

The SSAT Framework for Exceptional Education (FfEE)

Moderator Feedback

Name of school: Trinity Academy Halifax

Moderator: Den Corral

Date: 06/03/19

Strand of FfEE in which seeking accreditation as 'transforming in...': Principled Curriculum Design

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 full day of meetings and interviews with 16 key staff including Nick Robinson, Head; Catherine Cripps, Assistant Principal Curriculum and Sarah Case, Vice Principal, Teaching and Learning. I also talked to a panel of pupils drawn from a variety of years; attended an assembly; visited tutor groups and was taken on a tour of the school, which included visiting lessons

What were you particularly impressed by?

Trinity is a hugely impressive school. It can tell a very inspiring school improvement story. Over ten years it has turned from being "the worst school in England" in its previous existence as The Ridings School to being high performing and OfSTED category "outstanding" while serving the same challenging community. Behaviour, ethos, quality of teaching and learning, and attainment are all now outstanding and this has all been achieved by following a clear set of principles encapsulated in their four word mantra: "Empathy, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility" Their curriculum strongly reflects this.

I spent a whole day in the school following a packed programme, so it would be very difficult to do justice to all that I heard and saw in a short report. The school is pursuing so many impressive and effective initiatives covered by this strand. Here is a brief description of some of them:

-The basic curriculum offer is well structured and designed to raise aspiration and provide success for pupils from the community the school serves. Pupils follow a broad range of subjects in Years 7 and 8 then start their exam courses in Year 9. This provides opportunities to "bank" grades after year 10 and gives a broader range of options for pupils in their exam years. The curriculum provision is underpinned by a sophisticated, and very user- friendly data collection and response system, and an exciting teaching and learning CPD provision that has created a learning culture in the school that all staff enjoy.

-The Core CPD provision is a comprehensive programme of teacher development based on evening CPD sessions which happen on every Monday in the year on a rota under these headings "subject knowledge"; "whole school"; "subject knowledge reflection" and, "paired input and reflection". CPD activities include: coaching, intensive induction for new staff, Japanese lesson study, Magpie Days, and a Journal Club (I saw a very impressive teaching and learning journal which is edited by staff and showcases t&l ideas, articles by "experts", further reading on pedagogy ideas and descriptions of new ideas that teachers had tried).

-At a session with a group of Curriculum Leaders I found out about; new speaking skills work in MFL; diet and health work in the ethical science course; grammar and literacy work in the Humanities department; Maths Mastery supported by the Maths Hub that is based at Trinity and communication, critical thinking and creativity initiatives in English. There was a real sense that the subject teachers work closely across departments to explore avenues for integration and for exploring ways of working together on common themes and areas of curriculum overlap. There is also so much evidence that teachers want their teaching content to be wider than the exam syllabus and that the aim of their work is to help pupils reflect on their own lives, the community and the wider world. I had a real sense, that the school wanted to find every possible way to help pupils overcome the barriers to learning that they bring with them from their community. Their passionate, oft stated mission, is to empower pupils by building their confidence, resilience, ambition and joy of learning. My conversations with pupils backed this up.

-The Cultural Capital initiative is impressive and innovative. It successfully aims to expand curriculum opportunities for pupils through a range of activities aimed at increasing pupil access and involvement in culture, the arts, sport and the community. This includes activities such as trips, music events, sport and games, community fund raising, debate, residential trips and mental health training for year 7 and 8s. Forthcoming events include: a media and film group which will be watching and discussing films, and the "Trinity Twenty" where students target 25 Cultural Capital activities to do. All students record activities that they have done in their cultural capital Passport. The programme also includes regular cultural capital displays round the school, music from different genres during assemblies and support for children at a school in Africa.

- Vertical Tutor group periods happen every day at mid- morning. All groups are a mix of pupils from year 7 to 11. At these sessions they receive support from their tutor, their careers and curriculum for life programme, and, every Tuesday, become involved in debates about current issues. Everyday there is a two minute silence throughout the school when all staff and pupils stand in silence to reflect on a theme or inspirational thought., on the day I visited it was "the meaning of Ash Wednesday". The Thursday session is quiet reading for the whole school including all staff. The tutor groups are part of the school House system which promotes sports, games and cultural activities.

-Phase 1 Graduation is an achievement programme for all year 7s and 8s which culminates in a university style graduation day for pupils and parents at the end of Year 8. (The school has even invested in gowns and mortars for all graduating pupils to wear!). To graduate, pupils must achieve a set of criteria which include 96% attendance, excellent behaviour, 75% attendance at Phase 1 extra curriculum events, academic targets met, and participation in at least 6 public speaking events per year.

-Academies have been set up by the PE department for netball and rugby union to encourage participation in excellence programmes in those sports.

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

All that I have written above gives a picture of the extensive scale of practice in this area.

Sustainability is insured by:

-the schools track record of promoting and sustaining initiatives.

-the impressive way the school supports initiatives like cultural capital and Phase 1 Graduation by appointing staff or groups of staff to make them work, evaluate them, and move them on. Also, all initiatives are properly resourced.

-effective evaluation of initiatives is carried out, for instance on the Cultural Capital initiative the school gave me statistics on student involvement on trips and, very impressively, how these activities impact on Pupil Premium students.

-the enthusiasm, commitment and maturity of the staff is infectious.

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

All school outcome data is impressive. Trinity is one of the highest performing schools for the community demographic it serves.

It is OfSED rated "outstanding".

Student voice feedback is extremely positive. My conversations with staff and pupils support this evaluation.

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

The school is part of a wider federation and shares all its ideas with teachers in other schools.

Teachers from the school have presented at SSAT/LEPP events.

They have a track record of hosting teachers from other schools keen to share good practice.

As a C.of .E school they regularly share good practice with other schools in the Diocese.

They are a Holocaust Beacon School, a Physics Hub and share Spanish courses within the Calderdale area.

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

Continue to develop the Cultural Capital programme. This has huge potential.
Continue to support the MFL department to expand the take up of languages.

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

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