



UK SOCIAL MOBILITY AWARDS

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2022
WINNERS
CASE STUDIES REPORT

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School/College of the Year | Trinity Academy Leeds



About Trinity Academy Leeds

Part of the Trinity Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), Trinity Academy Leeds opened in September 2021. The school largely serves pupils from less advantaged SEBs – 65% of pupils receive Pupil Premium funding, and 60% have English as an additional language (EAL). The school aims to ensure that a high level of deprivation does not equate to low levels of aspiration for its young people.

What were Trinity Academy Leeds' winning activities in 2021-22?

Trinity Academy Leeds won School/College of the Year in recognition of its pioneering approach to careers education. The school opened in September 2021 with a cohort of 240 Year 7 students, which allowed the school to focus its resources on opportunities for its Year 7 in 2021-22.

The centrepiece of Trinity Academy's social mobility work in 2021-22 was Empower, the school's careers programme. Through Empower, students took part in timetabled, off-site industry experiences in Leeds five times throughout the year. The school provided all students with insights into a broad range of sectors, including construction, ecology, fine art, literature, history, sustainability, professional services, project management, sustainability, and theatre. After each careers visit, students took part in follow-up activities to reflect on their experiences and their future career paths.

In addition to these off-site visits, Empower-related activities were included across the school's curriculum. For example, when studying glaciation in geography, Year 7 students learned about the role of a glaciologist, and got involved in an Empower Spotlight activity which replicated a glaciologist's day-to-day work. Beyond the classroom, Trinity Academy's co-curricular clubs included an Empower focus, through which students self-selected to careers-related clubs. In one example, students in newspaper club acted as journalists, wrote articles, and created their own newspaper – additionally, a journalist visited the club to speak to students about their job. Across off-site visits, curricular and co-curricular activities, Empower aimed to inform students about potential careers they may not have considered, and to develop technical and soft skills which supported their future career paths.

What are the key enabling factors for Trinity Academy Leeds to advance social mobility?

Developing and maintaining a wide range of external partnerships is a key enabling factor for Trinity Academy's Empower activities. This involves reaching out to companies, informing them about Empower, and developing partnerships with companies who buy into the school's vision. The financial support provided by these partners also means that the school can provide all Empower experiences cost-free to all students.

Another important enabler is that the school's senior leaders give staff members time and support to develop and deliver an innovative approach to careers education. By valuing their staff and recognising their passion, the school's leaders create the conditions for staff to have a lasting, positive impact on their students.

What challenges has Trinity Academy Leeds faced on social mobility?

Designing a new programme from scratch presented Trinity Academy's staff with significant challenges, including setting up employer partnerships during the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring health and safety requirements were met across all Empower activities, and funding the trips so every child had equal access. The team behind Empower overcame these challenges through the support and engagement of the whole school community – from students and parents to teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and senior leaders.

How does Trinity Academy Leeds define social mobility success?

For Trinity Academy Leeds, social mobility success is linked to the school's mission statement – 'Ensuring that students are equipped with the knowledge, skills, experience, habits, and ambitions to enter a Level 3 qualification route or a challenging alternative'. Social mobility success is also linked to students having a voice, being able to express themselves, and growing up to be active citizens who demonstrate the school's core values of honesty, empathy, respect, and responsibility.

What next for Trinity Academy on social mobility?

In 2022-23, Trinity Academy is delivering its Empower programme and wider Empower activities for both Year 7 and 8 students. For Year 8, off-site visits will involve a new range of employers, including those linked to career ambitions described by the students at the end of Year 7. The school will continue being responsive to the students' interests, providing a broad range of options, and supporting them to make choices that will set them up for future success.

With thanks Rebecca Goult (Curriculum Leader – Humanities, Trinity Academy Leeds), who was interviewed for this case study.

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Our mantra is 'Reach Higher, See Further, Shine Brighter' – we provide the opportunities and tools for young people to exceed all expectations and fulfil their potential.

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