

Inspection of Trinity Academy Halifax

Shay Lane, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX2 9TZ

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

The principal of this school is Sarah Case. This school is part of Trinity Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Michael Gosling, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tom Miskell. There is also an executive principal, Nick Robinson, who is responsible for this school.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since July 2013.

What is it like to attend this school?

Trinity Academy Halifax is an extremely vibrant and innovative school. The highly ambitious curriculum is carefully designed to ensure that all pupils develop important knowledge, regardless of their starting points. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who receive exceptional support from expert staff.

Leaders have very high expectations of pupils. Pupils are extremely well behaved. Classrooms are calm places, where pupils focus fully on their learning. Bullying is rare, and if it does happen, pupils are confident that staff will address it quickly. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other's differences. They show a deep understanding of why tolerance is important in modern Britain.

Pupils' personal development is central to the school's ethos. Leaders ensure that pupils leave Trinity Academy Halifax with the knowledge, skills and attributes that they need to be successful in later life. The curriculum extends beyond the academic to one which encourages wider personal achievement. The extensive programme of planned activities, such as 'graduation', 'competitive edge' and the 'Trinity challenge', develops pupils' character and resilience.

One pupil summed the school's offer up well, commenting, 'This school provides young people with the tools they need to succeed in school and in life.'

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

The school promotes the aspirations of pupils through a rich and demanding curriculum that is highly ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. The school's recent actions to increase the number of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate have had a positive impact. Leaders relentlessly pursue excellence in the curriculum. For example, they are refining the mathematics curriculum with ambitious, new approaches that are further enhancing pupils' learning and achievement.

The deep knowledge and skills that pupils are acquiring are not fully reflected in historical outcomes. This is because previous practices, such as sitting examinations in Year 10, affected published outcomes.

Leaders have mapped out the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn in each subject with precision and clarity. Teachers prioritise this knowledge. They have strong subject knowledge and teaching expertise that enable them to teach the curriculum extremely well. They routinely present information clearly and check pupils' understanding regularly. They expertly identify and address any misconceptions. Teachers provide pupils with frequent opportunities to revisit previously taught content. This helps pupils to remember more and to build detailed knowledge over time.

The school has established highly effective processes for identifying and supporting pupils with additional needs. Teachers and support staff receive precise information on how to support these pupils to access the same curriculum as their peers, which they do with success. Leaders provide finely tuned training so that staff are very well equipped to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

A high number of pupils enter the school without being able to read fluently. Leaders place a strong focus on ensuring that all pupils can read fluently and confidently. Where pupils are at an early stage of learning to read, they benefit from specialist support from highly skilled staff through the school's 'nurture' curriculum. This provision also ensures that pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills that they need to catch up and access the wider curriculum.

Pupils attend school regularly. Where necessary, leaders work tenaciously with families to improve pupils' attendance. The school has clear behaviour and rewards systems that are understood by all members of the school community. The standards that leaders expect of pupils are exceptionally high. In the wake of disruption to routines caused by the pandemic, the school faced a spike in incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders managed this in an assured and effective manner, maintaining the calm and safe school environment that enables pupils to benefit from the exceptional learning they receive.

Where pupils do not meet leaders' expectations there is a consistent approach to ensure learning is not disrupted. Leaders recognise that some pupils need additional support to meet the high expectations that they set. As a result, there is a multilayered approach to supporting pupils. The quality of this approach is exceptional. The array of programmes, such as the internal 'ARC' provision and 'engage' pathways, ensure that pupils who demonstrate the most challenging behaviour thrive and succeed in school. A small number of pupils access alternative provision. The school's oversight of these pupils is meticulous.

The school's commitment to the wider development of pupils is noteworthy. Pupils are ready for life in modern Britain because they learn about important issues such as consent, finance and the impact of alcohol misuse. They know how to look after their mental and physical health because leaders carefully plan opportunities for learning about this through 'curriculum for life' lessons. Pupils can use the 'call it out' system to access the services of mental health professionals and high-quality pastoral support to help them when they are worried. A great number of pupils learn to be active citizens by participating in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. The school's career support and advice shows similar excellence.

School and trust leaders are tenacious in their desire to provide the absolute best quality of education for all pupils and to serve the local community. The school ensures that the most vulnerable pupils and families receive the support that they need. Wherever possible, the trust has centralised systems to allow school leaders to be able to focus on the pupils in their care. Leaders provide a sharply honed professional development programme for staff that enables them to excel in their work and which promotes their wider development. Leaders review the impact of

training regularly to ensure that it leads to sustained and continuous improvement in the quality of education. Staff feel that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. They are proud to work at the school. One member of staff, reflecting the views of many others, told inspectors, 'We know we matter; we are supported and we are cared for.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	136094
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10266127
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,605
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tom Miskell
CEO of the trust	Michael Gosling
Principal	Sarah Case
Website	https://halifax.trinitymat.org
Date of previous inspection	9 July 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Trinity Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school uses two registered and six unregistered providers of education.
- Trinity Academy Halifax is a Church of England school and the previous section 48 inspection took place in March 2019.
- 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 principal and many other senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, history, geography, performing arts, science and physical education. As part of the deep dives, inspectors visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, and reviewed education, health and care plans and other support plans for pupils with SEND. They visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported to learn.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for reading to discuss the support for pupils at the early stages of reading.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for professional development to discuss staff training.
- The team scrutinised the school's records of bullying, reviewed the actions leaders take when bullying occurs and spoke to several groups of pupils, including some single-gender groups, to understand their experience of school.
- Inspectors met leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and reviewed the school's data on suspensions and internal suspensions.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the trust, the chief executive officer and representatives from the local governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to attendance and records of pupils who have joined or left the school roll.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for alternative provision to discuss the rationale for its use and to review the checks that leaders carry out to ensure pupils are safe. Alternative provision settings were contacted and visited as part of this inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of 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 parents and staff through Ofsted surveys, as well as through additional communication from parents during the inspection. The views of pupils were considered through a range of inspection activities.

Inspection team

Stuart Voyce, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
Gabrielle Reddington	Ofsted Inspector
Sam Vickers	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Crane	Ofsted Inspector
James Duncan	His Majesty's Inspector

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