



Trinity School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112429
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278930
Inspection dates 15 March 2006 to 16 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

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

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Type of school | Secondary | School address | Strand Road |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Carlisle |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 | | Cumbria, CA1 1JB |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01228 607596 |
| Number on roll | 1854 | Fax number | 01228 607498 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Canon David Jenkins |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 November 1999 | Headteacher | Mr Alan Mottershead |

| Age group | Inspection dates | Inspection number |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 11 to 18 | 15 March 2006 - 16 March 2006 | 278930 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average voluntary aided comprehensive school with a Christian foundation and a large sixth form. Most students are from white British backgrounds and very few are from minority ethnic groups. A very small number of students are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below average. Students' social and economic circumstances are average overall and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. Very few students join or leave the school at times other than usual. Students' attainment on entry is average. The school has specialist status for foreign languages. The school and surrounding areas of the city were flooded in January 2005, causing considerable disruption to the school.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory and it gives satisfactory value for money. These judgements accord with the school's own accurate assessment of its effectiveness. It has strong partnerships with other secondary schools and higher education colleges which help to improve teaching and learning. Overall standards are average. Students have positive views of the school. They make satisfactory overall progress throughout the school because teaching and learning are generally satisfactory. However, in mathematics, standards are not as high as they should be because of inconsistencies in teaching. Instability in staffing has adversely affected students' progress in modern foreign languages, as shown by recent GCSE examination results, although these staffing difficulties have now largely been resolved. Positive working relationships underpin good care, guidance and support, and students' personal development and behaviour are good. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with a wide range of options and students benefit from a broad range of extra-curricular activities. However, the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has an accurate view of its effectiveness and has identified its priorities for improvement correctly. However, checks by subject managers on the quality of teaching are not yet rigorous enough. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and shows that the school has the capacity to improve further.

not applicable

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. Results are above average. Students' achievement is satisfactory but varies between subjects. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students would welcome more variety in teaching styles, greater independence in their learning and more opportunities to use computers. A good range of courses and enrichment activities match the aspirations of students and the needs of the local economy. Some students are unconvinced of the value of the general studies course but most find some elements of it interesting and enjoyable. Students feel well supported by subject and pastoral staff, who work well together to monitor and support students' progress. Students' personal development is enhanced by their mature approach to the many opportunities to take responsibility in the school and local community.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and modern foreign languages.
- Improve the consistency of teaching, especially in mathematics, to make lessons more varied, provide greater challenge for the higher attaining students, involve all students more actively, and mark their written work more rigorously.

- Ensure that subject managers' monitoring of the quality of lessons is rigorous and leads to consistently high quality teaching and learning.
- Ensure that statutory requirements are met for the teaching of ICT in Key Stage 4.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Students make satisfactory overall progress in relation to their starting points and reach average standards at the end of Key Stage 4.

Students make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. The results in national tests taken by Year 9 students in 2005 were above average in English and science. In mathematics, the results were average but represented some underachievement because of weaknesses in teaching. The school's assessments indicate that students are now making better progress in mathematics than in the recent past. Challenging targets were exceeded in English but not met in mathematics. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those in the early stages of learning English and those from minority ethnic families all make similar progress to other students.

The 2005 GCSE results were in line with the national average, and in many subjects, including English, they were above average. The strongest subjects were design and technology, drama, history, home economics and physical education. The school met its target for students achieving one GCSE grade but did not meet its challenging targets for five or more A* to C grades.

Students tended to achieve less well at GCSE in German and French than in their other subjects and are capable of higher standards in mathematics. Lower attaining boys did not achieve as well as they should in the 2005 GCSE examinations. The school's assessments indicate that students are making better progress in modern foreign languages. Assessment data indicate that lower attaining boys are also doing better as a result of recent action taken to improve teaching.

Sixth form standards are above average, although overall achievement is only satisfactory. This is because examination performance varies considerably between subjects. Students tend to achieve well in vocationally related and technology courses. The strongest subjects include health and social care, computing, design and technology – textiles, media studies and psychology. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Overall, students make satisfactory progress from their average starting points in response to sound teaching. Almost all students complete the courses they start.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of learners are good. Students' behaviour is good. However, parents are rightly concerned about a small number of lessons where

students misbehave because teaching is not stimulating enough. Exclusions are proportionately lower than other schools in the city and attendance is satisfactory. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, with strengths in moral and social development. Students enjoy school and appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided, including the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme, which is popular. The personal, social and health education programme, healthy eating options and many sporting opportunities all help students to maintain personal health and safety. Students treat each other with respect and the rare incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Taking part in and planning assemblies give students opportunity for reflection on spiritual matters. Activities instigated by the chaplain have not yet had time to have a full effect on students' spiritual awareness. Students contribute to decisions about their own community. They feel that management responds well to their views, particularly with regard to re-opening the swimming pool and the provision of a lockable bicycle storage. Students learn to work collaboratively and make sound progress in the basic skills in literacy and ICT, which prepares them effectively for their future life in education and work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The strengths of teaching are good subject expertise, good relationships, high expectations of conduct and secure planning that sets out a clear structure and progression for lessons. Students work hard in most lessons and produce much good quality of work. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported so that they make similar progress to others.

