



Trinity Catholic School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125756
Local Authority Warwickshire
Inspection number 293357
Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Janet Thompson HMI

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Type of school | Comprehensive | School address | Guy's Cliffe Avenue |
| School category | Community | | Leamington Spa |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 | | CV32 6NB |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01926 428416 |
| Number on roll (school) | 1026 | Fax number | 01926 462928 |
| Number on roll (6th form) | 135 | | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Nuala Scarisbrick |
| | | Headteacher | James Ferguson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 March 2002 | | |

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|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and three Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

The school has been a specialist technology college since 2000 and was given a second specialism in arts in March 2004. Since the last inspection the school has moved to one site. This change was more akin to an amalgamation and the move, completed in September 2005, took longer than originally planned. The difficulties arising from this caused considerable disruption to the school. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Ten percent of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few students are at an early stage in acquiring English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and or disabilities (LDD) is above average.

A section 48 inspection of denominational religious education and the content of collective worship was carried out at the same time by two inspectors. Its findings will be reported separately.

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 is offering a satisfactory standard of education. Standards and achievement are satisfactory and the picture is improving. In 2006, results at the end of Key Stage 4, when English and mathematics were included, were higher than national averages. Standards were similarly above average in Key Stage 3. Students make only satisfactory progress because teaching is too variable in quality. Teaching in some departments is of high quality, reflected in results, but too much teaching across the school is only satisfactory. Lessons are not always well matched to students' needs and in some there is a lack of challenge. The target setting system is beginning to raise expectations, but assessment is not used well enough by all staff. Too often students are not given sufficient feedback to help them understand how to improve their work.

Students make adequate progress in their personal development. They behave reasonably well but lack the motivation to work hard in some subjects. Serious behaviour incidents are addressed quickly, and so students feel safe, but inspectors agree with students and parents, that other behaviour is managed inconsistently. Longstanding links with business partnerships are good and there is very good provision for work-related learning, ensuring students gain a good preparation for their future. Arrangements for students' care, guidance and support are satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The clear focus provided by the principal has helped to establish a pattern of improvement and raise achievement. The curriculum is now satisfactory, although vocational options are lacking. Specialist status has helped to build links with partner schools. There are considerable strengths in activities that provide enriching experiences, for example outstanding art installations.

Whole-school evaluation has been effective in identifying the strengths and the priorities for development, although some grade judgments are higher than those of the inspectors. Planning to address priorities is good and resources are clearly focused on strategies designed to improve pupils' progress. A good system for monitoring has been established but the quality of evaluation is too variable. For example, governors are insufficiently involved in evaluating the consistent implementation and effectiveness of the school's policies. Since the last inspection, the school has made reasonable progress but this is only as a result of accelerated improvement in the last 18 months. Recent progress and plans to keep the focus securely on the outcomes for students indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve with some significant strengths.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. In this increasingly popular sixth form, students make satisfactory progress in lessons and achieve standards close to the national average. Students benefit from good facilities for study and recreation. The positive relationships result in a good learning environment. There is a good range of academic courses which are supplemented by

access to courses within the local sixth form consortium. At present, the numbers of students taking advantage of these arrangements are small but increasing. There are few vocational courses or courses suitable for those students requiring more support. The number of students from the main school continuing education in the sixth form is increasing and, although some students find the work too hard and give up a subject at the end of Year 12, there are very few who opt out at other times. Staff know the students well and provide good support and guidance. Students agree that they receive good guidance and support in their academic work as well as personal development. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase student motivation and progress by ensuring assessment is used to plan work that challenges students of all abilities.
- Give students better guidance about the levels they are working at and how they can improve their work.
- Increase consistency of implementing policy and ensure all levels of leadership, including governors, are able to evaluate the effectiveness of the policies.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Examination results at the end of Year 11 have varied considerably over the last four years. In 2006, a higher proportion of students than found nationally gained five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. Success in GCSE examinations across the grades A* to G was broadly average. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 2006, students reached levels above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. There was an increase in achievement in English and mathematics with particular success at the higher levels. The progress made by students is satisfactory because students enter the school with levels above those expected nationally.

Recent initiatives have helped the school analyse data more effectively and this has led to subsequent action to help improve achievement. The school has offered successful additional support to a group of girls in Key Stage 4. As a result, these students are now making at least satisfactory progress. There is still some variation in boys' and girls' achievement. Boys who reached higher levels and girls who reached middle levels in Key Stage 3 performed less well than others at Key Stage 4. Although there is no detailed analysis available, achievement by students from minority ethnic backgrounds is satisfactory. The learning support department plays a significant role in helping students with LDD achieve well but there is too much variation in the quality of teaching across subjects to help them make better than satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' personal development is satisfactory but is good in some aspects. While most students have reasonable attitudes to learning, they are not always sufficiently motivated in lessons. Students make a good contribution to the community but they do not have enough opportunities to take on independent responsibilities within the school.

High quality relationships between staff and students are a strength of the school and reflected by students saying they feel safe and happy in school. Although many parents are concerned about the behaviour of some students, observations confirmed students' views that behaviour is at least satisfactory and often good, despite some inconsistencies over how behaviour is managed. Within lessons and around the school, students behave safely. Most say they enjoy being at the school and this was evident in some subjects but not in all. Attendance is now close to the national average; an improvement resulting from good action by the school. There is, however, a lack of urgency in movement between lessons.

