

Inspection of a good school: Trinity School

Seal Hollow Rd, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3SL

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2024

Outcome

Trinity School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Matthew Pawson. The school is a free school in a single academy trust called Trinity School Sevenoaks Ltd. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees chaired by Cres Iveson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Trinity School is a caring and considerate school, where each pupil is valued and appreciated as an individual. Academic success is just one aspect of the school's promise to parents and pupils. The school is actively committed to equip all pupils with the skills and knowledge, which they will need in later life.

The Christian ethos pervades every area of the school. It is actively promoted by the chaplaincy team, who collaborate closely with pastoral leaders to ensure pupils' welfare and well-being. Pupils believe that their potential is limitless. They are tolerant, resilient and respectful towards each other and their teachers.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and engagement. Bullying is extremely rare, and pupils say that any issues are resolved quickly. Pupils are happy and safe. They look out for one another. They know that they can talk with a member of staff if they have any concerns. They are actively encouraged to do so.

A culture of kindness and compassion is evident across the school. Pupils are committed to their education. The school offers an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs and activities besides sports and performing arts. These include backgammon, botanical art, coding, debating, origami, sewing and sign language.

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

The curriculum is carefully planned and suitably constructed. The curriculum is ambitious and examination outcomes are particularly strong. The school has prioritised reading. This is a successful whole-school initiative. Extra help is put into place for those pupils who need to catch up with their reading. Literacy skills are supported well and pupils develop a

wide range of subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils make connections between what they are learning now with what they have learned previously. However, cross-curricular links do not always support pupils' wider knowledge and skills fully. As a result, there are some opportunities which are missed to help pupils really deepen and apply their understanding.

Teachers have strong and confident subject knowledge. In lessons, teachers ensure that knowledge is revisited so that pupils retain it. Teachers' questioning is used effectively to check pupils' understanding and adapt teaching to close gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers' feedback helps pupils understand what to do to improve. At times, however, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are not developed fully. When this happens, pupils do not make as much progress through the curriculum as they could. The school has recognised this and is working hard to support improvements, for example, in modern foreign languages.

The sixth-form curriculum is appropriately matched to course requirements. Students are well prepared for their sixth-form studies. Visiting speakers and university visits ensure that students move successfully to the next steps of their education. Many students proceed to highly regarded universities of their choice.

Relationships are exceptionally strong. Pupils play a highly positive role in supporting the school community. They value opportunities to take on leadership roles and develop their confidence in public speaking. Sixth formers act as inspirational role models. They help and support younger pupils.

Personal development is a strength of the school and is well supported through the 'Trinity LifeBites' programme, covering personal, social and health education as well as relationships and sex education. The programme is exceptionally well designed to offer pupils a wide, rich set of experiences in a coherently planned way. The programme also covers careers which are carefully mapped out and actively supported through careers fairs, visiting speakers and external visits.

Pupils benefit significantly from additional activities, such as public speaking, debating and various competitions. Disadvantaged pupils are known and supported well. Their work is sensitively tailored to individual abilities and aptitudes. The school is aware that the achievement of these pupils has not been as strong as that of their peers in the past. These gaps are narrowing.

Attendance is improving for all groups of pupils. A recently appointed additional welfare officer is monitoring patterns of attendance closely and working with families where persistent absence is a problem. The school has specifically targeted disadvantaged pupils and improvements are already evident.

There is a formidable team spirit and an intense sense of purposefulness across subject departments. The school works with diligence and determination to ensure a high-quality, inclusive education, which fully reflects the school's Christian ethos. Governors provide effective support and robust challenge, which ensures that staff feel valued and listened

to. Staff say that their workload is always carefully considered. They are proud to be part of the school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school rightly recognises that the quality of education is not fully embedded, for example, in modern foreign languages. When this is the case, the curriculum is not sequenced as well as it could be and learning is sometimes not ambitious enough. The school is already working to ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently so that pupils achieve highly in all subjects.
- The school has not made the most of linking curriculum content across different subjects. As a result, pupils do not always make important connections so that their learning really deepens. The school should extend its successful cross-curricular working in reading and the 'Trinity Life Bites' programme to ensure that pupils make connections across all subjects.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2015.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139554
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10313352
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1130
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	238
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Cres Iveson
Headteacher	Matthew Pawson
Website	www.trinitysevenoaks.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Trinity School is an 11 to 19 mixed Christian school. The school was founded as a single-academy trust free school in 2013. It also works with Sevenoaks Churches Educational Trust, which is overseen by a board of directors which is chaired by Cres Iveson.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was conducted in September 2013. The school is now due for its next section 48 inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, geography and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a range of lessons, spoke with subject teachers, talked to pupils, and reviewed samples of their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding and puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors looked at the policies provided on the school website. They studied curriculum documentation, behaviour logs, attendance records and destination statistics. Inspectors held meetings with leaders, teachers, pupils and students. The lead inspector met with members of the governing board, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey of parents' views and other written comments provided at the time. They reviewed the responses to the online surveys completed by staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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