

School inspection report

30 April to 2 May 2024

Trinity School

Birbeck Street
Off High Street
Stalybridge
SK15 1SH

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. The school's aim of bringing the love of God into the classroom is reinforced successfully through all aspects of school life. Leaders and staff demonstrate the Christian values of love, care, trust and inclusivity in their interactions with pupils. Pupils respond positively to this and feel valued.
2. In this small school, leaders create a tight knit community. Pupils are taught to respect and be sensitive to the needs of others. Staff and pupils welcome all, irrespective of background or circumstance.
3. Staff know pupils well and are dedicated to meeting pupils' different needs and abilities. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL).
4. Generally, teaching staff plan and teach activities that support pupils to learn successfully. However, during some lessons teaching does not challenge pupils sufficiently to learn more deeply. Teachers miss opportunities to move pupils' knowledge and understanding on. Pupils of all ages participate enthusiastically in the extra-curricular and outdoor learning activities provided by the school. Pupils acquire new skills, talents and interests. That said, these opportunities are limited. They do not support pupils to fully develop their personal and social skills.
5. Typically, pupils are willing and engaged learners. They make good academic progress. Pupils feel safe and their emotional needs are supported very well. Behaviour is good within and across the different year groups. Pupils develop positive relationships with each other. They understand that some pupils find it more challenging to control their emotions and actions. Staff adopt a positive and consistent approach in managing these situations. When sanctions are applied, these are used in a fair and reasonable manner.
6. Age-appropriate relationships education starts in early years. The curriculum is built on across the school through the relationships and sex education (RSE) and the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programmes, alongside aspects of the science curriculum. This is in accordance with statutory guidance. Leaders have consulted with parents to explain that the RSE programme is aligned to the school's Christian values.
7. Pupils recognise the rich diversity within the school community and demonstrate respect and sensitivity when considering the individuality of their peers. They demonstrate high levels of empathy for others. Pupils can explain the importance of inclusion and equality so that differences are accepted and celebrated.
8. Leaders and staff are positive and effective role models. Pupils demonstrate confidence and maturity when discussing different topics and situations. They are articulate, thoughtful and balanced in their views.
9. Governors and leaders have established rigorous and effective arrangements to safeguard pupils throughout the school. Leaders and staff make it a high priority to keep pupils safe and secure. The school's caring and nurturing environment is clear to see.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that greater oversight of the quality of teaching identifies where teaching needs to improve so that all teaching supports pupils to learn successfully;
- broaden and increase the range of opportunities, including extra-curricular activities, to further develop pupils' self-confidence, independence, skills and interests.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders know their school very well. They have the knowledge and skills to provide pupils with the inclusive care and nurture as befits the school's Christian values.
11. Leaders have many different roles and responsibilities. They are committed to carry out the necessary range of management and teaching responsibilities to ensure the smooth and successful running of the school.
12. Governors have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the relevant policies and procedures within the school. They use their skills and expertise to challenge and hold leaders to account. Governors and leaders make sure that standards are consistently met and pupils benefit from the school's provision.
13. Governors and leaders are fully aware of the limitations of the ageing school site and its resources. They work constructively to address these challenges. Governors and leaders understand their duty to manage and mitigate risk throughout the school so that pupils' wellbeing is promoted. They use the advice and guidance of external specialists to good effect. The Health and Safety (H&S), fire safety and risk assessment policies and procedures are suitably rigorous.
14. Governors and leaders are committed to continuous improvement. They identify the right areas for improvement. They take the necessary actions and check that these actions strengthen the school's provision.
15. Leaders' broad curriculum enables pupils to make progress and gain the skills and knowledge required for the next stage of their education. This includes pupils who have SEND and EAL pupils. However, in some lessons teaching does not extend pupils' learning sufficiently and pupils do not make the progress that they should.
16. Leaders and governors take pupils' safety seriously. Any safeguarding concerns are identified and managed in accordance with local procedures. Leaders have forged appropriate links with a range of external agencies. They have established systems which ensure compliance with the standards and support a culture of care, nurture and trust. The safeguarding policy is available on the school website.
17. Leaders and staff in the early years setting have established effective and caring rules and routines. These strongly promote children's wellbeing and independence. Children are taught to help each other and work together when tidying up. Children understand how to share and be kind to those around them. Children describe their likes and dislikes. They learn about differences and similarities, knowing that they are all special and unique.
18. Leaders take action to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. They make reasonable adjustments to improve various aspects of accessibility. For example, that pupils with additional needs can access the full curriculum offer.
19. The school's complaints policy is thorough, detailed and fully compliant. It is published on the school website. Complaints are rare. When they do occur, leaders follow the necessary procedures promptly and systematically so that issues are resolved.

