

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Trinity School	
Strand Road, Carlisle, CA1 1JB	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Carlisle
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	September 2011
Name of multi-academy trust / federation [delete as appropriate]	N/A
Date/s of inspection	18 and 19 October 2016
Date of last inspection	22 and 23 February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 137369
Headteachers	Derek Kay and Sheila Johnston
Inspector's name and number	Jo Fageant 104

School context

The school is an oversubscribed, larger than average secondary school located in the city of Carlisle. It became an academy in September 2011. It has two co-headteachers, appointed in 2014, both of whom had been deputy headteachers in the school. Most students are of White British heritage and fewer than the national average are entitled to free school meals, have special educational needs or have English as an additional language. The percentage of students with a statement or education health care plan is higher than the national average. There is a resourced provision for hearing impaired students in the school.

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

- The co-headteachers, governors and senior staff express an enthusiastic and unequivocal commitment to strengthening the Christian character of the school. The wise step by step approach to its implementation is successfully finding acceptance with everyone in the school community.
- There is clear commitment throughout the school to the 'for all' element of the school's mission statement. This is becoming increasingly linked with the biblically inspired aspiration for full and fulfilling lives for everyone.
- The values of community, trust, hope, endurance and compassion are well known by everyone and have a discernible impact on individuals and the school community as a whole. Their Christian significance is increasingly well understood as a result of the outstanding resources which support collective worship in its varied contexts.
- The outstanding work of the religious education (RE) department makes a strong contribution to students' understanding of Christian life in practice, in particular, through its implementation of the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders' Award.

Areas to improve

- In order to sustain the improving practice in collective worship
 - find ways to survey the views of all members of the school community
 - develop further the confidence of all those who lead collective worship in its various contexts
 - develop the skills of students to participate in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of collective worship at the highest levels.

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

The school's clear commitment to the worth and potential of each individual is summarised in the short vision statement: 'standards, responsibility and opportunity... **for all**'. This is linked with five core values (community, trust, hope, endurance and compassion) whose impact is acknowledged by all. These are being explored, and increasingly widely understood, from a Christian perspective, strengthened by a focus on a verse from John's Gospel about living life to the full. Although a distressing experience, the serious flood of December 2015 highlighted how these values and concern for the quality of everyone's life and future are taken seriously and lived out by all students and adults. The inclusive ethos thereby created is discernible in all aspects of school life. For example, the Christian belief in the value of each individual informs the ways in which all academic and personal needs are addressed. It ensures careful and detailed tracking helps to identify when and what interventions are necessary so that every student can make good progress and achieve well. This sometimes involves specialist staff, such as a family support worker, who work alongside an experienced pastoral team to eradicate barriers to success. The value of this provision is recognised by the wider community and Trinity is increasingly the school of choice for children with serious and complex physical and learning difficulties. They are well integrated and make good progress here in line with the Gospel aspiration for full and fulfilling lives for all. Students speak readily of how the vision and values influence behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning. This is clear in the purposeful atmosphere that pervades the school. They also underpin the careful attention given to spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. The uncompromising focus on fulfilling lives 'for all' challenges stereotypes and prejudiced-based behaviours. Some students are inspired to champion these causes. A good example is the two students selected for a trip to Auschwitz. They made a commitment to create a display representing a pledge against prejudice. Through the exploration of the different faces of Christianity and other religions in RE students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. Confidence, resilience, independence, a sense of responsibility and service as well as awareness of being part of the school and wider communities are all qualities developed by the wide range of opportunities and challenges offered by the school. As a consequence, students speak easily, referencing the school's Christian values, about the benefits they derive from challenges such as the Year 9 diploma, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and the time spent in India as part of the 'world challenge'. RE makes a very strong contribution to this element of the school's provision by devising the Year 8 curriculum around the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders' Award. Many students also accept leadership responsibilities and speak of how much they like the realisation that they can 'make a difference' and 'help others'. They also appreciate the wide variety of extra-curricular activities that develop their interests and skills. Achievements of all kinds are celebrated and students are made aware of new and enriching horizons. Clear systems of behaviour management, informed by the school's Christian vision, have a strong emphasis on encouragement, forgiveness and fresh start. All this reflects the commitment to each individual as a person of worth. As a consequence, students who might otherwise be excluded are managed within the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The school is continuing to build on traditions in place at the time of the last inspection. Worship is still offered in a variety of contexts: house groupings, 'thought for the day' in tutor time and special celebrations in the cathedral. There is variety also in styles of leadership with teachers, clergy and the chaplain involved. All this enriches students' understanding of what worship can be. A significant development is the creation of outstanding resources which enable coherence within the diversity of provision. With enormous dedication, the chaplain, with the help of the web developer, takes responsibility for these. Her aspirations mirror those of governors who are clear that making a positive impact is more important than imposing a particular model of worship. Students and teachers recognise how resources marry together themes, the school's Christian values, biblical material, prayers and stimuli for reflection in engaging and contemporary presentations. They also develop an awareness of the importance of Jesus in Christian worship and the concept and language of God as three in one. Use of the school prayer, in particular, helps students understand the purpose of prayer. Everyone recognises that the themes, and the interpretations they are given, are relevant, meaningful and thought-provoking. For example, harvest was explored in terms of harvest and famine times in people's life experiences. Although expressed responses vary, they are predominantly positive. Year 7 students spoke with enthusiasm about their welcome service in the cathedral and others of enjoying the annual carol service. Engagement with the subjects covered enriches SMSC development, inspires generosity of spirit and social and charitable action. In the large house groupings students are quiet, attentive and respectful. Engagement in tutor time is best when material is shared in creative and interactive ways. Tutors are well supported by the materials provided by the chaplain each week. However, they approach it with varying levels of confidence. Students are increasingly likely to appear in the worship presentations and there are some opportunities for them to lead assemblies on significant issues and experiences. However, opportunities for them to take responsibility for planning and leading worship are limited. Some have been able to express views which have influenced the ongoing development of worship. However, there is no systematic arrangement which

