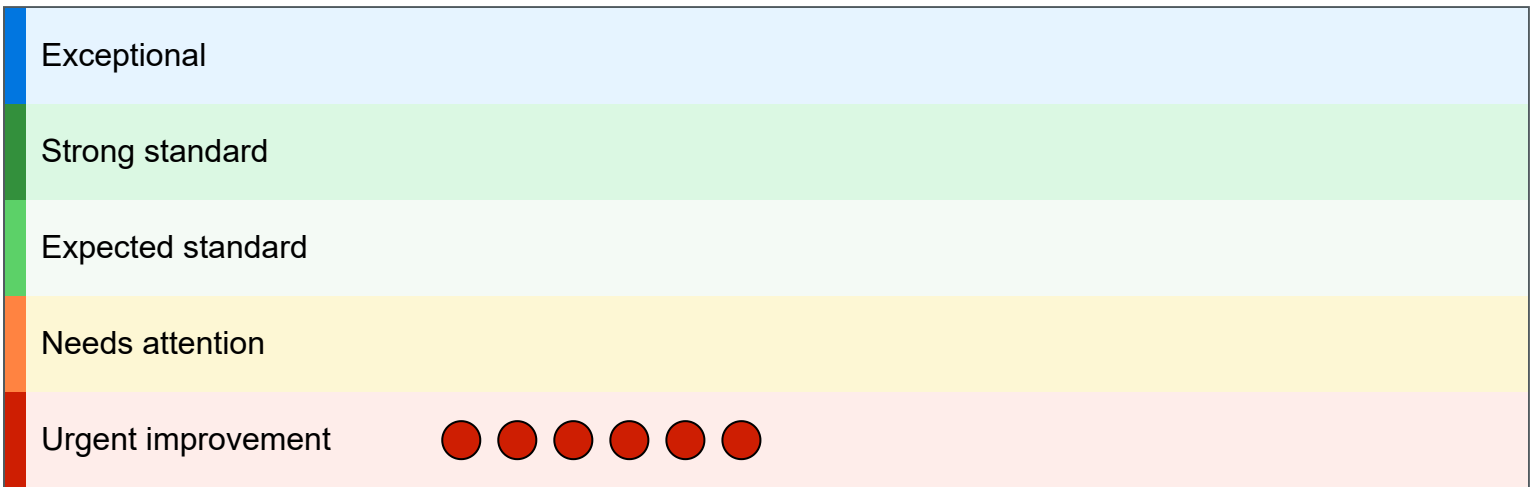


# Trinity Academy Newcastle

**Address:** Condercum Road, NE4 8XJ

**Unique reference number (URN):** 141865

## Inspection report: 20 November 2025



## ⊗ Safeguarding standards not met

Leaders have not ensured that there is an open and positive culture around safeguarding. This puts pupils at significant risk of harm.

A significant proportion of pupils at the upper site, including those who are vulnerable, are persistently absent from school. Leaders do not have suitable systems in place to assure themselves of pupils' safety when they are unexpectedly absent from school. Some leaders, and those responsible for governance, do not recognise that pupils' absence from school might indicate safeguarding concerns.

Pupils are not safe. Leaders and staff do not have the expertise that they need to address pupils' behaviour effectively. This compromises the safety of pupils and staff. Bullying, swearing, derogatory language, and aggressive and intimidating behaviour happen frequently. Pupils have little confidence that the school will tackle these concerns. Some staff, parents and carers share this view. In addition, leaders and those responsible for governance do not manage safeguarding concerns promptly or effectively.

Leaders are unclear about some of the risks that pupils encounter. Some policies and risk assessments are not sufficiently robust or implemented effectively. For instance, pupils wander around school when they should be in lessons. They frequently try to leave the building, and some succeed. Leaders' actions to prevent this are unsuccessful. This places pupils at risk of harm.

