

TRINITYLEARNING ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



Period covered: 1st September 2024 - 31st August 2025

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

This report covers another busy and productive year for TrinityLearning. It has been a year in which we have built on our very solid foundations to further develop our volunteer offer; revisit some of our earliest projects in the form of the sensory gardens; and expand several of our existing projects both in terms of what we provide and how we deliver this. Much of this has been driven by the valuable feedback we receive on a regular basis from our local school communities and our volunteers.

Again it is the outstanding support we receive from our volunteers - their enthusiasm, expertise, and willingness to give their time - that is key to our work. We are deeply grateful for their ongoing dedication, which remains a vital part of everything we do.

This will be my final Chair's Review as I stepped down from this position in the summer of 2025. I have learnt much from this position and had many amazing experiences. I have always been grateful for the support of my fellow trustees, and of course, the staff of TrinityLearning and look forward to staying with the charity as a Trustee. I am also very grateful to Rev Pauline Main for taking over as Chair of Trustees, knowing that we are in good hands! Thank you Pauline.

Katie Doney, former 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 review and improve TrinityLearning's legacy school Sensory Gardens and ensure their continued effectiveness
- To review and develop volunteer opportunities to broaden TrinityLearning's Volunteer base and provide accessible volunteering options for all.

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.

We want to ensure that every child and young person that we work with feels valued and supported as they take part in our projects and workshops.

Kingfisher Christmas Workshops

In December 2024, we supported the Kingfisher School Christmas Workshops - sensory Christmas services led by Deacon Selina and supported by our wonderful Kingfisher Singing Group.

The workshops took place in Trinity Church as well as at Kingfisher School. 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.

Using feedback and observations from 2023, we made several changes to ensure all pupils could engage meaningfully in the Kingfisher Christmas activities.

We continued to use smaller packs for children with the manual dexterity and interest to engage with them, and introduced larger versions of the same materials. The larger resources were very effective with children wrapping themselves up in the fleecy blankets to pretend to

be sheep or the baby Jesus. Splitting the resources in this way allowed us to accommodate different sensory preferences and engagement levels.

Workshops were run more frequently to allow for smaller group sizes, enabling a calmer and more supportive environment. The sessions that ran in Kingfisher took place in familiar classroom spaces rather than the larger, less predictable hall setting, helping pupils feel comfortable and secure.

In total we ran the workshops nine times to pupils from 11 different classes and the fantastic singing - particularly in the church workshops - and the interaction and involvement of all the groups were real highlights.



‘Universally, staff have been incredibly thankful for the fantastic experiences that you have offered our young people. Staff fed back that the services were engaging and child friendly as well as extremely well pitched and with relevant resources. We really appreciate how welcoming you were.’

Experience Easter

Experience Easter was held in Trinity Church in spring 2025 with the event remaining a key part of our outreach to local schools and community groups.

Although the number of children attending in person was lower than in the previous year, the smaller groups attending enabled us to refine workshops and tailor activities more closely to the needs of each group. This year’s format combined interactive storytelling, creative reflection, and discussion-based learning, ensuring that children were able to engage meaningfully with the Easter story.

Once again, this hybrid approach - offering live sessions at Trinity Church and online participation - allowed the project to reach a wider audience and fit in better with school schedules.

Some children visiting the live workshops walked for up to half an hour from their school to reach the venue. As the children entered the church, they paused in the entrance area to listen to an introduction to the story and to receive their individual packs for the journey. The doors were then opened to reveal the church, which had been specially decorated for the event. Many of the children had little prior experience of being inside a church, and it was wonderful to hear the little gasps of surprise as the doors were opened.

This year's visitors included children from two Beaver Packs and four Kingfisher school classes as well as our regular school communities. In total, approximately 360 children took part, either online or in person at Trinity Church.

