

# Trinity School

Independent special school standard inspection report

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## **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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Trinity School is a special school for boys and girls with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and language and communication difficulties. An increasing number of pupils admitted have additional needs associated with autism and Asperger's Syndrome. The school opened in 1998, was registered in 2000 and received approved status as a special school in 2005. In November 2009, the school's registration was updated with approval to use a second, adjacent building and to admit a maximum of 100 pupils between the ages of six and 18 years. For the first time, this year, there are two students in Year 12. There are currently 74 pupils on roll. Sixty-one have statements of special educational needs and are funded by six local authorities. Two pupils are in the care of their local authority. This is the second full inspection of the school by Ofsted, the first being in November 2007. The school occupies two Georgian houses close to the centre of Rochester, in Kent. The principal and her husband own the premises and are joint proprietors. The school motto is 'Confidence to learn - for life', with the aim of providing high-quality specialist provision in a calm, caring and supportive environment.

## **EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL**

Trinity School provides its pupils with a good quality of education and welfare and in so doing meets its aims. Pupils are happy and settled. They take their learning very seriously and they leave the school with qualifications and social skills that can be further extended at college. Two regulations not met at the time of the last inspection are now met. All but three of the regulations are met this time. All safeguarding requirements are met.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

As a result of good teaching and a good curriculum, pupils make good academic and personal progress from their individual starting points. Central to this are the regular curriculum meetings where staff discuss the curriculum in tandem with the progress that pupils are making, their interests, topics that link knowledge and skills together, and any useful current affairs or events.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

The curriculum is firmly grounded on principles of providing pupils with small steps in their learning, high priority for English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), relevant, real life contexts, and specific programmes for developing speech and language. Examples of how this works in practice are the language group work that takes place in the mornings, regular off-site visits that are clearly focused on curricular and social objectives, work experience placements, and the examination subjects that accredit students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills up to GCSE level. As result, pupils of all ages become confident learners and gain personal and academic skills that are of most relevance to them. With basic skills taking an appropriately large proportion of curricular time, there is less time for other subjects but they are suitably covered. These other subjects are often taught within topic areas but there is no clear way of showing how the respective subject matter and skills are covered within each key stage. Similarly, the programme for personal, social and health education, although forming a significant element to support pupils' personal development in the timetable, is not sufficiently coherent, with tight and careful in-depth planning.

The programme for the new sixth form is well thought through for the two students on roll. These are early days for this addition to the school's work. Currently, the students are taught as part of the existing Key Stage 4 provision and they are following appropriate programmes to extend their achievements. Suitable plans are in place to develop a separate curricular and social identity for older students.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. Teaching is characteristically precise, and it promotes independent application of skills, involves pupils working together and focuses on completion of tasks. Teachers are highly skilled in strategies that improve pupils' confidence and address their particular learning difficulties. In particular, through the teachers' good questioning and sensitive prompts, pupils are able to articulate what they know and think with increasing proficiency and confidence. Similarly, teachers have an in-depth knowledge of how well each of the pupils is doing and the next steps for them to learn. Opportunities for pupils to be more directly involved in their learning are sometimes missed because teachers do not always plan lessons around individual pupils' targets sufficiently. While support staff are mostly deployed in ways that encourage pupils to be independent in their work, there are occasions when too much help is given. Similarly, inconsistencies are evident in the way that commercially produced workbooks are used. Sometimes, working through these books is not the best use of time available for teaching or for tailoring work sufficiently to pupils' levels of ability. Nevertheless, teachers and support staff provide pupils with good role models as to how to learn and how to have fun doing it. For example, this was seen in two language sessions, one where two boys extended their communication within the group with much good humour and enthusiasm, and another where the group followed the adults' lead in a discussion about personal hobbies with increasing interest and involvement.

Assessment procedures are satisfactory. A suitable range of assessments provides staff with a secure understanding of pupils' skills on admission and annual assessments show their current levels of attainment. The school uses its own set of levels to show what pupils know and can do, supplemented by nationally recognised accreditations such as the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), Entry Levels and GCSE levels for older students. The way that pupils' individual attainments are tracked over time is under review and currently does not provide a precise picture of how much progress is made each year or over a key stage.

