

Tring School

Mortimer Hill, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5JD

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is led by an aspirational headteacher who is supported and challenged effectively by governors and other senior leaders. As a result, this is a good and improving school.
- Teachers and school leaders know pupils well. In most lessons pupils are provided with the support and challenge they need in order to be successful. Pupils are highly motivated to learn.
- Pupils' consistently positive attitudes and participation in lessons help them to make good progress. In English pupils make perceptive contributions to class discussions that help them make confident improvements to their written work.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding is used effectively to improve outcomes for pupils. Pupils with low starting points make good progress in literacy in Year 7.
- Pupils like coming to Tring School. They understand and consistently meet the school's high expectations for good behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Sixth-form leaders and tutors provide exceptional guidance, care and support for students that are accurately matched to their aspirations and needs. Most students advance to higher education or training.
- The school offers pupils an extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are enthusiastic about the many trips, visits and cultural activities organised by the school because it helps them to understand what they are studying in greater depth.
- The school's curriculum at all key stages is broad and balanced, offering a wide range of opportunities. Pupils make most progress in English and mathematics because school leaders have focused on these areas.
- In some subjects, including computer studies, German and business studies, pupils do not make as rapid progress as they should.
- From their starting points, outcomes for most pupils have improved strongly over two years, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils at Tring School achieve less well than other pupils in the school, particularly in English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects.
- Teachers do not always use information about pupils' special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities to plan learning. As a result these pupils do not make as much progress from their starting points as they should.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils so that they achieve in line with other pupils nationally with similar starting points by:
 - leaders evaluating and improving the impact of pupil premium funding on outcomes
 - ensuring that all teachers work to overcome the barriers to learning faced by these pupils.
- Further develop teaching and learning so that:
 - pupils make consistently good progress in all curriculum subjects
 - professional development for teachers is directly related to improving pupils' outcomes
 - in all subjects teachers plan learning that takes into account the individual needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and senior leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They are aspirational for pupils' outcomes and their behaviour. School development priorities are widely understood by all staff. Teachers' performance management targets are linked to these priorities. The school is improving rapidly as a result.
- School leaders have raised expectations about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. Where the quality of teaching does not meet the school's high expectations, support programmes are in place. The number of these plans has decreased significantly since the last inspection.
- Teaching is now good and improving throughout the school because leaders have adopted a systematic approach to professional development for all teachers. Newly qualified teachers develop their skills and understanding because school leaders provide a programme of professional development which is adapted specifically to their needs.
- Leaders of subjects such as English and mathematics are supported and challenged well by senior leaders. Improvements in outcomes for pupils in these subjects have been more rapid and sustained than in other subjects.
- School leaders have taken prompt action to address weaknesses in computer science, business studies, history and German. The quality of teaching and learning in these subjects is improving.
- The school's curriculum is evaluated regularly and adjustments made so that it matches the needs of pupils. For example, the school has reduced the number of languages taught to ensure greater depth in learning. As a result, pupils in Year 7 are making more secure progress in learning one language than pupils in the past did in learning at least two.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to help pupils eligible for additional support. A structured literacy programme is in place to ensure that pupils who enter the school with attainment below expectations for their age are helped to catch up quickly. In 2017 a high proportion of pupils met or exceeded their targets for improvement in literacy as a result of this programme.
- The school uses tutor time, regular assemblies and lessons to contribute to pupils' understanding of British values and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural well-being. For example, pupils learn about radicalism in their 'life skills' lessons. Others broaden their understanding of cultures through visits such as a service project in Borneo.
- Leaders recognise that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, attain better in English and mathematics than in other subjects. To improve pupils' outcomes the school has introduced a robust system for tracking pupils' progress in all curriculum subjects and made teachers more accountable for the progress of the pupils they teach. This is helping teachers to plan their teaching more effectively and evidence provided by the school shows that current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are starting to make better progress in most curriculum subjects.

- The school is effective in identifying the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, assessment information about these pupils is not used fully to inform teaching and learning across the curriculum. As a result, some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make as much progress as they should.
- In modern foreign languages and humanities subjects disadvantaged pupils achieve less well than others in the school because school leaders have concentrated on making improvements in English, mathematics and science. Leaders recognise that the difference in EBacc outcomes for disadvantaged pupils needs further improvement.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are happy, well cared for and making good progress. A few parents expressed concerns about their children's achievement in some subjects including science.

