

Trinity Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135007
Inspection number	317906
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Sara Morrissey HMI

This inspection of the academy was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
Academy	1237
6th form	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sir Vardy
Principal	Mr Ian Brew
Date of previous academy inspection	Not previously inspected
Academy address	Church Balk Thorne Doncaster South Yorkshire DN8 5BY
Telephone number	01405 813000
Fax number	01405 818382

Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the academy

Trinity Academy opened in September 2005 in purpose designed new buildings on the site of its predecessor school, Thorne Grammar School. The academy is an integral part of the Emmanuel Schools Foundation and has a specific non-denominational Christian ethos. It has subject specialisms in business and enterprise. It is larger than average in size and has a small but growing sixth form. Students attend from an area that includes districts of high social and economic deprivation. Most students join from one of five local feeder primary schools. The academy does not admit any students on the basis of their aptitude for its subject specialisms. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. The great majority of students are White British and those with a Gypsy/Roma background are the most represented minority group. Few students speak English as an additional language. Students' attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also average; the proportion with a statement for their special educational needs is slightly below average. The academy works in partnership with local primary and secondary schools and has extended its links with the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the academy

Grade: 2

This is a good and rapidly improving academy. Outstanding leadership has transformed the life chances and opportunities of its students. High expectations reflect the core values that underpin the academy's Christian ethos, which are understood by all staff and students. Students speak positively about the opportunities that they are given to learn and enjoy a wide range of activities to broaden their experiences. Achievement is good overall and highlighted by the excellent progress made by students in Year 11 as demonstrated in the 2007 examinations. Consequently, standards are rising and are broadly in line with the national average.

Excellent care, guidance and support ensures that students' personal development and well-being are good. All students understand the rigorous and consistently applied code of conduct. Behaviour in lessons and around school is very good and ensures a positive climate for learning. The quality of teaching is good. Students are very clear about their targets and what they need to do to improve. However, opportunities are missed in some lessons to engage students more actively or to foster a real enthusiasm for learning. Specialist subjects are making an increasing contribution to the curriculum, which is relevant and adapted well to meet the changing needs of students. New technologies are an integral part of the curriculum and support its delivery well.

The principal leads the academy very effectively. He has secured firm foundations on which to build further success by implementing simple systems and structures that all staff and students can follow to improve the outcomes for all. He is supported well by senior and middle leaders who are clear about their roles in raising achievement and standards. Students generally respond well to the high expectations made of them and feel better prepared for their future lives. The student council and house system provide a voice for students to express their views about the academy, but the opportunities for all students to be more involved in contributing to future developments in the academy are less well developed. Partnerships with parents are improving and many speak very positively about their child's experience at the academy. Links with other academies in the Emmanuel Schools Foundation have enabled good practice to be shared and adapted to meet students' needs effectively. Established partnerships with the wider community have resulted in good links with neighbouring schools and local businesses. This contributes well to raising aspirations and achievements of students, both in the academy and elsewhere.

A committed and consistent approach to agreed procedures adopted by all staff has led to rapid and sustained improvement since the academy opened in 2005. The impact of strategies to raise levels of achievement have proved highly successful and the academy has outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Good provision in the sixth form and excellent support enable students to settle quickly into a range of courses and make good progress towards challenging targets. Students value highly the quality of care and guidance that they receive and relationships between staff and students are warm and respectful. Standards have risen since the academy opened because students have grasped the opportunities presented to them and set high expectations of themselves to succeed in their chosen subjects. Teaching and learning are good overall and focus well on skill development as well as the acquisition of new knowledge. This enables students to grow in

confidence and develop greater independence as learners. The curriculum is increasingly well matched to students' needs. A good range of A level and vocational courses offer more continuous provision for students from ages 14–19. Students also enjoy greatly a wide range of enrichment activities and many opportunities to take greater responsibility within the academy and beyond. The academy's decision to involve parents and students more actively in reviews of progress has been beneficial in raising awareness of what steps need to be taken to maximise their potential.

