



Trinity School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131790
Local Authority West Berkshire
Inspection number 293848
Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Wiola Hola HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Love Lane
School category	Community		Shaw
Age range of pupils	11–18		Newbury RG14 2DU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01635 510500
Number on roll (school)	916	Fax number	01635 510510
Number on roll (6th form)	90		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Bob Hook
		Headteacher	Ms Deborah Forster
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	31 January –1 February 2007	293848

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is average in size. It opened in 1999 following the closure of two smaller schools. Most students come from a White British background with a few from other ethnic backgrounds. Just a few pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average as is the proportion with statements of special educational needs. The school has a specialist unit, called 'Ace', for 30 learners with dyslexia. Attainment on entry has been below average but in more recent years it has been closer to average. The school became a specialist school in Performing Arts in 2001.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

Trinity is an improving school. It has some good features but also some shortcomings. The best features are: in the test and examination results for English and humanities; in the drive of the headteacher and senior team to improve the school further; in the school's determination to provide exactly the right educational experiences for each and every students' academic and personal development; and in the work of the special unit for pupils with dyslexia. In the sixth form, standards are below average but students' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in Years 7 to 11 are below average but they are rising. Students' achievement, however, whilst now good in Years 7 to 9, is currently significantly less than might be expected by the time students end Year 11. In particular, students' achievements in mathematics and science, while improving, are unsatisfactory overall. In view of this, and in spite of some strengths, the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate.

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve and significant improvement is required in relation to: the overall achievement of students, and particularly in mathematics and science.

The personal development and well-being of students is satisfactory with some strengths. The school increases students' confidence and motivation and most students enjoy school. The school has worked successfully to develop the curriculum in Years 7 to 11. The breadth of courses available, the way in which they are organised to suit students' needs, and the additional educational experiences provided, all result in a good curriculum. The school is seeking to secure similar improvement in the sixth form. Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and varies greatly from outstanding to inadequate. Whilst good lessons exist, there are not enough of them to ensure that the rate of students' progress speeds up. The school provides good care and support for students: the care taken over students' personal well-being is particularly strong. There are many good systems for keeping a close check on students' academic progress and compiling data about it, but these data are not used to full effect in all subjects to ensure at least adequate progress for all. The school's status as a performing arts college impacts positively on students' personal development and self-confidence but less so on their academic progress other than in English.

The headteacher, the senior team and governors are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In the last few years, they have dealt unflinchingly with some difficulties, especially in relation to staffing issues and the budget. These have been largely resolved but some remain, particularly in recruiting for mathematics and in addressing some weaknesses in teaching across the curriculum. Work is in progress to improve the accuracy of some teachers' assessment of students' GCSE and A-level work. Senior staff have worked, and are working, to develop the effectiveness of some middle managers: many are already very effective whilst others need support to discharge their roles fully. Staff are positive about the way that the school is developing;

they speak with pride about how they are supported and encouraged, and of the productive links that exist with parents and the community. In view of the rising trend in standards and because of other improvements to educational provision and aspects of leadership and management, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form is smaller than average. It provides an adequate range of examination courses but relatively few other opportunities to extend students' experiences; the school is rightly working to broaden the curriculum and to provide students with more scope for personal development and for contributing to the school and wider community. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and students generally make satisfactory progress. The new leadership and management of the sixth form are good and students recognise and value the raised expectations and demands that have been made on them concerning their work habits. The head of sixth form and the tutors compile data on students' progress but its accuracy or use is not consistently good across the curriculum. Students receive good advice about what courses to study in this school or elsewhere.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards overall and particularly in mathematics and science.
- Increase the proportion of good or better lessons so as to speed up the overall rate of students' progress; eliminate the remaining shortcomings in teaching and learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of middle managers so that more are of the calibre of the best; strengthen their skills in assessing and speeding up students' academic achievements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 3

Standards are below average but rising. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 but weaknesses in Years 10 and 11 mean that it is inadequate overall from Year 7 to 11. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 varies greatly from subject to subject: it is good in English and humanities but unsatisfactory overall in mathematics and science. In addition, the achievement of girls is relatively much weaker than that of boys compared with what happens nationally: the school is acting to reduce this gap.

