

Inspection of a good school: Tring School

Mortimer Hill, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5JD

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2023

Outcome

Tring School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students are safe and happy here. Although large in number, everyone works well together to build a strong sense of community. While there are occasional moments of over-exuberance in the corridors and around the expansive school site, things rarely get out of hand. When they do, adults address inappropriate behaviours swiftly. Most pupils have confidence in adults' resolution of disagreements and of the rare incidences of bullying that occur.

There are high expectations at the school, including for the standards pupils and students should achieve in their examinations. Most pupils do very well, although there is still some way to go in the numbers taking and passing the full English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of GCSEs.

Provision for personal development is strong, including for students in the sixth form. Opportunities abound to participate in musical and dramatic performances, in addition to the sports clubs on offer. Wider afield, the school also provides opportunities for participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and the World Challenge. Pupils and students are able to show leadership, and this does much to build confidence. Tring is a school where everyone is made to feel welcome and can be themselves, whatever their background or personal situation.

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

The curriculum offered in the main school and in the sixth form is broad and well organised. Subject planning sets out clearly what is to be taught and learned. These plans are followed precisely. Leaders monitor the quality of provision in individual subjects and take swift action where it is needed.

Pupils and students achieve well in examinations because they have secure subject knowledge. Typically, teaching breaks learning down into manageable and memorable chunks and tasks. Time is then allowed for pupils and students to practise and to master key skills and knowledge. Skilful questioning helps teachers to understand whether

important learning has been fully grasped. They provide extra practise for those who need it.

The school is at the forefront of online learning. All pupils have exclusive use of their own laptop. This proved particularly beneficial during the COVID-19 lockdowns, when learning was able to continue immediately and without interruption because of the strong systems already in place. These approaches support access to the curriculum and learning for all pupils and students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The needs of pupils with SEND are accurately identified. Appropriate specialist support is put in place, when required. If this is not readily available from outside agencies, leaders proactively seek out alternative arrangements. The school makes effective provision for pupils who struggle to read.

Beyond the classroom, pupils and students are offered a range of opportunities to broaden their knowledge and experience. However, in a few subjects, leaders do not extend and deepen pupils' cultural knowledge as much as they might – for example, beyond the requirements of an examination specification. Leaders have revised the curriculum offer in modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9. However, the proportion of pupils taking and achieving the range of GCSEs that make up the EBacc remains significantly short of the government's ambition.

Typically, pupils' and students' behaviour in lessons is strong. They demonstrate commendable attitudes to learning. Working relationships with adults are extremely positive. This plays an important part in making teaching and learning effective. While occasional misbehaviour around the school buildings does not make pupils feel unsafe, it makes some feel uncomfortable.

Provision for pupils' and students' wider development is strong, including in sex and relationships education, where they gain a very mature and well-informed, age-related understanding of risks and responsibilities. The school's work on inclusion and diversity is particularly noteworthy. This includes the student diversity group, which has worked effectively to increase awareness and promote understanding among their peers and with staff. The organisation of pastoral support through tutors and house staff means that every pupil and student is known individually.

Trustees and governors are knowledgeable and experienced. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Staff are appreciative of leaders' consideration of their workload. While most parents are supportive of the school, some would like more detailed information around the progress their children are making. Others would welcome better communication about SEND or about issues in staffing and the curriculum that affect their child. While all necessary information is available to parents on the trust and school websites, it is not always easy to locate or access.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All required staff recruitment checks are made and recorded accurately. Any allegations made are handled swiftly and appropriately.

Training for safeguarding leaders and for staff generally is regular, reflecting up-to-date government guidance. Staff have sound knowledge of the signs of concern. They know what to do and how to report concerns when they have them. Pupils and students also have good knowledge of how to report concerns and access help when required. They have confidence in the support and help offered by adults at the school. Where necessary, leaders are quick to refer concerns to, and seek support from, external agencies and bodies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although changes have been made to modern foreign languages provision in Years 7 to 9, the number of pupils taking and passing examinations in these subjects remains too low. Consequently, the number of pupils obtaining good grades in the EBacc subjects is not as high as it should be. Leaders should continue to develop provision for modern foreign languages so that significantly more pupils take and pass examinations in these subjects.
- Although the school provides a broad curriculum and a good range of enrichment activities, pupils' and students' cultural knowledge is not always deepened as much as it might be. Senior leaders should work with subject leaders to identify how and where teaching might extend pupils' and students' knowledge, to enhance their understanding.
- Some parents told inspectors that they needed more information about teaching and the curriculum, including around SEND and how pupils' progress is reported. Additionally, while all necessary policies and information are available to parents, these are not always easy to access. In partnership with trustees and with parents, leaders should review the school's methods and strategies for communication so that parents gain a better understanding of their children's education.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138352
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10268579
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,534
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	300
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julian Crane
Headteacher	Sally Ambrose
Website	http://tring.herts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 November 2017

Information about this school

- Since November 2017, there have been changes of headteacher and the CEO of the trust. The local governing body chair had been in post for one month at the time of this inspection.
- This is a Church of England school, within the diocese of St Albans. The school's provision for religious education and collective worship was last inspected under section 48 of the 2005 Education Act in May 2019. Its next inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school makes use of two registered alternative education providers for a small number of pupils. This includes pupils who are dual registered at Tring School and the alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, other leaders, staff and pupils.
- As part of evaluating the quality of leadership, the lead inspector met with the chair of the trust, the acting CEO, the chair of the local governing body and other governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, drama, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and considered samples of pupils' work. Inspectors explored other curriculum subjects through curriculum plans, discussions with leaders, visits to lessons and sampling pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's single central record of recruitment vetting checks, considered its safeguarding policy and procedures, and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 275 responses made by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses submitted during the inspection. Inspectors also considered 111 responses made to the staff survey and 655 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mark Phillips, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Barr	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector

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