

Trinity School

13 New Road, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1BG

Inspection dates

20–22 November 2013

Overall effectiveness

	Adequate	3
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

This school is adequate because

- Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is adequate. It is not good because, although the school ensures that pupils are well cared for and safe in school, not all procedures for pupils' welfare, health and safety are fully up to date.
- Leadership and management are adequate. Although leaders ensure teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress academically and personally, checks to make sure that all policies and procedures for pupils' welfare, health and safety are fully up to date are not rigorous enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in all subjects, including in English and mathematics, because of good teaching and an effective curriculum.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and their attendance and punctuality are very good.
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff members help pupils to enjoy school. Pupils make good use of mentors to help them to settle well into the school and to improve their academic and personal development.
- Leaders have suitable plans improve the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards'). The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a day’s notice. The inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by 12 different teachers, looked at pupils’ work and spoke with pupils. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Discussions were held with leaders and managers and staff members.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s documentation including schemes of work, teachers’ planning, records of pupils’ progress, monitoring reports of teaching and learning, records of lesson observations, and staff training records.
- Inspectors took account of 22 questionnaire responses from staff, and the views of 11 parents and carers who responded to Parent View (the online questionnaire) and as expressed by three parents and carers during discussion.

Inspection team

John Gush, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rory O’Doherty

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Trinity School is a special school for boys and girls with dyslexia, dyspraxia, and language and communication difficulties as well as those with additional learning difficulties, such as autistic spectrum conditions and Asperger's Syndrome.
- The school occupies two Georgian houses close to the centre of Rochester in Kent.
- The school is registered for male and female pupils ages between six and 18 years of age and there are currently 64 pupils on roll. All but five of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs and they are funded by their local authority. Two pupils are in the care of their local authority.
- The school makes use of alternative provision to deliver physical education and games.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2013.
- The school's motto is 'Confidence to learn – for life', and its aim is to provide high-quality specialist provision in a calm, caring and supportive environment.
- The school was last inspected in September 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve aspects of leadership and management especially so teachers are better able to help all pupils achieve their best by:
 - ensuring pupils always know what is expected of them and are appropriately challenged in all lessons
 - ensuring learning targets for literacy and numeracy for pupils in Key Stages 4 and 5 are challenging and precise and fully reflect pupils' academic abilities and aspirations
 - improving systems for tracking pupils' individual achievements over time so that all opportunities are taken to enable them to increase their progress
 - developing the provision for post-16 pupils to better prepare them for adult life, particularly with independent living and employability skills
 - extending the provision for information and communication technology resources in classrooms
 - ensuring that rigorous checks are undertaken of the provision for pupils' welfare, health so that that all policies and procedures are fully up to date.
- **The school must meet the following independent school standards:**
 - Ensure that suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils (paragraph 23A(1)(a)).

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement is good because of good teaching, an effective curriculum and the valuable support for their learning and personal development from a good range of therapies. Pupils make good progress towards their targets in all subjects, including in English and mathematics. Although a large proportion of the pupils have experienced a disrupted education before coming to the school, almost all re-engage quickly with learning and make up lost ground well. With careful, well-prepared support from teachers and assistants, pupils take part actively in lessons and enjoy learning. They take pride in their work, much of which is attractively displayed in classrooms and around the school. They contribute well when presenting their newly acquired learning to others. Pupils use information and communication technology effectively to extend their learning, especially in literacy and numeracy.

During the previous year the first group of pupils to take nationally accredited qualifications, including GCSEs, achieved results that exceeded expectations in view of their starting points. All gained qualifications, including Functional Skills awards in literacy and numeracy. Those who took GCSEs achieved grades ranging from G to A in English, mathematics, science and food technology.

Post-16 pupils make suitable progress in their literacy, communication, numeracy and independent living skills. All the pupils who left school at the end of Key Stage 4 last year went on to further education or apprenticeships.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' good behaviour reflects the good progress they have made since joining the school. They behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and communicate well with staff and visitors. In lessons they show an interest in each other's progress and support each other well. These qualities help pupils to enjoy school and make good academic progress. Pupils say that they very much enjoy school. They demonstrate this by attending school regularly and being punctual to lessons. Many pupils comment on how much they value the opportunities they have to discuss personal issues with one of the school's mentors. These sessions help them to settle in and to concentrate on learning.

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All staff contribute very well to the culture of understanding and mutual respect which helps the pupils to become more self-confident and sociable. Through assemblies and daily lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils gain a good awareness of some important features of other cultures. For example, one class recently took part in a Chinese New Year festival and many pupils join the school's visits to the Netherlands, France and Germany. These activities help pupils to develop a deeper understanding of and tolerance towards difference, which helps them to understand the importance of appropriate behaviour and relationships.

Pupils learn about British institutions and services through citizenship, humanities and English lessons. They develop their understanding of right and wrong, and learn about civil and criminal law. Many take part actively in the school council, which allows them to be involved in decision-making about the school. Together with the school's charity work, which builds very good relationships with the local community, such activities help pupils to develop the attitudes and skills they need to take an active part in a democratic and multicultural society. The school ensures that, when political issues are raised, balanced views are always presented. However, not enough is done to support older pupils in developing independent living and employability skills to prepare them better for when they leave school.

Quality of teaching**Good**

The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress in their academic learning and personal development. In most lessons teachers and their assistants have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They use effective methods to help pupils overcome their particular difficulties in learning, so they can make the most of their abilities, especially in literacy and numeracy. In an outstanding science lesson, for example, pupils in Key Stage 4 were learning about fertility treatment. They undertook individual tasks based on well-presented material, and took part in small-group discussions where they shared their own ideas, and later whole-class activity and presentations. Pupils gained new knowledge about the mechanisms of fertility, considered the implications of treatment and reflected on the impact that the issue might have on their own lives.

