

# TRINITYLEARNING ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



Period covered: 1st September 2023 - 31st August 2024

## Our Mission

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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

It has been another successful year for TrinityLearning and we are grateful for the commitment of all those involved with the charity, volunteers, trustees and paid staff alike.

It is good to know that so many children have had the opportunity to engage with us, as we recognise that children and schools currently face many challenges and pressures, so the work of TrinityLearning is more important than ever.

We are grateful to those who generously continue to fund us and believe in our ethos and work. Without them TrinityLearning would not be able to function, and we feel greatly affirmed and encouraged by their commitment and faith in us. TrinityLearning is a cohesive project, and it is a good team to be part of.

We are always looking for new volunteers for our projects as well as on our board of trustees. It is a great opportunity to learn new skills, to grow in confidence and to make a real difference to children's lives. We look forward to all that the New Year will bring.

With grateful thanks to those who support us in so many ways; your input is invaluable to the team that is TrinityLearning.

**Katie Doney, TrinityLearning Chair of Trustees.**

## **Our Objectives**

### **Programme**

- To adapt and develop workshops and other support to enable accessibility and participation for all children and young people
- To expand our range of packs and resources to support children during times of change
- To celebrate and share the achievements and impact of our volunteers

### **Legal and administrative**

- To ensure TrinityLearning's organisational resilience

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## **Review of activities and achievements against our programme objectives**

**To adapt and develop workshops and other support to enable accessibility and participation for all children and young people**

### **Experience Easter**

In March 2024 we ran one of our largest ever Experience Easter projects with over 500 children from nine different schools taking part online or joining us in Trinity Church.

Experience Easter runs every year in the form of a series of six workshops which share the Easter story and provide opportunities for children to reflect and relate the story to their own experiences. In response to feedback received from our school communities we run the event as both a 'live' one where children visit us in Trinity Church as well as online, delivered via our website to ensure as many schools are able to access the event in the way they prefer. This year we also ran a simpler adapted version for children from Kingfisher School who visited the workshop spaces in Trinity Church and sang simple songs supported by the Kingfisher Singing Group.

During Experience Easter volunteer storytellers supported us as they shared a simple, scripted story with groups of primary school children and helped them take an active part in the stories in lots of different ways, from writing their hopes and dreams onto palm crosses to working their way through their angry and fearful thoughts using plasticine. Teacher feedback from the event was very positive.



*"Very good recount of Easter story with lovely props for clear understanding. Children were very engaged."*

*"Calm, relaxing atmosphere. A great opportunity for the children to reflect on the Easter story."*

TEACHER FEEDBACK



Two local church ministry teams also came to observe sessions as they work towards setting up Experience Easter in the Didcot and Wallingford areas: "Thank you so much for accommodating us ... It really was wonderful to observe the tremendous impact the session had on the children. It was very well done indeed."

## Kingfisher Christmas Workshops

In December 2023, we welcomed classes from Kingfisher School to Trinity Church for a sensory Christmas Service led by Deacon Selina and supported by our wonderful Kingfisher Singing Group.

The service consisted of a simple retelling of the Christmas Story with songs adapted from nursery rhymes as well as some traditional Christmas favourites such as Little Donkey and Away in a Manger.



We made a sensory pack for each child which included some pictures of a baby and a donkey, a bag of scented chamomile hay, a fleecy square (which felt like a sheep) and a star. Children thoroughly enjoyed finding the things in their pack and holding them up as they sang along.

The commitment of the volunteers was reflected in the enthusiasm and involvement of the staff and children, many of whom had clearly been practising their singing.

In total we ran the service five times to pupils from 11 different classes with some classes coming to Trinity Church and others taking part in a service at the school.

The services were such a popular and welcome addition to our TrinityLearning offer that we are planning to hold them again for Christmas 2024.

## Supported work experience

We offered supported work placements to three secondary school students in the summer. The three students worked well together and demonstrated excellent teamwork and initiative during the placement. The students took on lots of different jobs including a stock take of the Toolkit for Happiness resources, and creating PowerPoints and notices

for the Sunday services. They also took down and replaced the large TrinityLearning display in the church.

They wrote about the time spent with TrinityLearning- with some reflections on how they felt - in an amazing '[Farewell TrinityLearning' blog](#).

Supported Work Experience also took place with a group of students from Kingfisher School at the Trinity Toddler Group. Students were supported by one staff member from school and one staff member from TrinityLearning.

## Make a Difference Week

Seventeen 6th form students from Larkmead School volunteered for our Toolkit for Happiness project in the summer and gave between two and five days each of their time to deliver wellbeing workshops to around 180 year 7 pupils. This year we developed the reflection aspect of the workshops through the introduction of a daily journaling sheet which encouraged pupils to notice and record simple observations on the weather and their own feelings, enabling them to reflect on different aspects of the workshops throughout the week.

