

# Trinity Solutions Academy

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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**Name of lead inspector:** Chris Jones, Her Majesty's Inspector

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**Type of provider:** Academy 16–19 Converter

**Address:** Condercum Road  
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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Trinity Solutions Academy (Solutions) was inspected in November 2018. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

### Themes

#### **How successfully have managers increased the proportion of students who achieve their qualifications?**      **Reasonable progress**

Managers have increased the proportion of students who achieve their qualifications. They are working well to improve the way that they use information about students' achievements to evaluate the impact of the curriculum that students follow.

Managers have put effective strategies in place to improve attendance and encourage students to continue and complete their studies. Students now attend assemblies each week that focus on what they are able to gain when they come to the academy regularly. Attendance is now consistently high. Through fortnightly progress reviews, managers and teachers are better at identifying and supporting students at risk of leaving early. Retention has increased but requires further improvement.

Students have access to a broad and rich curriculum that provides them with the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to develop, understand and apply. They gain a range of skills to prepare them for adulthood and move on to employment, apprenticeships or further training. Over three quarters of students go on to employment, further education or training at the end of their studies. This is the same proportion as last year. The number of students going on to an apprenticeship has increased.

#### **How well have managers accelerated plans to source additional, high-quality work placements?**      **Reasonable progress**

Governors and leaders acknowledge that sourcing work placements last year relied too much on the knowledge and goodwill of vocational teachers and that the resultant work placements were of variable quality. They approved and secured the recent appointment of a knowledgeable and highly experienced employability coordinator to secure high-quality work placements, improve the relationship that Solutions has with local and regional employers, and provide impartial and targeted careers information, advice and guidance.

Curriculum time is well structured to enable students to develop their employability skills through enrichment activities each Friday. There is a clear intent to develop and secure the skills and experience that young people need to follow their career aspirations. A well-considered scheme of work and effective assemblies have helped students understand that their use of social media can affect their digital footprint and their future chances of employment.

The curriculum includes many opportunities for groups of students to visit employers and for employers to visit Solutions to help students understand better the range of opportunities open to them in the world of work. There are well-developed plans to get employers and support networks more involved. For example, work with the Prince's Trust helps students gain an understanding of self-employment in key areas such as animal care, construction, sports and fitness.

Employers and students benefit from a single point of contact at Solutions. This is already leading to better-quality arrangements for work placement. Information from vocational tutors and from weekly meetings with students identifies effectively when students have developed the confidence and skills to begin and complete a work placement. Work placements link directly to the students' vocational pathways and career aspirations. They make a significant difference to the students' motivation and enthusiasm. Employers are fulsome in their praise about the support they get from Solutions' staff.

**What steps have leaders and managers taken to improve the quality of education in mathematics? Reasonable progress**

Through targeted visits to lessons, effective data analysis and well-briefed local area board meetings, governors have reviewed the progress that leaders and staff have made in improving the mathematics curriculum and the progress that students make from their starting points. They have set challenging targets for future direction.

Managers and governors have restructured the mathematics curriculum well. They have increased the time available for teaching mathematics. Curriculum plans and expectations show that staff give students well-planned and coordinated opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge in vocational contexts.

Partnership and support arrangements across the multi-academy trust have ensured that mathematics teachers get the support and challenge that they need to improve their teaching. Teachers' expectations of what students can do and achieve have risen. Teachers use the results of diagnostic assessments well to inform their lesson planning. Teaching has moved from an overreliance on worksheets and 'spoon-feeding' to lessons that help students know, remember and apply their knowledge in vocational contexts and learn about examination techniques.

Leaders have in place a clear and comprehensive strategy to ensure that consistently high-quality teaching enables students to make the progress that they should in mathematics. Vocational and mathematics teachers liaise closely to ensure that they teach students how to apply what they have learned through challenging and interesting tasks. For example, in land-based studies, students carry out calculations and apply mathematical knowledge and skills, such as storing of feed bags in date order, calculating the area of the barn to see how many animals could be placed there safely and humanely, and reading instructions to calculate the amount of animal feed required for a set number of animals.

**How effectively have managers taken steps to ensure that students with learning difficulties achieve as well as their peers?**

**Reasonable progress**

Students who have learning difficulties have access to an individual, rich and broad curriculum that enables them to develop vocational, mathematics and English knowledge and skills. They develop significant new knowledge and behaviours through a curriculum that is well planned and sequenced, helping them to build on what they have learned previously.

Effective and well-structured progress reviews help students recognise how much progress they have made with important life skills. Tutors know about the individual attendance of each student. They follow up immediately when students are absent. However, managers are not able to identify whether students with learning difficulties are absent more frequently than their peers.

Retention has improved. Managers do not, though, know the difference in retention rates for students with learning difficulties and those without. Consequently, they cannot easily identify if they need to put specific strategies in place to increase the proportion of students with learning difficulties who complete their course.

Managers have restructured the curriculum to enable students to develop their knowledge and skills through courses that do not lead to qualifications. As a result, students gain confidence in what they know and what they can do and are prepared well to move on to courses that lead to qualifications. The achievement of qualifications by students with learning difficulties has improved. Managers are taking steps to enhance their management information systems so they can evaluate more readily how the performance of these students compares with that of other students at Solutions, and to evaluate how effectively their curriculum prepares students for their next steps.

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