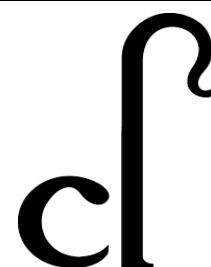


National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Trinity School

Strand Road
Carlisle
CA1 1JB

Diocese: Carlisle
Local authority: Cumbria
Dates of inspection: 22 & 23 February 2012
Date of last inspection: May 2009
School's unique reference number: 137369
Headteacher: Alan Mottershead
Inspector's name & number: Lyn Field National Society No.151



Diocese of Carlisle
Growing Disciples

School context

Trinity is a larger than average size secondary school in the centre of Carlisle. In September 2011 it converted to a Church of England Academy and is currently in the middle of a major rebuilding programme. The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and of those with special educational needs and disabilities are below those nationally. Only a small proportion of pupils is admitted on the basis of church affiliation.

Trinity is the Secondary School North West regional winner of the 2012 Church School Awards for its partnership project with two Ugandan schools.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Trinity School as a Church of England school are good

Trinity School is rapidly gaining momentum in its journey as a church school. The exceptional quality of care for each student and member of staff reflects its core Christian values. The curriculum pays attention to the breadth of human experience and the importance of faith. This enables young people to grow into compassionate and responsible citizens motivated to take responsibility for their own learning.

Established strengths

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across all subjects
- The headteacher's commitment to the Christian ethos of the school
- The leadership of the religious studies department
- The partnership with the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral

Focus for development

- To broaden the base of leadership for Christian aspects of the school especially the role of the chaplain, students and local clergy in collective worship
- To improve systems for governors to evaluate the impact of the school's Christian character in order to better inform their strategic planning
- To develop students' skills in expressing Christian values in order to articulate their impact on school life
- To identify the contribution all departments make to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students in order to celebrate the school's strengths in this area

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners

Christian values are the basis of the school's ethos. Exemplary pastoral care of staff and students is recognised by everyone involved in the school community and beyond. The

headteacher knows students personally and adds his own comment to all reports. Students are treated as unique individuals and no-one is forgotten. This motivates them to play an active role in the community particularly through charity work. Christian values, therefore, clearly influence the organisation of the school but are not always couched in religious language or terminology that promote an understanding of shared human values. This limits students' ability to explain the impact these values have on school life as articulately as they talk about feelings and emotions. However, they feel comfortable to discuss their personal beliefs openly. A few who have transferred from other schools say they no longer feel marginalised because of their faith and their views are taken seriously in debates. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is a strength of the school. This is because teachers across all departments take every opportunity to relate the content of their lessons to moral, global and ethical issues both in past times and in contemporary society. Although this is not formally monitored by the school, students provide countless examples of how this is a regular and challenging part of lessons. Typical comments were 'I have begun to see how religious belief is relevant to views of equality and punishment' and 'Lessons here have given me a moral compass'. They are very conscious that there is limited cultural diversity in their community and welcome the strong links with schools in Uganda and America that increase their awareness of their own attitudes and values. The school is in the midst of a major rebuilding programme. Although it is not within the remit of this inspection to comment on what is planned, work has already begun on innovative projects such as community orchards and students' own photographic work. A striking design of St Cuthbert's cross, that is a theme throughout the building, was the choice of students. This suggests that the school's core values are shaping the environment of the new building.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

A regular pattern of daily worship has been established since the last inspection. The evaluation of its impact, however, is still at too early a stage to shape its future development. Major building work has restricted the number of occasions in the week when students can meet for worship in year groups or houses. Senior staff, however, have remained totally committed to these occasions and have set clear expectations that *Thought for the Day* should be part of every form time. Although there is some variation in the style of delivery by form tutors, it is taken seriously and now has a high profile in school life.