The school has worked effectively to raise standards and achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9. Whilst good achievement continues into Years 10 and 11 for English, it does not for the other two core subjects because of a legacy of weaknesses in provision and management: some weaknesses have been dealt with, particularly in science. Results in the GCSE examinations of 2006 were the best in the school's history but remain below the national average for the 5

or more A*-C grades benchmark. Standards and achievement in the performing arts fluctuate greatly: this is linked to the high teacher turnover in these areas. The weaknesses in art, found at the time of the last inspection, have been eliminated and standards are now average. In the sixth form, standards in both AS and A-level courses are below average although some students achieve good results: most students make satisfactory progress, many from a lower than average starting point.

Students with dyslexia receive high quality support and as a result make good progress. Other students with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve at broadly the same rate as those without.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory with some good features. One parent commented, 'Our son has gained in confidence steadily since joining Trinity' and others wrote similarly. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as demonstrated in work on 'Remembering the holocaust victims' and 'Learning from religion'. The vast majority of students enjoy coming to school and attendance is broadly average. Behaviour is satisfactory overall and some students are very well behaved, sensible and polite but instances of unsatisfactory behaviour occur in some lessons and occasionally around the school. Students demonstrate responsibility by being peer mediators, members of the school council and taking part in public speaking events. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community through fund raising, staging successful productions such as 'Rent' and establishing links with China, for example. The school has the Healthy Schools Award and students show they have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Students have a satisfactory understanding about how to stay safe. If bullying occurs, they say it is quickly resolved. Students are adequately prepared for their future economic well-being although, for some students, numeracy skills are a relative weakness.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some lessons are good or better but there are not enough of them for the rate of students' progress to be speeded up as required. In recent years, high staff turnover and some weak teaching impeded good continuity of learning for some students; staffing is now more settled and the school acted to address the major weaknesses. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and plan lessons conscientiously. Their skills in engaging students fully through setting challenging tasks that match their needs, and maintaining students'

interest and concentration vary greatly so that lessons range from outstanding to inadequate.

In the good lessons, relationships are positive, students show confidence in their teachers and engage readily in classroom activities. For example, high quality learning occurred when students confidently researched and presented the highs and lows of German history over time, or through the teachers' skilled questioning when discussing the work of Emily Bronte. Many teachers are effective in improving students' speaking skills and their use of information and communication technology (ICT). In many lessons, good pace, appropriate praise and high expectations help students learn effectively. In some lessons, however, teaching is over-directive, limiting students' engagement or preventing them from developing independence in learning. Students are not always clear about what they are expected to learn or how to improve their work. Teachers identify students of different abilities but do not always vary their teaching approaches enough in order to meet the students' specific learning needs. Examples of such shortcomings exist in mathematics but also in patches across the curriculum.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. One parent wrote: 'and;hellip; the fact that Trinity seeks to improve what it offers all the time is notable', and this is indeed a strength of the school. The taught curriculum and extra-curricular activities match well the needs and interests of the students in Years 7 to 11 and adequately in the sixth form. The curriculum is appropriately modified to cater for those students who need extra help to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Similarly, the 'Red Band' curriculum in Years 7 to 9 provides accelerated learning opportunities for the most able. For some students in the 14-19 age group, the school works in partnership with another local secondary school and Newbury College to extend its provision. Further curriculum refinements are planned, particularly for the sixth form and for those less suited to traditional GCSE courses. In mathematics, skills are covered, but not routinely in meaningful or relevant contexts that might capture students' interest or aid their learning: this shortcoming contributes to students' underachievement.

