

Trinity High School and Sixth Form Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132819
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	316026
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Graham Sims

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	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	725
6th form	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Witherspoon
Headteacher	Marian Barton
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	Easemore Road Redditch B98 8HB
Telephone number	01527 585859
Fax number	01527 65587

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Trinity High School is a specialist college for business and enterprise. It is of average size. Students enter the school in Year 9, and about a third stay on into the sixth form. The proportion of students who receive free school meals is above average. Around a quarter of the students come from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being Pakistani, and an above-average proportion speaks English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Trinity High School and Sixth Form provides a satisfactory quality of education. Similar judgements apply to the quality of teaching and learning, to the range of curricular opportunities, to care, guidance and support and to leadership and management. The school has many strengths and some weaknesses.

The school has recovered from the difficulties it experienced during the previous academic year, when standards fell and, according to the staff, the behaviour of some students was a cause of particular concern. A determined effort to address students' behaviour has had some success and is now satisfactory. There is now a relatively calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school and in most lessons. There are still, however, pockets of unsatisfactory behaviour, especially where the teaching is weak or staff do not consistently follow the school's new procedures. Standards are already better than those achieved last year, although students' progress varies from lesson to lesson according to the quality of the teaching.

Overall, students' academic achievement is satisfactory. They enter the school with below average standards, and standards are still below average at the end of Years 9, 11 and 13, where they have been for the last three years. Within this picture, however, there is wide variation. Some students reach the highest levels, but the proportion achieving five GCSE passes at grades A* to C and those gaining a pass at grade C or better in English and mathematics is below the national average.

Whilst the school has acknowledged for some time that standards in English, mathematics and science need to improve, changes have been slow in coming. New leadership in English and science and other changes in staffing are beginning to have a positive impact on students' achievement, but there is still great variability in the quality of both teaching and learning in a number of subjects. There is some outstanding teaching and much that is good, but there is also some inadequate teaching and too much that is only satisfactory. This variation is also reflected in students' attitudes to school and to learning. Some students display a less than enthusiastic approach. In lessons, they lack motivation and display immature attitudes to learning. However, other students cannot speak too highly of the school and the opportunities it offers them. They feel the teachers are supportive and helpful, enjoy the range of activities available and make the most of what is on offer. In lessons, they are keen and eager to learn, participate well and make good progress. The views of the small proportion of parents who returned the inspection questionnaire are also largely positive.

This contrasting picture of the school is reflected in the school's leadership and management. Good new initiatives have broadened the range of courses and options available to students from Year 10 onwards, and some of the more vocationally based courses have motivated some disaffected students to succeed. But the range of options available is still not ideally suited to some students. The school's specialist status has had a positive impact in developing business and enterprise activities which help to equip students for the future and in improving the school's resources and use of information and communication technology (ICT). However, the lynchpin of mathematics has yet to see a corresponding improvement. Leaders ensure that good care and support are given to students with personal or learning difficulties and those for whom English is a new language. However, not enough is done to ensure that all students receive the guidance they need when their work is marked. Leaders have a clear picture of

where the quality of teaching is good, but need to tackle areas of weakness more effectively and ensure that stated policies and procedures are implemented consistently.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

As with the main school, the overall effectiveness of the sixth form, students' achievement, the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's leaders have created a harmonious sixth form to which many students aspire, but have not yet ensured a consistency of practice which ensures that all students achieve at the highest level. A-level results are below the national average, but students achieve well and reach above average standards on vocational courses, reflecting the positive impact of the school's specialist college status. At its best, the teaching is well paced, challenging and interesting, and the assessment of students' work is detailed and helpful. However, teachers do not always recognise the full range of ability within the class, which results in a lack of challenge for some students. Not enough is done to develop students' ability to use their initiative and to learn independently.

Students' personal development and well-being, the quality of the curriculum and the standard of care, guidance and support are good. Students enjoy the sixth form and a large proportion proceeds to higher education. They are good ambassadors for the school and involve themselves in a wide range of fund-raising activities for charity. Around half of the students are involved in helping students in Years 9 to 11 to develop literacy and numeracy skills. However, opportunities for students to undertake other responsibilities are limited. The curriculum is responsive to local conditions and meets the needs of the students well. Regular discussions with mentors provide students with good guidance on their progress and on how to improve, and there is good support for entry into higher education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of the teaching, focusing particularly on: raising teachers' expectations, improving the level of challenge, matching work more closely to students' needs, motivating students to want to learn, and providing more opportunities for students to become more independent learners.
- Provide more effective academic guidance when marking students' work, indicating what students have done well and what they need to improve, and ensuring that students respond to these comments.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring more rigorous self-evaluation, more effective action as a result of analysis and more consistent implementation of the school's policies and procedures.