Governance

- The governors of Tring School have a good range of experience and professional expertise. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. Governors are rigorous in monitoring the school's progress towards meeting its strategic priorities. As a result, they support and challenge the school well in most aspects of its work. Governors are an integral part of the ongoing improvements in the school.
- Governors recognise that the progress disadvantaged pupils make is not as good as it should be. They have now adopted rigorous systems for monitoring the progress of disadvantaged pupils. However, this has not yet provided them with sufficient information to effectively challenge the work of leaders in this area. Disadvantaged pupils continue to make less progress than other pupils nationally.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding leader has been trained appropriately and has a good understanding of the role. He is a member of the school's senior leadership team and this gives appropriate status to this key area of the school's work.
- The designated safeguarding leader is supported by five deputies and this ensures that there is always someone available for staff to talk to if they are concerned about a pupil.
- The school has effective systems in place for identifying, tracking and supporting pupils at risk. Leaders are rigorous in ensuring that the school's policies and protocols are understood fully and implemented consistently by staff.
- The school's single central record of pre-employment checks now meets statutory requirements. The school responded quickly and effectively to remedy minor administrative oversights apparent in the single central record at the beginning of the inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers typically use questioning well to encourage pupils to assess their understanding and to extend their thinking. Pupils respond well to challenging, probing questions from teachers and this helps them to make better progress. When teachers check pupils' understanding of key concepts throughout lessons, pupils readily ask for clarification if they do not understand. Misconceptions are quickly addressed.
- The school has embedded a strong learning culture. Pupils and their teachers demonstrate a profound understanding that learning is the core purpose of the school. Teachers routinely reflect on how effectively their teaching helps pupils to learn and whole-school professional development has extended their repertoire of teaching techniques.
- Pupils at Tring School are confident and inquisitive learners. Their good attitudes to learning help them to make good progress. For example, in further mathematics in Year 11, pupils are resilient in applying their learning to help them to understand concepts and meet complex learning challenges.
- In English, learning is strengthened by high-quality discussions between pupils and their teachers. For example, in one Year 8 class visited by inspectors, pupils asked for clarification about the detailed feedback from their teacher. Some pupils helped to provide further explanation and as a result the whole class showed a strong commitment to improving their work.
- Pupils support one another in their learning. For example, in history pupils work in small groups to deepen their understanding before applying their knowledge to answering examination-style questions. This means that pupils are confident and knowledgeable about their learning.
- Recent changes to the way support staff work are having a clear impact on the progress pupils make. There have been marked improvements in the collaboration between teachers and learning support assistants. Support staff have a better understanding of what is expected of them and how to help the pupils that they work with. As a result, pupils with low prior attainment are now making rapid progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has introduced 'electronic exercise books' in most subjects. This approach has helped most pupils to organise their learning better. For example, inspectors found that pupils in Years 10 and 11 have detailed notes online about how to make systematic improvements in their responses to examination-style questions.
- The school's introduction of structured feedback to pupils about their work helps pupils to understand their strengths and what they need to improve. For example, in Year 11 mathematics, pupils make rapid improvements because the teacher's comments are detailed and specific for individual pupils.
- A small group of pupils are educated in alternative provision so that their learning and social needs are met. The school ensures that the providers meet safeguarding requirements. The school monitors the attendance of these pupils and receives regular reports that they are making good progress in their attendance and academic subjects.
- Most teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and they know their

pupils well. In English and mathematics pupils make good progress because their teachers use this knowledge and understanding to plan learning activities that are matched closely to the needs of learners.

- In some lessons, where teaching is less effective, teachers do not take pupils' starting points sufficiently into account. This means that in some lessons learning time is not used effectively and pupils do not make enough progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Although published results show good progress in science, pupils told inspectors that the teaching of science relies too much on a self-study approach. As a result pupils do not find the work interesting and do not try as hard as they could. Some parents expressed concern through the free-text service regarding how the school chooses the science qualifications their children are prepared for. School leaders are reviewing how science is taught.
- The needs of individual pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not always described in a way that helps teachers plan learning for these pupils. This means that learning activities do not always meet the needs of these pupils and their progress is less rapid than that of other pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school has a comprehensive 'life skills' programme. For example, pupils learn about keeping safe online and about how to maintain healthy relationships. Pupils understand and respect the school's policy about use of computers and mobile phones. Pupils understand how to stay safe at school and beyond.
- Pupils in the school feel well supported by the adults who work with them. Young people in the school regularly and confidently seek support from school counsellors or heads of house. The school also operates a confidential reporting system for pupils who do not feel confident to approach a responsible adult directly. Pupils feel safe.
- In Years 7 to 11 pupils are arranged into tutor groups that include pupils from every year group. This helps to promote excellent relationships between pupils of different ages. Older pupils understand that they are role models for younger pupils. There is a mature sense of community in tutor groups and houses.
- Leaders ensure that there is effective provision in place to support pupils' social, emotional and mental health. For example, both the 'life skills' programme and tutor groups provide opportunities to work on these aspects of pupils' development. Inspectors found that pupils value additional support from counsellors, tutors and heads of house because it often helps them to work problems out for themselves.
- Pupils are tolerant of others whose points of view may differ from their own because they learn about how to consider the perspectives of others. For example, they plan

