



**TrinityLearning's Annual Report**  
**for the reporting period**  
**1st September 2021 - 31 August 2022**

Registered Charity Number 118272

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## **Our Mission**

TrinityLearning believes that every child deserves a calm, positive start in life. We aim to relieve the pressures on busy schools through specially tailored activities, including practical help for school leaders, regular mentoring for children and workshops for pupils and staff.

## **Chair's Review**

Welcome to TrinityLearning's 2021 – 2022 Annual Report and Accounts. This has been another busy year which saw us move back into more regular volunteer and in-school activities as classroom-based learning returned. However, the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's mental wellbeing was still being felt and so we found ourselves increasingly working on activities that benefit large groups of children from a wide range of age groups alongside our more targeted projects.

On a personal note, this will be my final Annual Report as Chair, as I stepped down from the role in September 2022. My motivation for three years as Chair of Trustees has been the appreciation voiced by children, staff, and carers who so clearly value TrinityLearning's input – whether through developing students' emotional understanding, offering calm spaces such as quiet gardens, or increasing student confidence by providing work experience for those who might have difficulty in finding suitable placements, as well as providing both online and classroom-based creative projects.

Being alongside our staff and our committed group of trustees and volunteers has been an enriching experience for me, with the opportunity to learn from them in many ways. I am pleased that this learning will continue as I will still remain on the Board of Trustees and help to support the new Chair, Katie Doney, as she comes into the role.

As always, none of the projects mentioned in our Annual Report would run without our wonderful team of hardworking and skilled volunteers who share their time so generously with us. We are so very grateful for their input, ideas and dedication to TrinityLearning.

Eve Newton, TrinityLearning Chair of Trustees.

## **Our Objectives**

### **Programme**

- To adapt and develop established TrinityLearning Projects to enable in-school, online or hybrid access as required by changing COVID-19 regulations and recommendations
- To adapt and develop Secondary School projects to respond to changing needs
- To increase the diversity of potential volunteers

### **Legal and administrative**

- To review volunteer policies and disseminate them via our website.
- To ensure all volunteers in child-facing or school roles have received Oxfordshire Safeguarding training
- To increase the diversity of potential trustees

## Review of activities and achievements against our programme objectives

### To adapt and develop established TrinityLearning Projects to enable in-school, online or hybrid access as required by changing COVID-19 regulations and recommendations

#### In-school projects



**Thinking Books:** Thinking Books is TrinityLearning's mentoring scheme for primary schools. It is designed to develop and improve children's ability to think and talk about emotions. Our volunteer mentors go into schools regularly to meet children one-to-one or in small groups. They share

reading of carefully selected books which start conversations about feelings and relationships.

In September 2021, Thinking Books was redesigned to limit sharing of resources thanks to Abingdon Town Council who kindly provided a grant of £900 from their Covid Support fund to allow us to do this

Our Thinking Books training took place in October 2021. Nine volunteers took part and feedback from the training was very positive. Due to changing conditions and Covid restrictions it was extremely difficult for volunteers to work in school over this year. Seven volunteers managed at least some time working in four Abingdon schools over the 2021-2022 school year and ran the full programme to 15 students. In order to help potential volunteers understand why and how we run our Thinking Books programme we put together a short blog with more details which can be found on our website at [More than just reading?](#)

"It was a very wide-ranging introduction to the programme. It was very intense and the time flew by but it didn't feel rushed. It was good to get an insight into why children might display particular behaviours, both through the explanation of how the brain works and exploring a case study." [Training feedback from Thinking Books volunteer.](#)

**Kingfisher Singing Group:** The Kingfisher Singing Group volunteers restarted regular sessions in October 2021, initially with just two volunteers and the TrinityLearning Workshop Leader. The group was able to provide regular sessions over most of the school year and the group size expanded as restrictions lifted and more vulnerable volunteers felt able to restart their volunteering.

The Group has continued to grow and meet once a week to sing nursery rhymes and action songs with children with a range of impairments and health conditions. We were also delighted to accept a kind invitation from Kingfisher School to join them for their St George's Day event where TrinityLearning volunteers enjoyed a fun and happy morning of singing, dancing and merriment with the children and staff.