### How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

## ⊗ This school requires special measures

His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires **special measures** because it is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

## **Urgent improvement** ●

### **Achievement**

**Urgent improvement** ●

Pupils in the secondary phase of their education do not achieve well. Many pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, enter the school with gaps in their prior learning. They are not helped to catch up. These gaps persist and widen over time. Pupils can work towards qualifications in some subjects, but many do not build up a secure body of knowledge that prepares them to be successful in the future.

In contrast, at the lower site, primary-age pupils typically learn and achieve well from their differing starting points. The school is successful in identifying and closing gaps in pupils' knowledge, especially in the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and communication. Pupils are proud of their work and many talk confidently about their learning.

This positive start is not maintained as pupils move into the secondary phase of their education. Pupils can work towards qualifications in some subjects, but many do not build up a secure body of knowledge that prepares them to be successful in the future. They leave school ill-prepared to move into education, employment or training.

### **Attendance and behaviour**

**Urgent improvement** ●

Pupils at the lower site typically attend school regularly. However, this is not replicated at the upper site. Pupils' rates of attendance are low. Leaders' approach to helping pupils to improve their attendance at school is not effective. Leaders do not keep a close enough track of pupils' attendance, nor do they check their whereabouts when they are absent. This puts some pupils at risk of harm. It also means that they miss much of their education.

Over time, the behaviour of some pupils who attend the upper site has deteriorated to the point that it prevents most pupils from learning. The upper site lacks order. Pupils often swear, use derogatory language and display aggressive and intimidatory behaviour towards others. Leaders do not ensure that pupils are protected from bullying. This makes some pupil feel unsafe and unhappy.

Leaders have not ensured that staff have the expertise to manage challenging behaviour effectively. Staff do not apply the behaviour policy and strategies in an effective way to help pupils to improve their conduct. In contrast, the lower site is calm and orderly. Staff respond sensitively to pupils' emotional needs. They are successful in helping pupils to manage their own behaviour and feelings. This helps these pupils to behave well.

### **Curriculum and teaching**

**Urgent improvement** ●

The school has established a broad curriculum. However, it is not fit for purpose. New leaders have identified weaknesses in the curriculum for secondary-age pupils but their actions to address these shortcomings are in their infancy. In several subjects, leaders have not identified the knowledge that pupils should learn. Staff are unclear about the content that

they should teach and they lack the expertise to design suitable learning activities. In addition, lessons are often interrupted or abandoned due to pupils' poor behaviour, and many pupils do not receive the provision identified in their education, health and care plans. This significantly limits how well pupils learn.

Typically, at the upper site, staff do not identify or address gaps in pupils' reading, writing and mathematical knowledge. This means that pupils cannot build a secure understanding across subjects, as weaknesses in their knowledge persist. These gaps are further exacerbated by changes in staffing. Pupils at the lower site have a more positive learning experience. They benefit from learning a well-ordered curriculum that is typically taught effectively.

The school does not provide effective support for secondary-age pupils who struggle to read. This hinders these pupils in their ability to learn sufficiently well across the curriculum. In contrast, the school's work to support early reading for primary-age pupils is effective. Younger pupils learn to read with fluency and understanding.

## **Inclusion**

**Urgent improvement** ●

All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities and an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The systems for assessing and meeting pupils' needs at the upper site are poorly developed. Many pupils do not receive the provision identified in specialist reports or in their EHC plans. Leaders have not established an agreed approach to identifying and removing barriers to learning and/or wellbeing that pupils face. Staff do not receive effective help or guidance in meeting pupils' needs. This means that while some pupils receive adequate support, many do not. The school does not check the impact of the provision that pupils receive.

In contrast, the social, emotional and mental health needs of pupils at the lower site are well understood. Staff act quickly when they notice a pupil may need extra help. They carry out detailed checks to understand pupils' individual learning needs. This helps pupils to thrive in all aspects of their development.

