



# CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN TO UNIVERSITY



DIXONS  
TRINITY  
ACADEMY

AN OFSTED OUTSTANDING SCHOOL

IMPACT REPORT 2014

# INTRODUCTION

Dixons Trinity Academy opened with 112 Year 7 students on 4th September 2012 and will rise to its full capacity of 720 students by September 2018. In January 2014, we became the first secondary free school to be judged Outstanding by Ofsted.

At Trinity, we have tried to take the best ideas from academies, schools, the independent sector and abroad. No individual element of our practice is revolutionary. Others have said that it is the way in which those ideas have been combined and embedded with rigour and simplicity that has allowed us to make such a strong start. We don't believe in off-the-shelf strategies or practices; there is no silver bullet. It is really about being values driven, having a clear vision, focusing relentlessly on results, operating strict routines, doing the simple things well every day, and building strong relationships at all levels.

This Impact Report is a direct reflection of our commitment to performance-transparency and accountability for student results and achievement in our academy.



# OUR MISSION

As a Dixons Academy, our shared mission is to lead educational system improvement in Bradford and the surrounding district, primarily by establishing high-performing non-faith academies which value diversity and maximise student achievement.

In order to achieve our mission, we focus on three key drivers: Mastery, which is the drive to get better at things that matter; Autonomy, or the drive to direct our own lives; and Purpose, which is the drive to connect to a cause larger than ourselves.

Our practice is thoroughly rooted in this approach and in the following three core values:

## **1. HARD WORK**

We never give up. We remain positive so that we have the strength to persevere with even the hardest work. We do what it takes for as long as it takes.

## **2. TRUST**

We are honest. We do what we say we'll do and do not make excuses. We are loyal and have the courage to do the right thing.

## **3. FAIRNESS**

We play by the rules. We are respectful, polite and courteous at all times. We don't take advantage of others and helping a member of our team is helping ourselves.

At Trinity, we have created an impressive culture of success through the operation of strict routines and protocols, an unwavering focus on results, and by offering the very best teaching and support. Students learn, behave and are well mannered. Teachers teach with skill and rigour, showing great courtesy. Staff and students enjoy what they do together.

In our achievement-oriented culture, it is cool to be smart, and all students work hard to climb the mountain to university or a real alternative.

**AT TRINITY, WE ALL HAVE A SENTENCE THAT STATES THE LASTING IMPRESSION WE WANT TO LEAVE ON THE WORLD. OUR ACADEMY SENTENCE IS:**

**“THE ACADEMY ENSURED THAT ALL STUDENTS SUCCEEDED AT UNIVERSITY, THRIVED IN A TOP JOB AND HAD A GREAT LIFE.”**



# DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

## **Learning First**

Our teachers have real respect for their learners as people with ideas of their own. They are passionate about teaching and learning and able to present challenging learning tasks. Our teachers have the autonomy to teach as they best see fit, using their expertise to 'read' their classroom and be responsive to maximise student progress. A no hands up "cold calling" method enhances teachers' regular monitoring of learning.

## **Powerful Feedback**

We harness the power of oral and written feedback to increase student learning by ensuring that frequent feedback causes thinking rather than an emotional reaction. Moreover, our whole culture is built on tailored and on-going feedback and how we can all improve, learners and teachers alike. We engineer feedback opportunities throughout each day; at every morning starter, after every lunch and at every line-up we reflect back on how the day has gone and the key highlights in learning.

## **Developing Crucial Skills**

We begin every morning with breakfast and a literacy or numeracy starter and spend 30 minutes reading every day during DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) sessions. Our top three literacy strategies are: carrying a reading book (reading); speaking in full sentences and no slang (speaking); tracking the speaker (listening).

## **Driven By Data**

Teachers and leaders have weekly 'progress meetings' and spend a 'Data Day' after each assessment cycle dedicated to creating data-driven instructional plans that target whole class, small group and one-on-one intervention. There is designated time before, during and after the academy day for small group and individual tutoring.

## **Advisory Structure**

Advisory groups form the core organisational and pastoral structure of the academy. The advisor is a coach, mentor, teacher and manager. Advisors guide students in learning how to manage their time, plan their work and complete projects. Advisors coach students to seek and build authentic learning experiences inside and outside the academy building.

## **Two Simple Questions**

To keep motivation that lasts, we focus on two important questions. First, we ask a big question to orient our life toward greater purpose – what's my sentence? In one sentence we state what lasting impression we want to leave on the world. Then we keep asking a small question for day-to-day motivation – was I better today than yesterday?

