

The Holy Trinity Church of England Secondary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126098
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340925
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Long HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1318
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Malcolm Liles
Headteacher	Mr Peter Wickert
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
School address	Buckswood Drive Gossops Green Crawley RH11 8JE
Telephone number	01293 423690
Fax number	01293 423698
Email address	office@holytrinity.w-sussex.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons and a sample of registration and tutor sessions, and held meetings with staff, a governor and groups of students. They observed the school's work and inspected planning and evaluation documents including the school development plan and those for individual subjects. The school's analysis of students' progress and attainment was scrutinised, as were a total of 532 questionnaires received from parents, 93 from students and 60 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at: the work carried out to tackle weaker teaching and assessment in some subjects, notably mathematics the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, in ensuring the school achieves challenging academic targets the school's effectiveness in sustaining high levels of care, support and a positive environment for learning.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most secondary schools. The majority of students are White British but the number from minority ethnic backgrounds, notably Indian and Pakistani, has grown and is now above the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion who claim free school meals. The school has specialist status for science and mathematics. There are collaborative arrangements with five other local schools and a college of further education to provide courses for students aged 14 to 19. The school gained a Healthy Schools Kitemark this year. The sixth form leader joined the school this term.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Holy Trinity is a happy school which students are proud of and enjoy attending. Their academic achievement in this positive environment is satisfactory, after a fall in recent years from a high level to a position in line with the national average. Until a year ago leaders, including governors, had not acted effectively to reverse the trend. At that point a forthright assessment of the situation led by the headteacher signalled the start of action to bring about improvement. Targets for academic achievement were revised. They are now challenging and are setting the agenda for the school. Improvement in the most recent GCSE results shows the impact of the work done and that the school has the capacity to get better. While a good start has been made, inconsistencies remain in the way the school's overall targets for students' achievement feed into targets in different areas of its work. Monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory but on occasion too little attention is paid to the impact made on students' learning when judging the effectiveness of provision or what to do next. The pastoral care and support provided by the school are outstanding. They are supported by the school's ethos and based on a genuine commitment to students' welfare and personal development. As a result the students behave well and feel very safe, and attendance is high. Those of non-Christian faith are fully included and relationships between students are good. The students make a very positive contribution to the school. Excellent support for those who are vulnerable or at-risk is typified by the rarity with which students are excluded from school. Teaching is satisfactory overall but varies in its impact on learning. There are examples of good and outstanding teaching. The school is making progress in improving teaching but some lessons are characterised by work which does not match students' needs well enough and by tasks which lack excitement. Students' progress, both in individual lessons and over time, is satisfactory but is slowed by a lack of clarity about how to move their work forward, whether to meet objectives for individual lessons or their long-term targets. Students' good behaviour and willingness to undertake the work provided mean that progress is at least satisfactory in most lessons but disguises the fact that it could be better. The curriculum makes a good contribution to the students' enjoyment of school. Specialist status has helped broaden the range of activities and strengthen links with the community, for example through work with local primary schools. The sixth form is popular and fully integrated into the school. Provision is good. The students are very well cared for and enjoy studying at the school. They provide very good role models for younger students and leave as well-balanced young people. They make good progress and achieve well on their courses although, as in the main school, their results represent a decline in recent years in the consistency and impact of teaching.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Teachers should improve students' progress by: consistently making full use of assessment information to plan lessons which challenge students of all abilities involving students more actively in lessons through engaging tasks which capitalise on their good behaviour and readiness to learn ensuring students understand the characteristics of successful learning so they can be more independent in moving themselves forward in each lesson and in meeting their long-term targets. All leaders, including the governors, should accelerate the pace of school improvement by: ensuring that challenging and measurable targets explicitly underpin all action planning for improvement paying closer attention to the impact on students' achievement when monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

