

# Tring School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117553
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326646
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Kempton HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1494
Sixth form	297
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Brian Scarth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julia Wynd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 January 2006
<b>School address</b>	Mortimer Hill Tring Hertfordshire HP23 5JD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 822303
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 890409

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	326646

---

© Crown copyright 2009

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

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

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

Inspectors investigated the school's overall effectiveness and the following issues:

- achievement and standards across the school
- leadership and management and the quality of improvement planning
- the quality of teaching and learning, and
- how student progress is tracked

Evidence was gathered from the national published assessment data for the school, the school's own records and other documentation, and observation of the school at work. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire, and interviews with senior and other staff, students and parents also informed inspectors' judgements. Other aspects of the school's work such as the personal development and well being of students, were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments of these areas, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Tring School is a popular local school that serves the town of Tring and surrounding villages. The students come from a relatively favourable area in terms of socio-economic backgrounds. The vast majority of students are White British. Around 14% of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is lower than the national average. The school has a large sixth form and is part of the Dacorum area consortium of educational providers. Tring School became a specialist humanities college in 2005. It holds a number of prestigious awards including: Investors in People, International Schools' award, Healthy Schools' award, Sportsmark, Fair Trade, and Youth Connexions Careers Education and Guidance Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Tring is a good and improving school with an outstanding sixth form. This is due to the outstanding leadership of the headteacher who is driving the school with vision and determination. She is successfully changing the culture of the school and over the last two years has pulled the staff together with a sense of purpose to eradicate underachievement and further improve the above average standards of student attainment. One parent acknowledged that 'issues are being addressed', another described the school as a place where 'children are happy and safe', and commented on how the school 'is a central part of the local community'.

Students enter the school with standards above those typically found and achieve well as they move through the school. For a number of years standards, especially at Key Stage 4, have remained above national averages although similar from one year to the next. Evidence during the inspection demonstrated that Key Stage 4 standards are improving at a quicker rate now and examination results this year are predicted to exceed those of previous years. This is due to the early identification of underachieving students and a developing use of intervention strategies for specific groups of students, especially in English and mathematics. For example, a group of Year 11 students were observed who achieved a D grade in their mock GCSE mathematics examination and have been provided with an early morning opportunity to improve specific aspects of their mathematics skills through an online scheme. Already, after only a few months, many have improved their grade. Progress accelerates in the sixth form where students attain well above the national average. Throughout the school different groups of students, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability make equally good progress. Standards in the specialist school humanities subjects are high. Whilst some good practice has been shared, the specialism has not fully impacted across the whole school.

The care, guidance and support provided for students are good in the main school and exceptional in the sixth form. All students are known by the staff and those with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported to ensure they feel safe and make good progress. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Parents of vulnerable students report the positive communications they have with staff and the ease of contact with the school when they have concerns. Communication, an issue in the past, has improved over the last two years since the appointment of the current headteacher, with good imaginative initiatives such as 'Parentmail' via email, and the popular 'Parent Consultation Group', which provides all parents with an open invitation to express their views and make suggestions. Many parents report that the 'school does listen to parents' and they agree that the school is improving. The pastoral support for students is good and academic guidance through the monitoring of students' progress has improved since the last inspection. All staff, especially subject leaders, are now much more aware of the significance of monitoring students' progress and use data increasingly to monitor underachievement. However, the central collation and management of data is underdeveloped and currently does not sufficiently inform student achievement or link into whole school planning.

Inspectors agree with the school's self-evaluation that the quality of teaching is good overall across the school, although there remain some inconsistencies, especially with regard to the pace and challenge of learning. The majority of teachers have good subject knowledge, develop positive relationships with students in lessons and work hard to plan detailed activities. Resources, especially information and communication technology, are well used in the best lessons. However, in some lessons students are not sufficiently challenged or inspired and

become passive rather than active learners. In these lessons the learning objectives are not made sufficiently clear to students, nor is learning sufficiently checked or consolidated as the lesson develops.

The curriculum is satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. The school has been slower than other schools to develop wider curriculum choices that meet the needs of all learners, especially in Key Stage 4. This is developing now with the introduction of more vocational courses and off-site provision for specific groups of students. Curriculum timetabling anomalies have meant that some students are taught by more than one teacher for a specific subject, which has an adverse impact on the progress they make and the standards they attain. There is more curriculum choice in the sixth form due to the close collaboration with other local schools. Some students travel to these schools to follow specific courses or where timetable clashes occur. Extra-curricular provision is good. Sixty percent of students attend activities ranging from sport for all abilities and aptitudes, to bridge and Christian Union. Music and drama are particularly popular. The high standards of music and drama productions are acknowledged and appreciated by parents.