A small proportion of the 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

Grade for sixth form: 3

There has been some variation in the school's results at the end of Key Stage 3 over the last few years, but the overall picture is of satisfactory achievement, but below- average standards in English, mathematics and science.

The GCSE results in 2007 were the lowest for a number of years, but the school's own assessment information shows that standards have improved this term. Nevertheless, the proportion of students who are on track to gain five GCSE passes at grades A* to C and the proportion set to gain good passes in English and mathematics are below average. Given their below average starting points, students' achievement is satisfactory. The progress of Pakistani students, the school's largest minority ethnic group, was particularly good in the year ending 2006, but matched that of other students in 2007.

In the sixth form, students' achievement is satisfactory. The proportion of A-level passes is similar to the national average, but the grades achieved are below average. Students opting for vocational courses do well, and reach standards which are above the national average. Performance in business studies, a core element of the school's specialism, has been particularly strong.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. This term has seen a significant improvement in students' behaviour, which is often good, and the number of exclusions has reduced significantly. There is still some unacceptable behaviour, which generally occurs in lessons which fail to motivate the students and where the school's new behaviour policy is not implemented consistently. Students say that bullying is rare and that students from different ethnic backgrounds generally get on well with each other. As a result, students feel safe in school and know whom to talk to for further help. Students, particularly those in the sixth form, are active in raising money for a wide range of charitable causes. Some students take on responsibilities within the school, but the range of these and of opportunities to contribute to the wider community are somewhat limited.

Many students say they enjoy attending school and speak highly of the teaching and opportunities provided for them. However, this expression of enthusiasm is not evident in some students who show little desire to participate actively in lessons or to support the school in other ways. The provision of an alternative curriculum for some of the school's more disaffected students has successfully re-engaged them. Attendance has been significantly below the national average for a number of years, but recent action has been effective and attendance figures for the first few weeks of the current school year have shown significant improvement.

Many students keep fit by participating actively in the wide range of sporting activities available to them. Although the school has taken steps to help students make healthier choices with regard to food and drink and to educate them in matters of health and safety, not all choose to follow the school's advice. Response in the sixth form is somewhat better, where students' greater maturity and sense of responsibility indicate a good level of personal development.

Students are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education and the world of work. The school's specialism makes a good contribution here through its range of business and enterprise activities, but more could be done to help students develop independence and a real sense of responsibility for their own learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

There is some outstanding and much good teaching in both the main school and the sixth form which stimulates students' interest, provides challenging activities and enables students to make good progress. One student, for example, said that he found one of his teachers 'really inspiring' and that the teacher had made him really interested in her subject.

However, too many lessons lack sufficient challenge and pace, and students' progress is inhibited because the teacher spends too much time talking and does not provide enough opportunity for students to work with groups, a partner or independently. On some occasions where the teaching is good, progress is only satisfactory because students' learning skills are underdeveloped and they struggle to sustain concentration or to express their ideas.

When they receive additional support, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, particularly those with hearing impairments, as was seen in a design and technology lesson in Year 9 where the assistant provided sign language and gave clear voice and visual prompts. Too often, however, all students in a class are given the same work to complete, regardless of their ability or prior learning. One more able student commented that he was frustrated, and held back as a consequence of this lack of challenge.

A benefit of the school's specialist status is the increasing availability of ICT. In an art lesson, for example, a camera and the interactive whiteboard were used very effectively to film and display the teacher's modelling of freehand drawing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school has developed good links with a range of partners and has adapted its curriculum well to meet the needs of specific groups of students. For example, it works with a local stately home to provide an alternative curriculum with a strong work-related dimension in horticulture for a small group of students. The timetable has been adapted to work with a consortium of schools to enable students in Years 10 and 11 to attend courses for which the school does not have the facilities, such as car mechanics and hair and beauty. The school recognises that it still has groups of students for whom the more traditional curriculum is not ideally suited and is seeking ways to bring about further adaptation and innovation.

