

Trinity School, Belvedere

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101472
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	307699
Inspection date	1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Lynn Bappa

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1018
6th form	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon David Herbert
Headteacher	Mr Ian Collins
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Erith Road Belvedere DA17 6HT
Telephone number	01322 441371
Fax number	01322 436723

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11; curriculum in the sixth form; personal development and well-being; leadership and management. Evidence was gained from lesson observations, from discussions with leaders and students and from evaluation of a range of documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Trinity School is a voluntary-aided Church of England secondary school serving an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage and operating within a selective system where a quarter of the students attend selective grammar schools. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above average. The largest ethnic group, apart from White British, is Black/Black African. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average (about one quarter). The school has recently gained specialist college status in humanities and visual arts. It has several national awards, including Sports Mark, Arts Mark Gold and the International Schools award. The school is over-subscribed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school with some outstanding features. In the words of one parent, the school has created an 'excellent nurturing environment leading to a sense of community'. Another commented that 'my son's learning and confidence has gone from strength to strength'. Students are lively, inquisitive and courteous, as reflected in their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors saw evidence for this in the requests for prayers for loved ones left by students in the chapel and in the impressive artwork displayed around the school. They behave well, attend regularly and show respect for their teachers and for each other. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and clearly benefit from discussing a wide variety of issues in their citizenship lessons. As one member of staff said, 'students don't just attend this school, they belong to it'. Students feel safe and well cared for because of the highly regarded pastoral care and support provided for them. They are confident that teachers and other staff will help them to sort out their problems quickly and effectively. They show a good understanding of how to stay healthy and are particularly proud of the school's very good sporting facilities. They are well prepared for life outside school.

Students achieve well overall. The school has implemented an effective range of strategies to improve learning and, as a result, standards have risen significantly in recent years. Students start school in Year 7 with standards that are much lower than the national average. Many arrive with particularly weak writing skills. By the end of Year 9, standards in national tests remain below average but show a steadily improving trend. The school's GCSE results have improved significantly over the past five years and are now broadly in line with national figures for 5 or more A*-C passes. Results in the arts subjects are particularly good. The proportion of students gaining at least 5 A*-G grades is above the national average and no student leaves the school without at least one qualification. Teachers provide good support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities and they achieve well. Students with English as an additional language, as well as those who are vulnerable, make good progress with their learning. Senior leaders have rightly identified that the provision for higher attaining students is less consistent. The school has begun to take effective action to tackle this but those leading the process recognise that their actions have not yet borne sufficient fruit in all areas of the curriculum. However, those students identified as gifted and talented clearly enjoy the challenge of good extra-curricular enrichment programmes. The school is on track to meet this year's challenging targets for Year 9 students in the national tests and for Year 11 in the GCSE examinations.

Teaching and learning are at the heart of the school. Consistently good teaching enables students to achieve well during their time in the school. Typically, teachers ask challenging questions, students are keen to learn, and relationships in classrooms are good. Students appreciate teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects and their willingness to provide extra support outside lessons. The school makes good use of support teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors to ensure that the most vulnerable students are supported well. There is some variability in the quality of teachers' marking. The best comments show students what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. This does not yet happen consistently throughout the school, however.

The school is welcoming, orderly and calm. Classrooms are bright and attractive and the learning accommodation and social areas provide students with excellent facilities, including a sports hall and a 'mini dome'. They are proud of their school's specialist status and were keen to talk about the recent launch day. This is beginning to have a positive impact on their personal

development as well as on curriculum enrichment and community provision. Impressive cross-curricular projects, such as 'Mask of Me', for example, involved all Year 7 students working together on a joint project in art, citizenship and English. There are excellent links with schools in several countries, including France, Italy, Germany and Finland. All students study at least one modern foreign language and Spanish has just been introduced into Years 8 and 9 and as an option in Key Stage 4. Links with local primary schools are very good and are developing even further because of the school's specialist status. During the inspection, for example, a group of South African musicians worked with students from Trinity as well as younger pupils from neighbouring schools as part of an on-going project with the school's Excellence Cluster partners.

The school's inclusive ethos, the opportunities and achievements enjoyed by its students and its energetic 'can do' atmosphere are in large measure due to the dynamic and persuasive leadership of the headteacher and his senior team. Between them, they have generated a momentum for continuous improvement, although there has not yet been time to see the full impact of all the recent initiatives. The drive for improvement is supported by all middle managers but they currently do not all play a sufficiently rigorous part in monitoring and evaluating work in their areas of responsibility. Governors know the school well and provide an effective balance of support and challenge to the headteacher and senior managers. Management of the school's work as a specialist college is of high quality and fosters the school's vision of 'achievement through expression' very effectively. The school works extremely well with a wide range of partners, including local businesses and the public library. Relationships with parents are very positive and good account is taken of their views. Issues relating to the last inspection have been tackled very successfully. The school is in a very good position to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Provision in the sixth form is good. Numbers have increased significantly since the last inspection and recruitment is good, including a growing proportion of higher achievers. For example, the school is beginning to recruit students from other schools as well as increasing the retention rates from its own Year 11. Levels of attainment are rising; standards are broadly average and progress is good. Sixth form students of all abilities achieve well in relation to what is expected of them, based on their GCSE performance. The increasingly wide variety of courses on offer, both academic and vocational, cater successfully for all abilities and aspirations. Students have very good support and guidance for the transition from Year 11 to 12. They play an active part in the life of the school and the local community. They feel valued and know that their opinions are taken seriously. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good, ensuring that resources are used very well to meet learners' needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on current strategies to help higher attaining students achieve the highest grades in tests and examinations.
- Embed monitoring and evaluation procedures more consistently across middle management in order to bring all middle managers to the level of the best leaders.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
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	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The attendance of learners	3	3
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	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 to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Trinity School, Belvedere, Belvedere, DA17 6HT

On behalf of your inspection team I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you extended to us during the recent inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed our discussions with you. We thought you would like a summary of the inspection findings, but also hope that you and your parents will take the opportunity to read the whole report. Given the positive views that so many of you gave us, you will not be surprised to learn that we judge Trinity to be a good school with some outstanding features. You help to make it such a good place to be. This is because you work hard, behave well and enjoy learning. We were impressed by the contribution that specialist status is beginning to make to your education in general. Overall, we think that standards are improving and you make good progress with your work. This is because teaching is good and you are good learners. However, it is not just your academic achievements that impressed us. It is also because you have good attitudes to everything the school offers and play a significant part in the wider life of the school and community. We agree with you that the school is a safe environment to work in. Your representatives on the School Council contribute well to issues that affect you. Your commitment to the wider community is reflected in your contributions to a range of charities. Your headteacher and other staff lead the school well and are doing a good job at improving it.

Although your school is good, it could become even better and we have identified two areas for improvement. We agree with your school that some of the students who find learning easy are not always given work that is challenging enough. Teachers who have responsibility for subjects have begun to evaluate work in these subjects to make sure that standards continue to rise and that everyone is achieving as well as they can. We have asked them to carry on doing this. We are sure that you will do your best to help them.

We wish you well and look forward to hearing good things about you all in the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Lynn Bappa

(Lead inspector)