## **Stretch Projects**

In addition to their more traditional curriculum, Stretch projects allow students to explore an area of interest within a given theme. We aim to develop students' autonomy and grow their love of learning. This project is assessed through a student exhibition at the end of each 13-week cycle.

## **High Expectations, No Excuses**

We have very clear rules about homework and equipment because students have to be ready to learn. Our students are expected to wear their uniform with pride and there is a strong attention to detail. Students are also required to be 'on task' and fully engaged in their learning at all times. If a teacher raises their hand, students fall silent whether in a classroom or a whole-school context. Over time, our learners pick up strong learning habits in order to be better qualified, more successful and happier in the future.

## **Parents As Partners**

At Trinity, parents, students and school leaders all sign a Home-Academy Agreement that outlines their shared commitment to hard work and consistent support of one another. Parents are given regular information on their child's progress in every subject. For example, every half term they receive either a highly personalised written report, a face-to-face meeting or a telephone call home.

## **More Time**

With an extended academy day, students have more time in the classroom to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding, as well as more opportunities to participate in a wide range of co-curricular electives that enrich and broaden the learners' cultural literacy. There are no shortcuts to success.

# CASE STUDIES

## ADNAN'S JOURNEY

"When I started at Dixons Trinity Academy, I was struggling with confidence, but we went on the residential which was great! The support from teachers and students helped me to overcome my nerves and my corrections stopped too. I feel so happy about my progress. For every month I have been at Trinity, I have made two months' of progress with my reading; I have fun as I am learning! Now, I feel so confident that I just performed in the dance event at the end of term. At Trinity, the core value that I appreciate is trust; the teachers have put their trust in me."

ADNAN - CLASS OF 2020

"Any parent should send their child here: this school will build them up and really help them to move forward and achieve their best. Dixons Trinity Academy supports Adnan to learn from his mistakes. At Trinity, standards are kept so high to make sure the students can make so much progress.

The teachers reassured us from the beginning that Adnan would be okay and they solved our problems with settling in – now he is so happy. He even practises his Stretch Projects at home with the family! With the website and Newsflash, we can keep up with what is happening at school and give Adnan the support he needs."

ADNAN'S DAD

## MARIA'S JOURNEY

"Since joining Dixons Trinity Academy, I have made friends and learnt lots; the impact of the other students around me has been really helpful as well. I feel like I can talk to the staff about anything.

I will definitely go on to university; it is my goal so I can get a good job and have a nice life.

My Stretch Projects came from my heart – I always wanted my topics to be unique and represent my commitment to hard work.

Every child deserves to be here because there are no distractions to making progress and we have the autonomy to direct our own learning."

MARIA - CLASS OF 2020

"I'm speechless: I have seen Maria grow so much this year. She is not only making progress academically, she is beginning to know her own identity. I've never felt scared to approach anyone at Trinity. The quality of relationships are just unheard of in a secondary school!

At Trinity, the foundations are right; no one would judge anybody else because the core values are in place. Everyone is treated fairly, no students are left out and, because of this autonomy, they will have the confidence to tackle everything life presents them with.

I couldn't ask for a better school! With the support from staff, I couldn't be happier!"

MARIA'S MUM

# MASTERY

## MASTERY: THE URGE TO GET BETTER AND BETTER AT SOMETHING THAT MATTERS.

Through Mastery, we demonstrate outstanding progress and achievement.

### KEY ACTION

We have developed the Crucial Skills Matrix to ensure our students make accelerated progress in the core.

### KEY IMPACTS

- From each different starting point, the proportions of students making substantial progress in English and mathematics are high. This rate of progress will result in over 90% of students from the Class of 2019 and Class of 2020 making, at least, two levels of progress by the end of Year 9.
- There is no difference in the progress of students from different minority ethnic groups, boys or girls, or those with low, average or above average levels of prior attainment.
- On average, students from the Class of 2020 made over 17 months' progress in reading in a 9 month period and the Class of 2019 has made 31 months' progress in a 21 month period.

Through Mastery, we ensure learning is rigorous, engaging and underpinned by meaningful feedback.

### KEY ACTION

We have developed teacher talent through disciplined, deliberate and intelligent practice and coaching. For example, we practise key techniques collectively as a staff twice every week during morning meetings and engineer more tailored practice during one-to-one coaching sessions.