From attainment on entry which is in line with the national average, the students make satisfactory progress to reach average standards by the end of Year 11. They enjoy lessons and most adopt a positive approach to learning. Their achievement varies considerably between subjects although the progress made in lessons and the most recent GCSE results show more even rates of progress and improvement in weaker areas such as mathematics. In recent years the school has missed its targets, including those associated with specialist status, set for Year 11 students. However the most recent results show the gap is closing. Equal progress is made by different groups of students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive some well-targeted support in lessons, although this is not consistently the case and they too make satisfactory progress. The students behave well in lessons and around the school. A minority lose focus in lessons if they are not involved quickly enough in activities, for example if teachers talk for too long. They are respectful toward each other and staff, showing a good understanding of right and wrong. They are very keen to contribute to the school and the community it serves. Many take on roles such as student councillors or get involved in projects in local primary schools. Students respond well to the value placed on service to others which is a central part of the school's ethos. This, alongside their good social and team-working skills, prepares them well for later life. The school does a good job in helping the students lead healthy lives so they have a mature approach to the dangers posed, for example by drugs and alcohol. The new canteen is much appreciated because it offers a wider range of healthy food. The students are well aware of the importance of taking regular exercise, as reflected in their high attendance at sport-related clubs and activities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers promote good behaviour so that classrooms are orderly and relationships with students are very positive. They have good subject knowledge and use it well to plan lessons. Some teachers make effective use of information about individual attainment to ensure lesson content matches the needs of each student; however, this is inconsistent. Some lessons include good explanations of tasks, their purpose and the features of successful work. Again this is not always the case and students are not always sure how to make progress. In some subjects and classes the students are very clear about their long-term targets and how to meet them, while in others they are not. The range of learning opportunities in lessons is satisfactory but some lack exciting activities, including purposeful questioning. All of these factors mean that progress is satisfactory rather than good over time. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to stimulate learning although some opportunities are missed to involve students in using them. The curriculum is well planned to meet students' needs and interests. Through its specialist status the numbers of students taking science courses in Years 10 and 11 has increased considerably and there is a good range of special events such as science and mathematics weeks. Specialist status has made limited impact on raising standards overall, however. Effective partnerships with other schools and a college help widen the range of courses in Years 10 and 11, notably increasing vocational options in response to the needs of some students. The well-planned personal, social and health education

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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programme makes a good contribution to students' well-being. The students learn about a wide range of cultures and faiths. They have good opportunities for spiritual reflection although some of these are not sufficiently engaging to ensure students gain the maximum benefit. Extra-curricular activities are well supported by students and contribute well to their enjoyment of school. Good provision for work-related learning, including enterprise events and carefully monitored work experience, helps prepare the students for the future. They receive effective information and guidance to support options and career choices. The welfare of students is monitored very carefully. The house system works well in nurturing students and building good relationships between those of different ages. Students who are vulnerable or at-risk are identified effectively and given very good support. The school works well with external agencies such as social services and education welfare personnel to support students who need extra help. Transition arrangements from the large number of primary schools are good at the pastoral level but the transfer of attainment data so that class teachers can inform their lesson planning at an early stage is not so effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team are ambitious to raise the level of the students' achievement. The team has been extended and restructured to focus more on improving the quality of teaching while sustaining the school's strong pastoral care. Middle leadership has improved through sharper arrangements for line management. The whole-school development plan addresses appropriate priorities and provides a way forward. However, in both this plan and those for specific areas of the school's work, some actions are not linked explicitly enough to measurable benefits for the students. Monitoring and evaluation yield a satisfactory understanding of the progress being made although there are occasions, notably when monitoring teaching, when too little attention is paid to the quality of students' learning which results from it. The governors are committed to the school and to the provision of equality of opportunity for all students. They meet regularly with senior staff but they too do not always refer enough to the impact made on students' learning when checking how well the school is doing and defining what could be better. The school works effectively in partnership with a range of external agencies and other educational institutions both to extend curricular opportunities and to provide support for students, for example through social or

