

Trinity School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131766
Local Authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	341215
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Marian Thomas

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joan Lamb
Headteacher	Mr Bill Curley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of inspection time on learning-related activities. They visited nine lessons and saw nine teachers. They held meetings with school leaders, pupils, teaching and care staff. They observed the school's work and looked at curriculum plans, the school's development plan and attendance data. They also visited the on-site farm as well as analysing the data from 24 questionnaires returned from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attendance rates and what is being done to improve them
- how the curriculum is delivered on all three school sites
- the achievement of different groups of pupils
- the quality of monitoring of the school's work.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average special school which caters for the needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All pupils who attend have a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Many pupils come from areas of social and emotional disadvantage. The majority of pupils are boys. Approximately 10% of pupils are in the care of the local authority. The school operates from three different sites across the city, but is managed by one leadership team and one governing body. The Deneview site caters for pupils in Key Stage 2. Kenton Lodge site caters for students in Key Stage 3 and the Oakfield site caters for students in Key Stage 4. The school is subject to a radical reorganisation and a new school building is currently being erected on the Oakfield site. The school has been awarded the Investors in Children and Sportsmark awards.

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

Trinity is a satisfactory school. The good standard of care, guidance and support provided for pupils and the success with which their severe behaviour and complex learning needs are met enable them to make satisfactory progress academically. The strong relationship between the care team and pupils helps pupils to make good progress socially and emotionally.

The headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure the quality of provision necessary for them to do so.

Self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness, although only satisfactory overall, has improved since the last inspection. This is because the school's middle managers are increasingly able at monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. As a result, findings are now acted upon more rigorously and areas of weakness are being overcome. For example, since the last inspection the school, in partnership with other special schools in the local authority, has developed a system for tracking pupils which is now being used consistently to inform teachers of pupils' progress. This demonstrates that school leaders and managers have a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Pupils arrive at school, often late in their school careers, with large gaps in their learning and low self-esteem. As they begin to enjoy school, their confidence as learners is rebuilt, which results in an improving trend in achievement. In turn, they begin to show more mature attitudes and a willingness to interact with others. Older students respond especially well to the practical and vocational nature of the courses offered. This, coupled with a strong emphasis on academic subjects, ensures that students leave Year 11 with qualifications which prepare them satisfactorily for the next phase of education or work. Younger pupils settle quickly and start to engage with learning and, as a result, most make good progress, often exceeding previous targets.

The school continues to work very hard at engaging students, but there are a significant number for whom attendance is an issue. As a result, despite the good and sometimes outstanding progress observed in lessons by inspectors, students' long-term progress is only satisfactory. Students say that they feel safe because staff are there to support them. Through the work of the care teams on all three sites, students feel listened to and are able to confide in adults. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively by staff. The quality of teaching is good and is marked by teachers' high expectations, to which pupils respond well. The recently introduced system for tracking pupils' progress enables staff to set challenging academic targets for pupils. However, these targets have yet to be incorporated fully in planning for individual needs. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress towards individual targets.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of individual pupils by ensuring that teachers make more effective use of pupils' targets when planning lessons.
- Improve the attendance of pupils by:
 - working more closely with outside agencies to identify the needs of pupils
 - improving pupils' attendance through engaging individual families more effectively in order to support the school
 - evaluating attendance data more rigorously to identify patterns of attendance in different key stages.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Younger pupils settle well because of the calm and industrious atmosphere in the classrooms. This allows staff to assess pupils' needs and provide good-quality learning programmes in the core subjects. This, coupled with a good pace of learning, helps pupils to work consistently and make good progress when they are in school. This could be seen clearly in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson for a special needs class. Pupils were studying 'time' using a television programme guide. Pupils were allocated different tasks depending on their ability. All pupils participated well and succeeded in finishing their task. They also enjoyed a discussion on the merits of different television programmes which contributed well to their speaking, listening and socialisation skills. Secondary age pupils engage well with learning because staff are particularly good at building up their self-esteem and, as a result, their belief in their own ability to succeed. This coupled with the wide range of academic and vocational courses offered ensures that most pupils leave with an array of qualifications and accreditations.

The majority of pupils who attend this school have become disengaged from learning because of their past experiences and, as a result, their attainment is low when compared with national expectations. Staff are particularly successful at re-engaging them and, as a result of good teaching, most pupils across the key stages make good and sometimes very good improvements in learning when they attend school. Last year most pupils passed GCSE entry level examinations in 10 subjects including English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) as well as obtaining passes in land-based studies, construction and music. These successes ensured that pupils were satisfactorily prepared for further study and the world of work. However, almost one sixth of pupils have poor levels of attendance. As a result, learning and progress overall is satisfactory.

All pupils who attend the school are identified as having additional needs. Pupils are supported well and, as a consequence, all groups make similar progress. The school

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accepts that improving the attendance of some pupils is a key focus for improvement and school leaders have made concerted efforts, including home visits and prosecutions of parents and carers, to address this. However, recent strategies, which include employing an educational welfare officer and weekly meetings to review attendance, have started to have an impact. As a result, attendance is rising rapidly. Further efforts to engage parents and carers are planned and senior leaders recognise that further data analysis is needed in order to target resources more effectively.

