

15 December 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

**Trinity Academy  
The City of Edinburgh Council**

In February 2014, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff how the school has continued to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection and at other aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out how well young people are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. This letter sets out what we found.

**How well do young people learn and achieve?**

Overall, there have been improvements in young people's learning experiences since the original inspection. Responses to our questionnaires, meetings with staff, parents and young people evidenced an improving school ethos being established by the new headteacher. Almost all young people continue to enjoy learning and find it easy to talk to staff. Over the past 18 months, staff have taken forward developments which are leading to improvements in the quality of young people's learning experiences across the school. For example, teachers have engaged more regularly in professional discussions to share effective practice. Most young people are motivated and engaged in learning, particularly in those lessons that give them some choices and provide learning opportunities which encourage them to think for themselves. Young people are benefitting from more teacher-learner conversations, including in the 'learning for success' period on Fridays. We have asked the school to continue to build on this improving practice to ensure all young people experience high-quality learning experiences across the school. Staff continue to provide a wide range of opportunities for further learning. This includes 'Trinity Achieves', the supported study programme. The extensive range of sporting and cultural activities remains an important part of school life at Trinity Academy for many young people.

Subject staff monitor young people's progress in their learning from S1 to S3. The school now needs to have an overview of young people's progress across their learning at these stages, including their progress in literacy and numeracy. Following the last inspection, staff implemented a number of strategies to raise attainment. These included a clear focus on improving the quality of learning, more opportunities for young people to reflect on their progress with their teachers and

better analysis of data to ensure effective interventions. Since his arrival, the new headteacher has very clearly set out expectations in terms of raising attainment for all young people. These approaches are beginning to have a positive impact. The school has very recently introduced a new system for monitoring young people's progress in their learning at the senior stages. Staff recognise that this requires ongoing development to ensure that planned interventions can support all young people in their learning. In a few subjects, particularly mathematics, too many young people did not achieve a qualification last year. There is a strategy in place to monitor and improve performance in mathematics. There have been some improvements in attainment in some areas of the curriculum by the end of S6. The school needs to continue to maintain a focus on improving young people's attainment at all stages. The number of young people moving on to a positive destination continues to improve although numbers leaving for higher education continue to be lower than in schools with young people with similar needs and backgrounds.

### **How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?**

Specialist staff continue to provide effective support for young people who require additional help with their learning. They work with staff across the school to ensure that they can support young people to achieve as highly as possible. There remains scope to ensure that all young people are sufficiently well supported and challenged across all aspects of their learning. The school has made steady progress in improving its curriculum, and continues to seek and implement further improvements. Staff have continued to revise and improve aspects of the courses offered during the broad general education. Courses leading to the new National Qualifications are now in place across the curriculum. A few of these courses require further improvement to ensure they provide learning which leads to successful outcomes for learners. Staff have increased the range of courses on offer to better meet the needs of young people. The school continues to work well with partners to help young people develop their employability skills. There is still work to be done to ensure that all teachers plan consistently for the development of young people's literacy, and numeracy.

### **How well does the school improve the quality of its work?**

The school has been through changes in leadership since the original inspection. The new headteacher took up his post in August 2015. In his short time in post he has already gained the confidence of staff, young people and parents. He has worked effectively with the depute headteachers and the local authority to build on progress already made by the school. Staff now have clearer advice and guidance about classroom strategies and evaluating their work. Plans to take forward a number of necessary improvements are now being realised. These include clear expectations in relation to self-evaluation processes and expected actions. Staff across the school have a greater understanding of their shared responsibilities for improving outcomes for all young people. Young people feel that they now have a better say in school improvements. The current Student Council is viewed as being more effective at communicating with pupils and taking forward improvements. Young people now have more leadership opportunities, including as Sports Ambassadors and in peer learning programmes. Parents have welcomed

approaches such as the successful recent 'back to school' day. The Parent Council works well with the headteacher and school staff to support school improvement. The culture in the school is now one of encouraging leadership at all levels. Overall, the school now has a clearer sense of direction and a renewed sense of shared purpose.

### **What happens next?**

Overall, the school has taken some important steps to address the areas for improvement from the original inspection. Young people, parents and staff are positive about these steps. With the arrival of the new headteacher, the school is ready to take forward a range of improvements. As a result, our Area Lead Officer will work with the City of Edinburgh Council to build capacity for improvement, and will maintain contact to monitor progress. We will return to carry out another further inspection within one year of publication of this letter. We will then issue another letter to parents on the extent to which the school has secured improvements.

Carol McDonald  
HM Inspector

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0131 244 4330, or e-mail: [complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.