

# THE DIOCESES OF SHREWSBURY & LICHFIELD



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SHREWSBURY



## **Holy Trinity Academy Priorslee, Telford**

**URN: 142067**

**DfE No: 894/4000**

**8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

### **Report on the Inspection of Denominational Education**

**Lead Inspector: John McCann, Diocese of Shrewsbury**

**Link Inspector: Eleanor Benson, Diocese of Lichfield**

**The inspection of the denominational education of  
Holy Trinity Academy, Priorslee, Telford,  
was carried out at the request of the governors of the school  
in fulfilment of their obligation under the requirements,  
and according to the directives, of the School Inspections Act 2005.**

**The school was inspected within the framework  
approved by the Bishop of Shrewsbury and the Bishop of Lichfield  
for the conduct of inspection of the denominational education of  
Catholic and Church of England Secondary Schools  
within the Dioceses.**

**Key for inspection grades**

**Grade 1 Outstanding**

**Grade 2 Good**

**Grade 3 Requires Improvement**

**Grade 4 Inadequate**

## **Description of the school**

Holy Trinity Academy is a smaller than average-sized 11-18 co-educational Secondary school. The school opened in September 2015 and in the last two years has experienced rapid growth in pupil numbers in Key Stage 3. It is a popular oversubscribed school, with a growing Sixth Form which offers a wide range of A levels. The Academy is under the trusteeship of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Church of England Diocese of Lichfield, within Telford and Wrekin Local Authority. Holy Trinity Academy mainly draws pupils from the nine parishes that it serves and the 21 Catholic and Anglican partner primary schools within them. There are 569 pupils on roll; 30% of the pupils are from Christian denominations and 4% from other world faith traditions. There are 44 members of teaching staff, including the Head, with 50% Catholic or Church of England and 2% identifying with other Christian denominations. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for children in the care of the Local Authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is on average 28% and just above the national average. The number of pupils supported on school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.

The inspection team observed specialists teaching in each Key Stage, 10 lessons in total. Pupils' work was sampled in each lesson observed, as well as a scrutiny of pupils' work from each class provided by the RE Department. Inspectors visited four classes during form time, one of which was in the Chapel, and attended two Acts of Collective Worship in House Groups. Inspectors spoke to pupils in their classes as well as conducting structured interviews with representative groups from each Key Stage and Sixth Form. Inspectors took into account the results of 167 completed parents' questionnaires, and 441 pupil questionnaires which related to the Religious Education Department and the Faith Life of the school; the results were made known and were discussed with the Headteacher. Discussions were held with: the Headteacher, six members of the Governing Body (including the Chair, two Parish Priests and the Link Governor for Spiritual Life), a group of parents; three Assistant Headteachers (Pastoral Lead, Teaching and Learning Lead, and Head of Sixth Form), the Head of Religious Education, the Spiritual Life of School Co-ordinator and a newly qualified teacher. Learning walks were undertaken in all areas during lessons as well as break and lunch time. Throughout the inspection the team had access to documentation relating to all aspects of the academy as well as development plans.

### **Overall Effectiveness:**

#### **How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education**

**Grade 2**

This is a good school with some outstanding features and lives out its mission statement. This is the first Section 48 Inspection and therefore has no recommendations to be referred to.

#### **The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Anglican/ Catholic Life of the School**

**Grade 2**

Pupils undoubtedly benefit greatly from the Catholic/Anglican life of the school and state "this is a good school". They are proud that they attend here and they, and their parents, are openly appreciative of all that is being done on their children's behalf by all staff and particularly the RE Department. This is clearly a school with a Christian ethos. Many opportunities exist, before and within the school day and in planned activities for all pupils to access the Chapel. A relatively small number of pupils are active within their parishes. The pupils show interest in the religious life of others and treat those of different Christian denominational beliefs with respect as well as those from other world faiths.

Throughout the school, there are aspirational quotations and reflections as well as acknowledgements of pupil achievements in a range of fields. The lack of graffiti in and around the building as well as within the pupils' books indicates a pride in their school as well as in themselves. Within the school's Mission Statement – "to create and maintain an inclusive learning community for all, rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ ....", there are three core values, Faith, Unity and Aspiration, and six core objectives which have been identified which exemplify how the Mission is to be achieved. These values are promoted throughout the school. An awareness of the common good and commitment to the wider community and service for others runs throughout the school eg Cafod, KIP, HCPT, St. Chad's and The Teenage Cancer Trust. Pupils use their initiative to run fund raising events for charities.

At present there are opportunities for pupils to participate in a day retreat in Year 7 and a residential retreat in Year 9.

The vast majority of pupils are polite and considerate of others within the class and outside in the grounds. Incidents of bullying are rare and the pupils state they are dealt with efficiently, effectively and fairly. The pupil Safeguarding Team makes an important contribution to pupils' wellbeing. From pupil interviews it is overwhelmingly believed that this is a safe and secure place in which to learn where everyone is valued and success celebrated and all are made welcome.

