



Diocese of  
**Hallam**



The Diocese of  
West Yorkshire  
& the Dales

## **Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Catholic Schools Inspection Report**

### **Holy Trinity Catholic and Church of England School (3 – 16)**

Carlton Road,  
Barnsley,  
South Yorkshire,  
S71 2LF

### **Catholic Diocese of Hallam & Church of England Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales**

Local Authority: Barnsley

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015

School's unique reference number: 135896

Headteacher: Mr Simon Barber

Inspectors: Deirdre Cleary (Catholic) David Thorpe 461 (Church of England)

### **School context**

Holy Trinity is a unique school.

It is the only school in the country that is not only joint Church of England and Catholic but also admits pupils from the age of 3 through to 16.

It was formed as a result of the closure of two primary schools and a secondary school in August 2012, and the establishment of a new school from September 2012.

It is a popular and oversubscribed school and serves an area with higher than national figures of deprivation.

The school has the highest percentage of looked after children and pupils with statements of educational needs in Barnsley Local Authority.

The school is in a purpose built 3-16 building which has state of the art facilities and houses both primary and secondary phases under one roof.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity as a joint Catholic and Church of England school are outstanding**

- The explicitly distinctive Christian nature of the school leads to all pupils and staff feeling valued. The views of all stakeholders are taken into account and respected e.g. Staff ethos meetings and Primary Staff voice.
- The leaders of the school share a very clear Christian vision which leads to members of the school community speaking with great confidence about the joint Catholic and

Church of England vision.

- The school's mission of 'Celebrating the uniqueness of each person as a child of God' is clearly and unmistakably lived out in the daily life of the school.
- Respect between the different traditions is evident and opportunities made to talk to one another and listen, as the new school has evolved, have been enriching for all. Bishop John Rawsthorne (Hallam) described the school as "at the cutting edge of ecumenism", and this describes what the inspectors saw very well.
- The impact of the Christian ethos leads to real action for those who are less fortunate, as is witnessed in the many charities that are initiated and supported by the pupils themselves. The pupils respond readily to the needs of both the local and global community e.g. the Church of England Diocesan link with Tanzania through the goat project which they have combined with being part of the Archbishop of York Youth Awards.
- The innovative and creative nature of the school enables all pupils to flourish in an atmosphere where the uniqueness of individuals is celebrated and where forgiveness is practiced and lived out in the day to day life of the school.

### **Areas to improve**

- To continue to provide support for staff in the planning and leading of worship in order to increase their confidence.
- At the primary phase: further develop expertise and confidence in Religious Education assessment through collaborative cross phase work.
- In the secondary phase: further develop teaching and learning strategies across the Religious Education Department to ensure that the needs of all groups of pupils are met in lessons leading to even better outcomes in terms of achievement.

### **The school is outstanding at developing its distinctive Christian Life**

- All pupils and staff feel valued and they enjoy their work. There are high levels of hope, aspiration, and well-being. One example was a Year 2 pupil who spoke confidently about how all the children are well looked after by both "grown-ups and other children."
- Overall achievement is good because at the end of KS4, attainment is above average and rising rapidly at the end of KS2 where attainment is below average.
- The proportion of students making Expected and Better than Expected Progress at KS4 has improved markedly since 2012. However, expected progress is still around the national median and better than expected progress is an area the school has identified for attention

- Holy Trinity is a distinctly Christian school that is very successfully incorporating the traditions of both the Church of England and Roman Catholic Churches extremely well. A pertinent example being the variety of worship times and styles afforded to both staff and pupils during the week.
- The excellent behaviour of the pupils enhances relationship within the school community and is based on the core Christian values of love and forgiveness.
- As a result of the distinctly Christian leadership, and the living out of gospel values, Holy Trinity is improving rapidly in all areas of its life. The impact of work carried out on Christian values throughout the school is summed up in the words of a primary pupil who said, “Our school is founded on Christian values, if we go to different churches it doesn’t really matter as we are all allowed to be ourselves.” As a result of this the pupils’ self-esteem is very high.
- The school’s Christian character informs its approach to behaviour and inclusiveness and this leads to Holy Trinity offering pupils a second chance, with each day being a fresh start. Pupils appreciate the fact that they are allowed to make mistakes and acknowledge that they need to learn from them.
- Christian values are in evidence everywhere, including in the fabric of the buildings and the learning environment. Visual displays are stimulating, encourage reflection and foster spiritual development.
- Students all speak positively and maturely about the school, including about the Christian ethos; they understand the strengths of the school. During the meeting with the secondary student council they cited teaching as the biggest area of strength, recognising that teachers worked hard to make lessons interesting and help all students to learn.
- Holy Trinity is a highly inclusive community evidenced by the way all stakeholders are invited to worship in both traditions, different cultures are celebrated and it has a leading role in Gipsy Roma Traveller provision in the area.
- Collaborative working between staff is apparent and enriches the curriculum and spiritual life of the school.

### **The effectiveness of Collective Worship is outstanding**

- Collective Worship is valued throughout the whole of the school and as a result is central to, and is reflected in, all areas of school life. It is a real strength of the school.
- The pupils enjoy worship and take an active role in planning, leading and evaluating it; members of the primary worship team speak with great confidence about their role, what they do and, more importantly, why they do it. They keep detailed records of all their actions and they recognise that this helps them to evaluate how effective the worship is.