### KEY IMPACTS

- "Learning time is never wasted. Teachers expect students to start work promptly and they do. Poor-quality student work or anything less than 100% effort is not accepted during lessons. This makes a significant contribution to students' outstanding achievement." (Ofsted, 2014)

Through Mastery, we spend pupil premium funding successfully to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and other students.

### KEY ACTION

We have extended the hours of our highly effective intervention teacher in the core and also employed a Health Mentor to provide well-targeted pastoral support.

### KEY IMPACT

- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged students are high and in line with those of other students in the academy.

### 2014/15

At Trinity, we show perseverance and passion for long-term goals. As we continue our commitment to Mastery, we will:

- increase the frequency and quality of extended writing across all subjects
- provide highly responsive KS3 'morning intervention' in the core
- ensure all marking and feedback matches current best practice
- appoint additional teachers in English and mathematics to allow staff to work more flexibly and to ensure every student receives the highest quality instruction to deliver maximum progress.

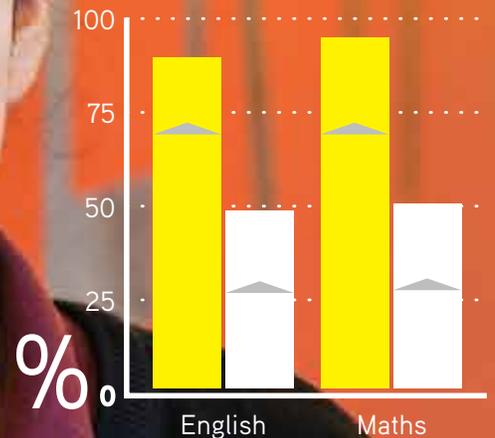
**"ATTAINMENT IS EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH COMPARED TO STANDARDS TYPICAL FOR STUDENTS OF THE SAME AGE"**

**OFSTED 2014**

**“AT DIXONS TRINITY ACADEMY, NO ONE IS SCARED TO BE CLEVER, EVERYONE IS PROUD OF THEIR OWN PROGRESS AND OF EACH OTHER’S. WE DON’T HAVE TO BLEND IN, WE ARE PROUD TO BE UNIQUE AND BE OURSELVES.”**

**PRABHJOT SINGH, CLASS OF 2020**

2013-14 Progress:  
Class of 2019 & Class of 2020



Expected Progress Above Expected Progress KS2-4 National Average 2013

## AUTONOMY: THE DESIRE TO DIRECT OUR OWN LIVES.

Through Autonomy, we create a joyful and disciplined school culture.

### KEY ACTION

We have extended and embedded our strong routines and inflexible protocols. Staff relentlessly focus on student and family investment.

### KEY IMPACTS

- 100% of lessons graded good, or better, for behaviour.
- 97% attendance; 99% punctuality.

Through Autonomy, we develop resilient, confident and independent learners.

### KEY ACTION

We have embedded Stretch Projects into our curriculum to ensure every student explores academic autonomy.

### KEY IMPACTS

- 100% of students arrived at lessons on time.
- 100% of students presented an exhibition of their Stretch Project at the end of each cycle.
- 100% of students received CEIAG.

Through Autonomy, we cultivate effective, autonomous leaders at every level of the organisation.

### KEY ACTION

We have embraced a range of student leadership opportunities such as iBase and Academy Representatives.

### KEY IMPACTS

- 100% of staff agree that the school is well led and managed.

- Every member of staff makes a wider contribution to academy life by leading a Stretch Project.

### 2014/15

At Dixons Trinity Academy, we keep the main thing the main thing! As we continue our commitment to Autonomy, we will:

