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Mr Patrick Tully
Trinity Academy Newcastle
Condercum Road
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Dear Mr Tully

Short inspection of Trinity Academy Newcastle

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 2018 with Fiona Dixon, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2012.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Your school has a strikingly friendly atmosphere. The ethos of kindness, care, honesty and respect is evident in classrooms and around the school. Most pupils enjoy attending Trinity Academy Newcastle. They are proud of their school and told me that 'visitors should always leave the school with a smile on their face'. Pupils value the friendships that they develop at school. They respect their teachers because, as they say, teachers deal with issues 'quickly, calmly and kindly'.

A wide range of activities are available for pupils to choose from at breaktimes and lunchtimes, including computer club, football and pool. These and other activities enable pupils to develop their social and independence skills.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about your school. They talk glowingly about the progress their children have made since joining the school, especially in moderating their more extreme behaviours. One echoed the views of many when writing, 'I cannot speak highly enough of the school.' Your expectations of parents' involvement in their children's homework are explained fully on the school's website. However, some teachers do not adhere to your expectations of homework fully.

You expanded the range of subjects that pupils can choose to study at GCSE level. The number of pupils gaining GCSE qualifications is increasing year on year. These were areas for improvement at the time of the last inspection. However, leaders' expectations of some pupils are still too low. Although the vast majority of pupils achieve a level 1 functional skills qualification at the end of Year 11, not enough achieve levels 2 and 3. In addition, some pupils at all key stages do not develop and apply their skills in English and mathematics sufficiently well. These pupils do not make up for time lost at their previous schools.

Your leaders have introduced a number of initiatives to encourage good attendance. Pupils speak positively about the importance of attending school regularly and the rewards they receive for good attendance. However, attendance, particularly for pupils in key stages 3 and 4, is not good enough. Too many pupils are absent from school too often.

Governors are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They are knowledgeable about school improvement initiatives. Governors challenge the impact of additional government funding, such as the Year 7 catch-up grant for literacy and numeracy, robustly. They understand what is going well in school and what needs to be better. Governors understand that the pupils need to attend school more often.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that the well-maintained register of staff pre-employment checks meets all statutory requirements.

You and your staff are knowledgeable about the circumstances that arise which make pupils vulnerable, both in and out of school. Staff training about safeguarding and child protection is extensive and refreshed regularly. Senior leaders, including the designated safeguarding leader, have a good knowledge of the local issues that affect your pupils. They work closely with other agencies to help keep pupils safe. You make sure that concerns about pupils are identified in a timely manner and reported immediately. As a result, prompt and robust action is taken to keep pupils safe and protect them from harm. Importantly, you make sure that pupils know how to stay safe, for example when they are using computers, mobile phones and the internet.

Inspection findings

- You and your senior leaders check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment well. As a result, you have a clear view of the strengths in teachers' practice and the areas of teaching and learning which need further work. You use this information well to provide high-quality training and support which is valued by the majority of teachers.

- Pupils settle down to work quickly at the start of the day. Teachers ensure that classroom activities are fun and interesting for pupils by providing visual and practical tasks. Pupils respond well to teachers' questioning. They are eager to contribute to class discussions. However, teachers' expectations are not always high enough, particularly for the most able pupils who are not always set challenging enough work. In mathematics, for example, the most able pupils often spend time on activities they can already do rather than moving on to more challenging problem-solving and reasoning tasks. This holds back their progress because they do not deepen their understanding by using and applying what they already know.
- Leaders have introduced a revised assessment system. Pupils can see how well they are doing with their work. This encourages the pupils to complete their work to the best of their ability. However, the handwriting and presentation of work of some pupils are poor. This is hindering their progress. You have identified this as an area for development and are investing in a handwriting programme for younger pupils.
- Leaders use additional government funding effectively to provide greater breadth to the curriculum and to increase pupils' participation and expertise in sports and outdoor activities. This has led to greater engagement by the pupils in the curriculum and to improved behaviour.
- You have invested in excellent enrichment opportunities for your pupils, for example the animal enclosure and the fitness gym. These high-quality resources motivate your pupils to learn and instil in them a real sense of pride in their school.
- Leaders are passionate that the school should be a bully-free zone. This is clearly communicated to pupils through the shared ethos of kindness and tolerance towards others. As a result, staff deal with the very small number of bullying incidents quickly and robustly.
- Improving attendance is a key priority for the school this year. Leaders stress the importance of pupils coming to school every day and have introduced incentive rewards. Pupils describe these changes enthusiastically. However, the impact of this initiative is not yet evident. At the time of the inspection, the attendance of a few pupils had not been accurately recorded in the registers. Too many pupils miss too much school. A small minority of pupils are on part-time timetables over long periods of time. These pupils are not reintegrated into full-time education quickly enough.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' attendance and absence are consistently recorded in accordance with the Department for Education's guidelines

- pupils on part-time timetables are supported to return to full-time education within a short time frame
- teachers expect more of their pupils so that more make rapid progress to reach and exceed the standards expected for their age, especially in English and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Newcastle-upon-Tyne. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bernadette Moorcroft
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and your senior and middle leaders, four governors and two groups of pupils. Members of the team observed teaching, learning and assessment in lessons with senior leaders. We looked at the work in pupils' books and talked to pupils about their learning. Inspectors considered the results from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 21 written responses from parents. We also considered 56 responses to the staff questionnaire and 15 responses to the pupil questionnaire. Inspectors examined a range of documents including information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and information about pupils' progress.