



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

## **Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**Trinity School**

**February 2020**



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### School's Details

|                                  |  |    |                |    |
|----------------------------------|--|----|----------------|----|
| <b>School</b>                    | Trinity School   |    |                |    |
| <b>DfE number</b>                | 357/6000   |    |                |    |
| <b>Registered charity number</b> | 1163326  |    |                |    |
| <b>Address</b>                   | Trinity School<br>Birbeck Street<br>Off High Street<br>Stalybridge<br>SK15 1SH |    |                |    |
| <b>Telephone number</b>          | 0161 303 0674  |    |                |    |
| <b>Email address</b>             | office@trinityschool.org.uk  |    |                |    |
| <b>Headteacher</b>               | Mr Michael Stewart   |    |                |    |
| <b>Chair of governors</b>        | Mr Andrew Chadwick   |    |                |    |
| <b>Age range</b>                 | 3 to 16  |    |                |    |
| <b>Number of pupils on roll</b>  | 112  |    |                |    |
|                                  | <b>EYFS</b>  | 12 | <b>Primary</b> | 50 |
|                                  | <b>Seniors</b>   | 50 |                |    |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>          | 25 to 27 February 2020   |    |                |    |

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Trinity School is an independent co-educational school for pupils from age 3 to 16 years. Founded in 1978, the school is Christian in character but admits pupils of other faiths or no faith. The school has charitable status and is governed by a board of trustees.
- 1.2 The school comprises three sections: an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), a primary school and a secondary school.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's vision is 'bringing the love of God into the classroom'; it aims to achieve this by providing the best educational practice combined with Christian principles, to ensure that every child achieves their God given potential.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of cultural backgrounds, living in and around Stalybridge and Greater Manchester. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is below average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 28 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, 16 of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 9 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. The school uses data to identify pupils who are the most able in the school's population and the curriculum is modified for them.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 In the primary school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 Pupils take GCSE examinations in their final year at the school. The small numbers involved prevent reliable comparison with national averages.
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### **PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

### **PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 2.10 appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

### **PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

**2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.14 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

**2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

**2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

**2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

### 3. Educational Quality Inspection

#### Preface

**The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work.** It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

**The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

## Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and other school activities and are keen to make the most of every opportunity to learn and achieve.
- Pupils demonstrate good speaking and listening skills, and present ideas to others well.
- Pupils make good progress, but sometimes this is restricted because the school does not consistently use assessment data to inform teaching practice in the classroom.
- Pupils' non-academic achievement is limited by the narrow range of extra-curricular opportunities available to them.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils' behaviour and moral awareness is excellent and they demonstrate full respect for the school's values and code of conduct.
- Pupils show excellent respect and tolerance for diversity and religious and cultural differences, benefitting from the school's inclusive ethos.
- Pupils show consideration, kindness and care for one another and for staff who are positive role models in this regard.

## Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Enable pupils to make best possible progress at all times by consistently using assessment data to inform teaching practice in the classroom.
- Enable all pupils to strengthen their non-academic achievement by widening the range of extra-curricular opportunities available to them.

## The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

3.5 The achievement of pupils, including those with EAL and SEND, is good overall and the school is mostly successful in its aim to provide the best educational practice to support pupils of all abilities in their learning. Pupils are performing in line with their abilities as demonstrated by standardised indicators of progress, scrutiny of pupils' work and the observation of pupils' performance in lessons. Pupils achieve well academically because they receive targeted support in small classes from a caring and nurturing staff, and they appreciate that staff know them extremely well as individuals. Pupils' progress is monitored by the 'Trinity Tracker' which uses end of unit assessments and formal examinations to measure achievement. However, there is inconsistency in the way that this assessment data is used to inform teaching practice in the classroom, and next steps in learning are not always understood by, or made clear to pupils and their progress is sometimes restricted as a result.

3.6 Pupils' achievement in lessons is good because teachers possess secure subject knowledge and employ a range of suitable methods in their planning to cater for pupils of all abilities. For example in an English lesson, each pupil completed a part of a literary analysis adapted to reflect their ability level and then the whole class collaborated to complete the piece. In the primary school, pupils worked on a shared grammar task looking at direct speech with some working from clear prompts on the board, whilst higher achieving pupils created their own characters and created extended dialogue. Pupils benefit from opportunities to think creatively and make good decisions which extend their own

learning, for example in the EYFS, where children were enthusiastically and confidently managing a pretend flower shop, serving customers, dealing with stock, taking payment and giving change. Pupils' achievement is enhanced by well-paced, animated and enthusiastic teaching and this has been developed through a structured programme of positive appraisal and peer observation cultivated by the leadership and management team.