debates and routinely practise arguments for and against a particular argument.

Individuals feel respected for who they are.

- The school's tutorial programme includes a focus on well-being through physical activity. In one tutor group pupils in Years 7 to 11 plan and lead 'fresh air Thursday' activities to encourage healthy physical activity.
- The Christian ethos permeates the school. The school's Christian Union is supported by the school chaplains and all year groups have a weekly Christian assembly. In a 'Remembrance' assembly seen by inspectors, pupils reflected on the role of peacemakers in conflicts and how they could commit to being peacemakers in their daily lives. Leaders' promotion of the school's core values provides a model of respectful behaviour which pupils follow.
- School leaders take a strong stance to show that racist language or actions will not be tolerated. They monitor and evaluate each incident and despite an increase in the number of racist incidents last year, none were repeated and there have been no reports of racist incidents in the current academic year.
- Pupils are taught well about citizenship. They understand citizens' rights and responsibilities and are prepared very well for life in modern British society. About half the pupils in Year 11 have signed up for the National Citizens Award.
- Careers information and guidance are very strong at all key stages. The school has adopted a strategic approach to ensure that pupils have access to good information and guidance from Year 7 to 13. In the past two years, no pupils have left the school without continuing in education, employment or training.
- Pupils have a deep and thorough understanding of what bullying is and the forms it can take. They are confident that it is dealt with well by the school. There are few incidents of bullying. When it does occur, leaders take prompt and effective action.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils want to come to Tring School. They love their school and rarely miss a day. Pupils arrive at lessons on time and ready to work. They ensure that they are well prepared and fully equipped for learning.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is consistently exemplary across curriculum subjects and in all year groups, including in the sixth form. They participate extremely well in lessons and remain focused on learning throughout. As a result, learning time is hardly ever wasted by disruptive behaviour.
- Pupils behave extremely well around the school site when moving between lessons and at lunch or breaktimes. Although supervised well by staff, pupils mostly regulate their own behaviour with great maturity because they understand the school's expectations.
- The school provides excellent support for the few pupils whose behaviour is challenging. For example, pupils are all a member of one of the school's four house groups. Each group has a 'head of house' who does not have timetabled teaching responsibilities. This approach works extremely well. Each head of house knows their pupils exceptionally well and, when required, intervenes in a timely fashion. Poor

behaviour is very rare.

- The school's inclusion room is very effective in supporting any pupils who are finding school difficult. Teachers are regular visitors to the inclusion room and a 'virtual' electronic classroom helps the pupils follow normal lessons. Pupils' attendance and progress have improved since the introduction of the inclusion room.
- Attendance has improved over the past three years for all groups and is now above the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved significantly. Few pupils are persistently absent and no groups are disadvantaged by low attendance. Pupils' attendance is monitored very closely by the school and prompt and effective action is taken to tackle absence where necessary.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment shows a three-year improving trend. For example, unvalidated GCSE results for 2017 saw more than three quarters of all pupils achieving standard passes in both English and mathematics, while over half of all pupils achieved strong passes in both subjects.
- By the end of Year 11, pupils make good progress from their different starting points in a wide range of subjects. Outcomes for some groups of pupils are particularly strong. For example, pupils who join the school with low prior attainment make better progress than their peers nationally.
- Pupils' progress in English is significantly better than the national average. This represents a sustained improvement since 2015. This is because teachers consistently respond to what individual pupils know and can do. They set work which rapidly moves pupils on from their starting points.
- The progress pupils make in mathematics is similar to that of other pupils nationally. While disadvantaged pupils made less progress in mathematics than other pupils nationally, the difference is diminishing.
- In mathematics the progress made by pupils with low prior attainment has improved rapidly. This is due to teachers planning learning activities which match the needs of these pupils and because pupils are supported effectively in lessons.
- Inspectors found that pupils currently in the school make good progress in most subjects. Teachers plan learning activities to help pupils develop secure knowledge, skills and understanding. English is a particular strength.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. They understand possible routes for education, training or employment and they attain relevant qualifications. In the past two years no pupils have left the school without precise plans for what they are doing next. The majority have sustained the choices they made.
- Pupils' progress in EBacc subjects is improving generally. In 2016, progress in these subjects was below average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. In 2017, the progress of disadvantaged pupils in these subjects was similar to that of pupils nationally.