## Hybrid projects

### Mindful Christmas Pauses – using your

**senses:** Although we had originally intended to return to supporting in-Church Christmas Activities, rapidly changing Covid restrictions meant that only one school was able to access Trinity Church to provide a limited audience nativity and a filmed (no audience) Carol Concert. In order to support schools dealing with frequent, and often unpredictable changes, to their Advent activities we produced



Pause - what can we hear?

“Some people enjoy the hustle and bustle of Christmas but for others it can be overwhelming, so it’s important to take a break and pause at this special time.” [Mindful Christmas Pauses welcome video](#)

some additional video-based resources to add to the Christmas Storytelling Resources created last year. Our Workshop Leader created some short mindfulness videos focussed on the sensory aspects of Christmas to help with calmness and wellbeing. The videos demonstrated

short, easily prepared activities that could be used in the classroom or at home to provide a calming break.

## On-line projects



**Experience Easter 2022:** Experience Easter is a series of reflective workshops, specially developed by TrinityLearning to allow children to access the Easter Story in a meaningful way. In spring 2022, many schools were still avoiding large in-person get togethers, so we made the decision to keep Experience Easter as an online event.

During lockdown in 2021, our intrepid volunteers had to film their Experience Easter workshops from home, with very little support. This time we were able to offer more technical support to volunteers and the purchase of a new clip-on microphone ensured better sound quality! Many volunteers re-filmed their workshops in and around Trinity Church, to give a flavour of the ‘live’ Experience Easter event which we hope will take place in 2023.

“As a teacher with a Christian faith, I find the way you present the gospel uplifting and the reflection activities are accessible and spiritually valuable to children of no faith, or a non-Christian faith or who do have a Christian faith.” [Teacher feedback, Experience Easter 2022](#)

## To adapt and develop Secondary School projects to respond to changing needs

### The Toolkit for Happiness project - encouraging peer mentoring and child-led volunteering



Larkmead school's 'Make A Difference' (MAD) week runs every July and offers Year 12s (6<sup>th</sup> formers) a chance to work on a project with a local charity, group or not for profit organisation. It is preceded by a Larkmead MAD marketplace event which takes place in April, giving students a chance to meet local organisations and hear more about the projects they

have on offer.

TrinityLearning's project offer was our Toolkit for Happiness Workshops designed to promote and support children's wellbeing and happiness by offering a range of ideas and resources that teachers can use with children or that children can use independently.

During MAD week in July, our Education Development Officer and our Workshop Leader worked with a team of eighteen Larkmead 6<sup>th</sup> formers who then led Toolkit for Happiness workshops to five year-7 classes over their 'Make A Difference' week - around 150 pupils in all. The 6<sup>th</sup> formers received training for two hours each morning and then delivered the workshops to year 7 classes, supported by our staff. They were involved in all aspects of the project including leading whole class sessions, leading small groups, teaching specific skills and organising resources. The 6<sup>th</sup> formers were amazing and the feedback from the year 7s was extremely positive.



Due to the impact of Covid this was the first time most of the 6<sup>th</sup> formers and year 7s had worked extensively with another year group. The older students showed impressive diligence, resilience and perseverance throughout the week to ensure that the year 7s enjoyed and benefited from the project. We were extremely impressed by their hard work and attitude.

We hope to expand the project out to Larkmead's Abingdon feeder schools from September 2022 using the same team of trained 6<sup>th</sup> formers.

"[Volunteering] taught me new skills and made me feel more confident."

Larkmead 6<sup>th</sup> former

"Talking about life while doing something else could help [some-one] out, even if it's 5 mins!" Larkmead 6<sup>th</sup> former



## Extract from our Workshop Co-ordinator's MAD week blog

Our Workshop Co-ordinator wrote about the full week of workshops for our TrinityLearning blog. The extract below highlights two workshops held during the week. For the full post visit our website at [MAD Week blog](#).

**Nature workshop** – our first workshop saw us outside, exploring nature and



***"Being outside in nature and not stuck inside can make you feel better."*** Year 12 pupil.



focusing on the small but wonderful things in our environment. Students made seed bombs and started to grow runner beans. Once the year 12s had experienced the workshop they then ran it with the year 7s in the afternoon with each member of the group taking on a different role – some presenting, some preparing resources and others helping pupils with the activities in small groups.



