



Trinity Christian School

Inspection report

This inspection was carried out under section 162 (A) of the Education Act 2002 as amended. Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI) has been approved by the Secretary of State in the Department for Education (DfE) to undertake inspections in designated independent schools within membership of the Christian Schools Trust (CST) or the Association of Muslim Schools UK (AMSUK).

DfE number:	357/6000
Association:	CST
Date of inspection:	1 st -4 th July 2013
Lead Inspector:	Mrs C Broomhead
Team inspectors:	Miss J Morgan Mr Y Seedat
Age range of pupils:	3-17 years
Number on roll:	107
Full-time:	53 boys 48 girls
Part-time:	5 boys 1 girl
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	0
Proprietor:	Trinity School Trust
Head teacher:	Mr M Stewart
Address of school:	Birbeck Street Stalybridge Cheshire SK15 3HW
Telephone number:	0161 303 0674
Email:	office@trinityschool.org.uk

The purpose and scope of the inspection

The main purpose of the inspection is twofold. It is to advise the DfE whether the school continues to meet the requirements for registration, and to determine whether the school's religious ethos continues to meet the expectations of its association. Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of The Bridge Schools Inspectorate on the Ofsted website.

Information about the school

Trinity Christian School was established in 1978 as a school with a religious character and is open to pupils from both Christian and non-Christian families. The school's main aim is *'bringing the love of God into the classroom'*. It also aims *'to provide a Christian education by approaching the curriculum, teaching, discipline and school organisation from a Biblical standpoint'* and it seeks *'to subject the whole life of the school to the demands of God's word'*. The school is registered to take pupils aged 3 to 17 years; those currently on roll are in the age range 3 to 16 years. Pupils travel to school from areas in and around Stalybridge and Aston-under-Lyne in Tameside. Since the last inspection in 2010, the school has moved onto one site in Stalybridge.

Evaluation of the school

Trinity Christian School is very successful in meeting its aim of bringing God's love into the classroom. The school provides a good quality of education, with many examples of exceptional practice evident across the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pupils speak very highly of their teachers and how much they enjoy the small class sizes and the individual help they receive. Inspectors agree with them and their parents that behaviour is excellent. The school's Christian ethos and aims are strongly embedded throughout all aspects of school life. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. In this safe and nurturing environment, pupils thrive and enjoy school. Evidence of this is seen in their good attendance, positive attitudes in lessons, willingness to take responsibility for their own learning and decisions, and their empathy and care for others. Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, clear priorities for further development and a strong commitment to the continuous professional development of staff. They have secured a number of improvements since the last inspection including to teaching, assessment, and pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The move onto one site is also seen by governors, staff and pupils as a great success. Inspectors were struck by the staff's passion for the school and concern for each pupil. The school meets all the independent school regulations and the expectations of the Christian Schools Trust.

Quality of education provided

The good curriculum provides a broad and balanced programme of education appropriate to pupils' ages. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship are strengths of the curriculum, along with a strong focus on developing

pupils' communication, language and literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers skilfully weave the school's Christian values and ethos into many subjects across the age range. This is extremely effective in promoting the pupils' personal and spiritual development. There have been some noteworthy developments since the last inspection including the excellent citizenship programme which is now in place and providing pupils with exceptional awareness and understanding of other cultures and traditions in the local community and wider world. A further development has been the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum, which is having a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

The school's curriculum policies and schemes of work give a clear overview of what is to be taught in each subject at each key stage. These are used effectively by teachers in planning their lessons and ensuring progression in learning. At Key Stage 4, pupils are offered a good number of GCSE courses, including a range of options which are tailored to each particular year group's interests. The school makes very good use of the specialist facilities it has on site, such as for science, art/graphics, food technology, and ICT. Primary pupils enjoy working in the ICT suite. For physical education (PE), the school has outdoor hard surface areas and makes use of sports facilities in the local area. The school benefits from well-qualified and specialist staff; their expertise and commitment to the school make a significant contribution to the good quality of teaching and pupils' enthusiasm for learning. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places of interest such as the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, Quarry Bank Mill at Styal, an art gallery, and geography field trips. Opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities are currently limited. The school is aware of this and is making plans for improvement.

