

Trinity School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	357/6000
Unique Reference Number	106276
Inspection number	301642
Inspection dates	16-17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Elisabeth Linley HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Trinity School is an evangelical Christian school that opened in September 1978. When first established, the school was situated in small premises in Mottram, Cheshire. In 1981, the school expanded to provide secondary education and in 1985, moved to Birbeck Street, Stalybridge. Pupils from nursery to Year 6, moved to a building nearby in 1995 and from September 2008, all pupils from 3 to 16 years, will be accommodated on the one site at Birbeck Street.

Funded nursery education is provided for children over three years and under five years of age. This provision is registered with Ofsted's Early Years Directorate and was last inspected by a childcare inspector in July 2000 when a report was published. Trinity School was last inspected in March 2002.

The school aims are *'to provide a Christian education by approaching the curriculum, teaching discipline and school organisation from a Biblical standpoint. This is because we believe the Bible to be the Word of God to us and thus relevant to every aspect of life. In other words, we seek to subject the whole life of the school to the demands of God's word.'*

Evaluation of the school

Trinity School successfully meets its aims. It provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Provision for pupils' personal, social, spiritual and cultural development is good; provision for welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils develop in confidence and make good progress in all aspects of school life. The vast majority of parents are positive about the school. The school meets most of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

Trinity School provides a good curriculum. It is broad and balanced and provides well for the pupils. The curriculum reflects the school's aims so that 'all parts of the curriculum are taught in the context of God's love and truth'. The National Curriculum is used as a basis for planning but the school modifies its content so as to meet its aims.

The provision for Nursery, Reception and Year 1 pupils, who are taught together, is satisfactory overall. In the early years, children are able to access a range of activities that develop their independence well. However, at the time of the last inspection of the school's funded Early Years provision, two key issues were identified. A weakness in medium term planning was one. Planning now shows how the six areas of learning are to be covered for children in the Foundation Stage. However the other key issue has not been improved. Weekly plans still do not show how activities meet the different needs of children. Also, the school does not record observational assessments that can then be used to inform the weekly plans and so meet individual needs. Some work was completed on this issue after the 2000 inspection; more recently, however, this practice has been limited.

The curriculum for pupils aged 7 – 11 is effective. It develops pupils' skills well. In the upper school, the curriculum is broad. It develops pupils' academic abilities and supports their personal development well. All pupils are provided with regular opportunities to develop their self-knowledge and respect for others through personal, social and health education and citizenship. Guidance for choosing GCSE options is effective and pupils benefit from the school's organisation of the curriculum so that no choice is beyond their reach. One pupil in Year 10 spoke positively about having the opportunity to take sociology whilst also attending a local college to develop skills in motor mechanics. The school focuses strongly on developing study skills and pupils were observed working independently, knowing that support from a teacher was available if required. This organisation enables a greater choice of options and, with very small groups, pupils clearly benefit.

The curriculum in lower and upper school is enriched with a broad range of activities to widen the pupils' experience beyond the classroom. In lower school, extra-curricular visits are planned to museums and other places of interest. A residential visit is also organised on a yearly basis for pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8. After-school clubs are limited in number. However, lower school provides football and a gardening clubs whilst drama, football and The Duke of Edinburgh award scheme are available in upper school.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. Teachers form good relationships with their pupils who make good progress in their personal skills. Teachers know their pupils well and, through effective questioning and one to one support, pupils are challenged and encouraged to try their best. Planning to meet pupils' needs in lessons is satisfactory. Plans indicate the activities to be carried out and the aims of the lessons are often mentioned. However, there is variation in how well staff use assessment information to plan to meet pupils' differing needs in lessons. Individual education plans (IEPs) are in place for most pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, there is a lack of consistency in their implementation through school. Even so, because teachers know all pupils well and put in place effective personal support, the vast majority of them make good progress over time. This is confirmed by formal annual assessments and GCSE results.