**Creativity Workshop** – this workshop involved creative games and some wonderful making. We used natural materials such as shells, fresh herbs, feathers and gems to make some fun and fantastic art pieces. We also made a fortune teller to help give us ideas for things we could do to help our wellbeing and boost our mood.

Feedback from Year 7s and Year 12s was that this workshop was fun, mindful, calming and satisfying.

***"I have something to make me happy when I am sad"*** Year 7 pupil

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The TrinityLearning display in Trinity Church looking terrific thanks to the hard work of two work experience students.

**Welcoming back work experience students:** In summer 2022 we provided supported work experience to students from local secondary schools. From one or two days with us to more regular part-time placements, students took part in a range of work-related activities including spending time with the Trinity toddler group, checking our mental health and wellbeing advice leaflet for education staff, and redesigning our large TrinityLearning display in Trinity Church.

We provide work experience with the aim of giving students valuable opportunities to communicate with others and experience new environments, as well as building confidence and communication skills. We also learn a lot from the students who often bring their own ideas and ways of doing things! Supported work experience will continue throughout



the next academic year and we're delighted to be able to support young people from across our school communities in this way.

### **To increase the diversity of potential volunteers**

TrinityLearning could not run without a base of committed volunteers who support our projects, giving their time and skills in a myriad of ways. However, whilst we support diverse school communities this diversity has not necessarily been reflected in our volunteer base.

To try and overcome this we have reflected on how to provide more and varied volunteer roles, how to make it clearer that we are an inclusive organisation and welcome people from all backgrounds, and how we can use our volunteer recruitment practices to support inclusion.

**Using our website** - our first step was to redesign and revamp the Volunteer section of our website. This is now a 'one-stop shop' for anyone interested in volunteering with us to see the projects we are currently running, the opportunities currently on offer, read a volunteer case study, and see the type of training we offer volunteers.

**Volunteer roles** - we have increased our emphasis on the different roles we can offer and tried to make the idea of volunteering less daunting and less of an undertaking. While the nature of some of our projects, such as Thinking Books, does require volunteers to undergo training and make a time commitment, we have ensured we include and advertise much more flexible opportunities where no regular time commitment is needed – such as making knitted or crochet toys for some of our packs or one-off helping to maintain a local school sensory garden.



**Volunteer recruitment** - volunteer opportunities are advertised through a wide range of channels. Whilst we make use of our Facebook page to advertise all opportunities, we also advertise in a range of printed publications such as church newsletters and updates as well as non-church-based channels such as Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action online hub and school newsletters.

We have tried to remove some of the barriers that might affect potential volunteers and have started to offer support to help complete volunteer applications, as well as offering large print documents if needed. We ensure that if training is needed the venues we use are accessible and we work with schools to ensure they are aware of any health conditions or impairments that might require reasonable adjustments to be made to ensure volunteers can work in-school.

We have a robust and adhered to Equal Opportunities policy which is shared with potential/new volunteers and we also have a volunteer expenses policy to cover any costs incurred in volunteering with us.

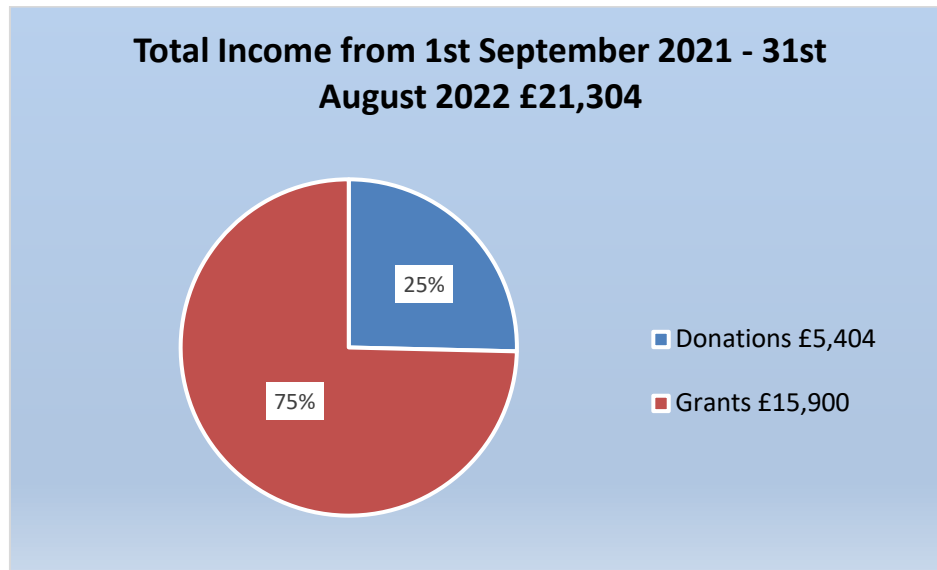
**Volunteer mentoring** - we have trialled early volunteer mentoring with our Workshop Leader who has worked with and mentored the Kingfisher Singing Group. This regular mentoring support has enabled the group to run consistently throughout the year even though initially it only had a few volunteers. By the end of the school year, the group was firmly re-established with a mixture of returning and new volunteers and several enquiries from potential new members.

