Section 48 Statutory Inspection – Denominational Report

Trinity Academy			
Address	Church Balk, Thorne, Doncaster, DN8 5BY		
Date of inspection	27-28 September 2022	URN	135007
Status of the school	Academy inspected as voluntary aided. Part of the Emmanuel Schools Trust		

Overall Judgement	**How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?**	**Grade**	**Excellent**
Additional Judgements	**The impact of collective worship**	**Grade**	**Excellent**
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	**Grade**	**Good**

School context

On a purpose-built site and part of the Emmanuel Schools Foundation, Trinity Academy has a non-denominational Christian foundation. There are 1,287 students on roll, including 182 sixth formers. Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion considered to be disadvantaged is well above the national averages. The proportion who have special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) is slightly above national averages. The vice principal became the principal in September 2022. Four of the team of nine senior leaders are newly in post as is the head of religious education (RE). This is its first section 48 inspection.

The school's Christian vision

Everyone is valued, challenged, and inspired being 'made in God's image' and therefore infinitely precious, morally responsible and gifted for a purpose. Founded on faith, hope and love, and inspired by Christ, we pursue excellence in character development, learning across the curriculum, and service to our communities.

Key Virtues: Love, Wisdom, Fairness, Self-Control, Courage, Humility and Integrity.

Principal	Victoria Gibson
Inspector Names	Lat Blaylock Pamela Draycott

Key findings

- There have been significant changes in the academy's leadership very recently. Through its Christian foundation, membership of the Emmanuel Schools Trust (EST), and the strongly focused and compassionate leadership of the principal, continuity is being maintained and appropriate change excellently managed. There are detailed and relevant plans in place. These seamlessly draw on what went before and are now being further developed and actioned to continue to improve outcomes. The academy is confidently moving forward under the excellent, caring, and collegiate leadership of the principal and her new team of senior leaders.
- The academy's Christian foundation is deeply embedded and expressed across all aspects of the academy's service to its community. The vision and associated virtues are extremely well known, understood, and lived out by staff and students alike. They are firmly based on Christian teaching and are inclusive of those from all faiths and none.
- The academy has reviewed and implemented a new curriculum, especially making some significant changes to the programmes for Key Stage 3. These changes are in place and are being closely monitored so that their impact is supporting a consistent teaching and learning experience for all students. However, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and some from more financially deprived backgrounds lag behind their peers in the progress they are making. Students in the sixth form make excellent progress. Figures for those not in education, employment, or training on leaving the academy are well below national and local averages and are evidence of commendable practice and support for sixth form students.
- Drawing explicitly on the academy's vision and associated virtues, the quality of pastoral care is exemplary, relationships are excellent, and behaviour is very good. The importance of showing the academy's vision and virtues in practice is understood by students and staff as being strongly demonstrated, for example. through the range of charitable and voluntary activities that many engage in.
- The excellent programme for collective worship meets statutory requirements. It makes an excellent contribution to student's understanding and application of the academy's deep-seated vision and virtues.
- Almost all students respond extremely positively to this. It provides students with inclusive opportunities for prayer and/or reflection on key aspects of Christianity. Senior academy staff give excellent leadership to all those, including students, who are active in delivering insightful and well-planned collective worship.
- The commitment of academy leaders to high quality RE has enabled programmes of learning to be increasingly effective, raising standards through well-planned and resourced RE. The curriculum strongly supports the academy's vision and virtues. Students value such opportunities. At Key Stage 3, students make sound progress towards a secure and wide-ranging knowledge of Christianity, and some other religions and worldviews. At Key Stage 4 almost all achieve good standards at GCSE. Teaching is good and well managed: good student behaviour is contributing to their understanding of key biblical and theological concepts and religious practices. Across Key Stages 3 and 4 a focus on creative and philosophical approaches to teaching and learning is underdeveloped. A successful programme of general RE enriches the student experience in the sixth form.