The Creative Partnerships programme has recently been introduced and provides the basis for careers education for Years 10 and 11. This offers opportunities for pupils to develop skills for life, including work skills, through placements with local employers and community organisations. It also includes modules where pupils can learn about skills and qualifications needed for different occupations. Pupils are taught from an early age to be independent, self-reliant, and responsible for their own learning and decisions. The curriculum prepares them very well for adult life, and most go on to study A levels at sixth-form colleges when they leave Trinity.

Teaching and assessment are good with some exceptional practice evident in a number of lessons seen. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching and assessment was good. Senior leaders have a good and accurate view of the quality of teaching and their strong commitment to professional development has made a clear contribution to the improvements seen. This very good teaching is at the heart of the good, and sometimes excellent, progress that pupils make throughout their time at the school. Teachers know their pupils' needs very well and provide excellent guidance and support during lessons. Pupils are given instant feedback and this ensures that they can check how well they are doing and can correct any misunderstandings they may have. Teaching and learning is an effective partnership between the teachers and the pupils. Pupils told inspectors how much they value being listened to and treated with courtesy and respect by teachers. They also said how much they value the individual help they get because they are in small classes and teachers have time for them.

Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils are challenged to achieve their best and to deepen their understanding. This is achieved through very effective and probing questioning and by teachers encouraging pupils to offer ideas, ask questions and seek further clarification. An example of this was seen in an excellent primary English lesson when pupils were learning about persuasive text. As a result, pupils are willing to try new things, to articulate their views and to discuss and debate concepts. They work very well together in pairs and small groups. This has a very positive impact on their self-esteem and willingness to help and support each other. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are taught very well in discrete English and mathematics lessons and within other subjects.

Very good planning ensures that lessons run smoothly; pupils know their learning objectives and resources are readily available. However, tasks are not always matched to individual needs as well as they could be, so the work set is sometimes too easy or too difficult. Lessons are very well managed. They start promptly and continue at a good pace so that pupils remain on task and the pace of learning is very good in the best lessons. Teachers are very creative in their use of the fairly limited resources available and ensure that pupils have very practical learning experiences. This captures their interest and motivates them to learn. The interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to support teaching and learning in primary and secondary classes. Pupils across all key stages develop enquiring minds, are keen to learn and are willing and active partners in lessons. Occasionally, teachers' explanations are not as clear as they could be and pupils are not sure what to do, so they sometimes call out to get the teacher's attention rather than put their hands up. This can cause distraction to other pupils.

Classrooms are generally bright, airy, and well-organised with carefully presented displays of pupils' work. Corridors are adorned with examples of pupils' high quality art work.

Good systems are in place to ensure that pupils' work is assessed regularly and thoroughly using end of unit tests and end of year examinations. This information is used effectively to plan teaching taking account of pupils' ages and abilities. In primary, pupils are assessed against National Curriculum sub-levels and their small steps of progress are tracked termly in English and mathematics. In secondary, pupils sit cognitive ability tests in years 7, 9 and 10 and teachers track pupils' attainment against their predicted GCSE grades. By the end of Year 11 most pupils reach their targets and achieve GCSE grades which are in line with or exceed national and local averages. However, the school does not have a whole school approach to recording pupils' attainment and progress, therefore is not able to evaluate effectively how well pupils have progressed across key stages from their starting points in comparison with pupils nationally.

