

Inspection of Trinity Academy Newcastle

Condercum Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE4 8XJ

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

The head of this school is Mark Flint. The school is part of Trinity Academy Newcastle Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Lynn McNally, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Carter.

What is it like to attend this school?

Trinity Academy Newcastle provides a nurturing environment for all pupils. The school provides specialist support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive.

The curriculum in English, mathematics and science is inconsistent. Turbulence in school leadership and staff vacancies has had a negative impact on leaders' ability to monitor curriculum development and delivery. Curriculum quality and provision vary significantly between the lower and upper school sites.

Pupils' behaviour across the school varies. Many pupils engage well in lessons. They interact well with their friends and with the adults who support them. However, there is a small but significant group of pupils who struggle to meet the school's high expectations for behaviour. These pupils disrupt the learning of others and show unacceptable levels of aggression and violence towards staff. Some parents express concern about the impact these behaviours have on their child's well-being.

The school works closely with external professionals, including the local police, to keep pupils safe. Following a tragic incident in 2022, pupils collaborated with police to set up the 'Knives Down League' to help educate the school and the local community about the dangers of carrying knives.

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

In the upper school site, teachers implement the curriculum well. Staff tailor learning activities to meet pupils' individual learning needs. This helps to engage pupils in learning. The curriculum in the lower site is less consistent. The school has not provided staff with clarity on exactly what should be taught and when. Some staff do not use assessment well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. They move learning on before pupils are ready. As a result, pupils struggle to recall and apply what they have learned.

The school prioritises the teaching of reading. A new upper school library provides pupils with a quiet space to enjoy books. Staff help pupils to select books that match their interests or reading ability. Pupils who struggle with their reading benefit from daily phonics sessions. Leaders have provided effective training for the staff leading these sessions. Training for other staff has been less effective. This means they do not have the knowledge they need to support pupils well in lessons.

The school supports pupils' SEMH needs well. Leaders have recently extended the nurture group provision to provide a calmer, more bespoke learning environment for a small group of pupils. In addition, the 'Sanctuary' provides trauma-informed care for pupils with more complex needs. Pupils in the 'Sanctuary' benefit from the regular support of a psychotherapeutic counsellor and educational psychologist.

The school has reviewed the behaviour management procedures to ensure that all pupils can learn in a calm learning environment. Some pupils are finding it challenging to meet leaders' high expectations. As a result, the number of suspensions has increased. A minority of parents express concern that the school does not meet their child's behaviour needs well. Some staff feel that the support they receive from leaders during and following serious behaviour incidents is inconsistent.

Rates of attendance are too low. Leaders use alternative provision placements effectively to help re-engage pupils in learning. The school uses a range of providers to best meet pupils' learning needs and interests.

Leaders have used the three school values of 'calm, kind and honest' when developing their personal development offer. They tailor the curriculum to meet pupils' needs, including individual lessons on relationships and sex education in key stage 3. The careers education offer is a strength of the school. Leaders have designed a range of opportunities to help pupils develop communication and employability skills. Activities to develop life skills, such as managing budgets, are included in the offer. A range of visits, speakers and work experience opportunities enhance the careers programme.

Trust leaders do not have the detailed information they need to hold leaders to account for the quality of education in the school. Leaders have not monitored the quality of the curriculum sufficiently well. Most staff feel proud to work in the school. However, recent staffing issues have impacted negatively on staff workload. Teachers, including those in the early stages of their career, have not received the time they need for the planning and preparation of lessons.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for English, mathematics and science across the school is inconsistent. Leaders have not provided teachers with the detail of what should be taught and when. This means that, in some lessons, learning activities do not help pupils to gain the most important subject knowledge. Leaders should ensure that they identify the small steps of learning for each year group, including the sequence in which these should be taught, and share this information with teachers swiftly.
- The school has not monitored the implementation of the curriculum in the lower school effectively. It has not provided staff with the support and training they need to implement all areas of the curriculum well. The school should ensure that

it monitors the effectiveness of the curriculum regularly, ensuring that it identifies and addresses any ongoing development needs.

- Some teachers do not use assessment effectively to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, they move learning on before pupils are ready. This means that some pupils struggle to retain and recall important subject knowledge. The school should ensure there is a consistent approach to assessment across the school and that this assessment information helps to inform pupils' future learning.
- Staff are subject to regular physical and verbal abuse from pupils. Some staff feel that the support leaders provide during and after these incidents is inconsistent. This impacts on staff well-being. Leaders should continue to address these extreme behaviours and must ensure that there are comprehensive support systems in place that are consistently applied following all incidents of physical and verbal aggression.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141865
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10271515
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Carter
Headteacher	Mark Flint
Website	www.tanmat.org
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been several changes to staffing since the previous inspection. This includes the appointment of a new head of school, a new deputy headteacher and two new assistant headteachers.
- The school is part of the Trinity Academy Newcastle Trust.
- The school has an upper and lower school site, which are located about 30 minutes apart. Both sites have the same leadership team.
- The school caters for pupils with an EHC plan with a prime need of SEMH needs.
- The school uses 11 alternative providers of education. Eight of these are unregistered provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the head of school, the deputy headteacher, the trust's strategic lead for safeguarding and the assistant headteacher.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees, the local governance committee and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors met with teaching staff, including early career teachers, and support staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, cognition and learning, personal development, and social, emotional and mental health. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum and provision with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector visited a selection of the alternative provision and the 'Sanctuary' provision. The inspector met with leaders, with providers and reviewed a sample of pupils' EHC plans.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at breaktimes. They spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took into account the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and parents through their responses to Ofsted's online surveys, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Alex Thorp, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jill Bowe	Ofsted Inspector
Maira Banks	Ofsted Inspector

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