

Inspection of Trentham Academy

Allerton Road, Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 8PQ

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are proud of their school. Pupils have no concerns about bullying. Pupils understand how to keep themselves and each other safe. Pupils value the support they receive in school. They know they can talk to anyone if they need help or support.

Pupils are very keen to learn. Most pupils attend school very regularly. In lessons, pupils are often inspired by the passion for the subject shown by their teachers. Pupils work hard and think for themselves. There is rarely any low-level disruption to interrupt their learning.

Leaders, teachers and pupils have very high expectations of each other. The school motto 'Aspire, Endeavour, Achieve' is evident throughout the school. Many subjects provide an effective curriculum that supports this ambition. Other subjects are making good progress.

Pupils enjoy a vast array of opportunities to enrich their education. Many pupils also enjoy a wide range of clubs and sports teams. Many pupils take on responsibilities in school.

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

Leaders have a clear vision for an ambitious curriculum. A broad range of subjects are available in key stages 3 and 4. Pupils choose which GCSEs they intend to study at the end of Year 8. Leaders have ensured that there is enough breadth and depth in the curriculum in Years 7 and 8 to make this possible. The number of pupils who choose to study subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is increasing. More pupils are now choosing to learn a modern foreign language.

Subject leaders are highly skilled. They have used their expertise to plan what pupils need to know, remember and understand. Leaders ensure learning builds on knowledge that has been previously covered. Curriculum planning is not yet effective in all subjects, for example in modern foreign languages. Leaders have already started to address this issue. Improvements are already evident.

Teachers expect pupils to work hard during lessons. Most pupils do work hard. Teachers in most subjects check pupils' understanding systematically and identify misconceptions accurately. Teachers use this information to provide clear, direct feedback to pupils. In so doing, teachers respond and adapt their teaching as necessary. This helps pupils learn more and remember more, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school's reading development programme is effective. It develops pupils' love of, and creative responses to, reading. The 'Reading Lounge' is popular with pupils. It ensures access to a wide range of texts in a supportive, learning environment.

The school's promotion of pupils' personal development is exemplary. Many pupils take part in extra-curricular activities. Highly committed staff provide a varied programme of activities for pupils. This promotes pupils' personal development very well. Many pupils hold leadership roles in school.

Leaders provide an expertly planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Pupils develop their understanding of cultural and social issues very well. PSHE topics link with other subjects so that pupils connect their learning. Well-developed careers education is an important part of the curriculum. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND benefit from being prioritised for careers interviews. All pupils are well informed of their possible next steps.

Leaders, governors and trustees have established a highly successful school. Leaders have created a well-respected and highly motivated workforce. They go the extra mile to ensure that all pupils and staff can flourish. This has resulted in significant improvements in the quality of education. As a result, the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND, are being met.

Staff feel that leaders support their well-being and workload well. Leaders provide staff with extensive professional development opportunities. Teachers recognise the positive impact this has on their own teaching. They value the support they receive and speak highly of the collaborative culture.

Most parents have a positive view of the school. Many value the academic, enrichment and pastoral opportunities provided for their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils value the care and support that is available to them. Pupils are confident that they can talk to anyone if they need help or support. Staff have been well trained and know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. The 'inclusion team' know the pupils in their care. This means they make the right decisions when deciding on appropriate next steps. 'The Hub' provides a safe, nurturing environment for those who wish to use it. Leaders provide effective support for pupils in school. They work tirelessly to help pupils and families get the support they need. Leaders place a high priority on support for the mental health of pupils and staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In most subjects, including English, history and science, the curriculum is sequenced precisely so that pupils build their knowledge and understanding over time. In other subjects, the curriculum is less well developed. As a result, pupils are not able to build their learning as well as they could. Leaders need to further refine planning in these subjects to make sure that pupils learn the important knowledge and skills in all subjects to help them in the next stage of their education.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

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.

School details

Unique reference number	144558
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10201019
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	718
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Melanie Sproston
Headteacher	Mike Whittingham
Website	clt.trentham.coop
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Trentham Academy opened as an academy in July 2017. It is a member of the City Learning Trust.
- The school uses four alternative education providers: Created Academy, ALPHA Learning, IWYS and Peak Education. A small number of key stage 4 pupils attend this alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils from all year groups.
- The lead inspector met the chief executive officer of the City Learning Trust.
- The lead inspector also met three members of the academy governance committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: history, science, English and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- One inspector visited three alternative providers.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding. They scrutinised records including those concerned with safer recruitment. They spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils at the start of the school day and during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff who responded to Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire, including written responses.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss their view of the school and talked to pupils informally about the school. Inspectors took account of pupils' responses to Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Richard Gill, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Feldman	Ofsted Inspector
Eddie Wilkes	Ofsted Inspector

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