Marking of pupils' work is usually undertaken regularly and always has a positive and encouraging tone, reflecting the school's ethos. However, the quality of written feedback to pupils is of variable quality. There are many examples of very good practice where teachers' comments make clear what a pupil has done well and give guidance on what to do to improve. There is also evidence of where pupils have acted on this guidance and improved their work. However, this is not consistent

across the school. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that most work is neat and reflects the care and pride pupils take in their work.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now outstanding. The teachers are excellent role models of the Christian faith and are committed to Christ-centred teaching. Each class participates in a daily Bible time or assembly. The curriculum, which is continually being developed, and many of the policies are based on biblical principles. In primary there is a four-year rolling programme which covers aspects of the Christian faith. A recently written programme on citizenship is an excellent addition to the secondary curriculum and has enabled the school to meet the new regulations. An integral part of each unit is the development of enquiry and attitudes which will help pupils to make choices in developing their lifestyle and equip them for the complexities of adult life. Among the topics the programme covers are law and order, democracy, local community projects, drugs education, human rights, crime, money matters, careers and work.

The school recognises that each pupil is uniquely created with God-given gifts and talents. It has very successfully created an environment where every pupil feels that their opinion is valued and that they are free to share it with others. The school council meets monthly with a staff member to consider ideas for events or any concerns they may have. Pupils' behaviour is excellent in both formal and informal settings. They are friendly, polite, caring and considerate, generally enjoying excellent relationships with the staff. Each pupil is able to earn rewards for good conduct and work for the house to which they belong. These are named after three Christian role models - Shaftesbury, Corrie and Schaeffer. The school rules are underpinned by Jesus' two commandments to love God and to love their neighbour.

The school encourages pupils to make a contribution to the local community. Groups have visited a local home for the elderly, a hospice and a school for pupils with special needs and taken part in voluntary work. The school raises money for a variety of national and international charities. The Parent Governor Teacher Association also initiates fund raising activities for the school in which pupils take part, for example the recent Summer Fair.

The teaching of PSHE in primary is covered through the daily assemblies or Bible times as well as through various topics. Pupils are given valuable insights into local services and public institutions. The citizenship curriculum devotes several lessons to democracy and the workings of parliament. During the inspection an outstanding lesson was given to help pupils understand the principles of a coalition government. A number of different speakers are invited to share with pupils in assemblies and lessons. The school has an important link with the pastor of a Messianic fellowship who has enriched the study of Judaism for the pupils. A well planned series of lessons on world views ensure that pupils in secondary have opportunities to consider and respect people of differing cultures and faiths. They study a number of countries which enable them to begin to understand and respect other world views including humanism, communism, Hinduism and Buddhism.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school's clear policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are implemented effectively and make biblical references where appropriate. Thorough risk assessments are conducted regularly on all activities, both in and out of school, to ensure that pupils are always safe. Any potential hazards are logged and dealt with quickly. Fire drills are carried out regularly and pupils are aware of what to do when there is a fire. Staff take part in regular child protection training and each weekly staff meeting devotes time to child protection issues. Staff are suitably trained in first aid and are well aware of pupils' medical needs.

The staff's care for each pupil's well-being is very evident throughout the school day. They implement procedures consistently and have established a friendly, caring environment in which pupils feel safe and say there is no bullying, fighting or swearing. Staff adopt a positive approach to managing behaviour and are very successful in encouraging pupils to be self-disciplined. This results in impeccable behaviour. Pupils are courteous and friendly to each other. The specialist class teachers are conscious of safety and hygiene implications, with regular risk assessments and good organisation of classes to ensure safe working. One parent commented, 'Trinity is an excellent school. I am continually impressed by the dedication of the staff and the real love and care they have for the children, which I have never come across any other school'.

The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school has robust procedures in place for checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. Staff recruitment procedures reflect the school's Christian values. The single central register is kept up to date, meets requirements and ensures that all checks are properly recorded.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school meets all regulations on premises and accommodation. The premises include specialist classrooms for food technology, science, art/graphics and ICT, all suitably equipped to enhance pupils' learning.

PE lessons in secondary are timetabled to take place in the last lesson of the day. On the days when pupils have PE, they come to school in their PE uniform. They are then dismissed from school so that they can change and have shower at home.