20. The school website provides parents and prospective parents with important information regarding their children's academic performance, admissions procedures and key school policies. Leaders complete the required annual returns for pupils who are funded or partly funded by the local authority. Leaders send these returns to the appropriate local authority.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

21. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. In the primary school, leaders have established a broad curriculum that supports pupils to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills. Pupils enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively. They listen to each other and share their ideas with clarity and thought. This is done in an environment of mutual respect.
23. In the secondary school, the curriculum provides pupils with a range of linguistic, mathematical, scientific and technological experiences. This is despite the financial and physical limitations of this small school. The curriculum is typically taught well and meets pupils' different needs. Pupils, including those who have SEND, learn successfully over time.
24. Throughout the school, teachers' secure subject knowledge enables pupils to develop their subject-specific knowledge and understanding. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary appropriately in their learning. In early years children explain the properties of different shapes. They can explain the difference between a square and a cube. Children explain the patterns they have made in terms of repetition and number.
25. Leaders have developed an assessment system to check each pupil's progress in every subject. Teachers identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers use this information to plan what they will teach in future lessons. This supports pupils to learn effectively. Teachers share pupils' assessment information with parents through termly reports.
26. Lessons are typically well-planned and taught using strategies that support pupils' different learning needs. Staff respond to pupils' interests and adapt lessons accordingly. For example, in English, pupils in Years 5 and 6 readily apply their knowledge of persuasive language to act out spontaneous performances. In some lessons, teaching lacks pace and pupils lose concentration. This is not always picked up by leaders. Teachers are not supported to improve their teaching and pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
27. Staff in early years provide parents with termly reports, regular updates and daily conversations. This helps parents to understand their children's achievements and how they can support their children's learning at home. Children in the early years make progress, particularly in their communication and language which results in most children meeting the early learning goals. As they progress through primary school, high quality teaching enables pupils to continue to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. They become confident communicators who are polite, well-mannered and ready to investigate the world around them.
28. GCSE results in 2023 were in line with national averages.
29. Pupils who have SEND are supported through in-class support, individual learning plans and the use of external agencies, for example, speech therapists. This enables these pupils to make progress at least in line with their peers. Similarly, EAL pupils are provided with additional support for speaking, listening and writing. They make rapid progress in these skills. Leaders' increased oversight would highlight any staff training needs and ensure that pupils receive high-quality support consistently across the school.
30. Leaders provide pupils with recreational activities to develop a range of social, creative and physical skills. The school has limited resources and facilities on site. Leaders make good use of local facilities

such as a dance studio, tennis club and the local park. A timetabled games afternoon encourages pupils to be involved with physical activities to complement their classroom learning. However, both pupils and parents would like to see greater opportunities to further promote pupils' personal development.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

31. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

32. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are in place and understood by staff and pupils. Good behaviour is promoted and pupils' wellbeing is supported. Incidents of bullying within the school are rare. Pupils are confident to address any friendship issues should they arise. Pupils recognise that staff do not tolerate bullying and would deal with any incidents swiftly and appropriately. Leaders keep detailed records. They analyse this information to spot any trends and take necessary actions.
33. Pupils are positive about their experiences at school. They understand how the values of care and love that they are shown help them to improve their self-confidence and self-esteem. This impacts positively on pupils' academic achievement and overall emotional wellbeing.
34. Staff work collectively and in partnership with parents to support pupils' mental health through early identification and a tailored response to pupils' individual needs. Pupils benefit, for example, from being linked with external agencies or supported with opportunities to find a safe space to work through their concerns. Pupils participate in practical activities such as baking, sewing and gardening or some quiet time for self-reflection.
35. The Psalm Garden, which has been designed and developed by pupils and staff, embodies the school's spiritual approach where the community are encouraged to take time to appreciate and be thankful for their surroundings. Pupils are proud of their involvement in this project which provides a peaceful place in which they can make spiritual connections between their lives and the world around them.
36. Pupils throughout the school speak positively about the RSE and PSHE lessons being a key element in their personal, emotional and academic development. Although pupils are not overly familiar with the terminology of protected characteristics, they demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities in this area. They use this as a focus to celebrate differences and individuality. Leaders foster an environment where mutual respect and a sense of community are a natural part of all the interactions pupils have with their peers.
37. Pupils are well-supervised throughout the school day. They have easy and prompt access to appropriate medical support and first aid when they feel unwell or are injured. Leaders and staff in early years adhere to the required adult-child ratios. They make sure that supervision is always sufficient to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in their care.
38. Staff in early years teach children about healthy lifestyles including recognising good oral hygiene practices through providing role play situations.
39. Older pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities and play their part in the smooth running of the school. Year 11 pupils supervise the younger pupils to tidy up after they have eaten their lunch. Pupils relish the opportunity to support each other and take pride in their school environment.
40. Leaders have a clear attendance and admissions process. Staff record all required information according to statutory guidance. Leaders report to the local authority when pupils join and leave at

non-standard times during the school year. Any daily absences are followed up swiftly. Leaders ensure information is obtained about the destinations of pupils who leave the school.