The head of sixth form provides good leadership. He is very clear about the priorities for the sixth form as it grows in size. Recruitment into the sixth form has increased because students' expectations have risen and they are encouraged to aim high. Students are guided well on different post-16 destinations and the proportion of students embarking on higher education courses has doubled in the last year.

What the academy should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of lessons where students are actively engaged in, and enthused by, their learning.
- Increase the opportunities for all students to make a constructive contribution to the future development of the academy.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' achievement is good overall. Standards attained by students are broadly average and rising in both Key Stage 3 and 4. Students taking examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2007 made excellent progress during Key Stage 4, given their relative starting points in Year 10. Consequently, the number of students attaining five A* to C grades in 2007 was above the national average. Furthermore, the proportion who gained five good passes at GCSE including English and mathematics doubled compared with results in 2006 and was just below the national average. The Year 9 students taking tests in summer 2007 made very good progress in mathematics and science and the proportion gaining the higher levels was similar to the national average. Progress was satisfactory in English, but fewer students achieved the higher levels in this subject.

Robust procedures for setting targets and tracking students' progress ensure that no group of students underachieves. The positive climate for learning that has been established through clearly reinforced expectations means that most students are able to make good progress in lessons. Excellent support and guidance ensures that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority groups achieve as well as other learners.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The academy's core values are central to all areas of its work and contribute very well to the students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers apply the academy's rules consistently, which means that students know clearly the difference between right and wrong. Students' social development is excellent and they show high levels of respect towards

peers, staff and the school environment. Students readily understand and accept that high expectations extend to all that they do, and while the vast majority accept and conform to these, a small minority find compliance personally challenging. The number of recorded incidents of disruptive behaviour in school has fallen sharply since last year, which has resulted in a significant reduction to the number of exclusions. Overall, students' behaviour is very good.

Students are aware of healthy lifestyle choices and an increasing number participate in related extra-curricular activities. Students feel safe because they believe that teachers listen and respond quickly to any concerns raised. However, a few students and parents indicated that some bullying still occurs, although this is decreasing because the academy acts quickly to deal with any issues. The vast majority of students enjoy attending the academy, which is reflected in improved attendance rates over the last year. Many of those who spoke with inspectors were very clear that they particularly enjoyed the excellent accommodation and resources available in all subject areas, as well as the range of different activities on offer to them both during and after lessons. Students also reported that they valued the opportunity to contribute to their lessons, especially when asked for their opinion about important issues. However, they indicated that not all staff were equally encouraging of them to express their views about school-related matters. Students appreciate the efforts made to inform them about different career options as part of preparations for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and improving. A rigorous monitoring system led by senior and middle leaders ensures that teachers are held to account for the progress of the students in their classes. Professional development is given high priority and teachers benefit from a wide range of courses and training opportunities. This includes the sharing of ideas and best practice through peer observations and the development of an 'Innovation Group' of teachers.

Lessons are planned in detail, informed by assessment information to ensure that students are challenged to achieve the best they can. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations to students so that they understand what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. Lessons usually move along at a brisk pace, with expectations that uncompleted work may become part of a homework assignment. Teachers make good use of the academy's information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, for example interactive whiteboard presentations during lessons to support students in their work. In the most effective lessons, teachers' enthusiasm for their subject is infectious and results in a high level of student enjoyment and active engagement in learning. There are many opportunities for students to contribute their own ideas and to assess their own and others' progress. Where teachers are more confident to 'take risks' and plan imaginative activities, students are enthused and make more rapid progress. However, in a number of lessons there remains a high level of teacher direction and instruction, with less opportunity for students to be involved in questioning and discussion or to take greater responsibility for their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum has been adapted well to meet the needs of all students. The Academy has developed three different 'pathways' for students in Key Stage 4, including a good range of vocational courses and appropriate work placements, and a recent review has resulted in proposals to increase the choice available to students particularly in creative and practical subjects. Students identified as being gifted or talented in a particular field or subject are offered enrichment opportunities and challenges. The academy's specialism has extended learning opportunities across all year groups in ICT, business and enterprise studies. Staff encourage students to make good use of the high quality resources in ICT to enhance their learning across all subjects.