Healthy lifestyles are promoted, for example, by the available food and drink, and a reasonable number of students are involved in sports and other extra-curricular opportunities. Students make satisfactory progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a particularly good contribution to cultural development by the visual arts and design subjects.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school regularly monitors the quality of learning and is aware of inconsistencies of quality across subjects. Monitoring has informed actions taken to improve lesson planning and this, with the sharing of good practice, has resulted in many students making better progress. Teachers get on well with their students. The structure of lessons has improved and aims are clear. As a result, learning progresses smoothly. There is not enough use of assessment to plan activities for different needs, so some students do not achieve as much as they could in lessons. Students with LDD make satisfactory progress and, when it is well planned, benefit from additional adult support. In most departments, teachers have good subject knowledge but, too frequently, learning is very teacher centred. Although students benefit from clear explanations, there are not enough opportunities provided to engage them in research to help them become independent learners. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory and students are given more opportunities to develop self-reliance in learning.

The school has introduced improved assessment systems and monitoring progress is good in some departments. In English, for example, this has made a significant contribution to raising achievement. The good practice is inconsistent in its development across subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Following a period of considerable change to the curriculum, students in Key Stage 3 now follow a broad and balanced range of activities meeting National Curriculum requirements. In Years 8 and 9, additional choices are offered which help to extend students' language studies, drama skills or introduce graphics. The curriculum for 14 to 16 year olds reflects the technology college status, with all students taking at least one technology option. Although the curriculum is well matched to most students' needs and abilities, there is currently insufficient opportunity to follow vocational courses and students in Years 10 and 11 only have one physical education lesson each week.

The specialist college status in both areas offers a wide variety of enrichment opportunities, including good quality design and technology projects in the community. The quality of work achieved in the visual arts department is outstanding. The development of exciting cross-curricular projects has enhanced studies in a wide range of subjects from science to English. The current art installation is outstanding. The teachers and artists in residence provide inspiring role models, raising the aspirations of students from early primary years to sixth form.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school provides satisfactory care and guidance in Years 7 to 11 and good support in the sixth form. Students are well supported when they join the school; they settle quickly, feel safe and enjoy new learning experiences. Pastoral care arrangements are satisfactory with clear reporting lines. Students approach staff with concerns and are confident that these will be dealt with. Incidences of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly and amicably, but the management of other behaviours is inconsistent. Appropriate health and safety checks and risk assessments are carried out. The school is well maintained.

New systems for tracking student progress have been introduced and are beginning to have a positive impact. When the information is used well, the staff provide clear guidance about the levels students are working at and give them good support, helping students understand how to improve their work. This is not consistent across all subjects.

Students with additional needs are given effective support by the learning support department and some make good improvement, particularly in their confidence and motivation. There is good information about the needs of students with LDD available for teachers but not all teachers use this effectively in lessons.

Support and guidance for students' economic understanding is a strength of the school. Students have a comprehensive programme of careers education, work experience and work-related projects based in school and the community. These raise confidence and self-esteem thereby equipping students well for adult life.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. In the last two years, considerable review and change have taken place. As a result, many aspects of the school's systems are relatively new and only just beginning to help improve the achievement made by students. The school has had an extremely turbulent time since the last inspection including two years with two temporary principals. During this difficult period, the governors, staff and parents were involved in considerable disagreement about school issues. This legacy has been difficult to overcome but the current principal has maintained a clear vision focusing on raising achievement. As a result, the school has managed to improve following these extremely turbulent times.

Managers work hard to ensure they address the needs of different learners. The support given to students in danger of underachieving demonstrates this. Monitoring is now good but evaluation is still too variable. There is not always enough evaluation of the involvement and achievement of different groups of students. In some departments, evaluation is strong and, through clear line management structures, practice is improving across the school. School data show students making better progress although it is early days for some initiatives and new practice. The current team of middle managers have a very good understanding of the need to evaluate their work in relation to the progress made by students.

The school provides satisfactory value for money and has accurately targeted resources to help improve the achievement made by students. Governors are fulfilling their role adequately. Although there are still concerns expressed by some parents that consultation is not sufficient, communication has improved over the last year. The governors have developed better protocols but they are not doing enough to evaluate the effectiveness of some of their policies.

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Inspection judgements

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|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <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? | 2 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| 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? | 3 | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 | |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 | |
| The attendance of learners | 3 | |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 | |
| 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 | 2 | |

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 | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 | 2 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below 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 | 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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 | |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 | |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No | |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No | |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed speaking to you and hearing about your views of the school. Your school, including the sixth form, is satisfactory.

The school has some real strengths. Specialist status enriches your education and we were especially impressed by your outstanding artwork displayed in the school. The curriculum has improved and, although it is still lacking in vocational courses, work experience and work-related learning successfully prepare you for your future working life.

Some of you have recently increased the progress you make but not enough of you make good progress. This is because teaching is too variable across the school. We saw some high quality lessons where teachers knew you well and where all of you were given challenging work. We saw other lessons where activities were routine and lacked challenge. In some lessons, you are not motivated and some teachers need to have higher expectations of your achievements.

An increasing number of teachers are using detailed assessment to help give you challenging work while offering good support but this is not always the case. It is more consistent in the sixth form and guidance here is good. We have asked the school to make sure assessment is used to plan your work more effectively and asked staff to give you more guidance about how to improve your work. You can help by rising to the challenge and making more effort to achieve higher results.

Policies in the school are not always implemented consistently and we agree with you that staff manage behaviour in different ways. We have asked the school and governors to make sure actions are more consistent and find out if policies work well to help you make better progress both academically and personally.

You all have a role to play in improving your school so that all of you can make good progress. I hope you will work with staff to do this. I wish you all the best for the future.