## **SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF PUPILS**

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Their attendance is good, as are their behaviour and attitudes to learning and to one another. A developing sense of how to get along with one another is evident in class, where pupils often help each other out, and on the playground, where they show how much they value the company of friends. It is also clear that pupils are often tolerant and understanding of one another's difficulties and that they learn to accept rules in school that they might not agree with. This helps in their understanding of other aspects of difference such as cultural and religious diversity, which is further fostered through visits within the locality and wider community. The school's emphasis on educational visits also extends pupils' understanding of local services and amenities, for example at the library or sports facilities. Getting to and from school independently is an aspiration that most pupils achieve to some degree by the time they leave. This not only expands their horizons from within family life but also prepares them well for attending college. All in all, good development in pupils' personal skills enables them to access experiences that they would not otherwise have or attempt, such as trying and enjoying new foods and leisure activities. It also helps pupils develop an awareness of their own potential.

## **WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS**

The school's attention to the particular needs of their pupils, alongside pertinent issues relating to the premises, ensures good provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors. The levels at which staff are trained and the number of staff who complete such training are above those required, for example by the regulations for child protection, first aid and fire safety. In addition, procedures to review annually the information held on pupils with regard to their health and parents' and carers' permissions are particularly thorough. Less thorough is the level of specific detail in logs for fire safety, incidents of behaviour and risk assessments, which, although adequate, do not reflect exemplary practice. The child protection policy, together with leaflets and guidance provided by the local authority, ensures that all staff have good information about how to be vigilant in their safeguarding of pupils' welfare. The school has a three-year plan in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 2002, as amended. The plan covers a range of

potential barriers but lacks detail about priorities. However, such relative weaknesses in specifics of detail in policies do not detract from the good practice that exists on a day-to-day basis. In particular, pastoral support contributes significantly to keeping pupils safe and healthy. Notably, the approach by staff to managing pupils' behaviour and worries works very well to reduce their anxieties and increase their levels of participation and enjoyment in school. In turn, this impacts positively on their ability to have a go and succeed.

Pupils are encouraged to be healthy throughout relevant areas of the curriculum. For example, home economics lessons not only focus on the safe preparation of food and an understanding of healthy living but also provide opportunities to cook and share lunch. The use of off-site provision for physical education encourages pupils to experience and succeed at a range of sports activities such as 'kwik' cricket, tennis and trampolining.

Pupils are very clear about how to conduct themselves in premises that do not always lend themselves easily to the business of school. For example, pupils' sensible conduct on the many stairways keeps them all safe and they respect the clear rules about areas of school that they must not access without supervision.

## **SUITABILITY OF STAFF, SUPPLY STAFF AND PROPRIETORS**

The school maintains a suitable single central register of checks on staff. The register shows that all of the appropriate checks have been made.

## **PREMISES OF AND ACCOMMODATION AT THE SCHOOL**

The premises have been extended since the last inspection and ensure effective and safe learning, with plans in place to extend and modify them further. Most teaching areas are compact but adequate for small teaching groups. There is a small library, rooms dedicated for science and art, and a small ICT room. Although the school has sufficient toilet facilities for the number of pupils currently on roll, the premises do not include sufficient toilets for the maximum number of pupils that the school can admit and facilities for the girls are not suitable. This regulation is therefore not met.

## **PROVISION OF INFORMATION**

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the education that their children receive at Trinity School. Twice-yearly progress meetings and meetings to review statements of special educational needs and individual education plans ensure that they receive regular updates on their child's progress. In addition, they receive two annual reports. The school brochure, together with its website and the welcome pack for parents and carers, provides all the required information in a clear format.

## **MANNER IN WHICH COMPLAINTS ARE TO BE HANDLED**

There have been no complaints registered within the formal procedures within the past year and a suitable policy is in place to address any that might arise in the future.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>3</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- establish appropriate plans and schemes of work for all areas of the curriculum (paragraph 2(1))
- provide a coherent plan and scheme of work for personal, social and health education (paragraph 2(2)(f)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- provide adequate toilets for the number of registered pupils and improve those specifically for girls (paragraph 23(j)).

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL COULD DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- map out the way that each subject is taught across each key stage to show how the curriculum is covered within the topic areas, as well as over the four or three years within Key Stages 2 and 3 respectively
- pull together all of the available assessment information so as to more clearly show the progress that each pupil makes over their time at the school
- ensure that revised policies are always dated and signed, and that more detail is added when recording behaviour incidents and fire procedures, and administering medication.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made)

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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## SCHOOL DETAILS

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school		
<b>Date school opened</b>	September 1998		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6-18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 53	Girls: 21	Total: 74
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 45	Girls: 16	Total: 61
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£12,985 - £17,655		
<b>Address of school</b>	11-13 New Road, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1BG		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 812233		
<b>Email address</b>	trinityrochester@btconnect.com		
<b>Principal</b>	Claire Dunn		
<b>Proprietors</b>	Claire and Richard Dunn		