## **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education** **Grade 2**

Religious Education is recognised by all as a strength of the school in terms of pupil participation and engagement as well as academic achievement. Pupils achieve well in each Key Stage, benefitting from appropriate and well-structured curricula, clear target setting and monitoring, regular focused assessment with, for the most part, clear teacher guidance and pupil self-assessment. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A\*-C is higher than the school's other core subjects. Pupils make very good progress in GCSE RE. Results in RE for the last two years had a higher value added score than the other core subjects. In 2016, 64% of the year group achieved A\*-C and in 2017 that rose to 69%. In each year 25% of the group gained the top grades A\*-A. In 2017 there were more top grades in Religious Education than in any other subject. Although girls currently outperform boys at GCSE, effective steps have been taken to close the gap through targeted intervention with the gap halving between 2016 and 2017. All pupils are encouraged to work hard and aspire to achieve the best that they can. Most groups of pupils make good progress.

Pupils in KS3 and KS4 show that they are skilled in working in a variety of different settings and can move easily between them. The vast majority of pupils of all ages speak positively about Religious Education and see its relevance to their own lives and the wider world; they also take pride in their work which is very well organised and presented and they benefit from excellent classroom environments.

The cohorts in KS5 A Level Religious Studies have previously been small but are presently among the largest groups in Y12 and Y13. Students achieve well in this subject with the majority for the past 2 years achieving high grades. Current students taking the new IA Level Religious Studies examination are making good progress. Nine pupils are studying Religious Studies in year 12 and will be entered for AS before continuing to the full A Level.

There is a General Religious Education course within the Sixth form offer which all students take. Almost all students complete an Extended Project on a religious, ethical or moral theme and gain a grade. The quality of teaching and level of achievement are good and improving. Last year grades ranged from B to E. This year some A/A\* grades are predicted.

## **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship** **Grade 2**

In vertical KS3/KS4 House Groups pupils respond with respect, reverence and improving levels of participation and ownership. They listen well and relate much of their prayer and reflection to the needs of local and wider communities and service to others. Their response indicated positive levels of engagement and attitude and full acceptance of worship as a key element of the life of the school. Pupils benefit greatly from the availability of a well-appointed and resourced chapel which forms a focal point within the school. Staff appreciate and at times draw upon the prayer and reflection materials provided on a termly basis by the Spiritual Life of the School Co-ordinator to support prayer and reflection in form time. During the inspection we evidenced staff using their own materials during this time with varying degrees of success. The approach to, and the provision of, form based acts of collective worship is inconsistent throughout the school and is an area the school acknowledges is to be addressed. Events and liturgical seasons are appropriately marked, often through Year, House or whole school liturgies. There is an experienced member of the RE Department with a specific responsibility for monitoring, leading development and having a strategic planning/ overview of the Catholic/Anglican Life of the school.

**How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Anglican/Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvements to outcomes for pupils**  
**Grade 2**

Leaders, governors and managers demonstrate a strong and determined commitment to the Church's mission in education, with spiritual and moral development a priority. The school spent its first year working to create its Mission Statement which set out its vision identifying three core values and six core objectives, which is at the heart of all it does. There is evidence that it is striving to make a positive and effective impact in each of the areas.

Opportunities throughout the day exist for staff and/or pupils to visit the chapel for private prayer and reflection or a planned liturgical event. It is hoped that the chapel will be seen by all as 'a place of stillness and reflection where all in need of silence or support feel welcome' Although numbers attending on a voluntary basis are small at present this is an area that the school is seeking to develop.

Monitoring of the provision is undertaken by the Headteacher and Spiritual Life Co-ordinator. The Headteacher is the line manager, and a highly experienced Foundation Governor is the link governor to the Spiritual Life Co-ordinator. A number of monitoring systems are in place to check on provision and outcomes although these are not always systematically applied. The recent development of a guidance and monitoring pro-forma yet to be introduced could prove to be beneficial in providing a co-ordinated approach to support delivery and provide a monitoring record. Leaders and managers are aware of the strengths and areas for further development, especially in relation to consistent provision and developing pupil participation in the planning and delivery of Acts of Collective Worship especially in form time.

There is a strong, effective and well-resourced pastoral support system in place to support pupils with different needs. It is clear from pupils' interviews that there is a high regard for the Catholic/Anglican Life of the school and the encouragement for everyone to be involved in it.

**How well leaders, governors and managers resource, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvements to outcomes for pupils**  
**Grade 2**

Leaders, managers and governors are committed to developing the quality of Religious Education to the highest level. Levels of departmental funding are commensurate and appropriate with other core subjects. An effective range of systematic monitoring and training activities are in place which have succeeded in significant improvements. Issues are identified and strategies implemented to ensure rapid improvement without stifling creativity and allowing for extended writing opportunities.

Good use of the assessment process results in well targeted planning and strategic action taken. The Headteacher is line manager for the Department of four staff, three of whom have significant leadership roles within the school. This is a very effective and productive partnership. The Head of Religious Education, who is also the school's lead for teaching and learning, regularly presents status reports to the Governing Body with a focus on attainment and progress at each Key Stage.

