



Tring School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117553
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280116
Inspection dates 11 January 2006 to 12 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Alan Clamp LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Mortimer Hill
School category	Voluntary controlled		HP23 5JD
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01442822303
Number on roll	1490	Fax number	01442890409
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms.Jane Nash
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Ms. Julia Trueman

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 11 January 2006 - 12 January 2006	Inspection number 280116
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Tring School is a voluntary controlled school with 1490 students. Boys and girls of 11-18 years of age go to the school. It has a large sixth form and offers some post-16 provision in partnership with Ashlyns School in Berkhamsted. From September 2005 the school has been designated as a specialist Humanities College. The school has a low proportion of students eligible for free school meals compared to other schools. Around 8% of students have special educational needs, which is lower than the national average. Approximately 6% of students are from minority ethnic groups and there are few students whose first language is not English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Since the last inspection standards in modern foreign languages have improved, better information is provided to parents about their children's progress. There are more science laboratories and a larger library. The school provides correct requirements for the provision of information and communication technology (ICT) at Key Stage 4. Standards of attainment in art and the use of pupil assessments and tests in planning teaching and learning remain areas for further improvement. The strengths identified at the previous inspection have been maintained. Standards in literacy in Key Stage 3 and generally for girls in Key Stage 4 could be higher. Students make good progress and achieve high standards. The personal development and well-being of students are good, particularly with regard to the extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles and make a positive contribution to the community. Teaching and learning are good and some outstanding lessons were observed in mathematics, French, geography and history. The curriculum is broad and balanced, although some students in Key Stage 4 would benefit from a wider range of vocationally-related courses. Students show an exceptional enjoyment in their education and participate in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Care, guidance and support for students are good and students with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported. The leadership and management of the school are good. From September 2005 the school has been designated as a specialist Humanities College. Although it is too early to assess fully the impact of the specialist status, comprehensive plans are in place as to how this will be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to raise standards throughout the school. Heads of departments do not always effectively share good ideas with staff. The school works effectively in partnership with others to promote the well-being of students. Value for money is good. There is a robust system of evaluating the school's performance and the evaluation of its own effectiveness, is comprehensive and accurate. The capacity of the school to improve is good.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Inspectors agreed with the school's view that the provision for post-16 students is good. Students make good progress and achieve high standards in AS and A2 examinations. Many students go on to higher education. Most teaching is highly effective. The school has worked in collaboration with Ashlyns School in Berkhamsted since September 2005 to offer a wider range of academic and vocational courses at level 3. The school also offers some GCSE and GNVQ provision. Progression into the sixth form has increased significantly in the current academic year. Students in the sixth form play an active role in the school community. Students receive appropriate guidance onto sixth form courses and are well supported. Advice and guidance relating to higher education are very good but some students would appreciate more information about employment opportunities on leaving school. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The arrangements with Ashlyns School are

well-managed and systems are being developed to more closely monitor the quality of provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve standards in literacy at Key Stage 3 - improve the progress made by female students at Key Stage 4 to match the good progress made by male students in 2005
- ensure heads of department share best practice on teaching, learning and assessment
- make better use of tests and other information to further improve the quality of provision and raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school self-evaluation that students make good progress and achieve high standards. Test results for Year 9 students in mathematics and science in 2005 were similar to the previous year and above the national averages. Results in English, however, had declined since 2004 and were broadly similar to the national average. Year 11 examination results in 2005 were above the national averages. The proportion of students achieving the equivalent of at least five GCSEs at grades A*-C was 71% in 2005 with over 90% of these students achieving grades A*-C in English and mathematics. Students achieve particularly well in GCSE design and technology, drama and English language. Achievement is relatively weaker in art and design, where the proportion of students achieving grades A*-C is similar to the national average. The school came close to meeting very challenging targets except in English in Key Stage 3. Students in the sixth form achieve better results than those seen nationally. Attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is above average. The overall progress made between Years 7 and 9 is satisfactory. Students make good progress to Year 11 and in the sixth form. The progress made by male students between Years 7 and 11 was better than the national average. The progress made by female students was similar to the national average. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Students of all ages thoroughly enjoy coming to school and their enthusiasm for learning is outstanding and helps many of them to make good progress from the moment they arrive in Year 7. They are highly motivated and keen to involve themselves in the many extra-curricular activities provided. For example, over half of all students regularly take part in sporting activities. Music and drama productions are also very popular. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their moral and social awareness is particularly strong and, as part of its status as a Humanities College, the school has appropriate plans to extend students' knowledge of other faiths and cultures. Students are proud of their school and behave responsibly during lessons and at other