We are planning to expand early volunteer mentoring to all Thinking Books volunteers and in preparation for this our Workshop Leader has mentored a new volunteer for Thinking Books, recruited through the Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action online hub. The volunteer reported a very positive experience of volunteering and felt supported through what was a very challenging period to volunteer in schools. We are hoping to offer this additional support to all Thinking Books volunteers from September 2022.

**Positive outcomes** - these policies are beginning to result in applications from volunteers from a wider range of backgrounds. We have welcomed 29 new volunteers over the period of this report. These include the 18 6<sup>th</sup> formers from Larkmead who took part in Make a Difference Week and 11 adult volunteers. The majority of volunteer requests this year have been for non-contact volunteering such as toy knitting or gardening. However, the end of the school year has seen a rise in the number of requests for information about child-facing volunteer roles so we anticipate that these will also increase as we move out of Covid restrictions.

## Finances

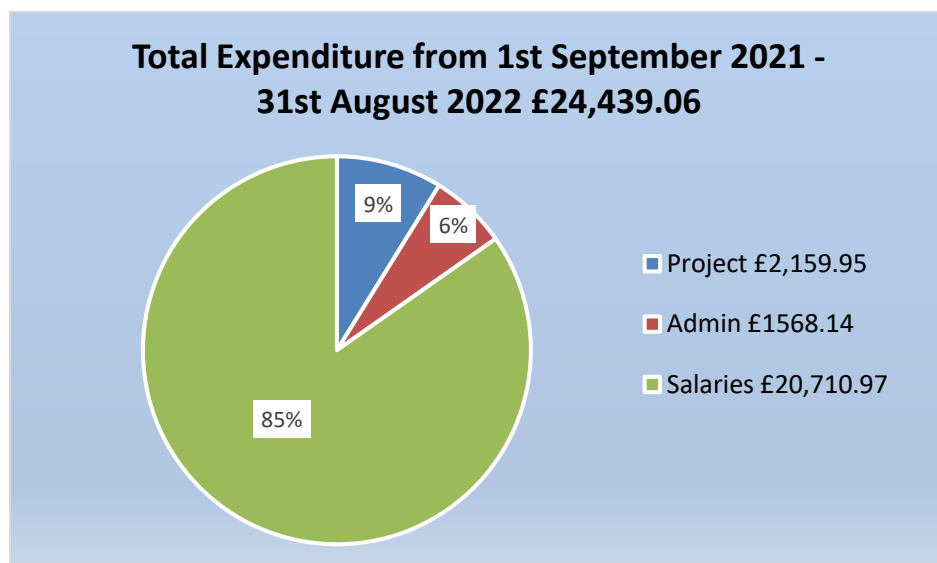
### Where our money comes from



Our core funding is provided through grants from the URC Wessex Trust and the Wantage Methodist Circuit. The original three-year funding plan was extended by two years in 2021 and this funding period encompasses the first year of the funding extension. We have also received financial support from St Helen's Church, All Saints Church and Churches in Abingdon. Individual supporters, mainly from Trinity Church, regularly donate money through the church to support our work which enables us to support local schools.