The school has an adequate range of resources and teachers make effective use of these to support pupils' learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' social development is good and they develop into mature and responsible young people. Through the school's Christian foundation, pupils are given clear religious and moral guidance with which to make choices in their everyday lives. The attention given to pupils' spiritual development is a strong influence on their personal development and pupils enjoy their time in school. Pupils are taught to value their own culture and that of others. In seeking to promote tolerance and understanding, pupils' awareness of other faiths is developed. For example, those in lower school have enjoyed learning about Hindu celebrations from fellow pupils. The study of 'World Views' in the upper school includes comparisons with other faiths and cultures. Pupils are encouraged to try to evaluate their own time and culture in the light of the guiding principles found in the Bible. Pupils have a growing awareness of their place in a multi-cultural world.

Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to co-operate and they are very willing to take on class responsibilities, performing their duties diligently. Pupils behave well in school. Each pupil plays an important part in keeping the school tidy and clean. The school council provides pupils with a voice in its management. The council holds purposeful meetings and has a capable chairperson. It has made several relevant suggestions for improvement, such as the need for a cycle rack. Fund-raising for charities here and overseas is a regular feature of school life and activities are often suggested by the school council.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies reflect the school's ethos and are implemented effectively. Staff know their pupils well and much emphasis is placed on providing effective pastoral support and guidance. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe in school and know that they can turn to a member of staff with whom they can share concerns. However, in discussion and through the pupils' questionnaires, pupils said that the school does not give them enough information on learning how to eat healthily.

All staff have received recent training for child protection and those responsible for first aid have also attended relevant training courses. Staff are caring about the pupils' welfare but some of the necessary policies in relation to health and safety are not in place. Risk assessments are undertaken, for example to carry out experiments in the science laboratory but some risks are missed and the assessments are not always recorded. This is also the case for risks assessment carried out for school trips. Fire risk assessments have been suitably carried out. Fire fighting appliances

and fire alarms are subject to regular checks to ensure equipment is fully operational.

The admission and attendance registers comply with regulations. The school's fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Although the school lacks formal written procedures to ensure that all staff have been subject to appropriate checks, the practice meets requirements fully. All staff who work with the children have been subject to a check with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) before being employed.

School's premises and accommodation

The upper and lower school premises are situated a mile apart. The lower school accommodation is satisfactory, although the demountable classroom in the playground is small and is in poor repair. Classrooms have high quality displays of pupils' work and posters which improve the learning environment. The upper school comprises a main building on two floors and demountable classrooms. It provides satisfactory teaching accommodation, although incoming rainwater through the demountable's ceiling needs urgent attention. A laboratory, art room and food technology room provide suitable specialist facilities. The computer suite is placed centrally and used regularly. Library provision is limited, although most classrooms have fiction and non-fiction books

There are limited facilities for physical education (PE). However, pupils in the upper school make use of local facilities. For example, they travel each week to a local sports centre for gymnastics and attend a local tennis club. Pupils in the lower school use the hall for PE. Outdoor space is suitable for the number of pupils on roll. However, when the lower school leave their present premises and join upper school pupils in September 2008, pressure will be put on the outdoor space at break times.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a wide and comprehensive range of information for parents, including a well-structured website and a handbook. Detailed annual reports on pupils' progress are also provided and there are opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress during the school year.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a written procedure for handling complaints that fully meets requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with DfES guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DfES guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- have regard to the DfES guidance *Health and safety: responsibilities and powers* (paragraph 3(4)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- ensure that the school buildings provide reasonable resistance to penetration by rain, snow, wind and moisture from the ground (paragraph 5(f)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure consistency in the use of assessment information in planning for lessons, so that the needs of all pupils are met more effectively.
- ensure that IEPs written to support the learning of those pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities are implemented consistently and effectively.

School details

Name of school	Trinity School		
DfES number	357/6000		
Unique reference number	106276		
Unique reference number (funded nursery education)	583378		
Type of school	All-age day school with nursery		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1978		
Age range of pupils	3-16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 46	Girls: 57	Total: 103
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 2	Total: 2
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of children receiving funded nursery education	Boys: 1	Girls: 6	Total: 7
Annual fees	£2,964-£4,146		
Address of school	Birbeck Street off High Street Stalybridge Cheshire SK15 1SH		
Telephone number	0161 303 0674		
Fax number	0161 304 7589		
Email address	office@trinityschool.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Ross Evans		
Proprietor	The Trustees of the Trinity School Trust		
Reporting inspector	Elisabeth Linley HMI		
Dates of inspection	16-17 May 2007		