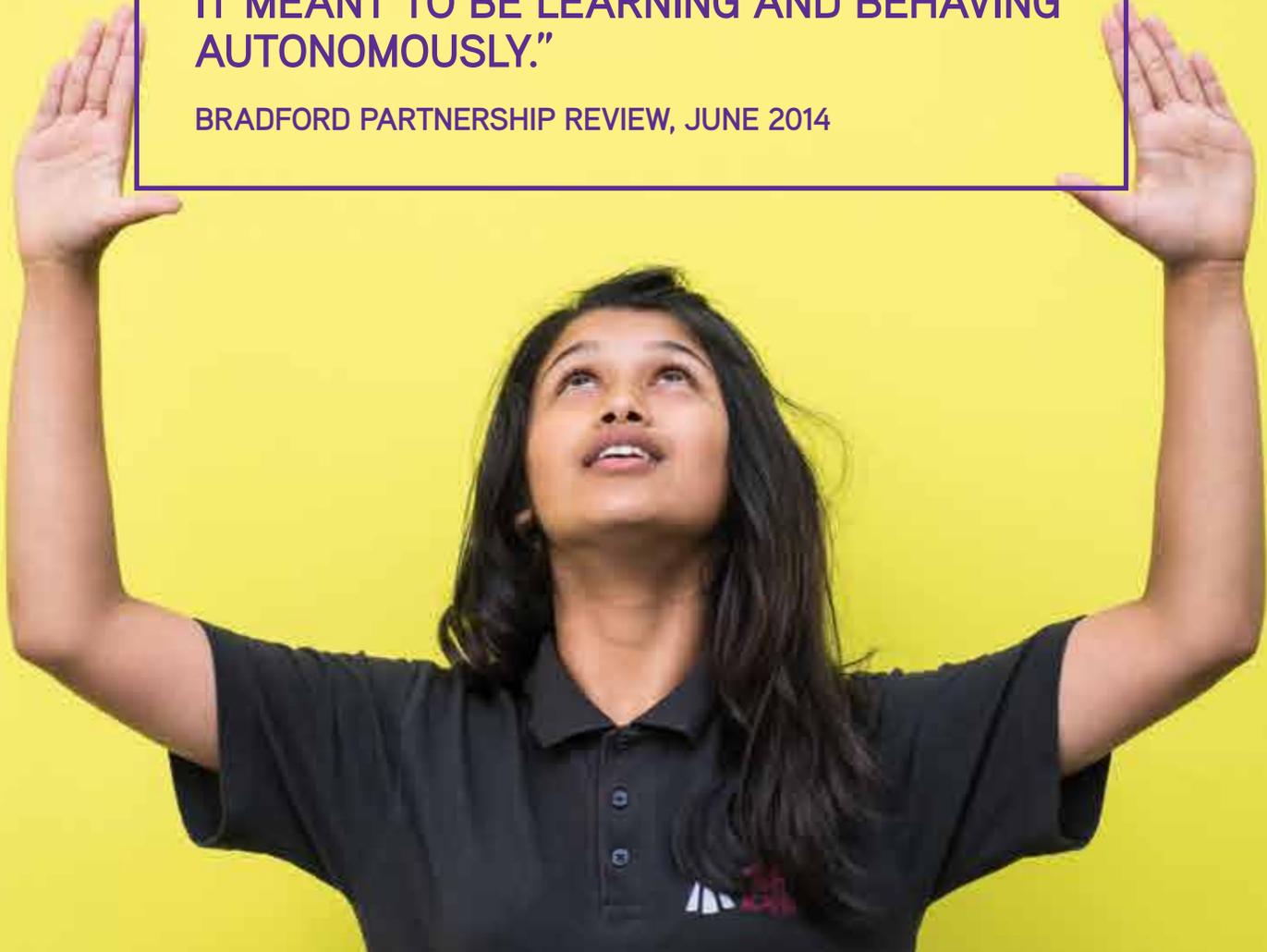
- sustain students' rapid progress in KS3 ensuring that all learners are supported to make good, or better, progress irrespective of their starting points
- offer student leadership responsibilities following the introduction of our new House system in 2014/15
- commit to providing high-quality annual experiences for our learners in national competitions.

# 100%

OF PARENTS AGREE  
(67% STRONGLY AGREE)  
THAT THE ACADEMY IS  
HELPING THEIR CHILD  
TO DEVELOP A GOOD,  
STRONG CHARACTER

**“THE ACADEMY’S ‘DRIVERS’ FOR IMPROVEMENT... ARE FIRMLY EMBEDDED IN EVERYTHING THAT STAFF AND STUDENTS DO. A YEAR 7 STUDENT, FOR INSTANCE, COULD TALK KNOWLEDGABLY ABOUT WHAT IT MEANT TO BE LEARNING AND BEHAVING AUTONOMOUSLY.”**

**BRADFORD PARTNERSHIP REVIEW, JUNE 2014**



# PURPOSE

## PURPOSE: THE YEARNING TO DO WHAT WE DO IN THE SERVICE OF SOMETHING LARGER THAN OURSELVES.

Through Purpose, we establish a genuine three-way partnership between families, students and staff.

### KEY ACTION

We have continued to develop the critical role of the advisor as the key point of contact between home and school.

### KEY IMPACTS

- 100% of parents attend consultation events.
- According to Parent View, 100% of parents agree that the school is well led and managed; and that they would recommend this school to another parent.