This financial period, we received a £900 grant from Abingdon Town Council's Covid Support Fund to facilitate the redesign of the Thinking Books project to make it more Covid safe. Larkmead Secondary School and Europa School also made voluntary donations towards the cost of resources for projects they took part in.

### Where we spend our money



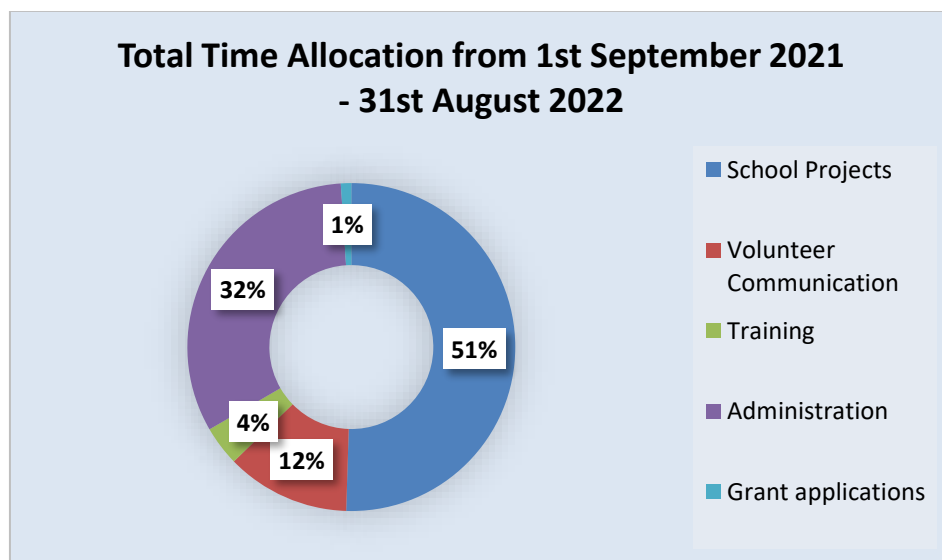
Our expenditure in this reporting period shows a return to lower project costs as anticipated. Our project work was not as resource heavy as previous years and was comprised of a mix of in-person and online work, as opposed to having to rely on activity packs which was the case during lockdowns.

Volunteering in school was significantly reduced by ongoing covid disruptions which resulted in a lower-than-expected return to in-school volunteering. The projects we did manage to run in schools often required additional staff time to provide continuity, resulting in a lower than anticipated resource spend so the vast majority of our funding during the period was spent on wages.

However, our efforts to provide continuity and in-school workshops were greatly appreciated by schools. We have developed and retained these school relationships and anticipate that this will result in a rapid return to volunteer activities from September 2022.

A full break down of our income and expenditure can be seen in the accompanying accounts.

### Time allocation

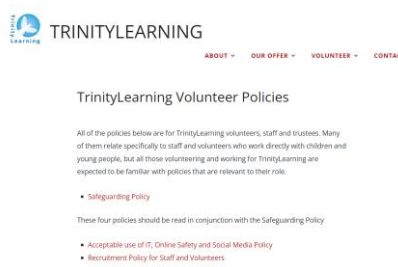


This year the redesign of the Volunteer section of the website and the audit of TrinityLearning's safeguarding procedures and the accompanying policy additions have resulted in a higher percentage of time spent on administration, however this is helping to ensure TrinityLearning is following best practice as we move back towards increased volunteer activities next year.

The time spent on volunteer communication was lower than anticipated as Covid infection rates continued to be high, reducing volunteer activities and the need for volunteer mentoring. We anticipate that this aspect of our work will significantly increase next year as volunteer projects fully restart in schools from September 2022.

## Review of activities and achievements against our legal and administrative objectives

### To review volunteer policies and disseminate them via our website



Volunteers play a key role in TrinityLearning, enabling us to provide a variety of outreach work, therefore it's vital that volunteers can easily access relevant, up-to-date and approved TrinityLearning policies and procedures.

Once a volunteer policy has been drafted it is circulated for discussion with our Board of Trustees and once agreed it is adopted. Any

related policies or procedures are also revisited if necessary to ensure coherence. Our Education Development Manager is responsible for monitoring the implementation of all volunteer policies and recording any issues that arise.