Pupils behave very well both inside and outside of lessons. Pupils feel very safe because they know staff are supportive and help them at all times. One pupil commented, 'Staff care about us here and we get respect.' Healthy meal options are taken up by most pupils in both breakfast club and at lunchtime. This, coupled with the popular sports options offered both in and outside school time, ensures that pupils have a satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils make a good contribution to the community both in and outside school by listening to and appreciating the needs of others. Through the work of the school council, fundraising for local and global charities regularly takes place. Pupils maintain the school farm, which also provides a learning opportunity for pupils from three other local special schools and promotes partnerships well. Pupils' good overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in their good behaviour, the way in which they react to each other and the manner in which they take care of the environment.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3 4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

As a result of good teaching, most pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in their work when in school. However, pupils who do not attend on a regular basis do not make sufficient progress.

ICT is used well in lessons to support learning and involve pupils in making choices. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure that pupils are kept focused on their learning. Learning rarely slows even when pupils' behaviour occasionally lapses. When this happens, the calm approach of teaching and care staff defuses the situation. Teachers in all phases have a good level of subject knowledge and ensure that learning activities and resources engage pupils well. For example, in a Key Stage 4 English lesson pupils demonstrated a high level of perceptive understanding of the needs of homeless people when discussing a text from a novel and the experiences of homelessness in a television documentary.

The curriculum is well organised and is imaginatively enhanced by visits and activities away from the classroom on all three of the school sites. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 has improved significantly since the last inspection and now has a much better balance between academic and vocational subjects. Activities on the school farm are well established and link with many areas of the curriculum. For example, areas of Key Stage 3 science are taught through access to the farmyard animals. A wide range of vocational courses is offered including certificates in food and hygiene, land-based studies and construction. These contribute well to students' development and future economic well-being.

As a result of good care, guidance and support, pupils feel there is always someone who will listen and help. One pupil expressed this well when he said, 'I know even when I feel very angry someone will care.' A careful and thorough assessment is undertaken when pupils arrive at the school which is then used to target support effectively. Links with outside agencies to support pupils care and guidance are good and vulnerable pupils are supported well. For example, staff work closely with the child and adolescent mental health team to support pupils with mental health issues. However, the school is aware that it needs to work more closely with all relevant agencies to improve pupils' attendance. The care teams on each of the school sites do consistently good work. This has reduced serious incidents requiring restraint by almost half since the last inspection.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
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 leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders has moved the school forward satisfactorily. However, it is their effective delegation of roles and responsibilities throughout the school which has increased the pace of this improvement. The governing body has implemented good procedures to ensure the health and well-being of all pupils. Members offer valuable support to the school and offer challenge to senior leaders. Clear policies and procedures ensure that all government safeguarding requirements are met to a good level. Leaders and managers have ensured that the school is an inclusive community. Links have been established between the school and a variety of local community groups which have promoted pupils' understanding of life in a multi-ethnic society. While this work has been evaluated consistently and improved, the school is at an early stage of development of links with the global community.

The school makes great efforts to engage parents and carers. The work of both care and school staff ensure that parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's successes. Links with home are actively encouraged and, as a result, most parents and carers value the work of the school. However, the school is not yet engaging all parents and carers successfully. As a result, not all pupils' attendance at school is supported sufficiently. Strong partnerships with a wide variety of agencies contribute well to most pupils' well-being and progress. The school ensures satisfactory outcomes for pupils, many of whom have extreme and significant needs. It does this on a well-controlled budget and provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires returned was low, only 10 in total. The responses indicate that these parents and carers are mainly happy with the school. However, the lack of response served to support the inspectors' view that school needs to improve relationships with parents and carers in order to improve pupils' overall attendance.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Trinity 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 129 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	33	13	54	13	54	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	50	10	42	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	58	10	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	38	13	54	1	4	1	4
The teaching is good at this school	10	42	14	58	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	42	13	54	0	0	1	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	38	13	54	2	8	0	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)	8	33	14	58	2	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	50	11	46	14	58	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	63	7	29	2	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	38	14	58	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	42	13	54	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	50	11	46	1	4	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.



05 March 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Trinity School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE4 8XJ

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we inspected your school. Special thanks go to those of you who attended the meetings with one of the inspectors and told us what you thought about the school. Also thanks to those of you who showed us around your farm. It was interesting and we could see why you are proud of it. We judge Trinity to be a satisfactory school. These are the things we liked best about it.

- You have lots of exciting activities and interesting courses.
- You behave well and feel very safe in school.
- You learn a lot about the world of work, so you are prepared well for when you leave school.

However, we were very concerned about the number of you who do not attend regularly. When this happens, you do not make as much progress and do not leave with as many qualifications as you could. As a result, we have asked your teachers to work even harder with as many different people as possible to ensure that more of you attend regularly. Also, we would like them to make better use of the targets set for you when planning their lessons.

We really feel that those of you who come to school regularly make good progress. Those of you who do not attend are letting your teachers down, but more importantly, you are letting yourselves down and affecting your future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marian Thomas

Lead inspector

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