

# Trinity School

## Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	887/6006
Unique Reference Number	132097
Inspection number	316970
Inspection dates	20-21 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland AI

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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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 08456 404040

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## 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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Trinity school is an independent, co-educational day school for children with specific learning difficulties between the ages of 6 and 16 years of age. More particularly, it provides places for pupils with dyslexia, dyspraxia and related speech, language and communication difficulties, including those with Asperger's Syndrome. It also seeks to meet the needs of more sensitive children who will benefit from learning in very small classes with a high level of adult support. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is often low as a result of their learning difficulties. There are currently 43 children on roll, almost two thirds of whom have a statement of special educational need. The school opened in September 1998 and occupies a Georgian town house close to the centre of Rochester in north Kent. It was registered in 2000 and received approved special school status in January 2005. It was registered as a member of the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils (CReSTeD) in October 2005. This is the school's first published inspection report.

The school aims to provide high quality specialist provision in a calm, caring and supportive environment with a programme of learning which will promote the development of its pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy, address their emotional and social needs and build their self-confidence. The school believes that '*within each pupil is the potential to learn, to gain essential skills and knowledge and find relevance in their education.*' Their motto is '*Confidence to learn - for life.*'

## Evaluation of the school

Trinity school provides a good quality of education in a safe and well-ordered context in which pupils are able to learn, gently mature and come to a growing belief in their own capacity to achieve. The pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to learning and personal development are good as is the overall quality of welfare, health and safety. The pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching, highly effective support, constant encouragement and a broad curriculum. Underpinning these good features are the strong leadership and firm resolution of the headteacher to provide the best possible education for her pupils. The school meets almost all of the regulations.

## Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. There is an effective curriculum policy that places due emphasis on planning learning experiences which relate to pupils' levels of ability, their learning difficulties and social and emotional needs. It sets out clearly the school's distinctive approach to meeting the pupils' needs and its aims are successfully translated into action. Planning is flexible and is adapted to match individual learning needs. The school is successful in its overall aim to provide an education for the whole child. Sufficient time is allocated to different subjects and the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with most work based on the programmes of study and guidance in the National Curriculum. Planning also draws, where appropriate, on the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network's (ASDAN) life skills programme. The provision for the core areas of literacy and numeracy is very well developed. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning in different subjects. The school is satisfactorily resourced with a designated ICT room and library. Personal, social and health education permeates the school's work. Pupils are provided with opportunities for physical exercise, improving their fitness and physical skills at a local hall and leisure centre.

The school successfully employs approaches which use as many of the senses as possible so that learning is effectively reinforced through the use of hand, eyes and ears. Where possible, practical approaches are adopted using art and craft. Individual tuition is provided when required. Learning takes place in small groups, with less than ten pupils in each class. Thorough initial assessments take place when pupils join the school and there are good links with local authorities. For older pupils careers guidance is provided through the local Connexions service and good links have been established with local business partnerships and colleges of further education. Opportunities for work experience are provided which contribute well to the pupils' preparation for the future. Secondary age pupils are able to follow courses in basic skills in literacy and numeracy and key skills in communication and the application of number leading to recognised awards from nationally accepted examining boards.

The quality of teaching and learning is generally good which means that the pupils make good progress. Some satisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. A strength of the teaching lies in the warm family atmosphere created by the teachers who know their pupils very well. The small classes, some with additional support from teaching assistants, allow the adults to provide the individual attention and encouragement that many of the pupils need to enable them to do well. The teachers are very successful in fostering an enjoyment of school and positive attitudes towards learning. They work very well with all the pupils in developing speaking and listening skills. There are high expectations of behaviour which are usually successful in enabling the pupils to achieve.

In the best lessons the teachers establish strong relationships with the pupils and demonstrate considerable skill and sensitivity in tailoring their language, the level of challenge in their questions and approaches to match the learning needs of different children. For example, in a craft lesson, one pupil continually sought support from the teacher to complete tasks, some of which he was capable of undertaking unaided. In response to one request, the teacher expertly demonstrated the stages involved in tying a knot, gave the pupil the necessary resources and encouraged him to complete the process by himself without further support. In doing so he was enabled to take one further positive step towards a firmer belief in his own ability to succeed without constantly seeking help and reassurance. The strongest lessons move at a measured pace which is well adjusted to suit the pupils' needs and to ensure they do not become unduly anxious. Praise is used well to celebrate success and it is clear to the pupils what they have done well.

In the satisfactory lessons the intended learning goals are not always sufficiently clear in the teacher's planning and are not consistently shared with the pupils so they know what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. There is also sometimes a tendency for the teachers to provide more guidance and support than is necessary in resolving a pupil's difficulties in learning. This slows the growth of the pupil's confidence in their own ability to overcome problems for themselves. In these lessons, when a pupil receives praise it is not always made sufficiently clear exactly what knowledge or skill the pupil has demonstrated to merit the acclaim.

