



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Trinity Church of England Academy

Shay Lane
Halifax
West Yorkshire
HX2 9TZ

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: Calderdale

Dates of inspection: 1 and 2 July

Date of last inspection: N/A

School's unique reference number: 136094

Headteacher: Mr Michael Gosling

Inspector's name and number: Jo Fageant 104

School context

Trinity opened as a Church of England academy in 2010 and moved to new buildings in 2012 having started in the buildings of its predecessor school. A more recent sixth form block has been added due to the increase in pupil numbers in 2013. In addition to diocesan sponsorship it has three other sponsors: the University of Huddersfield, Calderdale College and Calderdale Council. Due to the reorganisation of secondary provision in the area, older pupils have joined the academy from a mix of Church of England, Roman Catholic and Community schools. It is a larger than average 11-18 secondary school drawing its pupils primarily from the local community in North Halifax without faith based restrictions. The proportion of students who have special educational needs or are disabled is higher than average. The most able students are able to attend the local grammar school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Trinity as a Church of England academy are outstanding

- A clearly articulated Christian vision informs the work of leaders embedding a sense of the importance of 'doing what is right' and developing strategies that drive continual improvement.
- Meaningful Christian values drive everything thereby ensuring an atmosphere throughout the academy of purposeful learning and aspiration.
- A Christian commitment in the service of every individual and the community as a whole means pupils and staff talk powerfully of knowing they are valued and supported in appropriate ways to be the best they can be.
- Worship which clearly reflects Anglican traditions is inclusive of and relevant to all. The daily silence and saying of the academy prayer makes for a very short but powerfully reflective and universally appreciated act of worship.

Areas to improve

- Now that patterns of meaningful worship have been established and embedded, enrich the spiritual life of the academy by providing opportunities for its members to participate in planning, leading and

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

The academy has a very well-established rich Christian ethos relevant to its context of admitting pupils irrespective of their religious background or affiliation. Everyone is fully aware of the values of empathy, honesty, respect and responsibility. Pupils say they influence everything and that they are encouraged to live up to the challenge of the way they are explained in the school prayer. The values are used naturally in conversations and used well in tutor time richly to support spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their Christian significance is explored within tutor time, collective worship and religious education (RE). Understanding of and engagement with them leads to positive relationships, excellent behaviour and an orderly and purposeful atmosphere which promotes learning. Many pupils also recognise the inspirational impact of quotations about them displayed around the building from members of the school community and others. The deeply embedded Christian vision of senior leaders and governors is evident in their belief in the worth and potential of all members of the school community. The resulting forensic interrogation of data and a highly developed pastoral support system mean almost all needs, academic and personal, are identified and addressed. A relentless pursuit of excellence in the service of both staff and pupils gives rise to high quality teaching and learning, the attainment of high standards and a commitment to continual improvement. Pupils are guided well in understanding the progress they have made and how to continue to improve their learning. The outworking of the behaviour for learning policy and a motivating system of rewards also support the effective learning culture. Attendance is high due to careful monitoring and also pupils' enjoyment of what the school offers. They have opportunities to engage with a stimulating programme of trips and visitors. Pupils know teachers 'really care about us and want us to do really well'. They speak appreciatively of the time given at weekends and in holidays to support revision, of the way teachers respond to the needs and interests of individuals in support of their learning and the ways in which they 'get everyone involved in lessons'. Many agree that their teachers are 'absolute stars'. The integration of a significant number of pupils into Years 9, 10 and 11 in September 2013 was carefully choreographed and sensitively managed through a period of transition culminating in the closure of a nearby school. Unsurprisingly pupils expressed some anxieties about the move but all reflect, almost a year later, that they felt welcomed and quickly integrated making many new friends and enjoying the increased opportunities open to them. Several speak freely of perceiving that 'people in the school live out what they stand for'. Along with other subjects, RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and helps them develop a respect for Christianity and wider religious and cultural diversity and difference. Pupils speak very positively about the mixture of ages in each tutor group, valuing the family feel engendered by this arrangement within a very large school. They also appreciate the system of councils within the colleges and academy as a whole that gives them an influential voice. Beyond the curriculum the academy provides a very wide range of extra-curricular activities with the vast majority of pupils taking the opportunity to participate. Involvement is monitored and where necessary challenged for their wider benefit.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Very careful thought has been given to the place and nature of collective worship in the academy. This is an area which continues to develop and be enriched. It is outstanding because taken as a whole the varied forms of worship in place clearly incorporate the traditions and practices of the Church of England whilst being relevant, engaging and thought-provoking for all. The academy comprises pupils and staff with widely diverse experiences of and commitments to religion and worship. However, there is almost unanimous appreciation of the value of the daily period of two minutes silence which follows a reciting, in each tutor group setting, of the academy prayer. This prayer was written by students and focuses on the living out of the four core values. Pupils and staff alike value this daily reminder. The time of silence has been greatly enriched by the introduction of a weekly image projected in each room along with an inspiring quotation often from the Bible. Pupils say this helps them focus and reflect on important issues illustrated in this way. They acknowledge this influences their wider thinking, attitudes and behaviour. In addition, the chaplain and senior leaders have developed a pattern of worship in colleges and smaller combinations of tutor groups often making use of the inspirational sacred space in the centre of the building. These have a formal structure, pupil-led Bible, and often Gospel, readings and prayers which frequently use the language of the Trinity understood by all pupils. There is always inspiring input and the daily silence. Pupils respond with a sense of reverence and respectful