The personal development and well-being of students are good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form. Students obviously enjoy coming to school which is why their attendance is above the national average. They adopt positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and confident to talk to visitors. With its international school status, the school is developing links with other schools around the world, either through exchange visits, for example to America, or through the sixth-form-led initiative to communicate with and raise funds for a school in South Africa. All these facets along with the attractive and thought provoking displays around the school lead to the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community in the sixth form, such as voluntary work in the local hospice and primary schools, and some of this good practice is now spreading to younger students, such as mentoring and house representatives. More and more students are taking on leadership roles and report the impact that taking on a role or responsibility has had on improving their confidence and self-esteem.

Leadership and management across the school is good. The outstanding headteacher is well supported by an able deputy. They have a good capacity to act on the issues raised by this inspection. The headteacher inherited a senior leadership team which is currently being re-structured to ensure a best-fit to meet the demanding next stage of the school's development and also to ensure that all senior managers are fully held to account for raising standards. Directors of learning and heads of department report their increased accountability to the headteacher for standards within their subjects, and are rising to the challenge of their enhanced role. Strategic planning at all levels is extensive, although insufficiently focused on a few key issues with measurable success criteria and regular milestones to gauge progress.

Community cohesion is good. The school has audited its provision and has created a plan. It knows its community well. There is now targeted support for needy groups, such as getting mothers back to work, and parenting groups to support specific parents and children.

Governance is good, thoughtful and proactive. The recently appointed chair of governors has considerable experience in industry, and leads the governing body well. He is a regular visitor in school and holds the headteacher to account for standards.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

The sixth form has improved considerably since the last inspection and standards are now well above national averages and improving each year in both AS and A2 examinations. This is due to the outstanding leadership of the head of sixth form, with the support of the impressive student support manager. Students' progress is monitored effectively and they are very well supported to ensure that they meet challenging targets. The curriculum is currently good in the sixth form and is expanding through links with another local school. There are plans to include more vocational courses to meet the wider interests and abilities of students. Their personal development is outstanding and a strength of the school. Students are asked to pledge twenty hours community service in the school or local community, and many mentor younger students, organise events, or lead extra-curricular activities to give something back. This develops confident, articulate young adults. The annual project for the head boy and head girl and their team of deputies develops independence and leadership skills that prepare them well for their future lives. The projects are focused on leaving a legacy for their time in school. Last year, they developed a memorial garden in the grounds of the school; this year they are developing links with a school in South Africa.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve learning by ensuring that all students are actively engaged in lessons and that they are challenged by clear and measurable learning objectives.
- Expand the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners.
- Improve the effectiveness of data management to inform students' achievement and school improvement.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

**Annex A**

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
---	-----------------------	--------------

**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	1

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

---

<sup>1</sup>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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	1
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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	1
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2	1
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?	2	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	1
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	2	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
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	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**

26 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Tring School, Tring, HP23 5JD

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me and the other inspectors when we visited your school last term. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. I thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection and what the school could do to improve even more.

Tring is a good and improving school that is led by an outstanding headteacher who has made a big difference to the school in the last two years. The standards you attain are above the national average and improving year on year, especially in the sixth form. The sixth form is outstanding and students have lots of opportunities to develop their leadership skills by supporting those lower down the school. More and more of you are giving something back to the community through fund raising and specific projects which help you take more pride in your school. Your teachers and other adults work hard for you to prepare interesting lessons, and arrange additional support for those of you who are not making the progress you need to. Those of you who need extra help get really good support from the student support managers and the learning support team. There are a wide range of extra-curricular activities and you should all take advantage of these opportunities. You obviously enjoy school and your attendance is better than in most. Your behaviour is good too, with only a few of you who let the side down and occasionally disrupt the learning of others. The staff increasingly listen to what you and your parents think about school. The Parents' Consultation Group is a really good idea and your parents told me that the communication with the school has improved.

In order to make the school even better, I have asked your headteacher and senior staff to do the following things:

- improve your learning by ensuring that you are all actively engaged in lessons and that you are challenged by clear and measurable learning objectives
- expand the range of courses you can do in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form so that there are more vocational opportunities
- make sure that your assessment data collected by the school is managed more effectively by one of the senior staff to inform your achievement and to help the school plan more efficiently to meet your needs.

Yours sincerely

Clive Kempton

Her Majesty's Inspector