Performing Arts College status has increased the variety of learning experiences on offer. Through dance events, drama productions, public speaking and much more, students with particular talents are nurtured but the ethos is inclusive and all students are welcomed. These experiences make a good contribution to students' personal development. For those who would not enjoy public performance, a work-related course in stagecraft is on offer. Throughout the school participation in extra-curricular activities is high.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with good elements. Students of all abilities are valued. Arrangements for safeguarding students are securely in place. Effective support is provided through the 'Student Family Support Team' and 'Pastoral Managers' who oversee the welfare of students. Students at risk are identified early, and effective arrangements, such as 'Restorative Practice', help to keep them engaged and provide them with opportunities to reflect upon and modify negative behaviours. The school has good procedures to improve attendance. It has good links with outside agencies to support students with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). The 'Ace' unit is a strong feature of the school and provides highly effectively support for students with dyslexia who achieve well. Academic guidance is satisfactory: data on students' attainment is collated systematically but not all subject departments are accurate enough in their assessments, neither are data analysed or used well enough by them all to accelerate students' achievements. The quality of marking is very varied: whilst examples of good marking exist, it is not always helpful or related to students' targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets a very clear direction for the school. Through sensitive leadership, and well supported by the senior team, she has maintained the impetus to improve and is succeeding. Improvements are evident in the good curriculum, and in students' good progress in Years 7 to 9, but not yet in Years 10 and 11. The school's progress as a specialist performing arts college is gaining momentum under an able coordinator. Governance is good. Under the leadership of a well-informed chair, governors have close links with staff and effectively take on the role of critical friend while still offering challenge for the school's work.

The school has a positive culture of self-evaluation firmly rooted in regular reviews of whole-school and departmental progress. It has identified clearly areas for development. Self assessment is extremely honest and largely accurate. In particular, the school's evaluations about teaching and learning are valid but occasionally over generous. This is because lesson evaluations generally focus more on teaching than they do on learning. The school has done much to develop teachers' skills to good effect, and all this in the face of various staffing and budget difficulties which are being, or have been, addressed. Recruitment and retention of teachers is still difficult in some areas.

Committed middle leaders share the senior team's clear vision for school improvement but the quality of their work is varied; senior staff use their time well to support those middle leaders most in need of advice and development. There is a clear correlation between subject leadership and students' academic outcomes. The English and humanities departments are strident in getting the best out of the students. In

mathematics and science, there have been shortcomings in either leadership or staffing or both: the problems have been largely dealt with in science but some remain in mathematics. While whole school systems for assessment are satisfactory, weaknesses in this exist in some departments primarily in relation to evaluating students' progress.

The school has worked effectively to encourage parental involvement and a thriving PTA (parent-teacher association) now works closely with the school in all aspects of its work. Many parents comment that they 'feel their voice matters' and the school responds quickly. A few parents, however, state that some of their concerns have not been addressed in relation to students' behaviour or information about their child's progress, for example. In general, the views of parents, students and the local community are much valued and inform decisions about areas of the school's practice such as reporting to parents, the organisation of parents' information evenings as well as arrangements for fund raising activities.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	4	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	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
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	3	
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?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	3

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?	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	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	4	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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?	Yes	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your welcome and help to us when we visited the school recently. We appreciate the conversations we had with you in lessons, break times and arranged meetings. We would like to tell you about our findings.

These are the best things about your school, which is an improving one:

- you make good progress in English and humanities because teaching there is effective and teachers make sure that you all work hard and keep up
- the headteacher, the senior staff and governors understand exactly what the school does well and what needs to be improved; they are good leaders and managers
- students with dyslexia are extremely well supported and make good progress
- the curriculum in Years 7 to 11 is good; it has been devised and arranged well to suit your needs, interests and abilities
- teachers and other staff take good care of you so that you feel safe and supported.

Nevertheless, and in spite of the above list of strengths, the school is not enabling all of you to make as much progress in Years 7 to 11 as might be expected. We are asking the school to do the following things to improve. It should:

- raise standards, particularly in mathematics and science
- ensure there are more good lessons and no unsatisfactory ones; teachers should share more with one another what works well in teaching and learning
- help some subject leaders to develop their skills in analysing your academic achievements and in checking that you all learn as much as possible.

We heard and read many comments from you and your parents in praise of the school. A few raised concerns about the poor behaviour of some students. We hope that all of you will work hard, enjoy learning and make the best of your time at school.

We wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Wiola HalaHer Majesty's Inspector