A wide variety of visits and residential trips abroad provide good curricular enhancement, as do days dedicated to areas of business, such as a recent day for Year 9 focused on financial management. Students particularly enjoy the many additional sporting activities on offer as well as opportunities for drama and music. Although the school offers various revision courses, the opportunities for students to participate in or take responsibility for activities related to other areas of the curriculum are limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school cares for and supports its students well. Good links with the feeder middle schools ensure an efficient transition to the school. The learning support department is effective in ensuring that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully assessed, monitored and tracked to ensure that they achieve at least as well as their peers. There are good links with external agencies to support the school's work with various individuals and groups of students. Appropriate support is given to students who are new to learning English. The school has good systems for carrying out risk assessments, safeguarding and protecting students and for health and safety. Good attention has also been given to developing students' awareness of what they need to do to lead healthy lifestyles.

Students are pleased with the guidance they receive regarding future courses of study, work experience, future employment opportunities and higher education choices. The school has a sound system for keeping track of students' progress through termly assessments in each subject and, in the sixth form, through regular meetings with an academic mentor. Students are fully aware of their academic targets. However, the day to day guidance students receive through the marking of their work varies widely in quality. Good practice is emerging in a number of subjects. In English and geography, for example, students are given detailed feedback and are expected to respond to the teachers' comments. In many subjects, however, the marking of students' work is cursory. Few comments are made and little indication is given as to how students might improve their work. Not enough time is spent going over previous work and improving it in the light of teachers' comments.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Good leadership and management are shown in a number of areas. Initiatives to improve the curriculum and make it more relevant to students' needs have been successful. The school's specialist status is having a positive impact through the improvement of ICT resources, the introduction of business and enterprise activities and links forged with other partners. The positive ethos which has been established in the sixth form encourages a good proportion of students to continue their studies at the school. Behavioural issues which arose in the previous school year and poor attendance have been tackled successfully.

However, other aspects of leadership and management are less successful. The observation of teaching and scrutiny of students' work provide the senior management team and heads of faculty with a sound understanding of strengths and areas for development. However, not enough is done to remedy identified weaknesses or to ensure that all staff are consistent in their implementation of the school's procedures. This, in turn, leads to the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning and the variable quality of teachers' marking. The school sets itself realistic targets and has developed sound systems for keeping track of students' progress, but not enough is done to ensure corrective and supportive action where the teaching is not enabling students to meet their targets.

Governors provide a satisfactory level of support and ask challenging questions, but their monitoring procedures have yet to ensure consistency of practice throughout the school. The improvements which have been made and the positive comments of many students and parents show that the school's leaders have a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. However, greater rigour is needed to ensure that the weaker elements in teaching and academic guidance are improved to match up to the outstanding and good practice, of which the school has a good share.

Annex A

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?	3	3
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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
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	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	2
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Trinity High School, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 8HB

My colleagues and I enjoyed our visit to your school, and we would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to us. Of those of you we spoke to, many made favourable comments about the school and we could identify the positive features of which you spoke so highly. Through our observations, however, it was clear that not all students regard the school and the opportunities it provides in such a positive light. We have concluded, therefore, that the school is offering a satisfactory quality of education, but that it has some significant strengths and a number of areas for improvement. Below are our main findings.

- Most of you are making satisfactory progress in your academic work, although standards at the end of Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13 remain below those in most schools. Standards achieved in vocational studies are above average.
- Many of you are well behaved, have positive attitudes to your education and are keen to make progress. Some of you, however, show little interest in your work and your behaviour in a few lessons leaves much to be desired.
- The level of attendance has improved significantly this year.
- Some of the teaching is outstanding and much is good. However, too many lessons provide little challenge and do not do enough to motivate you to learn.
- Business and enterprise activities, vocational courses and alternative pathways are good aspects of the curriculum, but more could be done to adapt the curriculum for those who are not motivated by more traditional courses.
- Staff provide a good standard of care and support, but do not always provide enough guidance when marking your work.
- The school's leaders have introduced some good initiatives and dealt well with problems which surfaced last year. More could be done to improve the quality of some teaching and ensure that all staff are consistent in their implementation of school procedures.

Our findings for the sixth form are similar to those of the main school, except that we judged the personal development of sixth form students, the range of curricular opportunities and the quality of care, guidance and support to be good, rather than satisfactory.

In order to help the school to improve, we have asked the school's leaders to:

- ensure that all of the teaching is of a consistently high quality and that it motivates you to learn
- provide you with clearer guidance when marking your work to show you what you have done well and what you need to improve
- ensure that weaknesses in the school's provision are tackled more rigorously and that the school's procedures and policies are followed consistently by all.

We know that many of you realise how important your education is for your future and trust that those of you who are not yet motivated at school will respond by developing a greater desire to learn, cooperating with your teachers and trying your hardest. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Graham Sims Lead inspector

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Lead inspector