The school's overall approach to evaluating the impact of additional funding and the support that pupils receive is weak. This means that it is difficult for leaders, and those responsible for governance, to check that the strategy is making a positive difference to pupils who are disadvantaged or are known to children's social care.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Urgent improvement** ●

Trustees and members of the local governing body have not ensured that pupils benefit from a safe and secure environment where they feel they belong, and are able to achieve and to thrive. Consequently, those responsible for governance do not meet several statutory duties. While leaders, trustees and local governors acknowledge some of the school's weaknesses, their overall view of the school's provision is overgenerous.

The level of challenge that local governors and trustees currently offer does not hold school leaders sufficiently to account. Some of their checks lack rigour. For example, they do not

seek assurance on how well leaders record and analyse patterns relating to attendance, safeguarding and behaviour. They have started to address some of the considerable shortcomings at the school. However, they have failed to act promptly to address the school's urgent priorities. As a result, the trust's actions to stem the decline in pupils' behaviour and achievement since the previous inspection have been unsuccessful. There is very limited capacity to bring about much-needed improvements.

There has been considerable instability in staffing and leadership at the upper site. Many staff are either new or temporary. Staff have not received the training, support or guidance needed to support pupils' complex social, emotional and mental health needs or to implement a sustainable approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Alongside weaknesses in the design and delivery of the curriculum, this results in a poor standard of education and weak provision for pupils' wellbeing.

Some staff reported concerns about their workload and wellbeing, as well as concerns about the safety of pupils and staff. Parents and carers are also worried about their children's education and welfare.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Urgent improvement** ●

The school has designed a programme to foster pupils' personal development. It meets the statutory requirements for relationships and sex education and includes a recently implemented careers, information, education advice and guidance programme for secondary-age pupils. However, high levels of absence and disruption to learning at the upper site hinders older pupils from accessing the personal development offer fully. Additionally, the programme to support pupils' personal development does not meet their individual needs.

The school has not considered the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and the order in which it should be taught. Gaps in pupils' personal, social and emotional knowledge are not addressed effectively. When trips take place, the school has not considered how these experiences will contribute to pupils' wider understanding of the world. The impact of the school's work is limited. Pupils' knowledge of different faiths, fundamental British values and important topics, such as consent, is not as developed as it should be. As a result, pupils are ill-prepared for adulthood.

Older pupils show little respect for the differences that exist between themselves and others. Pupils hear prejudicial language frequently. As a result, they do not develop into respectful, responsible citizens. They do not gain the knowledge that they need for their future lives in modern Britain.

Pupils at the lower site benefit from a personalised offer that reflects their individual needs and includes a range of experiences beyond the classroom. It prioritises pupils' social and emotional development and supports them to develop important skills, such as self-confidence and forming relationships. As a result of this positive work, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, gain the knowledge that they need to enter the secondary phase of their education.

## What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils' experiences at this school are determined by which site they attend. Pupils at the lower site benefit from their time at school far more than those who attend the upper site. Instability in leadership and staffing have created confusion and marked inconsistencies in the school's approach to supporting pupils' behaviour and learning. Most pupils who attend the upper site do not receive an acceptable standard of education. The trust has not ensured that staff have the skills or support that they need to improve pupils' complex behaviours. Pupils' behaviour is poor during lessons and at social times. Leaders do not tackle bullying or dangerous and intimidating behaviour effectively. This means that many pupils do not feel safe or happy.

Most pupils at the upper site do not receive a curriculum that meets their special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. As a result, they do not achieve well. In addition, a significant number of pupils are routinely absent from school. Leaders do not check that these pupils are safe when they are not in school. This put pupils at risk of harm.

The experience of pupils at the lower site could not be more different. They have been protected from the turmoil that the school has recently faced. Pupils attend school regularly. They enjoy their learning and achieve well from their differing starting points. Skilled staff provide pupils with highly effective support. This helps pupils to follow the school's rules and make progress towards the targets in their education, health and care plans. Pupils who attend this site are typically well prepared for their secondary education.