- 3.7 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are well developed in most lessons because teaching is well-planned, learning objectives are very clear and lesson content effectively builds on prior learning. In a geography lesson, pupils showed excellent knowledge of pollution in China and were able to interpret information very successfully to draw conclusions. Pupils think for themselves when prompted, but sometimes the most able receive insufficient challenge and the inconsistent use of assessment data limits the identification of their need to be stretched in their learning.
- 3.8 Pupils' communication skills are well developed across the school. They are articulate in lessons, keen to debate and confident in discussion, as well as being very good at listening to each other. Pupils respond positively to the culture of discussion and mutual respect fostered in lessons. In a 'world view' lesson, pupils used sophisticated language confidently responding to questions which engaged and stimulated discussion on the importance of bearing witness to the events of the Holocaust; their readiness to share their thoughts and feelings was enhanced by the purposeful yet relaxed working atmosphere created in the classroom. Children in the EYFS enjoy language and their progress in communicating is supported by creative and informative displays which celebrate individual and class achievements. Pupils are confident and increasingly effective writers over time and they can adapt their writing to suit the needs of different purposes and audiences. However, on occasions the amount of progress seen in written work in the senior school was limited.
- 3.9 In mathematics, pupils acquire a range of basic numeracy skills and these are applied across the curriculum. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson there was reinforcement of learning through the use of graphs and numeracy skills were developed by cross curricular links with computing and science. Pupils with high ability in mathematics develop their skills well because they are challenged by extension work provided in lessons.
- 3.10 Pupils exhibit very positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about working collaboratively in groups and maintain good concentration in lessons. They are sensitive to each other and appreciative of the environment in which they work, wanting to make the most of every opportunity to develop knowledge given to them. They are keen to undertake research projects and complete them well. Some higher ability pupils are provided with extension tasks which allow them to show more initiative and independence in their learning, but other pupils do not always have similar opportunities and so their progress is restricted.
- 3.11 Pupils develop competent information and communication technology (ICT) skills and use these confidently in other areas of learning. The opportunity provided by the effective use of an online interactive learning platform in the senior school enables pupils to develop skills further through targeted and personalised online assessment. Children in the EYFS are confident using online curriculum-focused activities and show familiarity with the software and good mouse control. Pupils' confidence in the use of ICT is limited in some sections of the primary school as they are not required to use it consistently and independently across the curriculum.
- 3.12 Pupils are engaged in lessons and have a positive working relationship with their teachers and their peers. Pupils' work is well-planned and well-organised and they readily complete self-directed work, take responsibility for their studies and reflect on knowledge gained in previous lessons. In Years 3 and 4, pupils showed an eagerness to learn by choosing to use their break to investigate shapes further using mathematics dictionaries to help them: this is fuelled by the atmosphere in the classrooms which celebrates learning at all times. In questionnaire responses, an overwhelming majority of parents and pupils felt that the school was developing pupils' confidence and skills for the future and this was

reflected in the pupils' enthusiastic appreciation of the skills and knowledge they had developed during the GCSE consultation day.

- 3.13 Pupils' achievements in the classroom are good and in Years 5 and 6 pupils were clearly able to articulate their own strengths and those of others, ranging from English and maths to music, sport and drama. However, throughout the school pupils' non-academic achievement is limited by the absence of a structured extra-curricular activity programme to enable them to flourish outside the classroom.
- 3.14 Pupils are keen and willing learners; they have a positive attitude and are confident having been nurtured in a secure and caring environment. This constructive attitude to learning stems from the overarching ethos of encouragement and celebration of achievement fostered by the leadership and management of the school.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.15 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.16 Pupils show high levels of self-understanding for their age and a well-developed sense of their own strengths and weaknesses. They are confident when working together, actively seeking help from their peers as well as their teachers in a positive, affirming and encouraging classroom environment where they feel able to express themselves without fear or embarrassment. Pupils in a Year 9 Spanish lesson were confident in conversing in the target language having been encouraged to build resilience by making mistakes and taking risks in order to learn. They show the ability to adapt to new situations and show perseverance in the face of difficulty. Pupils are accepting of each other and value the culture of the school, appreciating and enjoying the way in which they mix freely across year groups. Pupils demonstrate excellent self-knowledge and self-discipline and appreciate the fact that they are cherished and valued for who they are as individuals. These qualities underpin the school's pastoral support system and are consistently modelled by senior leaders.
- 3.17 Pupils show a well-developed understanding of the ways that decisions matter in life and the fact that there are consequences to their actions. This is a result of leaders' and governors' drive to ensure that teaching supports learning with high expectations and the encouragement to see setbacks as an opportunity to learn. Pupils spoke with warmth of the freedom they have to make their own decisions within a supportive setting. Behaviour around school is excellent and pupils take care of each other and their environment, for example in the way they eat together as a class, enjoy each other's company and then cheerfully tidy and clean the classroom afterwards. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 used a Bible studies lesson to talk maturely and sensitively about the ways they would use their personal strengths to make society a better place. Year 11 prefects are involved in helping younger pupils make positive decisions and maintaining discipline in the school environment, and primary pupils act as peer mentors helping those who need their support.
- 3.18 Pupils have a highly developed appreciation for the non-material aspects of life and of the world around them, talking about the importance at all times of making the most of what they have. They reflect with a maturity beyond their age. Pupils feel comfortable sharing their own experiences of spirituality encouraged by the moral foundation and spiritual culture of the school together with an empathetic leadership, and this fulfils the school's aim to bring the love of God into the classroom. Pupils talked passionately about the importance of maintaining good relationships within school and always making everyone feel welcome.
- 3.19 Pupils have an excellent understanding of and respect for society's systems of rules and laws, which they demonstrate through their engagement and achievement in a thorough, stimulating and well-considered citizenship curriculum. They enjoy responding with enthusiastic arguments in debates and discussions and have a keen sense of fair play. Pupils accept responsibility for their own behaviour readily, consistently referencing the fact that it was unacceptable to behave in a manner that transgressed the rules. A clearly understood behaviour code was evident even in the youngest children