Curriculum provision in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 meets the Bishops' Conference and Diocesan Board of Education's requirements, as does the time requirement for Religious Studies 'A' Level and the provision for general Religious Education as a core entitlement for all students in the Sixth Form.

There is an excellent network of links between the Religious Education Department, leadership team members and Spiritual life Co-ordinator which leads to well-planned programmes to support staff and bring about change.

### **The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education    Grade 1**

Teaching at Key Stage 4 and 5 is never less than good and there are many examples of outstanding practice ensuring pupils are interested in their learning, enthusiastic and making good progress in a variety of learning contexts. At the core of the Religious Education Department are a team of four full time subject specialists. A further full time specialist appointment has been made for September.

As a result of good assessment procedures, teachers and learning support personnel work well to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which challenges most pupils and contributes to their very good progress. Good and imaginative use is made of resources and activity, including technology to maximize learning and is a strength of the Department. Pupils are consistently provided with positive, constructive and formative feedback both orally and written at GCSE and 'A' Level which helps pupils make very good progress.

The two year KS3 Religious Education curriculum introduces the skills needed for success in the 3 year GCSE course. The Department has introduced a good scheme of KS3 assessment which they are modifying following the first year of use. There is highly effective marking and feedback evidenced in Key Stage 3. The Department have worked very hard this year to minimize the effects of a significant number of split classes which were concentrated in Y7 and Y8. However this will be resolved for next academic year.

From observations and book scrutiny it can be seen that achievement and effort are highlighted and personalised advice is regularly given, appreciated and acted upon.

Sixth form students are very good advocates for A level Religious Studies. They enjoy and benefit from being challenged in their thinking and developing discussion skills and respond appropriately to the thoughts of others.

The provision of materials to support learning is excellent as are the learning bases throughout the department both in and outside of the classrooms. The department may wish to consider greater use of exemplar material to be displayed so that all students are aware of the quality of work being produced on a regular basis in this subject.

### **The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes learning** **Grade 2**

The Religious Education curriculum is enriched through imaginative and well planned strategies to capitalize on the expertise within school. The Religious Education curriculum provides many opportunities for spiritual and moral development within the school day. Extra-curricular opportunities are limited to Key Stage 3 and are much enjoyed. A balanced curriculum enables pupils to gain some depth of understanding of several world faiths in addition to Christianity. However, pupils lack opportunities for direct experience of world faiths through guest speakers or visits to places of worship. The curriculum is characterised by ready reference to local and world-wide social and ethical issues and opportunities for, and reflection on, service to others. The curriculum offered matches fully the requirements of The Bishops' Conference and the National Board of Education. The school's plans for the introduction of new curriculum developments at GCSE and 'A' Level Religious Studies in 2016 were clear and appropriate and as with all schools will continue to be developed.

### **The Quality of Collective Worship provided by the school** **Grade 2**

Staff and students are comfortable praying together. The school is seeking to increase ownership, participation and evaluation by pupils. There are a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer in form time, House Groups Acts of Collective Worship, and the chapel. An experienced member of the RE Department has the role of overall planning and creating resources to support the Spiritual Life of the school. Staff value the prayer and reflection/discussion materials supplied however some staff are also confident to use their own materials in a variety of ways. House Group and whole school Acts of Collective Worship are good, given a high profile and are well delivered with expertise by tutor staff and their pupils on a form rota basis as well as by members of the Senior Leadership Team. The liturgical seasons and feasts are celebrated by the whole school community. Themes are consistent with the Catholic/Anglican character of the school and take note of the religious diversity of pupils and the wider community when appropriate. The local clergy are always welcomed into the school, as and when available and have, at times, significantly enriched and supported the provision, and their contribution has been much appreciated by the staff, governors and pupils. It is unfortunate that the school has not been able to offer the weekly voluntary Eucharist as in previous years due to limited availability of clergy on a regular basis. The Spiritual Life Co-ordinator has a good, positive working relationship with all of the local clergy and is working with them and the link governor to further extend the range of liturgy the school can regularly offer.

### **Recommendations for further development**

1. In the context of a growth in the number of staff and rapidly increasing pupil numbers it would be timely and appropriate for the school to thoroughly embed its Mission Statement rooted in scripture with all members of the Holy Trinity Community so that it is known and its impact on all areas of the curriculum and school life understood.

2. Continue to develop form based Acts of Worship throughout the school which includes time for pupils to reflect and respond within a purposeful setting, and implement the recently created monitoring framework to support a more consistent approach.
3. Create a structure to support chaplaincy for the development of the spiritual life of the whole school in recognition of the rapid growth in the school community.
4. Develop a programme of visits and guest visitors to enhance pupils' understanding of World Faiths.
5. Continue to develop and refine reliable assessment measures in Religious Education for the new programmes of study in all Key Stages, which will effectively inform parents of pupil progress.