

Trinity Academy

Trinity Academy Halifax, Shay Lane, Halifax, HX2 9TZ

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- In three years, the academy has grown into a vibrant, highly successful school that is an asset to the North Halifax community. The academy makes the most of its splendid new buildings.
- Leaders have ensured rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and in students' achievement. Teaching is now outstanding. Teachers are highly enthusiastic and continually strive to improve their skills.
- Students' achievement is high. Students in all years make rapid gains in their learning. Current work shows that students reach above average standards, following a strong push on developing their literacy skills.
- The academy adds high value to the achievements of those students who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- The curriculum supports learning well, drawing highly effectively on interactive technologies. It is well-balanced, promoting students' personal development alongside their basic skills.
- Students' behaviour and safety, including the arrangements the academy makes for safeguarding, are excellent. The atmosphere for learning is very purposeful, but enjoyable.
- The sixth form is still developing but is good, with improving scores in examinations and courses that better meet students' needs.
- The Principal's leadership has been a significant factor in the academy's success. He empowers a highly-skilled senior leadership team and has the whole staff on board.
- Robust performance management systems reward and encourage staff at all levels to ensure that students succeed.
- Self-evaluation is strong and accurate. Leaders recognise that they need to refine their systems for checking up on the progress of disabled students or those who have special educational needs.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to narrow the gap between the rates of progress of different groups of students.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons and held meetings with the Principal; senior leaders; leaders of key subjects and of the sixth form; representatives of the boards of governors and trustees; and with a group of staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised published data about students' achievement. They read information provided by the academy about students' current progress. They discussed the academy's self-evaluation. Inspectors looked at samples of students' work and records held by the academy, for example records related to students' behaviour, safety and well-being.
- Inspectors read the 83 responses that had been received on Parent View. They also considered information held by Ofsted and discussed related issues with the Principal.
- Inspectors met with several groups of students and talked to them also in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors met with a representative from the local authority to discuss the academy's role in the local community.

Inspection team

Honoree Gordon, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Isobel Short	Additional Inspector
David Woodhouse	Additional Inspector
Keith Massett	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Trinity Academy opened on the outskirts of North Halifax in September 2010 in the former buildings of the predecessor school, Holy Trinity Senior School and moved to new, purpose-built school buildings nearby in September 2012. The Principal of Trinity Academy has been in post since it opened but has acted as Executive Principal since February 2012. Trinity Academy is much bigger than the average secondary school.
- Children who live in the local community of North Halifax are given preference in admissions to the academy and virtually all of the current students come from this local area.
- The academy has a Church of England foundation but admission is not restricted to children or parents of Christian faith.
- The academy has four sponsors as partners: the Diocese of Wakefield as lead partner; the University of Huddersfield; Calderdale College and Calderdale Council.
- The academy educates students between the ages of 11 and 18. The sixth form is known as Phase 3. There are 1202 students on roll; of these 195 are in Phase 3.
- A quarter of students are known to be eligible for free school meals; this is broadly in line with the average for secondary schools. The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is higher than average.
- The proportion of students who are classed by the academy as requiring support from school action is around one in six. The proportion at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs, for whom specific programmes have been drawn up, is just over one in ten. These figures are also more than typically found nationally. All disabled students and those who have special educational needs are in contact at some stage with a specially resourced unit in the academy. Around 40 students are taught for part of their timetable in a 'nurture group' provision.
- The academy has received pupil premium funds for one quarter of the students in Years 7 to 11. This proportion is higher than typically found. The pupil premium is additional supporting those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Forty new teaching staff will join the academy in September 2013. Of these, 15 had started in the week or day before this inspection, as part of their induction. All students had moved up a year group the week prior to the inspection. Consequently, many teachers were teaching new classes of students for the first or second time.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the monitoring and analysis of the progress made by those students who are disabled or have special educational needs to ensure that all groups of these students progress more rapidly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The vast majority of students make rapid and sustained progress from broadly average starting points. Students' attitudes to learning are excellent. The calm, purposeful atmosphere that prevails in the academy provides a highly appropriate climate for learning.
- Students at the end of Year 11 now attain well above national standards in mathematics and apply these skills well in other subjects. Data from the academy's excellent systems for tracking students' progress, and from inspectors' observations of students' current work, show convincingly that attainment in English has risen, too, over the last academic year to above average. This follows the academy's successful drive to raise literacy levels across all year groups. A strong focus on developing reading skills and fostering reading for pleasure lie at the heart of this rapid improvement. Students talked enthusiastically about the reading programmes and the books they take home. They have begun to read widely.
- The attainment of almost all groups of students is at least in line with national averages. The proportion of students who gain five or more GCSEs, including English and mathematics, has risen rapidly since the academy opened and is now well above national average figures. Robust monitoring of teaching and learning conducted by the school's leaders shows that this trend of rapidly rising results is set to continue in 2013.
- The progress of high-attaining students had not been as swift as the progress of other groups of students. This pattern has been turned around so that these students currently progress at a much faster pace than before. The academy is wisely continuing to focus on this, for example through ensuring more challenging lessons for them.
- The academy adds high value to the academic and personal development of those students who have been identified as having disabilities or special educational needs. These students, including those in the 'nurture group', progress in line with their peers. However, the progress of some of the students is not always evenly balanced across subjects. This is because monitoring and analysis of the progress these students make are not as sharp as for other aspects of the academy's work. Also, some recent initiatives to boost students' progress have yet to show impact on their achievement.
- The pupil premium funds are used to very good effect to enhance the basic skills of those students for whom this additional funding is intended. Their average point score is higher than similar students nationally. Following specifically targeted programmes the reading ages of pupil premium students have risen rapidly. Funds are also used appropriately to help students access the full curriculum, including enrichment activities, which benefits their personal development.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good, stronger thus far in vocational subjects than in more academic A-levels. This picture is developing as outcomes continue to strengthen across different courses. The quality of the sixth form has developed rapidly as the reputation of Phase 3 has grown. Of late, courses are more tailored to students' needs, teaching is better and as a result, students' examination scores have risen.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Students' learning and progress over time from their different starting points are outstanding. This reflects the emphasis the academy's leaders place on constantly developing teaching skills and checking performance in the classroom.
- An excellent programme of planned, professional development for all staff includes attendance at weekly themed workshops of their choice after school. These are typically delivered by identified Leaders in Education in the academy. Staff are fulsome in their praise for this programme. The result is an open climate for sharing good practice and highly collaborative working across teachers and subjects.
- Teachers check throughout lessons how well students are learning, adapting their teaching