We also reviewed our Nature workshop and introduced a herbal teabag making activity, which proved to be calming and popular with year 7 and 6th form students.



*"I am more confident speaking to the Year 7s than I expected."*

*"I liked being with friends and doing the activities with them."*

*"Great experience that has helped my uni decision."*

*"I liked everything. I wouldn't change anything."*

Following training from TrinityLearning's Education Development Officer, and Workshop Leader each morning the students then led wellbeing

workshops in two teams, with each team leading workshops for three year 7 classes over the rest of the day.

The 6th Form Team really went above and beyond to ensure each year 7 pupil felt included and able to access the activities.

## **To expand our range of packs and resources to support children during times of change**

### **Bereavement support**

It was a difficult start to 2024 with three local schools suffering significant bereavements within their communities. In response, TrinityLearning provided six Bereavement Packs and 13 additional Bereavement Journals. For context, we would usually distribute around 10 packs per year.

We were very grateful for the offers from our knitting volunteers to restock our supplies of the tiny bears which go out with each pack - most notably this year from the All Saints Church community.

### **Family Change Packs**

In response to feedback from schools we began work developing a Family Change Pack for adults working with children who are experiencing change in their family due to divorce, separation or new step parents and step siblings.

Similar to the Bereavement Packs, these also contain a journal (produced by AtaLoss, the same team who produce the Bereavement Journals) activity ideas and resources, and a book list. Resources include simple change advice and a slider snake made from beads which the child can make and keep. Our first batch will be available from autumn 2024 and we have already had expressions of interests from local schools.

## School Gardens

Whilst no major changes were made to TrinityLearning gardens this year, two regular volunteers did continue with their ongoing maintenance of Kingfisher Garden. Jan and Chris Greenough were involved in the creation of the garden and have continued to provide ongoing support and maintenance for the garden since 2020. They stepped down in September 2024 and TrinityLearning would like to thank them for their significant contribution to the Kingfisher Garden which has benefitted so many children and staff at the school.

### **To celebrate and share the achievements and impact of our volunteers**

Our 2024 Volunteer Celebration was an opportunity for us to say a huge thank you to the many volunteers who support our work by generously donating their time, skills and experience.

As well as volunteers, we were also joined by staff from some of the local schools we work in, Ministers from one of our major funders – the Wantage and Abingdon Methodist Circuit – as well as and friends and supporters from local church communities.

Our Trustees put on a super spread of snacks and cakes and it was great to have everyone together in one place and for volunteers to have a chance to connect with others they hadn't met before.

Presentation boards at the event highlighted just some of the many ways volunteers support our work both in schools – as Thinking Books volunteers or part of our Kingfisher school singing group, as well as from home – knitting toys, and making up resource packs.



Reflecting on what they most enjoyed about volunteering with TrinityLearning volunteers shared they enjoyed feeling as though they were making a difference.

“Working with children makes me feel useful and I get great satisfaction and joy at their growth in confidence.”



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

### **To ensure TrinityLearning’s organisational resilience**

#### **Trustee succession planning**

Trustees play a vital role in driving and supporting TrinityLearning’s aims and objectives. Recruiting trustees and succession planning is a crucial part of ensuring continuity and good governance and is an area we have particularly focused on during this reporting period.

We have done this in several ways including revisiting our trustee skills audit; ensuring we have up to date and accurate trustee role descriptions and making it clear where we might require specialist skills such as finance or safeguarding; continuing to offer trustee training where appropriate/relevant; tracking trustee tenure and encouraging open discussion with trustees about their plans which might involve stepping down earlier or taking on a more ‘specialist’ trustee role.

We were also delighted to announce the appointment of a new trustee to the TrinityLearning Board of Trustees during this reporting period.



## Updating Trustees knowledge of Charity Commission principles and procedures

We have begun to ensure trustees' knowledge of Charity Commission principles and procedures is refreshed and kept to date so trustees can school fulfil their roles effectively and with confidence. This has involved watching the Commission's short updated guides during Board meetings giving trustees an opportunity to discuss any issues raised and will continue during the next financial year.

