

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 March 2023

Simon Robson
Headteacher
Trinity Academy Richmond
Frances Road
Richmond
North Yorkshire
DL10 4NF

Dear Mr Robson

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Trinity Academy Richmond

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 8 February 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in February 2022.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, trustees and members of the local governing body the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons, spoke with pupils and reviewed documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and records relating to behaviour. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Trinity Academy Richmond remains inadequate and has serious weaknesses. Leaders have made insufficient progress to improve the school.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Changes in the senior leadership have hampered the pace of improvement. In effect, there have been three changes of headteacher since the previous inspection. This has made it difficult to sustain improvement or to check the impact of leaders' actions. Your appointment as the substantive headteacher has brought a new confidence to staff and a determination to improve the school. There are indications that the pace of change

is building. Your precise self-evaluation informs a new school improvement plan, which sets out the actions that leaders will take to improve the school. You have written a teaching and learning policy and led recent training for staff to establish common expectations. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work.

The intentions of leaders until January 2023 have not fully come to fruition. A number of previously planned actions to improve the curriculum for all subjects, including those in the early years, did not happen. Limited work has taken place to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Some work to improve the curriculum for early reading has taken place, but more work is required to ensure that pupils learn to read with fluency and confidence.

The recently introduced programme for the teaching of early reading has provided teachers with clarity about the order in which sounds should be taught. Teachers now follow a prescribed lesson structure which provides pupils with the opportunity to practise reading the sounds that they are learning in words and sentences. Staff have completed training to help them to teach the new curriculum. However, there remains some variability in staff's subject knowledge of phonics, which is limiting pupils' progress. For example, some teachers do not pronounce some of the sounds that they are teaching correctly. This makes it difficult for pupils to learn how to decode unfamiliar words. Leaders have not monitored the implementation of the new reading curriculum carefully enough, and they have not identified these inconsistencies. Staff from an English Hub are providing support for the reading leader, but suggested actions from their visits are not being implemented quickly enough.

The trust and diocese have worked together to train subject leaders. This has improved subject leaders' knowledge and confidence in leading their subjects. However, subject leaders are still to identify the specific knowledge that pupils should learn in most subjects. Therefore, the curriculum that pupils experience does not build their knowledge over time. Work to design new curriculums has only recently begun. You aim for subject leaders to have identified the knowledge that pupils should learn by the end of the spring term, with a view to implementing a new curriculum in September 2023.

Leaders had set out to implement a strengthened curriculum for the early years by December 2022. This was not achieved. Staff have worked with an external specialist to identify milestones that children should achieve at the end of Nursery and Reception. However, leaders have not specified the small steps of knowledge that pupils need to learn in order to achieve these milestones. Leaders still need to consider how children's knowledge builds over time in the early years.

Very recently, staff have had training to help them to understand how to manage pupils' behaviour. However, staff's expectations are still too low. Leaders had set out to implement a new behaviour policy by December 2022. This was not achieved. Lessons continue to be interrupted by pupils chattering and not focusing on their work.

Staff from another school in the trust and specialist teachers have provided guidance for teachers to help them to better support some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is having an impact on how these pupils manage their behaviour.

The local governing body's mechanisms to check the impact of leaders' actions stalled due to the changes in senior leadership. Trustees have acted to strengthen local governance by adding experienced governors to the local governing body. A new chair of the local governing body, who took up post in January 2023, recognises the need to check the progress that school leaders are taking to improve the school. There are plans in place to achieve this. The board of trustees meets regularly with school leaders to check the impact of leaders' actions. However, changes in senior leadership have frustrated the way in which the board of trustees has been able to hold leaders to account for their actions.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of The Dales multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Leeds Anglican Diocese, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Scargill-Knight
His Majesty's Inspector