A tailored system of rewards and sanctions has been carefully constructed to meet the particular needs of each pupil. Systems for tracking and assessing the pupils' gains in learning are good. The teachers maintain good records of the pupils' achievements. Most pupils make good progress because they receive good teaching, effective support, and continuing praise and encouragement.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has created a warm ethos and a strong sense of community which makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. A strongly and consistently nurturing environment is deliberately created. The pupils attend regularly and approach lessons with interest and a desire to succeed. Their behaviour is good. They readily co-operate with their teachers in lessons and around the school.

A major thrust of the schools' work is to help the pupils to come to believe in their own ability and capacity to succeed. The pupils respond positively to praise and rewards, which raise their self-esteem and sense of pride in their work. Every opportunity is taken by staff to offer praise for effort and perseverance. Close working relationships allow the staff to continually reinforce messages about the difference between right and wrong to help the pupils to conform to the school rules. There are high expectations of appropriate behaviour and the pupils know they are

expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The school maintains a calm and orderly community in which pupils develop an awareness of the effect of their actions on others. Pupils are happy at the school and one child stated that *'I don't feel odd in this school'*, whereas this had not been the case in his previous school.

The pupils contribute to the wider community through, for example, raising money for charities on Red Nose Day. They gain an understanding of public institutions and services, for example by visits to local libraries, museums, activity centres and from visits from local councillors, the police and fire service. Pupils' cultural development is fostered well through the provision of opportunities to listen to music and use musical instruments. They develop an awareness of diverse cultures through the celebration of festivals and visits from members of minority ethnic communities.

The relentless focus on basic and key skills, on overcoming barriers to learning and the enduring emphasis on gaining self-confidence, prepare the pupils well for the next stage in their education and strongly promotes their economic well-being. Through the personal, social and health education and citizenship programme the pupils are encouraged to live a healthy and safe lifestyle and to respect the differences between people.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school provides a safe, healthy and strongly nurturing environment for its pupils. Their welfare and general well-being is given a very high priority. Almost all requirements are met. Staff convey a genuine care for the pupils. A consistently supportive and gentle approach ensures that they feel safe and secure. The pupils report that there is no bullying in the school. Strong bonds of trust exist between the pupils and the staff which means that the pupils feel that they have someone to turn to for help. The small scale of the school, its domestic setting and the high staff-pupil ratio ensure that the pupils are well supervised at all times.

There is a series of detailed policy documents which meet requirements. There is appropriate provision for First Aid, with staff qualified to administer it. First Aid boxes are appropriately stocked. Accidents are carefully recorded. There is an appropriate behaviour policy with a suitable system of sanctions to deal with incidents of inappropriate behaviour. The school maintains records of more serious incidents which have led to carefully considered sanctions.

The child protection policy meets requirements. The school has made the necessary provision for fire safety. The fire drill book is up-to-date. Risk assessment forms are completed appropriately. The admission register is kept in accordance with the regulations but attendance registers are not maintained fully in line with requirements. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 with plans to improve access and provision for those with disabilities.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has carried out the necessary checks to confirm the suitability of the staff to work with children and completed the required central register of staff checks.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school is located in a large five story Georgian town house, four floors of which are used for teaching purposes. The school office and a staff room are on the ground floor. The exterior and interior of the building have been very well maintained. The interior of the house is well decorated and rooms are well furnished, with carpeting in most rooms. Classrooms, although small, are an adequate size for the number of pupils. They are bright, pleasant and maintained in a clean and orderly state. There is both good natural and artificial lighting. There are specialist rooms for art and ICT along with a library which doubles as a music room. There is a small walled and hard-surfaced play area at the back of the house which is used at break times and for some lessons in physical education. The school makes provision for pupils who are unwell but does not fully meet the requirements of the regulations having no washbasin in the room used.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Much useful information, which includes an expression of the school's aims and ethos, is contained in a prospectus for parents and for other agencies who may wish to refer a young person to the school. A range of further documentation provides all the necessary information to meet the regulations. Annual reviews are timely and comprehensive. Annual reports to parents provide a wide range of information on work completed and pupils' achievements. Parents, other carers and those with particular responsibilities within local authorities, report that they are happy with the quality of the information they receive and with the progress the young people make.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a detailed written complaints policy which sets out the procedures it will follow in the management of any complaint. It contains information about all of the specific elements required by the regulations. Information provided with the school's prospectus draws attention to its availability.

## 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:

- ensure the attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

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

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).



## School details

Name of school	Trinity School		
DCSF number	887/6006		
Unique reference number	132097		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1998		
Age range of pupils	6-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 30	Girls: 13	Total: 43
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 18	Girls: 8	Total: 26
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,640-£10,430		
Address of school	13 New Road Rochester Kent ME1 1BG		
Telephone number	01634 812233		
Fax number	01634 812233		
Email address	trinityrochester@btconnect.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Claire Dunn		
Proprietor	Claire and Richard Dunn		
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland AI		
Dates of inspection	20-21 November 2007		