Careful attention is paid to pupils' statements of special educational needs, and teaching ensures that requirements are fulfilled. All pupils have valuable individual education plans with targets to help them develop their learning which are derived from assessments of pupils' ability and progress. However, learning targets for literacy and numeracy are not always challenging or precise enough to fully reflect pupils' academic abilities and aspirations. This is especially the case for pupils in Key Stages 4 and 5. The school is aware that more effective checks on pupils' progress over time in different subjects would aid teachers' ability to help pupils make even more progress. The school is currently developing new software for this purpose.

Teachers make good use of their subject knowledge to enthuse and inspire pupils. While they use ICT well to stimulate learning, ICT resources, although adequate overall, are limited in some classrooms. Teachers' expertise in working with pupils with specific learning difficulties is effectively supplemented by the school's team of therapists who help staff to develop strategies that enable most pupils to re-engage well with learning. Teaching assistants provide good support both in classes and with individual pupils; their enthusiasm and the valuable relationships they develop with pupils have a very positive impact on most pupils' learning. In a small minority of teaching, pupils are not very clear about what they are expected to do and the work is not sufficiently challenging for all pupils. As a result, their progress is sometimes slower. Pupils' work is neatly presented and regularly marked. Most marking is helpful to the pupils by praising effort, reinforcing learning and giving guidance on improvement. Marking is particularly effective, especially in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, in showing pupils what they need to do to improve and reach their targets.

Quality of curriculum**Good**

The curriculum is mostly good and enables pupils to make good progress. It is built around the National Curriculum subjects as well as programmes for PSHE, citizenship and religious education. New arrangements for accrediting aspects of the curriculum through the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) framework are being piloted. The curriculum planning is good and provides a good basis for teaching and for pupils to use their developing literacy and numeracy skills across most subjects.

The curriculum addresses the learning needs of post-16 pupils and supports some development of their independent living skills as well as their communication, literacy and numeracy skills. However, the provision is not as good as it could be in developing their independent living and employability skills.

Pupils take part in a good range of physical education activities which are available through a partnership with a specialist provider. Pupils enjoy activities such as tennis, swimming and the using the trampoline and these activities have a good impact on improving their health and fitness. Regular outings, such as to museums and local places of interest, extend pupils' knowledge of their

locality and of aspects of the wider world. These are complemented by trips abroad, some of which involve a residential stay, helping them to cultivate new friendships and improve their ability and willingness to learn. Professionals from occupational, speech and language therapy services provide expert, helpful interventions for pupils as well as valuable advice to teachers and assistants. Appropriate advice about future options is provided for pupils through lessons, the annual reviews of their statements of special educational needs and visits from an independent careers adviser.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Adequate

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is adequate and all regulations are met. Not all policies and procedures for pupils' welfare, health and safety are fully up to date. The school provides a safe and nurturing learning environment for its pupils and ensures that they are safe. Staff recruitment is carried out in a thorough and careful manner, and all the required checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of staff to work with young people. The required single central register is maintained correctly. All staff are trained in fire safety as well as first aid. Fire drills are routinely carried out in school and fire-fighting equipment is subject to regular inspection.

All staff members have received basic child protection training. The designated child protection officer has a very clear understanding of all safeguarding procedures and of the role of the designated officer and is booked to attend the required refresher and higher-level training very shortly. The school works very closely with the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure that that any child protection concerns are followed up in the appropriate manner.

A range of suitable policies and procedures, including those to prevent and address any bullying, are implemented. Pupils respond well to the way the school addresses any possible bullying through assemblies, the school council and anti-bullying days. Some pupils say although they had experienced bullying in previous settings, it does not occur at Trinity and that they are confident the staff would deal with any issues well. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and that they receive good support and guidance. Supervision in school is provided in a good-humoured manner, which pupils appreciate. Risk assessments, including those for visits outside school, are undertaken as required.

Leadership and management

Adequate

The leadership and management of the school are adequate overall, but the checks to ensure that all policies and procedures for pupils' welfare, health and safety are fully up to date are not as rigorous and timely as they might be. However, leaders have ensured that teaching is good and that pupils are enabled to make good progress both in their academic and personal development and that all but one of the regulations for independent schools are met.

The school's approach to learning and personal development is strongly promoted by the school's proprietor and by the newly appointed headteacher. These views are shared and understood by all the school community and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. The headteacher has carefully evaluated the quality of teaching and accurately assessed the school's strengths and areas for development. The resulting development plan identifies appropriate areas for action to improve teaching and the curriculum so that all pupils can make the most of their time at the school. These include improving the tracking of individual pupils' achievements, sharpening learning targets and improving aspect of the provision for post-16 pupils.

The premises provide suitable learning facilities, including classrooms that are light and airy and are generally well resourced apart from some ICT resources. The premises and accommodation are maintained to a good standard but one of the regulations is not met in this standard because pupils do not have sole use of the toilets provided for them as required. All the required information for parents, carers and others is provided or made available through the school's

website and the school brochure. The complaints procedure meets regulatory requirements and is correctly implemented.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	132097
Inspection number	422742
DfE registration number	887/6006

This inspection was carried out 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.

Type of school	Special day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 18 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Richard and Claire Dunn
Chair	Richard and Claire Dunn
Headteacher	Elizabeth Furnell-Baines
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,500 to £26,056
Telephone number	01634 812233
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