enables the views of all to be heard. Although it has so far only once been possible, the provision of a staff Eucharist in response to a request from some teachers is a clear indication of the developing worship life of the school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Words included in the religious education (RE) policy, 'academically rigorous, personally challenging', perfectly capture the nature and quality of the subject in this school. The department benefits from a strong team of specialist teachers and the established leadership of someone with clarity of vision and understanding, enthusiasm and energy. Much of the teaching is outstanding and never less than good. Lessons are well planned not only in relation to the 'what' of learning but also the 'how'. This means students develop and successfully use a range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. Excellent use is made, in preparation for lessons, of home learning challenges. In response to rigorous monitoring of students' work and responses, teachers ensure varied tasks match the range of ability found in each class. They often allow students to use their preferred ways of presenting work. However, in the spirit of the 'learn to learn' course, they also challenge them to respond in ways they find less easy. As a result, students are engaged and experience a sense of achievement in their learning. They make good progress and achieve standards in line with, or better than, national expectations. The courses for each key stage, including non-examination provision in the sixth form, are carefully planned. As a consequence, students recognise the value of the subject is about more than examination success. They understand that what they learn prepares them for life in the wider world. It gives them a rich appreciation and understanding of Christianity, other religions, difference and diversity. Students speak highly of the benefits they derive from undertaking the Archbishop of York's Young Leader's Award in Year 8. Their responses are captured in comments such as, '(it) makes us better people', '(it) shows we can make a difference'. This aspect of RE develops in students important social skills such as teamwork, conflict resolution and decision making. RE contributes richly to the 'standards, responsibility, opportunity' mission of the school and to students' SMSC development. Despite the success of the department, there is no sense of complacency. The use of personal development plans for staff encourages professional development and a forward looking approach. The departmental action plan sets innovative and ambitious targets that ensure ongoing motivation.

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

The co-headteachers, governors and senior staff express an enthusiastic and unequivocal commitment to strengthening the Christian character of the school. They have a clear sense of how to take this forward and have successfully addressed all the areas to develop identified in the last report. Following their appointment, the co-headteachers worked with all parts of the school community first to devise a clear vision statement and then to identify associated values that support a clear expression of Trinity's Christian foundation. In addition, a verse from John's Gospel about experiencing life to the full is increasingly understood to express the school's aspirations for students, staff and partners. This more explicit articulation of the Christian character is not yet the customary language of the whole school community. Leaders have a clear and passionate commitment to the worth of every individual and their holistic development. This ensures they have effective strategies for monitoring the professional development of staff as well as the academic performance of students and provision for personal wellbeing and SMSC development. Each week a bulletin summarising reflections from leaders' learning walks, circulated to all staff, helps to clarify leaders' aspirations and expectations. It also serves to encourage by highlighting examples of the best practice observed. Governors are actively engaged in promoting and monitoring ways in which the school expresses its Christian character. They have a thorough understanding of what the school does well and the direction that future developments need to take. Some of their policy documents specifically include a Christian perspective on the relevant issues but others still rely solely on expectations set out in legislation. The statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. Leaders sustain a commitment to the provision of an externally accredited RE examination course for all students in Key Stage 4. To ensure its success they have increased the time allocated to the subject in order to respond to the challenge of the new GCSE specifications. Leaders value highly the work of the chaplain and acknowledge that her contribution goes well beyond the hours for which she is paid. They recognise the enrichment she brings to the provision and impact of collective worship. A diocesan adviser has been important in helping all staff to understand the parts they can play, including through collective worship, in the on-going development of Trinity's Christian character. For new staff, the strengthening Christian character of the school is made clear throughout the appointment and induction processes. There are numerous links with a wide range of organisations and communities beyond the school which bring mutual and substantial benefit to all groups. Leaders understand the school to be part of the wider community and demonstrate this through their commitment to service. This was clear at the time of the December 2015 flood when they opened the school as soon as possible to restore a sense of order, calm and normality in a context of devastation and distress. This is just one of many powerful examples of leaders living out their Christian vision.