fit for purpose. Staff training is up to date. Staff know what to do if they have concerns.

Those who have additional responsibilities are experienced and diligent in their work. Relationships with outside agencies are appropriate and ensure that the correct procedures are followed when required.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Although leaders have increased the profile and the importance of reading across the school, the teaching of phonics still needs to be developed further. Leaders should strengthen the quality of phonics provision by providing staff with additional up-to-date training, so that their practice improves, and so that pupils make more rapid progress in developing their early reading skills.
- Leaders and directors understand the need to develop the breadth and depth of the curriculum offer further to match ever-changing cohorts of pupils. Plans are evolving for this to happen. This will enable even more pupils to achieve good GCSE qualifications in mathematics and English, as well as expanding the vocational element of the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	132097
DfE registration number	887/6006
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10123980
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	67
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Cavendish Education Ltd
Chair	Aatif Hassan
Principal	Elizabeth Baines (Executive Principal)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,900 to £29,900
Telephone number	01634 812 233
Website	www.trinityschoolrochester.co.uk
Email address	office@trinityschoolrochester.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–15 June 2017

Information about this school

- Trinity School and College is an independent special school that caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. Pupils also have additional learning difficulties such as anxiety, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and associated speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The school is registered for up to 170 male and female pupils aged between 6 and 25 years of age. Nearly all the pupils have an education, health and care

plan.

- The school and college are situated in two different premises relatively close to each other and in the same road in Rochester, Kent. The school building caters for primary- and secondary-aged pupils. The college building caters mainly for post-16 students, including students aged over 19.
- The school is governed by a board of directors, including the chair of the board of Cavendish Education Ltd.
- The proprietor (Cavendish Education Ltd) recently acquired a property adjoining the school. As a result, the address of the main school site is now 9–13 New Road, not 10–13 New Road.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision, although some students attend a local college accompanied by members of the school's own staff.
- The school's last standard inspection was in June 2017, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good and all the independent school standards were found to be met.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We held a wide range of meetings during the inspection. These included meetings with representatives of the proprietor, school leaders, teachers and support staff, and two representative groups of pupils.
- The lead inspector held individual telephone conversations with four parents and three officers from local authorities that place pupils at the school.
- When considering the quality of education, we focused particularly on English, mathematics, and personal, social, health and citizenship education. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds on pupils' knowledge over time.
- The lead inspector reviewed the 57 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey and accompanying free-text messages.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, at lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- We assessed the school's culture to keep pupils safe throughout the inspection. A wide range of documentation was considered, including policies and documents associated with the school meeting all aspects of the independent school standards. The single central record of checks on the suitability of adults to work

with children was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Bzikot

Ofsted Inspector

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