Areas for development

- Based on the academy's Christian and inclusive vision:
  - In keeping with the academy's ongoing and rigorous improvement plan embed the effectiveness of the new leadership team so that they continue the exceptionally good start made to ensure the successful implementation of the key elements of that plan.
  - Ensure that academic outcomes for all, including vulnerable students, continue to improve so that student cohorts reach at least the national average for GCSE attainment. This is to ensure that the good progress made across the Key Stages 3 and 4 is reflected in examination performance.
  - Develop RE teaching and learning strategies that enable more creative and philosophical thinking to encourage deeper analysis and evaluation of the religious and ethical issues addressed.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The principal, who was previously the head of school, is providing stability and compassionate leadership during a period of significant change. She is working extremely positively with her new leadership team to effectively implement the academy's well thought through improvement plan which rightly identifies key elements to develop over this academic year and beyond. The plan is building explicitly on, and being guided by, the academy's inclusive Christian vision, which is deeply grounded in Christian teaching. It draws skilfully on the Trust's vision overall which is skilfully related specifically to Trinity's context and needs. At its heart is a clear biblical understanding of the infinitely precious value of the individual 'made in the image of God'. This leads to a powerful emphasis on the academy's seven key virtues. In turn these associated virtues provide a vigorous framework for the personal and character development of students which is connected effectively to their academic attainment and progress. The virtues are recognised by staff, and most students and their parents /guardians as being deep-seated, inclusive, and relevant to all, irrespective of their religious or non-religious background. For example, students are keenly aware that the virtues are not exclusively reserved for Christians but that 'they are a good way to live' and that 'they are about being a better human being'. Trust membership provides excellent support for the academy with, for example, leaders, including middle leaders, being part of focus groups, which share effective practice. Members of the Local Governing Board are strongly supportive of the academy, holding it to account and being appropriately engaged in its ongoing development. They bring their own expertise from varied professional walks of life to the table.

In keeping with the academy's Christian underpinning and recognising the need to ensure a quality experience for all, the curriculum, especially for Key Stage 3, has been renewed. Significant well-planned changes have improved students' engagement and impacted positively on both behaviour and attitudes to learning. There is a strong emphasis on developing a wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills effectively. However, GCSE attainment overall remains just below the national average. That said, most students make at least good progress from their starting points on entry to the academy. However, there is a gap in the progress made by some students with SEND as well as some of those who come from more financially deprived backgrounds and their peers. As an expression of their inclusive Christian vision the academy has set focused strategies for improving progress overall and for these students in particular. Consequently, for example, data is increasingly being used effectively to set very ambitious targets for all students as well as to accurately identify those in need of further academic support. This demonstrates the academy's very high aspirations for its students. The sixth form provides older students with a very good level of education and the majority commendably make excellent progress. Academic and vocational outcomes are consequently excellent. On leaving the vast majority go into work or onto apprenticeships or go to university so that those not in education, employment or training on leaving is well below the national and local averages. Recognising the different gifts, talents and interests of individuals, the academy offers a good range of extra-curricular opportunities and clubs to extend learning and for pleasure. Sport figures highly in these clubs alongside, for example, a games club, opportunities for music and drama and a science and technology group.

Any personal, behavioural, or social issues that may be barriers to learning are addressed professionally and with compassion. For example, one key issue that effects the academic progress of some is poor attendance. The academy has exemplary pastoral systems which encourage and reward good attendance and excellent, consistent, and well thought through practices in following up where attendance is less good. There is a rounded approach taken to the support offered to students, including, for some, the use of outside agencies. Attendance is currently just under the national average but above other secondary schools locally. The excellent pastoral support places a very strong emphasis on the wellbeing of students and staff. For example, a range of quality marks have been awarded to the academy recently: these include The Schools' Mental Health Award (Bronze) and the Inclusion Quality Mark (Centre of Excellence) Award. Pastoral care from dedicated staff at all levels conveys the academy's compassionate approach which is expressly based on its vision. Staff are excellently supported. Those from Christian and other backgrounds engage thoroughly with its vision and virtues, recognising and celebrating that it is intrinsic to, and a driving force for, the academy.

Reflecting the preciousness of all there is a welcoming, happy, and respectful atmosphere as people are treated with dignity and respect. Students overall feel safe. The vast majority engage very well with their learning. This means that behaviour in and around the academy is very good. Incidents of bullying are low and are dealt with seriously by the academy. On those few occasions where behaviour falls short of the very high standards set by

the vision and focused on through the virtues there are effective procedures in place to bring about resolution. These are explicitly based on the Christian concepts of moral responsibility, forgiveness, and justice.

