

Inspection of an outstanding school: Trinity School

Heathway, Dagenham, Essex RM10 7SJ

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 September 2023

Outcome

Trinity School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this excellent school. They like the lessons and the staff who teach and support them. There are lots of interesting and engaging things to do at school and everybody works hard to make it a welcoming and cheerful place for all pupils.

Pupils who attend the school have very complex needs. Staff are well trained and understand pupils' particular needs extremely well. Staff notice straight away if a pupil is anxious or uncomfortable and they respond quickly and sensitively.

The school is a calm and welcoming environment. Many pupils require a high degree of support to help them manage their emotions and behaviour, and this support is put in place in a calm and respectful way. All staff have very high expectations of pupils to behave well and to try their best in lessons. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and they are relaxed in the company of the adults who support them. Adults who work at the school understand how pupils are developing their social and communication skills. Staff are patient and attentive, and they allow pupils time and space to be as independent as possible.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. The school caters for pupils with a wide range of needs, and most pupils have significant barriers to their learning. These barriers are most pronounced when pupils first join the school, and the school has a sharp focus on ensuring that pupils feel happy, safe and secure so that they can concentrate on learning. If there is any unkind behaviour between pupils, this is sorted out very quickly.

Leaders at all levels continually review and refine the curriculum. The curriculum is highly personalised for each pupil and focuses on the most important things that they should learn and remember. There is a clear system for tracking pupils' understanding, and this

ensures that pupils have fully mastered each step before moving on to the next part of the sequence.

Reading is prioritised at the school. The school has a structured approach to teaching phonics, and leaders and teachers make sensitive adaptations to the programme to meet individual pupils' needs. Some pupils are learning the early skills and knowledge they need to get them ready for phonics. A significant number of other pupils can decode text very well. These pupils are now developing their reading skills so they fully understand what they have read. This enables them to access the rest of the curriculum and be more independent.

Pupils are extremely well supported to regulate their behaviour. Most pupils at the school need extra help and understanding to manage their emotions at times. Staff are expert in spotting the early signs that a pupil is starting to become anxious or may need help to communicate what they need or want. There is a highly structured programme of support in place for behaviour, which includes teaching pupils how to communicate in more positive ways. Staff provide this support for pupils in a calm, sensitive and respectful way, so that disruption is rare and pupils can get on with their learning as soon as possible.

Pupils are taught important skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils learn about safe and healthy relationships and what to do if they are worried about something. Pupils also learn about different cultures and ways of living, and how important it is to be tolerant and respectful of other people. Pupils enjoy going on regular outings in the local community. They go to local shops and parks and open spaces. Pupils take part in different sporting events and cultural activities, such as Panathlon and the Superbloom Communities Project at the Tower of London. The curriculum for older pupils in the further education department has a focus on increasing independence, including cooking, self-advocacy and independent living skills. There are opportunities for pupils to learn about the world of work and to experience vocational learning such as horticulture and retail.

Leaders and staff feel well supported at Trinity School. They say it is like a family. Workload and well-being are kept under constant scrutiny. Governors take their roles very seriously. They know the school very well and have a wealth of skills between them. The whole school community is united in its commitment to the values of the school, and works harmoniously for the benefit of pupils and their families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next

inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in November 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	131102
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10269260
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Glenda Spencer
Headteacher	Susan Ball
Website	https://www.trinityschooldagenham.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school makes provision for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including autism, severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The school manages a specially resourced provision for 27 pupils with complex autism.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and both deputy headteachers. They also met with leaders, including heads of school and assistant headteachers.
- Inspectors met with the chair of governors and the safeguarding governor. They also met with a senior representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication, language and literacy, personal and social education and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with pupils in their lessons and in small groups. They also considered the 12 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Gary Pocock, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Lorraine Slee	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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