in the EYFS, who explained with considerable enthusiasm the traffic light system in which green represents good behaviour, red is unacceptable and amber means a pupil has received a warning. Pupils genuinely care for each other, showing no tolerance at all for bullying. The absence of bullying and presence of good behaviour in school was overwhelmingly supported by pupils', parents' and staff's views in questionnaire responses.

- 3.20 Pupils readily help and support one another's learning in the classroom to solve problems effectively, and their excellent social skills are facilitated by the small class sizes. Pupils, teachers and the leadership team staff refer to the school as a family and pupils spoke with considerable warmth about the school and how much they valued the very productive relationships they have with the staff. At lunchtime, pupils were seen happily chatting and playing football together in mixed age groups. Older pupils show concern for younger pupils and throughout school there is a clear sense of recognising each other's needs and a willingness to support those with difficulties. In a Year 9 computing lesson, pupils spontaneously offered help to one another as they worked through a challenging task, and the calm classroom atmosphere and consistent behaviour management framed this supportive approach.
- 3.21 Pupils make a significant contribution to the community through charitable enterprise such as Operation Christmas Child, sponsoring and fundraising for a 'compassion' child, or by using the school's facilities to make their own cakes to sell in support of the Macmillan coffee morning. Year 11 pupils demonstrate excellent leadership qualities and are extremely effective in promoting the ethos of the school. In the primary school, pupils vote to elect designated pupils to act as 'rainbow carers' who fulfil the role of peer mentors for younger pupils. All pupils take their responsibilities and personal accountability very seriously. Older pupils are successful in developing the skills they need to tackle the next stage in their lives with confidence, shown through the ways in which they support younger pupils and demonstrate respect and responsibility as leaders in school.
- 3.22 Pupils have an excellent sense of respect for each other and for maintaining harmony within the community. In discussion, pupils spoke with maturity about the importance of tolerance in school and also drew attention to the notices and displays evident in all classrooms actively emphasising these values. Pupils showed a thoughtful and perceptive awareness of British society and the democratic process and were inclusive and understanding towards those of other backgrounds; they spoke about the importance of valuing diversity and what they had learnt through the citizenship curriculum. In the 'world views' lesson, pupils spoke of valuing the way that they looked at a country then studied its faith, history, culture and background to get a better understanding of the world around them.
- 3.23 Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy, physically and mentally, in terms of diet, exercise and lifestyle. They have a full understanding about online safety, developed in tutor time, lessons and the assembly programme. In responding to the questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of pupils agreed they knew how to stay safe online and this was endorsed in discussion when they spoke of the risks they face in modern society and the fact that they felt well equipped to be digitally aware. Pupils feel very secure within the school environment. They understand how to be mentally healthy and value the opportunity provided by 'pastures' a quiet place in school where they could take time out during the school day to alleviate stress and encourage mental well-being. Pupils are happy to seek advice or support when needed and speak positively about knowing that there is always someone on hand to help them if they have a problem.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, the designated safeguarding governor and attended form meetings and an assembly. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Mrs Jane Buttery | Reporting inspector                               |
| Mrs Lynne Horner | Team inspector (Head, SofH school)                |
| Mr Gavin Sinnott | Team inspector (Director of Studies, IAPS school) |