Reflecting the academy's focus that all are infinitely precious, morally responsible and gifted for a purpose, a wide range of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are provided: students respond very well. Students are encouraged to reflect on the impact of the virtues through their learning. For example, when studying a text in English they may be asked to reflect on how a character in the story is demonstrating self-control or courage or integrity. In PE there is an emphasis on the ways character and virtues enable a team to function well and to improve. Prayer and reflection opportunities are provided regularly as part of the daily collective worship programme. In personal development lessons and RE space is provided for exploring different viewpoints on moral and ethical issues. In their daily reading aloud time, students have selected texts which address issues about, for example, racism and trans rights, and benefit from strong discussion opportunities around key ethical issues. Students are given opportunity to show love and be advocates for fairness and change through, for example, the student council and through the wide-ranging and generous charitable fund-raising activities undertaken across each academic year. Engagement with charities goes beyond merely raising money: It includes seeking opportunities for service in the local community, for example engaging with older people who live near the Academy in positive ways. Student surveys take place periodically such as one held addressing collective worship recently, which has provided positive responses and rich data. Issues raised are considered with some appropriate adaptations made in the light of comments. Consequently, students are learning the benefit of making their opinions and suggestions known in respectful ways.

The programme of collective worship meets statutory requirements and makes an excellent contribution to students' awareness of and engagement with the academy's vision and virtues. It enables students to reflect daily on their own contribution to the community in varied, thoughtful, and sometimes creative ways. Relevant themes are clearly chosen to support students' spiritual and moral development and reflect the academy's underpinning Christian and inclusive vision. Excellent materials, drawing on biblical and other sources, and including the use of innovative video recordings of staff, support students in giving their own responses whilst listening respectfully to others. The theme during the inspection was 'gifted for a purpose' with materials well adapted for both year group and tutor group collective worship. It included a focus on human and spiritual gifts and consideration of how to identify your own gifts and use them in the service of others. The implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme by staff is robust. It is especially sensitive to the fact that many within the academy do not identify as Christian. It is exemplary in how it balances the challenges of Christian teaching and practice with secular world views. It consequently contributes to the students' sense of identity as Trinity students admirably. Student involvement in planning, leading, and monitoring the programme is currently under review.

The RE curriculum meets statutory requirements. It has an appropriate balance between a focus on Christianity and other religions and world views. It effectively supports and reflects the academy's Christian vision and virtues. The Trust, members of the Local Governing Board and senior leaders ensure that RE is given enough curriculum time and a fair share of resources. This shows its status as a core subject. Students engage positively with RE and recognise how it helps them understand a range of approaches to life. Assessment, especially across Key Stage 4, is well used to target learning and in enabling students to recognise their achievements and take the next steps in learning. There have been some changes in RE subject leadership which have slowed developments. However, the new subject leader is working cooperatively with colleagues, to build new approaches on previous practice.

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The effectiveness of Religious Education

The RE curriculum has been recently reviewed. Changes at Key Stage 3 have effectively linked each year group with a particular aspect of the academy's vision thus drawing on and supporting the academy's Christian service to its community well. Specialist staffing within the department is approaching its current innovations with professional expertise, benefitting from the roles staff take in GCSE examination work at a national level. Changes at Key Stage 3 include, for example, some creative and challenging opportunities for teaching about Christian understandings of God from the Narnia novels of CS Lewis, and exploring, in Year 9, the meanings and applications of relativist and absolutist morality. These kinds of challenges get good responses from students. Overall approaches to creative and philosophical elements of the RE curriculum is limited and consequently higher order skills such as analysis, evaluation and interpretation are underdeveloped. Standards of learning are good, overall. A careful assessment system uses tests and knowledge retention methods to ensure most students use key terms and concepts accurately. From their various starting points the progress made overall is good. Alongside the strong RE enrichment programme in the sixth form, departmental planning to re-establish A level Religious Studies in the future is supported by the desire of some Key Stage 4 students to further their studies.

Adpated from a template developed by The National Society (Church of England and Church in Wales) for the Promotion of Education 2019