

Inspection of Trinity Academy New Bridge

Craigshaw Road, Sunderland SR5 3NF

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 July 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Alan Carter. This school is part of Trinity Academy Newcastle 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 (CEO), Lynn McNally, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael McHugh.

What is it like to attend this school?

Over time, pupils have received a mixed quality of education and school experience. Staff have not consistently set high enough expectations for what pupils can achieve. In recent months, the school has taken positive steps to improve pupils' learning and pastoral care. However, this is not yet fully realised in pupils' achievement and engagement.

Most pupils who attend school regularly are happy and safe. They speak positively about their relationships with staff. While some pupils occasionally disrupt lessons, staff respond with skill and kindness.

Too many pupils do not attend school often enough. This pattern has continued over time. Low attendance leads to significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils' achievement in the curriculum has not consistently matched what they are capable of. For many, this includes missing out on achieving nationally recognised qualifications.

Some pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) mean that they find social situations hard. The school actively provides a range of cultural experiences to support pupils' development. For example, many pupils take part in trips and visits. They also enjoy new activities such as boxing and learning outdoors. This pushes pupils out of their comfort zone and strengthens their self-esteem in meaningful ways.

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

This academic year, the school has started to strengthen both the design and teaching of the curriculum. Subject leaders have reviewed what they want pupils to learn. Staff adjust learning to help pupils receive the support that they need. Many pupils speak positively about their learning. While some lack motivation and engagement, others enjoy learning new things and trying their best.

There is variability in how well the curriculum is taught. Some tasks that pupils are set are too easy and do not build on what pupils already know. Others do not consistently align with the intended aims of the curriculum. In some subjects, the school sets different curriculum goals for different pupils in ways which reduce ambition and limits what some pupil can achieve.

The school is actively working to improve pupils' attendance. Some pupils are beginning to attend school after long periods of non-attendance. However, some of this work is at an early stage and barriers persist. Low attendance rates continue to limit pupils' achievement. This makes it difficult for the school to turn its curriculum aims into meaningful outcomes for pupils. As a result, pupils have notable gaps in their knowledge. They struggle to apply basic skills in areas such as English and mathematics.

At the time of the last inspection, the school did not prioritise reading. Until recently, progress in this area has been slow. Now, the school checks pupils' reading skills thoroughly. This has led to effective support for some pupils to help them catch up. However, the school is still building the capacity needed to support every pupil who

requires help. Staff have created a new reading hub in the school and recognise the importance of reading across the curriculum. The positive and impactful reading culture the school wants to build is not securely in place.

The school has a coordinated approach to identifying and supporting the needs of pupils. Pupils have a range of complex social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. Pupils value focused activities such as mindfulness sessions and gardening therapy. These activities support pupils' confidence in managing their emotions. They also give pupils useful strategies to help navigate everyday life.

The school has put in place a comprehensive careers programme that supports pupils' ambitions. For example, partnerships with local businesses broaden pupils' horizons and expose them to new opportunities. The school embeds careers education into the curriculum. This helps pupils understand the relevance of what they are learning.

Over time, the school has struggled to maintain a positive reputation with stakeholders. However, many staff now say that things are improving. Staff feel well supported in their roles and value the trust's well-being initiatives. Recent stability in leadership is helping to rebuild relationships with parents and the wider community. The school has set out a clear and ambitious vision for its future. Many changes are in the early stages of development and their impact is not fully evident.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has only recently begun to effectively make improvements in reading. A lack of reading confidence and fluency is a barrier for some pupils and slows their progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils receive the support they need to become fluent and confident readers.
- In some subjects, the tasks set for pupils do not match the curriculum's intended goals or build effectively on what pupils already know. This hinders some pupils' progress through the curriculum and how well they can achieve in the subject. The school should ensure staff align pupils' work with shared curriculum goals, adapt it to pupils' starting points, and maintain high ambition for all.
- There remains work to be done for the school's attendance strategies to overcome the barriers that some pupils face. Absence from school contributes to significant gaps in learning for some pupils who consequently struggle with core skills such as reading, writing, communication, and mathematics. The school should carry out further work to improve attendance and implement robust catch-up strategies to prepare pupils for future success.

- Many school leaders are either new to their roles or are currently implementing changes. As a result, there has been limited time to evaluate the impact of recent initiatives. The school should ensure that continued leadership development leads to effective impact evaluation and timely refinements to their work where necessary.

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	146640
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10397812
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael McHugh
CEO of the trust	Lynn McNally
Headteacher	Alan Carter
Website	www.tanmat.org
Date of previous inspection	7 January 2025, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Several senior leaders have been appointed since the last inspection. This includes the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The CEO took up post in September 2023.
- The school is part of the Trinity Academy Newcastle Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school is a specialist provision for pupils with social, emotional or mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- There were no pupils on roll in the sixth form at the time of the inspection.
- The school uses seven unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior and trust leaders over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also met with the CEO of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, information technology and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector met with the leader responsible for SEND, reviewed a sample of pupils' EHC plans and discussed provision for pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees and the chair of the local academy board. They also reviewed documentation related to governance, including minutes of meetings.
- The lead inspector held a phone call with the strategic lead for SEND at the local authority.
- 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.
- The inspectors met with groups of pupils and staff formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dennis Ley

Ofsted Inspector

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