Through Purpose, we work with the Dixons Academies to replicate best practice and to contribute to continuous improvement.

### KEY ACTION

We have worked in collaboration with the Dixons Academies, hosting training and collaborative events, learning from the experience of our robust partners. For example, senior and middle leaders across the academies have worked closely to respond to curriculum and assessment changes.

### KEY IMPACTS

- Year 7 students participate in a challenging residential, climbing a mountain.
- Year 8 students participate in a challenging residential, visiting Oxford University.

Through Purpose, we establish a strong reputation for Dixons Trinity Academy.

### KEY ACTION

We have encouraged visitors into Trinity from across the range of educational expertise and shared our

successes with the media to ensure our students are able to take pride in Dixons Trinity Academy.

### KEY IMPACTS

- Dixons Trinity Academy is graded Outstanding by Ofsted.
- Dixons Trinity Academy is heavily oversubscribed, with over 7 applicants for each place.

### 2014/15

At Dixons Trinity Academy, we see our own achievements as a commitment to our community. As we continue our commitment to Purpose, we will:

- sustain our commitment to charity work both locally and internationally
- continue our relationships with key educational experts within the Future Leaders Charitable Trust and Teach First to ensure our students continue to access the highest quality teaching and learning
- focus on our key work within the Dixons Academies, especially as Dixons McMillan Academy will open in our building in September 2014 giving us a special opportunity to work closely together on a daily basis.

100%

OF STUDENTS AGREE  
(72% STRONGLY  
AGREE) THAT THEY  
ARE PROUD TO BE  
A DIXONS TRINITY  
STUDENT

100%

OF STUDENTS AGREE  
(55% STRONGLY  
AGREE) THAT ADULTS  
IN THIS ACADEMY  
CARE ABOUT THEM

“I THOUGHT ZAHRA WAS HAPPY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL, BUT NOW I KNOW WHAT REAL HAPPINESS IS FOR HER. DIXONS TRINITY ACADEMY HAS GIVEN HER SO MUCH. I AM SO THANKFUL SHE GOT A PLACE; NEXT YEAR, HER BROTHER CAN'T WAIT TO START!”

MRS SHEIKH



# WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID

## **Ofsted, January 2014**

We are delighted to be the first secondary free school to be judged Outstanding by Ofsted. Highlights from the report include:

“In this academy, only excellence will do.”

“Students make rapid progress from their starting points and after only one year their attainment is high.”

“Teachers are passionate about teaching and highly committed to ensuring that students achieve their full potential.”

“Behaviour is exemplary and learning time is never wasted.”

“Exceptional leadership, from the headteacher and other senior leaders, has driven forward the academy’s mission.”

## **Bradford Partnership, June 2014**

“Even though the academy was judged ‘outstanding’ in all aspects of its work by an Ofsted inspection team in January 2014, it is a tribute to the work of the senior leaders and all staff that the pace to school improvement remains very strong. There has been no slackening in approach or in the desire to be highly successful for all.”

## **Rt Hon Michael Gove MP (former Secretary of State for Education)**

“Congratulations on your outstanding rating from Ofsted. It is a remarkable achievement.

Please pass on my thanks and admiration to your whole team – teachers, support staff, and parents – for their part in this success story.

To have secured an outstanding rating just 18 months after opening is a testament to the hard work and dedication of everyone in the school.

That includes, of course, your pupils. It came as no surprise to me that Ofsted highlighted their high aspirations and their desire to progress into higher education, secure a ‘top job’ and enjoy their lives.”

## **Lord Nash (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools)**

“Thank you for having me last Friday. I really enjoyed the visit and was most impressed with everything I saw. There is such clear purpose and vision behind all aspects of the school and I was particularly struck by the high aspirations of the children.

Dixons Trinity Academy is clearly a really outstanding school and I look forward to it going from strength to strength.”

## **Heath Monk (CEO, Future Leaders Charitable Trust)**

“I have visited outstanding schools in many countries and contexts, but the one that stands out for me, and that I recommend all prospective school leaders to visit, is Dixons Trinity Academy”

## **Jay Altman (CEO, FirstLine Schools, New Orleans)**

“What I found remarkable about Dixons Trinity was the striking combination of purpose and spirit. There is a seriousness of purpose that would be notable in any school: students are focused on both achievement and on making their own distinctive contribution to the world. At the same time, there is an enthusiasm for learning and a spirit of joy in being part of a supportive school community. I left inspired.”