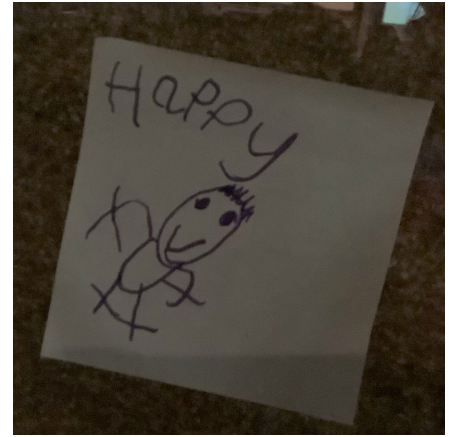
Feedback from teachers and group leaders was positive, noting the thoughtful presentation of TrinityLearning volunteer storytellers and the benefits in terms of interaction and inclusivity that the smaller group sizes had.



"Engaging and interactive.
Inclusive and adapted to
meet children's needs."

"Amazing informative
Easter experience. Lovely
resources and volunteers
were patient and kind."

TEACHER FEEDBACK



Two volunteers also provided new video storytelling segments to update workshops which had un-editable Covid references. Further minor updates are planned for next year to continue to ensure the online version remains in-line with the live version.

Toolkit for Happiness project

Eighteen 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.

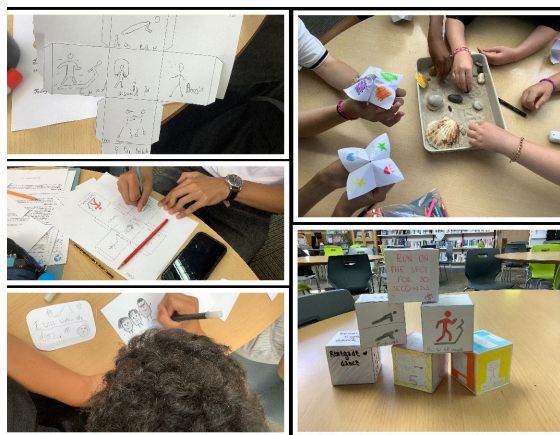
Following training from TrinityLearning's Education Development Officer, and Workshop Leader each morning the students then led wellbeing workshops in two teams, with each team leading workshops for three Year 7 classes over the rest of the day.

This year, we refined our journaling sheets to help students make simple observations about their own feelings and reflect on different aspects of the workshops throughout the week. The revised format reduced the amount of written work required, making the activity more accessible. This adjustment led to a noticeable increase in engagement and enthusiasm for using the sheets, with students showing greater interest in recording and discussing their reflections.

The process for collecting feedback from Year 7 students was also improved. Instead of individual responses, feedback was gathered in groups, with Sixth Form students acting as scribes for table leaders. This enabled the collection of more comprehensive and insightful feedback regarding workshop preferences and overall student experience.

We are already planning a significant update to the Creativity Workshop for the next academic year in response to feedback we captured from Year 7s in order to ensure students feel

engaged and also as part of the more 'co-production' approach we are taking with this project.



"The best bits for me were making friendships and creating a bond with the younger years."

"The best bit for me was seeing that the year 7s trust you and like you for who you are."

"We like the way the 6th formers interact with us."

Feedback from Year 12s and Year 7s

To review and improve TrinityLearning's legacy school Sensory Gardens and ensure their continued effectiveness

Following on from feedback from some of our volunteers, it became apparent during this reporting period that we needed to carry out a review and potential enhancement of TrinityLearning's legacy school Sensory Gardens to ensure their ongoing effectiveness and accessibility.

Carswell Primary School's sensory garden was designed and completed in 2012 with financial and practical support from TrinityLearning. The garden was designed to provide children with hands-on experiences of nature and sensory stimulation, as well as being a space to relax and explore. Whilst initially well used by the school, the garden had become progressively more overgrown and had been completely inaccessible for over a year as some plants had toppled over, completely obscuring the paths.

The school were concerned that the garden was being lost as a resource for both learning and recreation but did not have the capacity or resources to really overhaul the garden and make it suitable for use again.

In May 2025, a dedicated team of five volunteers from 4 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps at Dalton Barracks partnered with TrinityLearning to overhaul the garden. With around 25% of Carswell pupils coming from forces families, the school maintains strong links with Dalton Barracks and the wider military community.