The headteacher has taken sole responsibility for preparing the material for worship. It includes explicitly Christian teaching, philosophical elements and questions for personal reflection. Students are quiet and attentive. The issues raised are challenging but sometimes too difficult for some. However, a significant number of tutors, non-teaching staff and students value these daily opportunities for spiritual reflection. With the appointment of a new chaplain the school has the extra capacity to support the development of worship. Senior leaders recognise that it is now time to review the breadth of worship on offer and to consider what experiences of prayer, for example, are appropriate to equip students for their life beyond school.

Significant events in the school calendar take place in the Cathedral. These include the welcome service for Y7 pupils, senior prize giving and the annual carol service that has evolved from a being a Christmas concert into an act of worship. These occasions are respected by students of all faith backgrounds and they use words such as *memorable*, *special* and *meaningful* when describing their feelings. It has taken time for parish clergy to become actively involved in leading worship in the school. This position is now improving and a small group is beginning to develop relationships with individual school houses. Their presence, alongside staff and students, is already valued.

The effectiveness of the religious education (RE) is good

RE is growing in popularity as students realise how well it challenges their thinking and provides them with a basis for understanding moral and ethical issues across the whole curriculum. A recent conference with Peter Vardy is an example of how events inspire students to aim higher. The introduction in Year 9 of a full GCSE for all students is a significant change. Christianity is the main religion taught but alongside an appropriate

balance of other faiths. Rates of progress in RE are good and continuing to improve. Most groups of students meet and sometimes exceed their targets. Standards in all key stages are in line with core subjects in the school and above national averages.

The quality of teaching varies but is good overall with some exemplary practice that provides a model for other staff in the department. In the best lessons, students develop skills in independent learning. At A level, in particular, this is because the strong subject knowledge of their teachers motivates them to pursue individual research routes and is then used to check that they have drawn accurate conclusions. Marking gives students clear direction in where to improve and this is followed up in subsequent work. Students work well collaboratively. They share responsibility for tasks and produce notes in a variety of ways so that their individual work enriches the understanding of the whole class. Occasionally the size of working groups slows progress as not every student actively contributes when too many are involved.

The leadership of the department is outstanding and constantly drives improvement.

Expectations are high and implemented through accurate monitoring and individual professional development plans for teachers. The analysis of data is rigorous and is used to inform changes to how students are taught and to match courses to their different learning styles and potential career paths. The progress of individual students is tracked at every stage so it is known exactly where they are making more or less than expected progress.

At this stage the success of the department is reliant on the strategic management of its leader, although this is well supported by the strong sense of teamwork that exists together with a willingness to constantly devise better ways of working.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good

The headteacher has taken responsibility for successfully addressing issues from the previous inspection and maintaining the Christian ethos of the school. For a number of years the aims have been for the care of each individual to be at the core of the school's work and this is now fully embedded in practice. The headteacher's evaluation of the school, in consultation with senior staff and governors, is accurate. It suggests that the time is now right to revisit the place of Christian beliefs and its identity as a Church of England academy.

The school's productive relationships with the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral have traditionally defined the school's identity and there is a strong desire for this to continue.

Students, for example, consider that it adds a welcome dimension to their education and conveys key messages about the school's distinctiveness to the wider community. The strong leadership of RE reflects the school's drive and ambition to improve. It ensures that the subject makes a significant contribution to the curriculum and achievement for all students. Senior staff and governors believe that the pace of development as a church school has increased and has reached a watershed moment with the appointment of a new chaplain.

This comes after a significant length of time with a vacancy in this post. It is being funded from the school budget which demonstrates the strength of the commitment to its Christian status. The appointment is timely as the leadership of the Christian ethos has depended too much on the headteacher. Consequently, this gives the school a strong agenda to move forward but the current systems for review are not sufficiently well matched to the school's current needs and status to inform its strategic planning. The previous inspection served as a wake up call and prompted the formation of a committee to monitor the school's compliance with statutory requirements. This has provided a channel for governors to hold leaders at all levels to account. However, it has remained too focused on checking what is provided rather than moving on to evaluate the impact on students and staff and identify priorities for the future.