- The school recognises that involving pupils in evaluation is still an area for development in the secondary phase.
- Staff are well prepared and supported to lead worship. However, the school has rightly identified that, in the primary phase, although staff recognise the importance of worship, their confidence in the planning and leading of worship needs to be increased.
- There are excellent opportunities for pupils of all ages to worship together at different times during the week and this is possible because of the house system that is in place. A very moving worship time was experienced during the inspection when pupils from early years foundation stage through to 16 worshipped together in a very meaningful act that was skilfully led, enabling all ages to participate at their own level of belief and understanding.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour and good levels of engagement during worship; they show enthusiasm and many in the primary-phase talk passionately about their enjoyment of worship and what it means to them. One child in Year 4 commented that during worship she has an opportunity to “feel closer to Jesus”.
- Clergy involvement in worship is well planned and clergy from both traditions are actively involved. They are also available when any pastoral needs arise, as too, is the school’s chaplaincy co-ordinator who works tirelessly, and successfully, in ensuring that worship in school is extremely well-planned. As a result of this members of the school community appreciate the inspiration that Collective Worship provides. The staff daily worship time is very well attended.
- Governors are active in the worshipping life of the school, leading to a feeling of togetherness in the school and local community.
- The pupils are exposed to a rich diet of worship experiences and understand why worship is important for Christians.
- Worship successfully covers the broad spectrum of the Church of England and Catholic traditions and is based on scripture. Use of prayers, hymns and liturgical language reflect a sensitive awareness of the similarities and differences between the two religious traditions.

**The effectiveness of Religious Education is good.**

- Religious Education enjoys a high profile in the school and all pupils receive the required 10% of curriculum time for the subject.
- The high profile of Religious Education has resulted in positive attitudes from the pupils in relation to diversity and difference.

- All school leaders, including governors, are committed to the centrality of Religious Education in the life of Holy Trinity School. This is demonstrated in the fact that the Governors have established an ethos committee that supports and challenges the school in all areas of life but especially in Religious Education.
- Outcomes in Religious Education at KS4 have been consistently strong, from virtually a full cohort entry, over the last 3 years. They rank among the best in the school and compare favourably with national norms. At KS3, attainment is strong in each year group. Religious Education is amongst the highest achieving subjects in the curriculum and at least in line with other core areas.

### **In the primary phase:**

- The majority of teaching is at least good with some outstanding features. No lessons were less than good. This leads to pupils who speak with confidence and passion about Religious Education. They enjoy it and several state that it is their favourite subject.
- The planning of work in Religious Education is thorough. Differentiation, continuity, and progression within the lesson is clearly evident. Both attainment targets are well balanced. As a result of this, the pupils' religious literacy is good.
- Learning objectives are addressed through a wide variety of interesting and creative strategies such as role play, modelling and through the confident use of ICT. There are good links with other subjects, especially literacy, which is reinforced through Religious Education.
- Pupils' confidently apply their knowledge and skills and are extremely self-assured in both answering and asking questions of a religious nature.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the impact of religion on their personal life, a good example was one Year 5 pupil who when talking about the subject stated that "we should share love and forgiveness." This is a result of spiritual development being skilfully planned into the curriculum.
- The assessment of Religious Education at the primary phase lacks consistency and by addressing this the teachers will become more confident in identifying specific next steps of learning. This should lead to pupils making more progress.

### **In the secondary phase:**

- Religious Education is extremely well led and the Department work together very cohesively as a team and this is a huge strength.
- There is no complacency, staff are striving for the highest of standards and monitoring and evaluation is rigorous.
- Most of the teaching seen was at least good, and often outstanding.

- There is much innovative and creative practice evident in lessons and across the Religious Education curriculum. There is a good balance between excellent preparation for writing and external examinations, moral and spiritual development, imaginative tasks that inspire pupils and fulfilling the distinct requirements of both the Catholic and Church of England Dioceses.
- Students speak highly of their teachers and particularly value the support they have received towards exam preparation.
- Support to develop literacy skills is a key strength across the whole department; pupils have writing frames for both Attainment Targets, literacy mats, key words are available and all well matched to student needs.
- Pupils are well trained in peer and self-assessment and can effectively and confidently analyse the work of others and their own.
- Staff know their pupils well and are in many places addressing their needs in the classroom through differentiated resources and teaching and learning strategies.
- Marking and feedback is also a strength across most of the school and is valued by students, who are given time to improve and often refer back to it. This does, however, need to be more consistent across all key stages.

### **The leadership and management of the Christian life of the school is outstanding**

- All leaders and governors share, and can confidently speak about, their very clear Christian vision for the school. There is clear ownership, from all parts of the school community, of the distinctly Christian vision and this is seen in the school's mission, 'To celebrate the uniqueness of each person as a child of God.'
- The Headteacher, along with other senior leaders and governors, has worked relentlessly in ensuring that the vision, mission and core Christian values are known and owned by all members of the school.
- Staff receive excellent support from senior leaders, in addition clergy and the lay chaplain provide very good pastoral support to the whole school community.
- As a result of the very effective links between the respective dioceses, parishes and communities there are excellent opportunities to promote Christian values. In turn this prepares the pupils for life in modern Britain very effectively e.g. the School Council clearly and confidently articulated the importance of living in a democracy.
- Governors play an active role in the life of the school and both Catholic and Church of England traditions are represented on the governing body and work closely with the school to support its Christian foundation. This strong partnership is at the heart of the success of the school.

- The interaction between the school and the wider community is outstanding as is seen in the large number of charities that the school actively supports.
- The successful bringing together of three distinct and different schools has resulted in an inclusive and harmonious Christian community where the needs of all pupils always takes priority and is at the heart of all decision making.
- Leadership at all levels, including the pupils, is outstanding and is a great strength of the school.

*March 2015 Holy Trinity Catholic and Church of England School, Barnsley*