engagement because all these occasions are skilfully planned by the chaplain to be both distinctively Christian and inclusive of all. He meets with volunteer pupils to evaluate worship provision and impact and acts on findings. A good example of response is the introduction of the image which accompanies the time of silence and pupils beginning to contribute ideas for this. Volunteer pupils also contribute to worship events beyond the academy. Pupils have an opportunity to worship each Christmas in an impressive celebration, led by the chaplain, in Halifax Minster.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Pupils make rapid progress in RE and attain high standards at least in line with national expectations. Teaching is consistently at least good and often outstanding because teachers reflect on their practice and, in line with the rest of the academy, are always striving to be the best they can be. The subject sits within the broader humanities area and is managed by two very experienced teachers. They have developed a clear strategy for the improvement of RE and inspired, supported and motivated a team of talented and enthusiastic newly qualified teachers, along with existing staff, to be innovative in its implementation. The determination and energy of all involved have brought about a transformation of this subject in a short time. Teachers collaborate and share planning which enables the different strengths of each to contribute to the development of high quality resources and learning opportunities. The course begins imaginatively in Year 7 with a 'faith trail' around the building which explores the academy's values, the concept of the Trinity and wider aspects of faith in a highly reflective way. Pupils learn well because lessons are carefully structured, relevant and require them to be actively engaged. Through the development of their study and thinking skills pupils gain a good understanding of Christianity, other faiths and the impact of religions and values on the lives of believers. Excellent use is made of assessment and internal moderation so teachers have an accurate understanding of pupils' progress and can support them in their next steps with appropriately targeted work. Effective marking ensures pupils understand what they have done well and how to improve. All pupils follow a GCSE course and the department's record of accurate assessment suggests that outcomes this year will be excellent. There are also a small number of students working towards an A level examination in religious studies.

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

The Christian vision and commitment of the principal have been central to the establishment of this highly successful academy serving its local community. Since its inception difficult decisions have had to be made and he has been unswervingly focused on doing 'what is right' at each stage of development. He has worked in partnership with equally committed and enthusiastic governors who share his vision. This has been successfully communicated to and embedded with the mix of staff and pupils from predecessor schools and those who have joined from elsewhere. The whole academy community was involved in selecting the values which define its ethos. They are known and used beneficially by everyone throughout all aspects of academy life, making a very positive contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Confidence in sharing a distinctively Christian understanding of these and developing explicitly Christian worship has increased through what one member of staff described as the 'journey of becoming'. This journey has seen the establishment of a highly effective and supportive pastoral system led by six college managers, three deputies and form tutors all of whom know their pupils very well. Self-evaluation at all levels is forensic in its attention and response to detail ensuring there is a relentless drive for improvement. RE and collective worship are two areas that have greatly benefitted from this analysis, understanding of how to improve and investment in appropriate strategies to achieve this. Arising from an appropriate balance of challenge and support teachers are encouraged to be the best they can be through valued in-house training tightly focused on academy priorities and individual needs. A significant feature of the sustainable success of the academy is the way in which leadership responsibilities are widely distributed and clearly defined. Teachers feel trusted and motivated when they are given responsibilities to lead on an area in which they have expertise. Governors are proud of what has been achieved and enjoy active involvement through the 'governor of the month' scheme. They have confidence in the principal and his team and, like them, are not complacent. Parents, some of whom were initially anxious are supportive of the academy and have opportunities to engage through the 'You Say' group. There are positive links with the diocese, local churches and Halifax Minster and clergy support eucharist services.

SIAMS report July 2014 Trinity Church of England Academy, Halifax, HX2 9TZ