where necessary. Scrutiny of work shows that marking is regular, with informative feedback for students on how to improve further.

- Teaching is enthusiastically delivered and often innovative. Teachers make the most of the excellent resources of the new buildings. For example, sixth form students all have computer tablets to foster independent learning; science students have access to a three-dimensional cinema to enhance their understanding of scientific concepts. Students value highly the enhanced opportunities the new buildings have brought for their education.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively. They, too, benefit from formal training and oversight of their work. The 'nurture group' supports vulnerable students well.
- The best teaching observed encouraged students to draw on what they already knew and could do and built on this skilfully to move learning rapidly on. Teachers employed a wide range of effective strategies and activities. Teaching that is not yet outstanding tends to be overly formulaic and does not free students up to explore or contribute more widely.
- Literacy is taught well across the curriculum. This is a performance target for all involved in teaching and this is helping to break down barriers to learning for many students. The appointment of additional specialist staff in teaching phonics has helped.
- Teaching of mathematics is of high quality and this lies behind the high value the academy adds in this subject. Students' basic skills are being developed very well. This is preparing them highly effectively for the next stage in their education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the academy. Attitudes to learning are excellent. Attendance is high and continuing to rise, reflecting students' enjoyment in learning. The attendance of vulnerable students is also high; far fewer are persistently absent than normally found.
- Systems to manage behaviour work highly effectively. The number of exclusions has fallen dramatically since the academy started. The design of wide, open spaces, bright classrooms and modern facilities encourages students to behave well as this is a welcoming environment for learning.
- Students report in discussions that they feel safe and are taught well. They do not express any concerns over bullying, but should it occur consider that the academy staff respond well.
- Concerns raised by one parent with Ofsted prior to the inspection are being examined by the appropriate bodies. Inspectors looked at a sample of files related to students' well-being and discussed with the Principal and staff the policy and training provided for using restraint.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, a fitting testament to the academy's Christian values and core principles. The ethos and values of the academy are evident throughout in the relationships between students and with staff. Students take the academy's key principles seriously. Each day includes planned moments for spiritual awareness or prayer. Students have ample opportunity to reflect on 'big' questions related to family, relationships and faith.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The strong leadership, quiet determination and drive of the Principal have ensured that the outstanding progress since becoming an academy that was noted in the 2012 monitoring inspection has continued. He has high expectations of his staff. All are very ambitious for students' success.
- Senior leaders are highly effective: they relentlessly drive improvement. They work really well together as a team, each with clear roles and responsibilities. The academy's leaders promote equality of opportunity exceptionally well. Following the academy's stated values ensures that they also tackle discrimination highly effectively. Leaders are successfully closing the gaps in

attainment between different groups of students.

- The academy's leaders have built high capacity to sustain this improvement. Their actions have had a rapid impact on standards, first on mathematics and now, through a strong focus on literacy, on English. Leaders have improved teaching and can judge the quality of lessons accurately. They have identified suitable next steps for the academy. Responses from Parent View show that parents and carers are very happy with the education the academy offers.
- Staff at all levels have targets in their performance management related to the academy's key priorities for further improvement, such as literacy and the achievement of able students. This ensures that all staff work to common goals across the academy and are held accountable for them.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements. Records related to students' safety are kept methodically and outside agencies are involved, when necessary. The work of the Vulnerable Students Manager includes overseeing the effective use of the pupil premium funds.
- Inspectors agree with a view expressed by the local authority, that the Principal has made an outstanding contribution to improving education in North Halifax. He has taken on the executive leadership of the adjacent secondary school until its closure, drawing partly on academy resources. This has enabled the school to be successfully removed from a category of concern in May 2013.
- The curriculum is well-chosen and well-balanced, with a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities that promote personal development and healthy lifestyles. Through mixed-age teaching groups, some students may take examinations early. At this early stage of the academy's operation, this does not appear to be limiting the potential of the most able students. However, the academy is keeping this policy under close review to ensure that decisions operate in the best interests of the students.
- The governance of the school:
 - is outstanding. Governors and trustees challenge and support the academy's leaders in equal measure. They are very well informed about all aspects of the academy's work, including understanding data about achievement and well-being; the quality of teaching; and how effectively the pay and performance systems are being used to drive improvement. The university, diocese, college and local authority partner sponsors work together highly effectively with the Principal in setting priorities and in exercising their statutory responsibilities.
 - ensures that appropriate measures and checks are in place to secure the financial probity of the academy, as verified by the appropriate external audit. A formal plan is in place for developing the skills and awareness that governors require to carry out their various functions.
 - through its actions has contributed to the academy's strong contribution to the life of the local community.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136094
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	399772

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brendan Evans
Principal	Michael Gosling
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01422 244890
Fax number	01422 240033
Email address	principal@trinityacademyhalifax.org

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