The curriculum is enhanced further by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, for example in sports and performing arts. There are many opportunities for students to take on responsibilities within the academy and the wider community, for example in drama, music and dance. A number of older students hold Junior Sports Leader Awards, and others are encouraged to take the lead in organising assemblies and events as part of the house and prefect systems.

Leaders have identified a need to increase the time available for creative subjects at Key Stage 3. They also recognise that students' literacy skills could improve at a better pace in Key Stage 3. Consequently, plans are in place to provide additional time for specific English work and to ensuring coverage of literacy across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The strong Christian ethos emphasises a caring and supportive environment. Students receive clear guidance to enable them to meet high expectations and the process of engaging students more actively in aspects of their own education is developing across the academy. The monitoring of students' performance is very thorough, including those from traveller communities and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The academy provides excellent support at times of transition. There are very clear and effective arrangements for prospective Year 7 students, all of whom speak very positively of their induction experience. Detailed guidance is given to Year 9 students on potential course options at Key Stage 4, and to Year 11 students on their future education, employment and training opportunities. There are excellent systems in place to support students including peer mentoring, undertaken by specially trained sixth form students. Teacher support is very well focused to help all students achieve their full potential.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The principal is an outstanding leader who provides clear strategic direction for all students and staff. His vision for the academy is based firmly on the core values that underpin its work.

He has created an environment where students can learn and achieve well by effectively tackling low expectations and aspirations. The principal maintains a high visible presence around the academy and reinforces his high expectations of both students and staff to build a culture reflecting the academy's Christian ethos, where everyone can achieve their 'personal best'.

The roles of senior leaders and managers are clearly defined and focus sharply on raising achievement and standards. Their strengths complement each other effectively and senior leaders support the principal well. Middle leaders understand their roles and are accountable for the achievement and standards of students in their area. They have valued the opportunity to participate more in whole-school developments such as the recent curriculum review. Staff feel well supported by senior leaders and work together well to create a well disciplined, calm and orderly learning environment through the consistent implementation of agreed procedures.

Accurate self-evaluation by leaders and managers at all levels informs school development planning effectively. Outcomes of lesson observations by senior and middle leaders have informed department development planning to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to raise achievement. Excellent accommodation and resources are used well to support the curriculum and provide opportunities for innovative practice. Performance management procedures are rigorous and link well to professional development opportunities. Governors bring a range of expertise to different committees responsible for different aspects of provision and provide high levels of challenge and support in holding the academy to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	Academy Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA
How well does the academy work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the academy's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this academy require special measures?	No	
Does this academy require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you all for the very warm welcome that was extended to us during our recent visit. We appreciated talking to you in lessons, around school and in our meetings, which we found very helpful in making our judgements.

The inspection team has agreed that Trinity is a good and rapidly improving academy. The leaders of the academy are highly committed to making sure that you are able to achieve your very best. Many of you told us that you are able to get on with your learning without disruption because the high expectations of all students are clearly understood. As a result, your behaviour is generally very good. Teachers ensure that your lessons are planned well to enable you to do your best. You also receive an excellent range of support and help from staff so that everyone has an equal chance to succeed. The curriculum has been designed carefully to reflect your different interests and abilities and a number of you told us how much you appreciate the excellent facilities and extra activities available that make your time at the academy more enjoyable.

Although much has been done to ensure that you are able to achieve your personal best at Trinity Academy, we have identified a couple of areas that staff should focus on to help it improve even further. These are to:

- increase the number of lessons where you are able to take an active part in your learning to help you make even better progress
- increase the opportunities for you to contribute positive ideas about how the academy can continue to improve in the future.

Of course, both these issues emphasise your important part in ensuring the future success of the academy, not least by attending regularly and maintaining your high standards of behaviour and effort.