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health-related services. Procedures for safeguarding the students meet requirements. The school has a good awareness of child protection issues in its care for students. Staff have been suitably trained in child protection and the school fosters a sensible attitude among students to keeping themselves safe. The school is active in promoting cohesion within its own community, in the local area and through international links such as with a school in Sierra Leone. It is keen to develop its work in this area but its monitoring of the impact of what it already does lacks rigour and hinders the planning of further steps.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students achieve well in the sixth form. They make good overall progress on A- and AS-level courses, albeit with some inconsistencies between different subjects, and outstanding progress on Applied A levels. The students enjoy the sixth form and are very appreciative of the strong sense of community. Sixth formers make an excellent contribution to school and the community outside school. They readily take on responsibilities and fulfil them very well for the benefit of younger students, for example as mentors, classroom helpers and club organisers. Sixth form lessons are characterised by a good pace for learning, good subject knowledge and expertise on the part of teachers and good student involvement in discussing and developing their ideas. This succeeds in inspiring the students to do well. Nevertheless, as with the younger students, some opportunities are missed to ensure students know exactly how to reach their targets and are given high quality tasks which ensure this happens. There is a good range of courses, including through collaboration with other providers, to broaden

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the range of options. Students value the excellent care and support they are given, including through the continuity offered by the house system. This means the vast majority complete their courses successfully. They receive good guidance on options after the sixth form. Leadership and management are good although this is a period of transition. A high value is placed on promoting students' well-being and progress. Action has been taken to improve weaker subjects and this is beginning to bear fruit. The sixth form is inclusive, has grown steadily and welcomes students from other schools. The new sixth form leader is focused well on bringing further improvement and is receiving good support from other senior leaders.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who returned a response was good in comparison to most secondary schools. The response was strongly supportive of the effectiveness of the school across a wide range of its work. Parents and carers took a more positive view of the progress being made by students at the school than did the inspection team. In their comments parents and carers singled out the level of individual care for their children as a key strength; a view shared by the inspection team. A significant minority felt that communication was too slow when they had particular concerns about their children or wanted to know how to support their learning. The school is aware of this and is taking good steps to improve electronic communication although it is too early to judge the impact of what has been done.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holy Trinity CofE Secondary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school. The inspection team received 532 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1318 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	216	41	300	56	16	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	228	43	294	55	7	1	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	139	26	323	61	48	9	2	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	158	30	310	58	36	7	2	0
The teaching is good at this school	204	38	300	56	13	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	138	26	329	62	54	10	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	150	28	316	59	42	8	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	181	34	284	53	28	5	4	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	186	35	300	56	30	6	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	189	36	283	53	25	5	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	118	22	319	60	43	8	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	235	44	272	51	14	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	252	47	270	51	12	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 September 2009 Dear Students Inspection of The Holy Trinity Church of England Secondary School, Crawley, RH11 8JE This letter is to thank you for your participation in the recent inspection of your school and to tell you what we found. You may also like to read the full report. The Holy Trinity is a satisfactory school but has significant areas of strength. The sixth form provision is good so that students make good progress. You make a very positive contribution to the school with a large number of you taking on responsibilities such as student councillors. Sixth form students act as excellent role models for younger students in this respect. Students in the main school make satisfactory progress and reach standards similar to those seen nationally by the end of Year 11. The progress made has fallen in recent years, but there are indications it is now improving. You told us you enjoy school and that most students behave well. We could see this for ourselves and were impressed by the good atmosphere and by how polite and mature you were. The school cares for you very well. Many of you told us that the staff know and support you as individuals and that you are confident to turn to them if you need help. Questionnaires from your parents and carers support this view. Your teachers are keen to help you do your best in lessons and some are good or outstanding. However, some lessons are not as effective as they should be to ensure you make the best possible progress and you are not always sure how to move your work forward. The curriculum is good and the wide range of activities, including extra-curricular clubs, help you enjoy school. The headteacher and the staff have been successful at ensuring The Holy Trinity is a safe and enjoyable place to study and are keen to improve the progress you make in your work. We have asked the headteacher to include the following in his development plans: to help you make more progress by ensuring lessons include challenging and engaging work for all of you, and by giving you a better understanding of how to improve your work for yourselves so as to meet your targets to make sure the staff check that the actions they take to improve the school are actually making an impact on your learning. Stephen Long Her Majesty's Inspector

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