

The SSAT Framework for Exceptional Education (FfEE)

Moderator Feedback

Name of school: Trinity Academy Halifax

Moderator: Den Corral

Date: 19/07/19

Strand of FfEE in which seeking accreditation as 'transforming in...Climate for Learning':

Please use the following questions to provide feedback to the school. As guidance we would expect the total feedback to be between 500 and 1000 words.

What activities did you undertake with the school to learn about their practice in this strand?

A thorough and far reaching programme which included:
 An orientation tour of the school with a Deputy College Manager
 A session to give an overview of climate for learning activities and evidence titled "7 days at Trinity" (including an excellent recent film) with Kate Wilson, Assistant Principal.
 A presentation on the KS3 Graduation Programme by Nicola Underhill, Phase 1 Leader.
 An off-site visit to the Arc, the recently developed alternative learning facility for pupils on the verge of exclusion, with Tom Taylor, Vice Principal Behaviour and Student Support.
 A session with three College Managers who are members of the student support and wellbeing team.
 A tour of the Student Art Trail with a year 8 pupil.
 A presentation on recent developments in teaching and learning, CPD and Q.A. systems by Clare McQueen, Associate Senior Leader.
 At the beginning and the end of the day I met with Nick Robinson, the Principal, Sarah Case, Vice Principal and Kate Wilson for an overview of the school and the day.
 I was also shown an impressive file of evidence.

What were you particularly impressed by?

The Academy asked two Senior OfSTED Inspectors to carry out a review of "Behaviour and Attitudes", which they did the week before my visit on 8th July 2019. It is a glowing report. They concluded: "Provision and practice related to students' behaviour is of the highest order. The Principal, with quiet brilliance, sets the standard for the academy. He is ably supported, with vision, energy, and commitment, by other senior and middle leaders who know students very well indeed." Everything I saw and heard on this, and on my previous visits to Trinity, completely support this view of the Academy. It is an exemplar of outstanding climate for learning in a challenging community. This has been achieved through vision, hard work, a combination of creativity and common sense and a daily commitment to maintain and build on what has already been achieved.

Important drivers of this success are:

-A belief and optimism about the pupils and an excellent awareness of the strengths and challenges of their community. Recent examples of good practice in this area include: the Cultural Capital initiative, the recent Pride March, the initiative to familiarise new staff with the pupils' neighbourhood by spending time "visiting" it, and the involvement of local employers in a range of confidence and aspiration building activities.

-The Phase 1 Graduation programme is the Academy's response to OfSTED's Wasted Years report. It is a motivational programme for all Year 7 & 8 pupils which involves: hitting high standards in behaviour, attendance, attitude to learning in the core subjects and three others, involvement in 6 public speaking events per year and, from next year, a 70% average score in Masters of Recall. Pupils gain a diploma based on university style grades (1, 2.1, 2.2 etc) which is presented to them, in front of parents, at a Graduation Ceremony which they attend wearing gowns and mortar boards at the end of Year 8. The small minority of pupils who don't graduate take part in alternative activities which include career advice, developing growth mindsets and re-engaging with education. Evidence presented to me showed that this was a popular initiative with pupils and parents and was clearly contributing to the aspirational culture. A new initiative is planned to start in October for Year 9 pupils called Trinity Challenge, which

will build on pupil's Graduation experience. This will involve them completing 50 academic, cultural, and community challenges.

-The Arc alternative provision is in its second year and, after a difficult start following an unsuccessful appointment is now flourishing under a new exceptionally talented and committed leader. Students who have exhausted the school's behaviour and effective response programme are referred to the unit for a carefully planned, up to 26 weeks, programme of rehabilitation and confidence building tailored to their needs. When they are ready, they are carefully re integrated into mainstream school. This is very clearly explained to them as a last chance, failure to re integrate well will result in permanent exclusion. I visited the off-site provision and talked to pupils and staff who were all very positive about the progress being made. So far, all the pupils who have re integrated are still at the school. I was particularly impressed with the honest assessment pupils made about the difficult behaviour they had been exhibiting and how they had managed an honest assessment of themselves then worked on how to rebuild their young lives.

-The Student Welfare team are very impressive. This is, effectively, the school's pastoral system. They are a team of six non-teachers who have become highly qualified managers of the behaviour code empathetic, firm but fair, supporters of pupil well being and effective parent liaison personnel. They do everything from daily support through call out to pupils causing problems in lessons to long term support and guidance for students and parents. They monitor trends in behaviour, provide counselling and advice on issues such as bullying, misuse of social media, drug abuse, self-harm and work hard to support the excellent teacher/pupil relationships that are evident all around the school.

-Engaging teaching and learning, effective Q.A. and the development of an exciting learning culture that enthuses and involves all staff is evident in the quality of lessons I've seen at Trinity. Some recent innovations in this area include: a more developed "market place" programme for staff to share good practice: a peer review package that involves staff observing and discussing lesson ideas across subject areas, an Early Careers initiative that supports all teachers in their first five years of teaching, a Walk and Talk activity which involves staff looking at each other's pupil's books and more opportunities for effective student feedback.

The biggest single indicator of how outstanding the climate for learning is at Trinity is what you see, hear and feel as you walk around the school's wonderful building. There is a tangible and intoxicating air of cheerful engagement. Everywhere you look you see pupils and staff enjoying learning and relationships based on mutual respect.

What were your thoughts on the scale, consistency and potential sustainability of their practice in this area?

Trinity's history is the best evidence for sustainability. The past ten years have seen the school transformed from being branded "the worst school in England" by the media to its present OfSTED judged "outstanding" status. The school serves the same community that it did 10 years ago. The most important component of this transformation was the rapid, and sustained rebuilding of an effective climate for learning which they have done to an exceptional level. They are very aware that it can only be sustained through daily hard work, effective systems and an ethos that relentlessly promotes high standards and optimism about achievement combined with the development of new ideas and constant review of practice.

What impact is this practice having on pupils, staff and stakeholders?

Pupils are confident, well behaved engaged learners.
All the evidence suggests that parents and the community have a high degree of trust and pride in the school's achievements.

What evidence is there of the school's practice being shared effectively with other schools?

The school is part of a MAT and TSA. I saw lots of evidence of good practice being shared across these partnerships. Teachers from Trinity have opportunities to work and support in the alliance schools. Trinity staff regularly contribute to SSAT/LEPP events, publications and on-line forums and Nick, the Principal, is now a very welcome member of the LEPP Steering Group.

How could the school further extend their work in this strand?

Nick would like more of his staff to present at SSAT/LEPP workshops and conferences. They have much to contribute.

The senior team are also very aware that the school has reached a high level of performance, but this can only be sustained and built on by the continued development of high quality staff and by very carefully balancing the maintenance of their outstanding practice with the carefully planned implementation of new ideas.

Please send to leading.edge@ssatuk.co.uk

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