Pupils at the lower site benefit from a range of opportunities that nurture their personal development. For instance, they develop empathy and respect when taking care of the alpacas in the school's farm. Some pupils at the upper site enjoy using the on-site gym. However, most older pupils receive a limited offer beyond the academic curriculum. They are not prepared for life in modern Britain.

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## Next steps

- Those responsible for governance must act with urgency to ensure that leaders have the training, capacity and experience to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities so that that pupils are safe and feel safe in school.
  - Leaders should ensure that staff are trained and supported to accurately identify pupils' needs and remedy gaps in their knowledge so that pupils make the progress that they should through the curriculum.
  - Leaders should ensure that staff gain the expertise that they need to use information about pupils' education, health and care plans, alongside guidance in specialist reports, to shape and adapt learning activities that enable them to progress from their starting points.
  - Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in the secondary phase identifies the important subject knowledge that pupils need to learn and order this in a way that builds on pupils' previous learning.
  - Leaders must establish a consistent and sustainable approach to managing pupils' behaviour, ensuring that staff are appropriately supported to implement the shared strategies effectively.
  - Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they adopt a strategic approach to rapidly improve pupils' levels of attendance and seek assurances that the pupils are safe when they are absent from school.
  - Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that provision for pupils' personal development is consistently tailored to pupils' needs and that staff deliver it consistently well, so that all pupils benefit and are well prepared for their future lives.
  - Those responsible for governance must build their knowledge and expertise so that they fulfil all of their statutory duties and they are better able to hold leaders to account for the quality of the school's work.
  - Trustees must urgently build capacity within the school so that the shortcoming in pupils' education and wellbeing are tackled swiftly and lead to sustainable improvements.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Trinity Academy Newcastle, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lynn McNally, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael McHugh.

The inspection began on 20 November 2025 as a focused monitoring inspection. The inspection was deemed a full inspection. As a full inspection requires more time to complete than a focused monitoring inspection, inspectors returned on 21 November 2025 to complete the full inspection.

The focused monitoring inspection was carried out following a number of complaints made to Ofsted that raised serious concerns. His Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised in the complaints. Inspectors sought to establish whether safeguarding standards were met and whether behaviour was of an acceptable standard.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the CEO, trustees, members of the local governing body, and school leaders as well as representatives from the local authority.

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.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

HMCI strongly recommends that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers. The position regarding the appointment of early career teachers will be considered again during any monitoring inspection we carry out.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan. All pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs and other associated needs.

Primary-age pupils are taught at the lower site. The vast majority of pupils at the upper site are of secondary age.

At the time of the inspection, the school was experiencing some instability and turbulence in staffing. Some leaders were in temporary positions.

### Lead inspector:

Victoria Burnside, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:


Thomas Wraith, His Majesty's Inspector

Richard Wakefield, His Majesty's Inspector

Dan McKeating, His Majesty's Inspector

## Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 20 November 2025

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**206**

Well below average

### What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

### School capacity

**180**

Well below average

### What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,152

## Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

**89.32%**

Well above average

### What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

## Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

**100.00%**

Well above average

### What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.1%

## Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

**0.00%**

Well below average

### What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13%

## Location deprivation

**Well above average**

### What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

## Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

## No resourced provision

### What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

### Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

## SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health

### What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

## Destinations after 16

### Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022 leavers	59%	93%	Not available
2021 leavers	56%	94%	Not available
2020 leavers	77%	94%	Not available

## Absence

### Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (1 term)	42.9%	7.7%	Above
2023/24	41.2%	8.9%	Above
2022/23	33.5%	9.0%	Above

## Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (1 term)	73.9%	21.1%	Above
2023/24	82.4%	25.6%	Above
2022/23	68.8%	26.5%	Above

## Our grades explained

### Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

### Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

### Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

### Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

### Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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