Trinity manages to maximise the limited space they have very effectively for pupils to learn. Governors confirmed that plans are in place to extend the classroom accommodation. Buildings are regularly maintained and enhanced with attractive displays in all areas of the school. There are two large outdoor play/recreation spaces suitable for physical education and break times. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has a small area which is used imaginatively to access outside provision continuously. The premises are secure.

Provision of information

Parents are extremely positive about the school and overwhelmingly pleased their child attends here. There are regular communications between school and home, both by pupil post and by email. Parents say this works well and keeps parents informed about what is happening at the school. The school's website provides clear and up to date information in a user-friendly format. The school provides parents with a parents' handbook which informs them about school's policies and procedures. Detailed reports are sent to parents regularly informing them about their child's progress at school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets all the regulations, and has a clearly written complaints procedure. There have been no formal complaints.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for the five Nursery and eight Reception pupils is good with many outstanding features. Each pupil is valued as a unique person with special God-given gifts and talents and every effort is made to provide experiences to meet their individual needs. Pupils feel loved, respected, safe and secure. As part of a well-established routine they start each day with a Bible time, worship and prayer. Pupils' behaviour is excellent as a result of high, consistent expectations by all staff. Good relationships are enjoyed by the pupils with their teachers and with each other.

All seven areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework are included in the very thorough planning and are supported with relevant age-appropriate resources. The dedicated staff team work tirelessly to ensure a balance of child-initiated and teacher-led activities with a special focus on literacy and numeracy. Phonics are taught in ability groups with Years 1 and 2. Pupils' experiences have been further enriched by visits to a travel agent, a science museum, a greengrocer and a fire station. The provision of a computer with suitable software would be a welcome addition to extend pupils' education. However, the interactive white board is used well by staff members. The lead practitioner is the key worker, though all staff contribute perceptive observations to the detailed 'Learning Journey' files. Assessment is thorough from the time pupils start school and is used effectively in planning future teaching. Records show that pupils make good progress towards their early learning goals by the end of the Reception year, particularly in reading. The close working arrangements between the EYFS and Years 1 and 2 mean that transition to Key Stage 1 for pupils is fairly seamless.

High priority is given to the welfare, health and safety of the pupils so all of the EYFS requirements are met. The setting is secure with regular risk assessments being carried out on the inside and outside provision. Whilst space is rather limited it appears not to have a detrimental effect on the outcomes for pupils as staff manage the setting very well and make maximum use of every area. The two outdoor areas, one grassed and one with tarmac provide scope for many outdoor activities though staff have rightly identified the need for more climbing equipment. The Christian ethos is reinforced indoors with colourful displays and outside with attractive murals.

The equipment and resources are well organised, neatly stored and arranged to be accessible to pupils, encouraging and developing their independence. Healthy living is promoted through the weekly cookery lesson. During the inspection, in an outstanding lesson, pupils delighted in identifying and preparing fruits which they made into smoothies. Pupils were also being trained in hygienic practices such as hand washing.

Since the last inspection there are suitably trained staff covering every EYFS session; the lead practitioner has a level six qualification, one practitioner has just completed her level 3 qualification and another is working on an Open University certificate in Early Years practice. The excellent team are well placed to further develop the setting, particularly if more space became available. The partnership with parents is good with regular prayer meetings to ensure the pupils' spiritual development. One parent said, 'Trinity Christian School has provided our son with a safe, caring environment where he is recognised and treated as an individual.' This sentiment was repeated by other parents at the time of inspection who said that every financial sacrifice they had made to send their child to the school had been worth it.

Compliance with the regulations

The school meets all of the regulations for registration.

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Meeting the expectations of CST

The school's religious ethos continues to meet the expectations of CST.

What the school could do to improve further

As part of future development the school might wish to consider:

- improving consistency in marking, drawing on the very good practice which already exists within the school, so that pupils know what they have done well, how they are progressing, and what they need to do to improve further.
- ensuring that tasks are consistently well matched to individual needs.
- evaluating how well pupils are progressing at each key stage from their starting points, in comparison with pupils nationally, so that targets are sufficiently challenging to enable progress and achievement to be outstanding.