Their week-long project included removing an overgrown Buddleia, an overgrown conifer, 12 large shrubs, and approximately 10 self-seeded tree seedlings, as well as digging and preparing garden beds, removing toxic weeds, clearing tyres from the original herb garden and replanting herbs directly into planters or the soil.

The garden transformation has made previously overgrown paths safe and accessible, allowing children and staff to use the space fully and ensuring that ongoing maintenance will

be minimal.



“Our sensory peace garden is a place that children explore, imagine and reflect. Early years and key stage one use it to observe the changing of the seasons and as a place to inspire writing, specifically poetry and stories. There are small sculptures hidden around that inspire these fantasy stories and when the weather allows there is a story den for groups of children to listen to stories being read aloud.

Our SEN children love the garden too for the same reasons and will often go one-to-one with a staff member to explore, play and have a calm space to reflect.

We are developing our playground offer and part of that is to allow children to free roam in all of our outside areas. The work that Trinity and the volunteer troops did has opened up this area of our school and we are all very grateful to them.” Paul Crandon, Headteacher, Carswell Primary School.

Further Support - At the end of the school year, Trinity Church members responded to an appeal for plants and donations to restock the Kingfisher School Sensory Garden. The appeal raised around £150, which was used to fill planting gaps and prepare the garden for the new school year, ensuring it starts in optimal condition.

To review and develop volunteer opportunities to broaden TrinityLearning's Volunteer base and provide accessible volunteering options for all

TrinityLearning could not carry out its projects without our wide base of volunteers. This includes volunteers for our two key ongoing projects - Thinking Books and Kingfisher Singing - but also includes a much wider base of volunteers who listen to children read in local schools; maintain Sensory gardens; knit and crochet small soft toys for our packs and help make up resources for Experience Easter. During this reporting period we revisited our commitment to enhancing our volunteer offer in order to try and engage a wider volunteer base.

The Volunteer Experience

We began this review by considering the complete volunteer experience—the emotional and practical journey from initial contact with us, through to the decision to join, and continuing into ongoing volunteer involvement. By understanding each stage of this process, we wanted to be able to identify areas we could improve on or offer enhanced support to make sure everyone who volunteers for us has a meaningful and rewarding experience.

“The best bits about volunteering for me was it helped with speaking in front of large groups and increased my confidence.” Year 12 volunteer.

Our first step was to review the volunteer section of our website to produce something which clearly highlighted our offer in terms of easy to see volunteer opportunities, how we work with and support our volunteers and importantly what our volunteers feel about working alongside of us. For existing volunteers this section has up to date training and volunteering news, links to our Volunteer Handbook as well as volunteer opportunities and other ways to get involved in our work.

We had supportive conversations with volunteers to find out what might make volunteering and attending our training sessions easier and more accessible. This feedback gave us valuable insights into the practical and personal barriers some volunteers face, such as travel arrangements, timing of sessions, and access to information or resources and in turn helped us re-evaluate the need for hybrid and flexible approaches.

We also continued to run meet-up and feedback sessions for our projects where volunteers can come together to share thoughts, experiences, what is working well and what TrinityLearning might need to revisit/tweak.

“I find it useful to hear input from other volunteers about their experiences and to see that even in the [training session] we have differences in our perceptions of what going in the [Thinking Books] picture in different situations.” Thinking Books volunteer.

Ongoing support

New volunteers, or those taking on new roles such as working one to one or with small groups in schools are shadowed by experienced staff before working independently. This approach helps them gain confidence and understand how sessions are structured and managed.

Within the Kingfisher Singing Group, new volunteers are paired with experienced team members to observe and assist in sessions before taking a more active role. Similarly, during Experience Easter, new volunteers may begin by observing sessions or helping with resources for one or two visits before trying activities such as storytelling themselves.

This supportive, hands-on approach helps to ensure that all volunteers feel well-prepared and confident in their roles.

Celebrating our volunteers



The 2025 Volunteer Celebration provided a valuable opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the many volunteers who generously contribute their time, skills, and experience to support our work. In addition to our volunteers, the event was attended by staff from local schools, funders, as well as friends and supporters from local church communities.

It was also a chance to create a welcoming environment in which attendees could connect and share experiences. It was particularly encouraging to see volunteers meeting others involved in different aspects of our work and forming new connections.

Looking to the future

As always there is a slow build up from upgrading systems to seeing results but during this reporting period we had two new long-term volunteers (1 garden and 1 in-school) and the Dalton Barracks team who collectively provided around 50 hours volunteer time. We are very much aware that this is an ongoing process and will need to be reviewed regularly to ensure we are meeting the needs of our volunteers however they choose to be part of TrinityLearning's mission.

"I have enjoyed doing something different and taking the time to be outside with nature. A way to take a break from work whilst doing something good for the community." Dalton Barracks volunteer.

Review of activities and achievements against our legal and administrative objectives

To ensure TrinityLearning's organisational resilience

Recruitment of new Trustees

We have continued to build on our trustee succession planning, ensuring that TrinityLearning has the governance, skills, and stability needed for the future. Over the past year, we have continued to review the make up of the Board, identified areas where additional expertise

would be valuable, and strengthened our processes for recruiting, welcoming, and supporting new trustees.

During this period we have recruited one new Trustee and welcomed a non-Trustee board advisor who provides support and advice alongside the formal decision making carried out by Trustees.

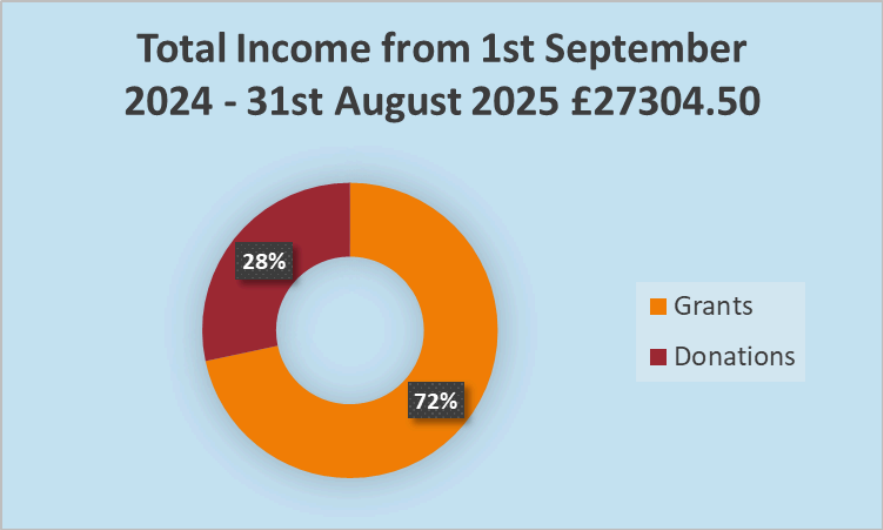
By continuing to invest in succession planning in this way we hope to build on the long-term resilience and effectiveness of the organisation.

Revisiting our reserves policy

In this reporting period, Trustees considered TrinityLearning’s current Reserves Policy. Trustees determined that while Charity Commission recommended best practice is for reserve funding to cover more than six months of operating costs, this is not currently achievable for TrinityLearning. However Trustees amended our current Financial Policy to extend our reserves from three months to four months and continue to monitor and review this position carefully.

Finances

Where our money comes from



Our core funding continues to be provided through matched funding grants of £7500 from the URC Wessex Trust and the Wantage and Abingdon Methodist Circuit. A £3,000 grant from the Richard Belcher Trust also supported our core funding.

During this reporting period we have also received funding from:

The Gladiator Trust - to cover the costs of our Experience Easter resources packs for 2025 and 2026.

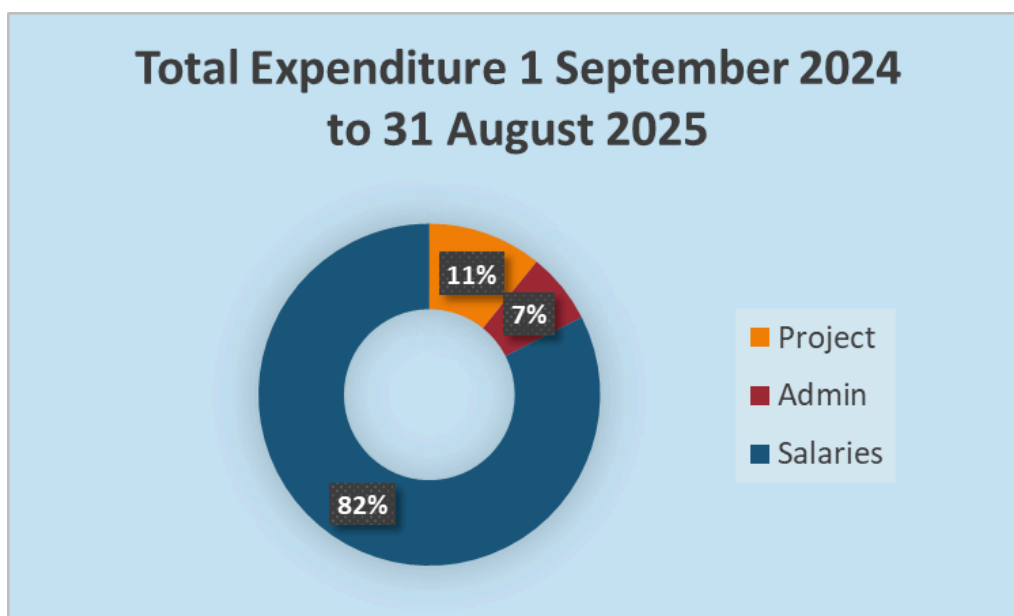
The Doris Field Trust - which enabled us to revitalise the Carswell School Sensory Garden.

Christ's Hospital - to cover the costs of resources for our Thinking Books project for the next two years (2024 - 2026). Thinking Books is our volunteer mentoring project. It involves trained volunteers meeting children for ten weekly in-school sessions to discuss characters' emotions using carefully chosen books. This grant will help us keep the book boxes well stocked and, most importantly, allow us to give each child who takes part in the project a copy of the book they have worked with. The children love choosing their books and are proud to take them home when the project is completed.

Abingdon Town Council - provided £800 to help cover the cost of the resources for our Bereavement Pack and Family Change Pack resources for schools in Abingdon Town over two years (2024-2026).

We also received £300 from Larkmead School towards resource costs for MaD week 2024, as well as funding from St Helen's Church, All Saint's Church and individual donors through Trinity Church. These additional donations are essential in enabling TrinityLearning to develop new projects and provide the same offer to all schools in the Abingdon area. Several of our small grant providers are area specific which means they can only be used to support schools and young people within a certain locality.

Where we spend our money

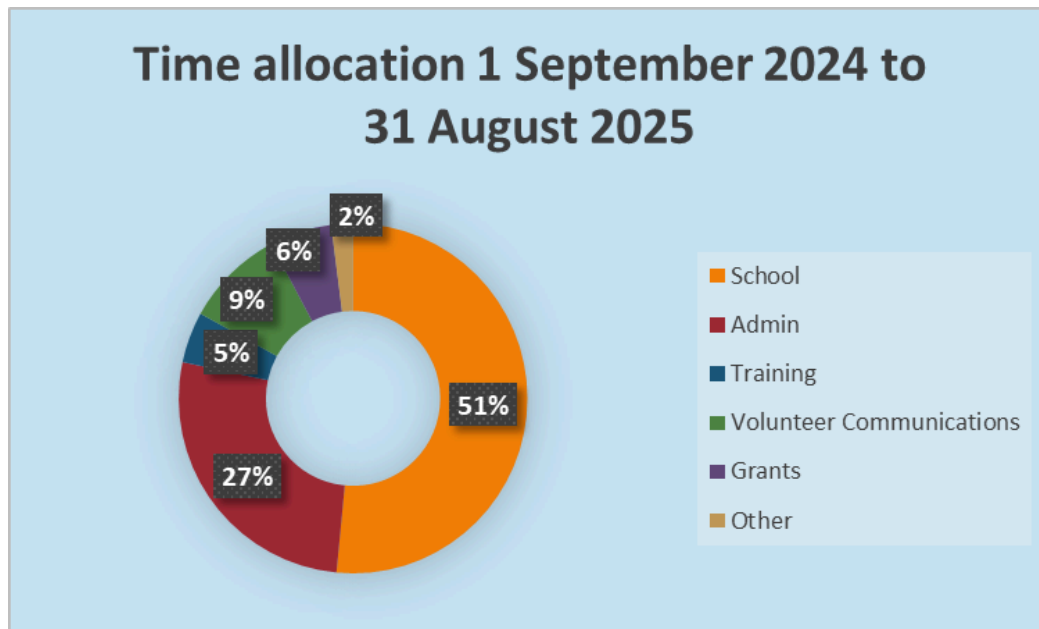


Although the total amount spent on salaries remained roughly the same this year, it decreased as a percentage of our total spend due to higher project-related expenditure. Project costs increased due to higher spending on Bereavement and Family Change packs in response to increased demand. Costs were also higher owing to one-off project spending for the Carswell

Garden refurbishment and additional resource spending to improve accessibility for the Kingfisher Christmas Service and Experience Easter.

Admin costs saw a slight increase due to higher training costs as two staff members completed retraining in paediatric first aid.

Time allocation

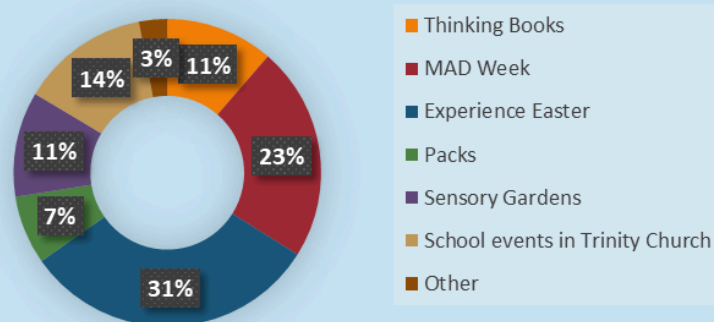


This year saw increased time spent on training as staff repeated their statutory Oxfordshire Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training with the Education Development Officer also completing the Methodist Church Higher Level Safeguarding Training and Paediatric First Aid.

We also spent additional time on preparing grant applications and successfully received several small grants. These grants, along with donations, now mean that currently all project resource costs are covered. The increased time spent on these areas resulted in a slight reduction in the overall amount of time spent on School Projects.

Administration time was also slightly increased, mainly due to increased reporting to funders, such as through the presentation to Wantage and Abingdon Methodist Circuit, and to the school communities we support, through the presentation to the Abingdon Partnership headteachers. This corresponded with a slight decrease in time spent on volunteer communication.

School Projects time allocation 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025



Larkmead school's 'Make a Difference' week took up less time this year as the major changes made last year were consolidated and improved with only minor tweaks. There was less demand for supported work experience, however, planning, risk assessing and supervising the refurbishment of the Carswell Peace Garden took up a considerable amount of time this year. This reduced the capacity available for other projects, particularly during the summer term.

Thinking Books time allocation remained fairly constant and focused on training and volunteer support. This continues to be an impactful project for children with at least 32 children receiving 10 sessions and a book last year.

Time spent supporting school events in Trinity Church increased again, due in part to the growing number of schools using the church for events, services, and performances—particularly during the Christmas period. Support includes time spent preparing and delivering the Christmas Service for Kingfisher School, including sessions held in the church as well as additional sessions carried out in the school.

The Kingfisher Singing Group continues to use very little staff time whilst delivering significant impact through its dedicated volunteer team. Over the year they have delivered a session a week to three classes of children totalling around 30 sessions and over 420 volunteer hours.

Time spent on Experience Easter increased slightly as we worked on improving accessibility. Part of this work involved running sessions for smaller groups to allow access for younger children and those with significant impairments or health conditions which is more staff-time intensive.

Resource Packs to be used by adults working with children continued to use a significant amount of time (7%) as we launched the Family Change Pack and increased our advertising of these to schools. This increased demand, with 17 Bereavement Packs and 14 Family Change Packs being provided to schools over the reporting period.

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