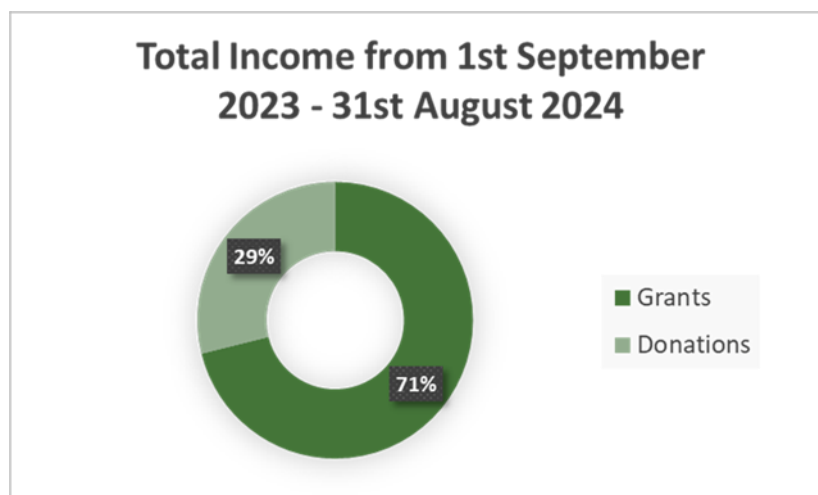
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## Finances

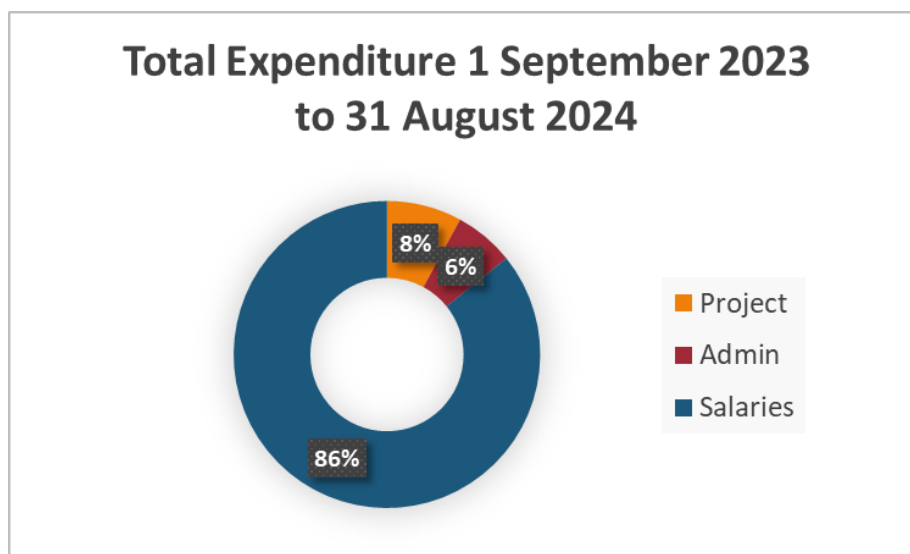
### Where our money comes from

Our core funding continues to be provided through grants from the URC Wessex Trust and the Wantage Methodist Church. Both agreed to extend their original funding period by an additional two years in April 2023 and school this reporting period encompasses the first year of the funding extension. A £3,000 grant from the Richard Belcher Trust also supported our core funding.

We also received financial support from St Helen's Church, Churches in Abingdon and All Saints Church and Abingdon Baptist Church. Individual supporters, mainly from Trinity Church, regularly donate money through the church to support our work as well.



