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Mr Adrian Ward
Headteacher
Trinity High School and Sixth Form Centre
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Dear Mr Ward

Short inspection of Trinity High School and Sixth Form Centre

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 2018 with Jacqueline Newsome, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

All members of the current leadership team were leaders at the time of the last inspection. They know the school, its staff and its pupils very well. This deep understanding of your pupils and their community has allowed you to secure a curriculum that effectively meets the needs of your learners. Pupils make good progress in a broad range of subjects and are well prepared for transition to further education or training, post-16.

Leaders have addressed the issues raised in the last inspection through careful planning. They have found some imaginative solutions to some of their more persistent staffing concerns. The head of technology now leads the science department, providing effective support and leadership to a new team of teachers. There were significant improvements in pupils' results in science examinations this year.

Leaders have prioritised supporting the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. There is an effective strategic plan for disadvantaged pupils that makes good use of evidence-based research to identify activities to support them in their learning. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have improved since the last inspection, but there remains a stubborn gap between the achievement of these pupils and that of their peers.

An extensive professional development programme is in place to help teachers understand and apply good teaching strategies. This has helped to address the weaknesses that were identified at the last inspection in making sure that the tasks set by teachers build on what pupils already know and understand. However, you recognise that this training has not had enough impact in ensuring that teachers give your most-able pupils hard enough activities to support them in making consistently good progress.

Leaders are very visible in the day-to-day life of the school, and have a considerable understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. However, there remains some variation in examination outcomes that the school did foresee but was unable to combat effectively. You agree that leaders, including governors, would benefit from developing systematic checks that help to identify the impact of professional development, the effectiveness of teaching and leadership, and the accuracy of internal data. These would enable leaders to identify and address weaknesses before they affect outcomes.

Your pupils are a great asset. They are proud of their school, and are polite and welcoming to visitors. They show great resilience in their learning, pushing teachers to provide clear explanations. They behave well in lessons. They value the warm relationships with their teachers and recognise that many teachers go the extra mile to support them. They demonstrate very inclusive attitudes, looking after each other. They behave very sensibly around the school site at break and lunchtimes.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding is well led and there is a school-wide awareness of the needs of your most vulnerable young people. Governors understand their safeguarding responsibility, and they discuss safeguarding regularly at governing body meetings. Leaders are proactive in making sure the site is safe. The school acts in a timely manner on any concerns raised and records are carefully kept. The school is concerned about the response time from the local authority on some urgent matters, but leaders are persistent in seeking support.

Pupils feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they have concerns. They have many opportunities in their pastoral curriculum and assembly programme to discuss topical issues such as cyber bullying, and so understand how to keep themselves safe. Your pupils who need a quiet space during break or lunch value the 'Pitstop' facility. Pupils report that they feel confident that any issues they raise will be appropriately dealt with.

Inspection findings

- Over the last three years, there has been a considerable improvement in the progress made by pupils in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Middle-ability pupils have made rapid progress in mathematics, performing significantly better than similar pupils elsewhere. They have benefited

from improved teaching, higher expectations and more careful tracking of progress.

- Students' progress on vocational courses has been consistently above the national average for the last three years. In 2018, there was also a considerable improvement in the outcomes on A-level courses. Teachers are applying some of the effective teaching strategies they use at key stage 4 to their post-16 classes. For example, they are encouraging students to read thoroughly around a topic before they come to lessons. Aspirations for sixth-form students are high, and more than 80% of students went onto university courses.
- Despite the good overall progress of pupils, most-able pupils make less progress than others. Leaders have introduced more training for staff on stretching and challenging the most able, but the impact of this work is not yet evident in improved results.
- You have addressed weaknesses in science evident at the last inspection. There is still some variation in the quality of teaching, but good teacher knowledge, high expectations, positive relationships and good use of subject-specific vocabulary are evident in science lessons. Your lower-attaining pupils are given frequent opportunities to recall key information, helping them remember important science facts. Improved teaching in science meant that students did better in all science A-level courses this year.
- Attendance has improved, although it remains below national levels. You have reviewed the weekly meeting of key staff to discuss the attendance of individuals to ensure a more rigorous, proactive approach. There is a whole-school focus on the importance of attendance, with increased reflection on attendance in form time, and 'return to school slips' to follow up on periods of absence. There has been a considerable decrease in the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school, partly as a result of tenacious tracking and follow-up for these pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers have high expectations and provide suitably challenging activities so that your most-able pupils make more rapid progress
- they implement fully and track carefully the action plan for your disadvantaged pupils
- they put in place thorough checks to ensure that weaknesses in achievement are rapidly identified and addressed
- they take further action to improve attendance for all pupils to bring the school in line with national attendance levels.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deborah James
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you, your senior team and the chair of the governing body. We visited lessons across a wide range of subjects to observe learning, and we looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. We scrutinised documents including safeguarding policies, the school improvement plan, analysis of pupils' achievement, and attendance records. We spoke to groups of pupils and observed pupils at break and lunchtime. We took account of the 86 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View.