The quality of teaching is inconsistent, however, particularly in mathematics. In too many lessons, students are passive rather than active learners. Some lessons lack variety of activity and the pace of learning is slow. Work is not always planned to match different students' needs so that higher attaining students are not fully challenged. Students' written work shows that marking is not always frequent or rigorous enough to be helpful to students.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is satisfactory and generally meets students' needs in most respects. Specialist status as a language college helps to provide good opportunities to study languages. The added international dimension makes a good contribution to students' social and cultural development. A wide range of vocational courses and subjects at GCSE and A Level enables students to make choices suited to their aspirations and abilities, particularly in the post-16 curriculum. The school has valuable links with further education to provide an alternative, work-based curriculum which provides

additional choices for students who are unlikely to do well at GCSE. A diverse and well-supported programme of extra-curricular and enrichment activities enhances students' academic and personal development. However, the school does not meet statutory requirements for teaching ICT to all pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pastoral leaders, form tutors and non-teaching house tutors know the students well and work together effectively to provide well-targeted support. Students' attendance, punctuality and behaviour are closely monitored and where students experience difficulties they are well supported. Parents and students are supportive of the school overall and have a high regard for the pastoral system. The school works particularly well with external agencies to identify and support students' individual needs, and support for looked after and vulnerable students is a strong feature. Child protection measures are in place and health and safety measures meet statutory requirements. However, the school site raises problems of disabled access, especially with split-level buildings.

Students' academic progress is closely monitored through the house system and by subject teachers. Underachievement is identified quickly and effective support is provided through individual mentoring or extra classes. Students exercise a high degree of responsibility for setting their own targets, in consultation with parents and teachers. The school works effectively with the Connexions service and students are suitably prepared to make the choices that they need to make at age 14, 16 and 18.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Professional training has improved the effectiveness of self-evaluation, which is accurate and helpful to the school's development. The headteacher, ably supported by a new senior leadership team, has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The leadership team recognises weaknesses in examination and test performance and is taking action to improve results, for example, in mathematics and modern foreign languages. Staffing has improved, particularly in modern foreign languages. The curriculum has improved. The work of subject departments is checked more rigorously than before and students' progress is monitored and analysed more effectively. However, the monitoring by subject leaders is not yet rigorous enough to ensure consistently high quality teaching and learning. The school has tackled the issues identified at the last inspection effectively and demonstrates the capacity to improve further.

Governance is satisfactory. The governors support the headteacher and are increasing their effectiveness in checking the school's progress. Statutory requirements are not fully met because of a lack of planning for the teaching of ICT to all students in Key Stage 4.

Staffing is adequate. Although recent difficulties have affected students' progress in modern foreign languages, these have now been resolved. The accommodation is adequate and managed well. Financial control is satisfactory. Having been astutely managed, the budget is now on an even footing and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Inspection judgements

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 | 3 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 | 2 |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | NA | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | Yes |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | Yes |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 | |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 | |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 | |
| The attendance of learners | 3 | |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 | |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 | |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 | 2 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 | |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 3 | |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 | |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 | |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 | |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | Yes |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | Yes |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form | Yes |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | Yes |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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15 March 2006

Dear students

On behalf of the inspection team I wish to thank you all for the welcome you gave us. We very much appreciated the opportunity to see you at work and to talk to you about your work and your school. It is important that you know what the inspection team found.

We found that most of you enjoy school, work hard in lessons and achieve the results that you expect to reach. You are well supported by pastoral and subject staff who track your progress closely. They make sure that you know whether you are doing well or need to work harder. You have many exciting opportunities to take part in extra activities out of lesson time. You take on responsibility well and are rightly proud of the achievements of the school council. Sixth form students are good role models for younger students. Language college status has given you and others in the community many opportunities to study a language.

You have not done as well in mathematics and modern foreign languages as you have in other subjects. We know that the school is aware of this and is working hard to help you to do better. In addition, we have asked the school to:

help you to improve the way in which you learn in lessons and help you to take a more active part in lessons

make sure that you benefit from having your work marked regularly, to encourage you and help you to know exactly what to do to improve

carry out more frequent checks on lessons and on your learning to make sure that all that they are doing to help is working

make sure that all students in Years 10 and 11 continue to learn to use computers.

You can help most by continuing to enjoy school and your lessons and having a positive attitude to studying. We wish you all the very best for your futures.

Best wishes

Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector