

Chilton Trinity Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123881
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314753
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Gale HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	993
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Ballard
Headteacher	Patricia Hollinghurst
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	Chilton Street Bridgwater TA6 3JA
Telephone number	01278 455631
Fax number	01278 444361

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This average-sized secondary school became a specialist school for technology in 2002 and received re-designation in 2007. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The majority of students are White British. Although the percentage of students with a statement of special educational need is low, the percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

The school has received accreditation for the Healthy Schools award, the Gold Respect award and Investor in People status. It also recently received the Sportsmark award. It runs a SHARE programme to help parenting skills in its local community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with several good features. It rightly prides itself on the quality of the support it provides its students. A parent commented that, 'Chilton Trinity Technology College has a well deserved reputation for being a caring establishment. It seeks to bring out the best in every child.' The school has overcome a number of staffing difficulties that have hampered its effectiveness in recent years and has begun to develop the capacity to make further improvements. Standards are below average at both key stages. Standards have improved at Key Stage 4 but the school's data show that they have dropped in Key Stage 3, particularly in English. There has been an appropriate focus on improving students' moral and social skills and on building mutual respect through initiatives like the nationally recognised restorative justice programme. As a result, students' personal development is good and the school has engendered a positive approach to schooling amongst students. Whilst a small amount of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed concerns about behaviour, the inspection team judged it to be good in lessons and around the school.

There is recognition from the school leadership that the next step on their 'learning journey' is a renewed focus on accelerating progress and in making learning more relevant and personal to students. To begin this journey, the school has identified literacy as the key to students' progress and is targeting students for intervention. This intervention, together with improvements in the curriculum, regular monitoring of teaching and learning and improving tracking systems, is starting to have an impact on standards. Achievement is now satisfactory throughout the school because teaching and learning are satisfactory and so students currently make the progress expected of them. Although there is good teaching that challenges and engages students, there are inconsistencies between subjects. Not all lessons are planned well enough to meet the full range of students' needs and this prevents progress from being consistently good. The curriculum is good and allows students to follow an appropriate course of study through their time at the school. Extra-curricular provision is outstanding and both excites the able and supports the more vulnerable through the work of dedicated staff.

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some good features. The headteacher is passionate about making the school better and she has helped school leaders at all levels to have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The leadership team and other leaders in the school have a clear sense of priorities to improve the school. This is enabling the school to implement targeted strategies to realise these priorities. Some, such as improving behaviour, are already successful. Those designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been overly focused on the teaching and have yet to fully consider how well students are learning. Monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet resulted in consistent practice between departments. Since the previous inspection, the school has successfully improved aspirations and behaviour, and tackled issues around progress in religious education. It has begun to address performance in English examinations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards in English at both key stages.
- Ensure planning for teaching and learning fully meets the needs of students of different abilities.

- Ensure that strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning are developed around a shared understanding of effective learning and are carefully monitored to ensure consistent impact on achievement.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards at Key Stage 3 as shown by national test results in 2006 were below average. Standards are inconsistent year on year, with no discernable pattern in mathematics and science. For example, the proportion of students gaining Level 5 or higher increased from 2005 to 2006 but fell in 2007. English standards have been declining over the last three years and the school's data from 2007 show that progress was unsatisfactory and standards in English were well below average. The school has correctly identified literacy as a barrier to learning and put in place a programme, under a new coordinator, that has made a significant impact. Achievement is now satisfactory as a result of this initiative and the effective tracking of the neediest for intervention.

The GCSE examination results have improved. In particular, the proportion of students gaining five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics increased from 29% in 2006 to 35% in 2007. In addition, several subjects improved their performance in 2007 and students gained more accreditation as a result. Achievement at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory but inconsistent. In science and design and technology where the school enters most students for GCSE examinations, standards are improving and exceeded the challenging targets set by the school in 2007. However, there is too much variation between subjects and students in English literature, drama and history performed below the expected levels. Again, the school has been proactive in new appointments and other initiatives to address underachievement. Currently, not enough students meet challenging targets for achievement overall to be good. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

An atmosphere of social harmony is tangible in the school. Students are proud of their school and show enjoyment in their education. Through their experiences of restorative justice, the school council, citizenship and religious education, students have developed a good understanding of moral and social issues. The good opportunities to contribute to the school community, including serving on the school council and acting as mentors to other students, are valued. Leadership roles are developing through these opportunities and, as prefects, older students have a valuable input into the day-to-day running of the school and contribute strongly to programmes to combat bullying. Students' contributions to the wider community are more limited. Students have a responsible attitude and show respect for each other. Most students know how to stay healthy and demonstrate this strongly in their participation in sporting activities and partaking in the very good food that is a feature of the catering. Attendance, although below the national average, has improved since September as a result of the systems that the school has put in place for more effective tracking, rewards and follow-up. Good behaviour is supported by the system of rewards and sanctions and most students respond well, although a small minority disrupts lessons. Fewer students are now excluded because the

school has worked hard to embed the principles of restorative justice. The school's drive on literacy, together with an awareness of punctuality, prepares students satisfactorily for life after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good features in some subject areas. Teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and effective management of behaviour. This leads to students being confident in asking their teachers for help in a respectful atmosphere. Professional development for teachers is gradually improving the amount of good teaching. However, teachers do not consistently apply initiatives and so the quality of teaching and learning varies too much between subjects. Consequently, students make satisfactory rather than good progress overall. In some lessons, students achieve well because they are clear about what they are learning; activities are well structured and ongoing assessment allows teachers to refocus learning to the needs of individuals. This was seen to particular effect in the teaching of science, language and physical education. However, in some other lessons, students are not as clear about what they are learning and are over reliant on teacher input to facilitate their learning. This means they are too passive to make good progress. In these teacher-led lessons, students are often working on the same tasks, without sufficient regard as to whether the work is too easy or too difficult for different groups and individuals.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Modifications and extensions to the curriculum in recent years ensure it meets the needs of the majority of students successfully. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum fulfils all statutory requirements and is broad and balanced. 'Super learning days' at the start of Year 7 have proved popular with students and a 'learn to learn' programme has been successful in introducing new students to more effective learning strategies. There is a healthy gifted and talented uptake in Year 9 and in master classes. Communication skills and peer reader schemes are helping to extend and develop these students. In Years 10 to 11, the use of four pathways to encourage the pupils to choose an appropriate mix of subjects is innovative and Year 10 students commented very favourably upon these in effectively guiding their choices. The school works well in partnership with others and this broadens the curriculum at Key Stage 4. Study support is providing help for those falling behind in their studies and the school was recently accredited for its work in this area.

Specialist status is well managed and is having a positive impact on the subjects involved and on the wider curriculum, particularly in the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning. The provision of enrichment activities is a particular strength, with a wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good. Parents rightly believe that induction procedures are excellent and that their sons and daughters feel safe, secure and confident from the day they arrive at Chilton Trinity. Procedures to ensure health and safety

are in place and reviewed regularly. Child protection procedures are rigorous and record keeping efficient. Liaison with outside agencies is good. Students feel confident that they can turn to adults for help with both their personal and academic difficulties.

Inclusion and the raising of aspirations lie at the very heart of the school's work. Personal development is monitored particularly well through an effective pastoral support system, involving senior staff, form tutors and outside mentors. The school is very watchful of the care and progress of vulnerable students. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, students in the care of the local authority and those with English as an additional language receive good support from teachers, teaching assistants and mentors. This is beginning to raise the standards reached by these students.

Academic guidance and support are linked to rigorous and consistent assessment. Recently introduced comprehensive tracking procedures are in place to guide students with their academic work. This is increasingly ensuring that students are reaching their academic potential.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders at all levels are setting a clear direction, and the vision of the headteacher through her leadership team is well shared. The senior leadership team is holding the staff to account through the self-evaluation process. This process is used effectively to ensure middle managers take responsibility for their subject or year group. The self-evaluation process has been well designed, is clear and requires managers to build on a wide range of evidence including a comprehensive set of assessment information. This leads to department heads successfully analysing strengths and areas for development in terms of achievement and standards, personal development and curriculum. Self-evaluation is less effective in the identification of areas for development in teaching and learning, as analysis focuses too much on teaching to the detriment of learning. The school has put in place a learning plan but has not yet developed a shared understanding of what outstanding, good and satisfactory learning looks like. Systems for tracking students' progress are good and allow the school to monitor progress effectively. Students are becoming increasingly involved in the process.

There is now capacity in the senior leadership team to concentrate on the key issues that will take the school forward. A focus on raising standards and achievement is evident and the school has well considered strategies to bring this improvement about. There has not been sufficient time to embed all these strategies and consequently, whilst challenging targets are set, these have not yet resulted in a trend of improvement or consistently raised standards.

The school has developed good partnerships with local schools, with the local authority and with external agencies and is well supported and appropriately challenged by a suitably informed and committed governing body.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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?	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

3 December 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Chilton Trinity Technology College, Bridgwater, TA6 3JA

My colleagues and I recently inspected your school. I am writing to inform you of our findings. Chilton Trinity is a satisfactory school with several good features. Although results in tests and examinations are below the national average, you make satisfactory progress. However, results in English are not as good as they should be.

You behave well and strongly believe in the school's ideas about restorative justice. You tell us that the school is a safe and enjoyable place. You get on well with your teachers who know their subjects well. However, not all teaching provides you with the right tasks and activities to help you make good progress. This means not everyone reaches their targets. The school tracks your progress well and is starting to put in place extra lessons to help with your learning when you are struggling.

The headteacher and senior staff are improving the school. I have asked them to build on the progress made so far by making sure these important further improvements take place.

- The school should make sure test and examination results in English improve. You can help by making sure you work as hard in this subject as you do in others.
- In all lessons, your teachers should plan activities that help you make good progress towards your own target grades. You can help by not settling for anything less than your best work and effort in each lesson.
- The school should make sure that plans to improve your learning are applied consistently in all subjects and then monitored to ensure they help you make good progress.

There is a lot to be proud of in your school. I hope you will continue to work with your teachers to bring about further improvements for Chilton Trinity.

Yours faithfully

Peter Gale Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex B

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