times. Attendance continues to be good. Students mature into sociable and articulate young people and they play an exceptionally active part within the school community. They readily assume responsibility and are quick to use their initiative. Staff and governors are very interested in students' opinions and involve them fully when planning for the future. Volunteers in Year 10 train as mentors and provide Year 7 students with additional guidance and support. Students are very keen to adopt healthy lifestyles and have been instrumental in extending the range of healthy options available at break and lunch times. Although arrangements for health and safety are good, there are relatively few opportunities for students to learn how to assess potential risks and respond accordingly. Students' strong work ethic and good basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT equip them well for their future lives within the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school self-evaluation that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good or better. Some outstanding lessons were seen in mathematics, geography, French and history. In these lessons, the teachers' subject knowledge was excellent, they appreciated students' individual needs and they took advantage of students' desire to learn and participate in lessons. Most teachers have high expectations of students. They plan lessons well and enjoy good relationships with the students. Good use is made of the resources available, in particular the interactive whiteboards, although these facilities are rather limited. The students work hard and respond well to questions, supporting the brisk pace of most lessons. Students with specific learning difficulties are supported well by teaching assistants and make good progress as a result. A good range of teaching methods are used in most lessons to support effective learning. The use of assessment information in the planning of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The analysis of progress is effective. Most students are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and know what to do to improve their performance. Homework is used to support work in lessons, but the setting of homework does not always match the agreed timetable and this limits the effectiveness of some learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced for all students, with a good range of options in Years 10 and 11. More vocational courses are now offered and an innovative course for students with more practical interests called 'Skills 4U', has been introduced successfully. Some students in Key Stage 4 would benefit from a wider range of vocationally-related courses. The school has effective links with Ashlyns School in Berkhamsted that enable a broader range of courses to be offered to students in the sixth form. All students follow a Life Skills programme that includes personal, social

and health education. The programme also includes work related learning, including a work experience placement in Year 10, and enterprise skills involving team building days. Since the last inspection, the provision of ICT has improved and students in every year have opportunities to develop their skills. Students use ICT satisfactorily within subjects to explore and research ideas, and to present work. Students participate in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The relationships between staff and students are very positive, friendly and constructive. Students are encouraged to support each other. Sixth form students and Year 10 mentors provide support for younger students. The abilities of students are assessed when they arrive at the school and regular checking ensures that they make good progress. Students negotiate demanding but achievable targets with their teachers. Progress against these targets is monitored regularly. Those with special educational needs are well supported and helped effectively by teaching assistants in lessons. Health and safety arrangements are good. Robust child protection and anti-bullying procedures are in place. Students receive good advice and guidance on entry to the school, during transition to Key Stage 4 and when moving into the sixth form. Careers guidance is good and has been enhanced by the recently opened Connexions centre in the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is supported well by a strong senior management team and together they have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and where further improvements are needed. Staff are well qualified and experienced. The school experienced a period of instability in 2003-05 with high staff turnover and some long-term illness. However, staffing is now more settled. The school makes a strong commitment to staff development and to further improving the performance of middle management. Considerable improvement has been achieved in recent years in the quality of resources and accommodation. The new learning centre offers an exceptional opportunity to students to use up-to-date ICT facilities in a bright and supportive learning environment. Further refurbishment is required in some parts of the school, such as the science laboratories and toilets. Self-evaluation is good and has been a key feature of the school development plan. A comprehensive system of lesson observations and analysis of students' performance is being established. Heads of department are increasingly involved in evaluating the quality of teaching and sharing of ideas, although there are some inconsistencies in the effectiveness of this process. A greater focus on these aspects could help to improve good teaching to outstanding teaching. The rigour in using pupils' tests and other information to track students' progress and set challenging targets is improving. However, better use of the nature of the student is required to fully evaluate their achievements fully. The school

promotes equality of opportunity effectively. The success in the bid for Specialist College Status for humanities reflects the quality of the planning by the senior leaders and governors, and the strength of leadership in history and geography. Finances are managed well and the school provides good value for money. Governors are committed and supportive of the school. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, visit departments regularly and provide invaluable expertise to support the leadership team.

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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
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	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?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

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	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	insufficient evidence

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

On behalf of the inspectors who visited Tring School on the 11 and 12 January, I would like to thank you for introducing us to your school. We enjoyed the opportunity to share your achievements and talk to you in lessons and through discussions. Many of you helped us find our way around and made us feel welcome. We think that you might like to know our view of the school. Below is a summary of the report that you will also be able to read when it arrives in school. What we liked about your school: - you make good progress and achieve high standards - you enjoy your education and participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities - you are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles and make a very positive contribution to the school community - the quality of teaching and learning are good - you are well cared for, guided and supported - the school is effectively led and well managed. What we have asked your school to do now: - improve standards in literacy at Key Stage 3 - keep improving the progress made by female students at Key Stage 4 to match the good progress made by male students in 2005 - ensure heads of department share the best ways to teaching, learning and assessment - make better use of tests and other information to further improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to raise standards. The school is good and improving. The school has high hopes for the future and is in a good position to improve further, but it will need you to play your part. We wish you every success. Best wishes, on behalf of the inspection team.