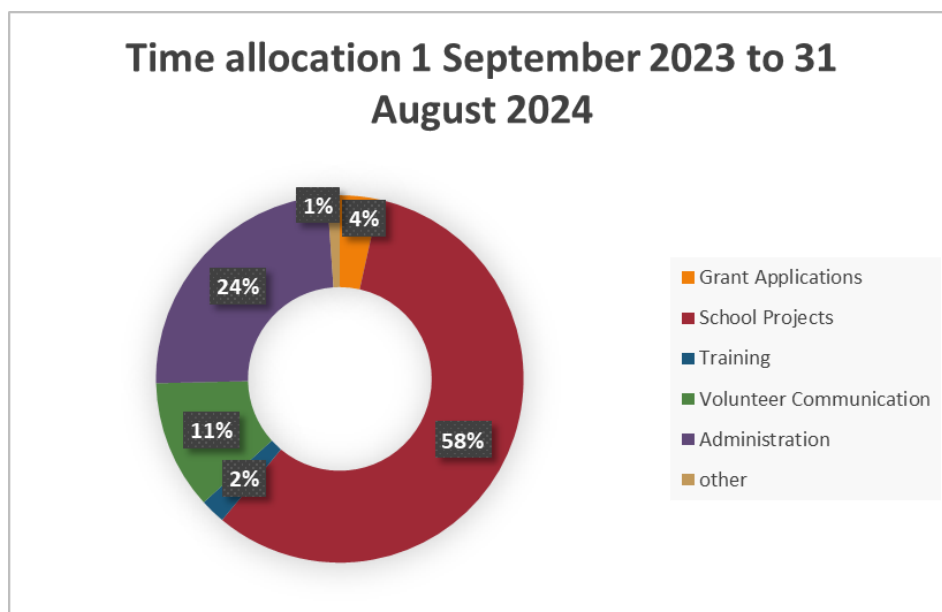
## Where we spend our money



As always, TrinityLearning's largest spend during this reporting period was staff wages. Overall expenditure in this reporting period has increased by approximately 5% mainly due to a 7.5% pay rise awarded by Trustees to all staff with effect from September 2023 with the aim of keeping wages broadly in-line with market rates. This was the first review of pay rates since TrinityLearning was set up as a charity in March 2019; initial rates having been set during the 2017 proposal for three-year funding from the URC Wessex Trust and Wantage and Abingdon Methodist Circuit. Details on staff time allocation on different aspects of TrinityLearning's work are included below.

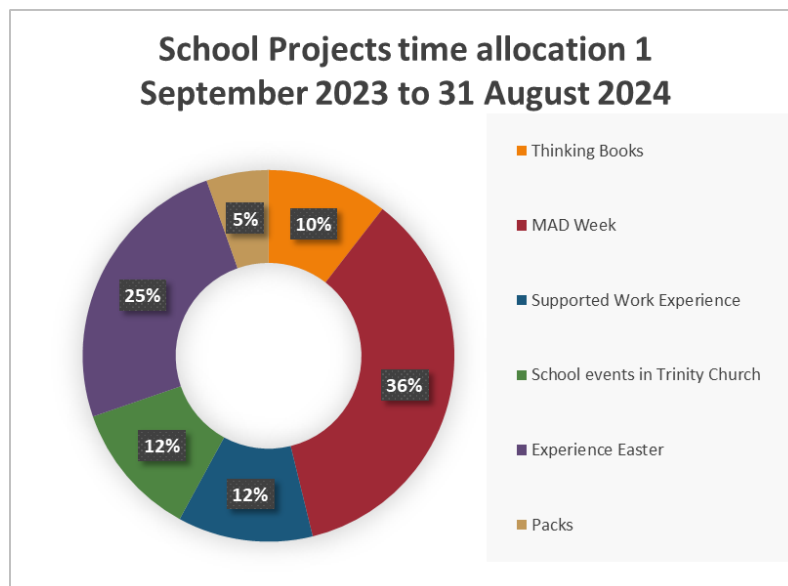
Project spending was slightly reduced this year, partly due to the reduced costs for Experience Easter as only consumables were required. Office costs and photocopying appear a little lower this year, mainly due to bills being presented later so costs will be included in next year's accounting. A full break down of our income and expenditure can be seen in the accompanying accounts.

## Time allocation



This year we continued to see a reduction in the time spent on administration and an increase in the time spent on school projects. We are pleased with this trend as we believe it highlights how vital laying a solid administrative foundation has been in terms of developing policies, procedures and ways of working for long-term resilience and ensuring we are better equipped to support our school communities.

Now that policies and procedures are embedded, we would expect admin time to remain consistent going forward as it includes time for Volunteer DBS rechecking and ensuring our Safer Recruitment procedures are rigorously followed. Slightly more time was spent this year on grant applications which reflects the fact that almost all our school projects successfully received partial or full funding from external funders.



This year, more time was focused on Larkmead School's Make a Difference week as several workshops from the Toolkit for Happiness Project that we deliver during the week were redesigned. As predicted last year however, Experience Easter used considerably less staff time this year as the changes made to allow it to run live in Trinity Church consolidated.

Thinking Books also shows reduced time allocation due to consolidated systems, with the current time allocation being entirely focused on training and volunteer support. However, Thinking Books continues to deliver significantly more one to one time to children as each volunteer delivers between 10 and 30 hours per year. In this reporting period six volunteers supported 41 children through the Thinking Books programme, a total of 410 volunteer hours.

Our Bereavement Packs and Family Change Packs used significant amounts of time (5% of our total staff time) as the new Family Change Pack was developed and there was increased need for bereavement packs and additional related resources.

We also saw an increase in time allocation for Supported Work Experience this year as we supported three local secondary school students who did their work experience with TrinityLearning and five students from Kingfisher School who visited Trinity Toddler Group. Time spent supporting school events in Trinity Church increased as

TrinityLearning supported Trinity Church in developing and delivering a Sensory Christmas Service for Kingfisher School.

Some of our projects such as the Kingfisher Singing Group, continue to use very little staff time and provide considerable on-going support to children.



## **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](#)

[Connect and keep up to date with our work on Facebook](#)

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