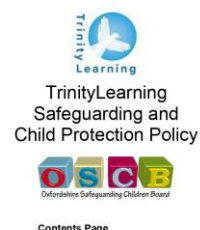
Volunteer policies, like all TrinityLearning policies, are reviewed regularly, on a cycle. Some policies, such as the Safeguarding Policy require annual reviewing, others are reviewed every 2-3 years. We keep a record of all policies and their review dates. Policies may also be updated more often if any relevant organisational or legal changes need to be reflected or volunteer feedback indicates that changes might be needed. Again, revised policies are discussed with trustees to be agreed and adopted.

All TrinityLearning policies that relate to volunteering are then listed in full on our website in our Volunteer section.

We have also begun to audit our Safeguarding policies and procedures using the NSPCC Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool for Safeguarding in voluntary and community groups. A named Trustee and the Education Development Officer review a section of the audit before each trustee meeting and ensure that the relevant policies and procedures are up-to-date and follow best practice guidelines. This is planned to continue as a rolling review to ensure all safeguarding related policies and procedures remain up-to-date.

### To continue to ensure all volunteers in child facing or school roles have received Oxfordshire County Council Safeguarding training

As the school year got underway in September 2021, we were finalising plans to restart our volunteer projects in schools. This included continuing to run our own in-house safeguarding training sessions across the school year, using Oxfordshire County Council's Safeguarding training and led by our Education Development Officer. Safeguarding training is a vital part of helping to protect children and young people from



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neglect and harm, therefore all TrinityLearning volunteers who work directly with children must take part in this training.

Our annual training allows volunteers to develop or refresh their knowledge of safeguarding issues and clearly sets out how volunteers should report any concerns or incidents, and who they should report them to.

During the period covered by this Annual Report, 10 volunteers took part in three TrinityLearning Safeguarding sessions. Each of them received a Safeguarding certificate and will repeat the training annually while they continue to volunteer with children.

As part of TrinityLearning's transition from a Trinity Church project to a standalone charity, we began providing volunteer DBS checks independently this year rather than checks being instigated as a subsidiary of Trinity Church.

This change allows us to deal more directly with DDT, the company who process the checks, but does incur additional charges of £12 per applicant. Between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, three volunteer DBS checks were submitted at a total cost of £36. We anticipate that these costs will be higher next financial year as we have experienced a rise in child-facing volunteer applications.

### **To increase the diversity of potential trustees**

Our trustees work with us to collectively decide how TrinityLearning is run and their guidance ensures that we are on track to meet our aims. However, in a similar vein to our volunteer base, we are aware that the diversity we encounter within our school communities has not necessarily been reflected in our Board of Trustees.

We have started to take some initial practical steps over the period covered by this report with the aim of working towards a more diverse Trustee Board.

These include, creating clear written trustee role descriptions (from 'specialist' trustees such as Secretary to non-specialist trustee roles), and creating inclusive adverts making it clear we welcome people from a wide-range of backgrounds.

**Inclusion** - Board papers are provided well in advance of meetings and can be provided in a variety of formats; Trustee expenses are covered, and our current Board of Trustees have worked to make sure Board meetings are convenient for all (moving to meeting in person during the summer and online during the winter).

The Board has a strong inclusive culture with all trustee voices and opinions equal and welcome. Trustees regularly work alongside other volunteers and staff ensuring they see and hear first-hand the issues faced by the school communities we work with.

**Future work:** We feel we have made some important first steps in this area and intend to build on this work further by actively looking at how to engage a wider range of potential trustees as well as more targeted advertising.



## **Get Involved**

Volunteers play a vital role in TrinityLearning, enabling us to work with children, teachers and the wider school community and give them the support they need. From helping to set up workshop spaces to supporting children's emotional literacy, our outreach work would not be possible without the invaluable input of our volunteers.

We can offer school-based or remote volunteering options and we provide training and support for all roles.

Find out more about volunteering with TrinityLearning on our website:  
<https://trinitylearning.org.uk/volunteer/>

### **Connect and keep up to date with our work**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TrinityLearning-108933674177652/>

Website: [www.trinitylearning.org.uk](http://www.trinitylearning.org.uk)