- Disadvantaged pupils achieved less well than other pupils nationally in 2017. The school's rigorous approach to tracking the current progress of pupils in all curriculum subjects indicates that disadvantaged pupils are now making secure and rapid progress towards the aspirational targets that the school has set for them.
- Over three years outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have improved in English and mathematics. Progress of these pupils in other curriculum subjects is less secure. This is because teachers do not make effective use of information about the individual needs of pupils to plan learning activities.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Sixth-form leaders monitor standards closely and pursue excellence. Students rise to this challenge and make sustained and substantial progress in their learning. Academic results for students in Tring School sixth form are consistently above average.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge and effective planning help students to make rapid gains in their learning. For example, in English, students' detailed analysis of model answers to examination-style questions meant that they made clear and rapid improvements in their own writing.
- Teachers regularly assess students' progress. Where students fall behind, teachers help them to identify what helps them learn well and offer additional help if required. Students describe the feedback they get from their teachers as 'real ongoing dialogue'. This helps them to develop well-structured responses and support their views with clear evidence.
- Students in the sixth form conduct themselves confidently in the school. They contribute fully in lessons by taking part in group work and class discussions. They develop into well-rounded young adults, extremely well prepared for life when they leave school.
- Leaders tailor the curriculum carefully to meet the needs and aspirations of students. Leaders continually monitor, evaluate, and adjust the curriculum. Students study a wide range of subjects that lead to relevant academic and vocational qualifications. Students' achievements reflect the outstanding progress they make.
- Students appreciate the personal feel of the sixth form. They feel respected by the adults who work with them. As one student said, 'They understand us as people. We are not just names on a list.' The vast majority complete their sixth-form study successfully.
- Students who have not achieved a pass in GCSE English or mathematics receive additional support. In 2017 100% succeeded in passing mathematics at level 2 and no students entered the sixth form without a level 2 qualification in English.
- Students in the sixth form benefit from a comprehensive and imaginative programme of careers information and guidance. Students learn about career pathways, attend careers conventions and all Year 12 students complete work experience placements. Staff support students well to make appropriate choices about their next stage in education, employment or training. The vast majority gain places at their first-choice universities.

- Sixth-form students are mature and thoughtful in their reflections. For example, students identified that they wanted to consider sexual orientation as part of the 'Cool Programme'. Following a presentation by a speaker they responded with insightful questions and observations.
- Students who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress because sixth-form leaders know them well. Detailed strategies are put in place to meet their learning, social and physical needs. As a result, they make good progress during their time in the school.

School details

Unique reference number	138352
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10037662

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,522
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	302
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr David Benson
Headteacher	Mrs Susanna Collings
Telephone number	01442 822 303
Website	www.tring.herts.sch.uk/
Email address	tringschool@tringschool.org
Date of previous inspection	23–24 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils in this school who have high prior attainment on entry is well above average.

- The proportion of pupils receiving additional support for SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support with pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is well below average.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than in most schools of this size and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- A small number of pupils are educated off-site in alternative provision provided by the Dacorum Education Support Centre or Buckinghamshire local authority.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection inspectors observed parts of 65 lessons, sometimes accompanied by senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with governors, the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and newly qualified teachers. The local authority school improvement partner for the school was contacted by telephone.
- Inspectors interviewed pupils in all year groups about their experience of the school. In addition, inspectors observed tutor meetings and an assembly. They observed breaktimes, lunchtime and pupils leaving school by bus.
- Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work in folders, exercise books and in electronic exercise books.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, behaviour records, safeguarding records, minutes of governing body meetings and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 131 questionnaires returned by staff, 477 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 318 responses submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. A small number of written and telephone comments were made about aspects of school management and these were considered together with other evidence gathered by the team and parents' communications directly to Ofsted.

Inspection team

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Liz Cornish	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Kerridge	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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