41. Management of the school site and its resources provide significant challenges to governors and leaders. They implement a regular programme of maintenance and health and safety checks to ensure the premises and facilities are safe and secure. Policies regarding fire safety are implemented effectively so reducing the risk from fire.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 42. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

43. Secondary school pupils demonstrate the school's Christian values through their behaviour and by being good role models to younger pupils. However, they have limited opportunities to take on roles of responsibility. When given these opportunities, for example, being a school councillor or working on the tidying rota, they fulfil their roles with commitment and maturity. In the primary school, the recently introduced role of the 'happiness heroes' enables pupils to take on positions of responsibility and to support their peers to resolve friendship issues. These opportunities have a positive impact on pupils' social development, self-confidence and self-esteem.
44. Leaders provide a wide range of post-16 options to their Year 11 pupils. These include A-level choices and vocational courses at local sixth form colleges, and various apprenticeships options. Pupils are given careers guidance through the curriculum and impartial one-to-one advice is provided by an external company brought in by the school.
45. Pupils are taught strategies to cope emotionally with the world outside of the school through pastoral and outdoor wellbeing support. For example, pupils enjoy practical gardening activities in the Psalm Garden. Pupils are encouraged to become good citizens in their lives after Trinity School.
46. Fundamental British values are inherent in the Christian faith and leaders ensure that this is embedded in the PSHE curriculum. Pupils confidently and accurately explain the British system of government which uses a democratic voting system and that views are represented by elected members of parliament.
47. In the secondary school, opportunities to explore economic education form an important part of the PSHE curriculum. Year 10 pupils talk knowledgeably about the 'finance and managing money' topic they cover within the PSHE curriculum. Pupils describe how running the school tuck shop helps them successfully manage their own personal finances. They understand that financial management is an important life skill.
48. Year 7 pupils demonstrate balanced, respectful and well-informed views in their discussions on migration and emigration, culture and poverty and the resulting social impacts of this. Older pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of other cultures when considering the differences between their own faith and that of Judaism.
49. Pupils are extremely supportive of each other. They demonstrate a keen sense of right and wrong in their interactions with staff and their peers, both in and out of lessons. During break and lunch times, older pupils encourage quieter and younger pupils to join them in their play. Pupils consistently demonstrate their intention to contribute to the well-being of their present and future communities through the charitable work they participate in; for example, collecting donations for the local foodbanks.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

50. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

51. Governors and leaders ensure that all staff have a robust understanding of their statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding. Staff training includes understanding the policies and procedures in place to ensure pupils are taught in a safe environment. This includes how to report low level concerns and whistleblowing. Leaders respond promptly and appropriately to any reported concerns.
52. Safeguarding concerns are logged appropriately, including the very rare incidents of child on child abuse, sexual harassment, and racial issues.
53. Leaders provide regular training for pupils, parents and staff on issues surrounding e-safety so that pupils know how to keep safe online. Filtering and monitoring systems are in place to ensure the safety of pupils when accessing digital material online in school.
54. All governors and staff receive annual training in line with the latest requirements along with regular updates covering aspects such as Prevent. Safeguarding is a standing item on all meeting agendas for governors, leaders and staff.
55. Governors and leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously, as evidenced by their rigorous safer recruitment procedures and the checks made on staff before they join the school.
56. Leaders afford the same thorough approach to safeguarding in early years. Staff are appropriately trained and understand how to respond to and report any concerns. They understand how to collaborate with the school's wider safeguarding team.
57. Safeguarding leaders have appropriate links with external agencies and often liaise with them for advice and training resources. These are shared, as appropriate, with staff. Through this partnership with external agencies, regular training and their understanding of pupils' needs, staff effectively support any pupils who are at risk of harm.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

58. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Trinity School
Department for Education number	357/6000
Registered charity number	1163326
Address	Trinity School Birbeck Street Off High Street Stalybridge Cheshire SK15 1SH
Phone number	0161 303 0674
Email address	office@trinityschool.org.uk
Website	www.trinityschool.org.uk
Proprietor	The trustees of Trinity School
Chair	Mr G Cottrell
Headteacher	Mr Christopher O’Gorman
Age range	3 to 16
Number of pupils	128
Number of children in the early years registered setting	13
Date of previous inspection	25 to 27 February 2020

Information about the school

59. Trinity School is an independent co-educational day school located in Stalybridge, Cheshire. The school has charitable status and is governed by a board of trustees. The school comprises two sections: a primary school and a secondary school.
60. There are 13 children in the early years comprising one Nursery and Reception class.
61. The school has identified 28 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
62. There are 22 pupils who speak English as an additional language.
63. The school states that its aims are to 'bring the love of God into the classroom' by providing the best educational practice combined with Christian principles and to ensure that every child achieves their God-given potential.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

30 April to 2 May 2024

64. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

65. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

66. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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