

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Knuzden, St Oswald's C of E Primary School</b>	Mount St James Stanhill Road Knuzden Blackburn BB1 2DR
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese/Methodist District</b>	<b>Blackburn</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Lancashire
Date/s of inspection	13 October 2016
Date of last inspection	29 February 2012
School's unique reference number	119450
Headteacher	Andrea Gray
Inspector's name and number	Ann Aspden 858

### School context

Knuzden, St Oswald's is a one form entry voluntary aided primary school situated in an area of socio-economic deprivation on the border of Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen. There are 207 children on roll and of these 80% are of white British heritage with the remainder of Asian heritage and from the Muslim faith. The percentage of children with special education needs and disabilities is below the national average. Significant changes in staffing, including senior leadership roles, have occurred since the last inspection.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Knuzden, St Oswald's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong Christian vision and leadership of the headteacher is enthusiastically endorsed and supported by staff and governors.
- Every child sees themselves as a child of God and is enabled to flourish spiritually, academically, and socially.
- Christian values, articulated and understood by children, staff, governors and parents, are embedded in all aspects of the school's life and demonstrated in the excellent relationships between all members of the school community and its happy, well behaved children.
- Collective worship is inspirational and deeply affects the spiritual development of all who learn and work in the school.

### Areas to improve

- Develop the governors' approach to monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school, including religious education and collective worship in order that this becomes a key part of the school's development planning process.
- Develop children's awareness of Christianity as a multicultural world faith in order to extend and deepen their understanding of diversity.

## **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners.**

At the heart of the school is its mission statement, 'Encouraging God's children through courage, compassion and creativity' which has become embedded and is intrinsic to school life. The school promotes its ethos in many ways, all of which are extremely effective. In particular, the Facebook page and the class Emojis are put to excellent use and allow the sharing of spirituality and Christian values across the whole school community. The school's Christian character is underpinned by Christian values and this results in a learning environment which enhances the personal development and academic achievement of all children. All displays are accompanied by biblical quotes and the children say this is because Christ is everywhere, in all subjects, he never leaves them. A Key Stage 1 child stated, 'You can't run away from God because he is everywhere.' The teaching of Christian values such as endurance, trust and friendship, results in children feeling able to persevere and aspire to achieve their goals. Excellent relationships and very high standards of behaviour reflect the fruits of the vine which are lived out consistently by all members of the school family. Children flourish as a result of a wealth of spiritual opportunities in lessons, worship and carefully planned opportunities in specific areas within the school environment. These include the atrium where Christian values are the focus for prayer and quiet reflection. Here, children spontaneously engage in personal spiritual moments. They come and go throughout the school day and are revitalised by their '5 minutes of peace'. The value of such places was explained by a Year 2 child who said, 'This is where we come to talk to God and tell him our worries. He's always there for us.' Religious Education makes a highly valuable contribution to the Christian character of the school. It provides a convincing foundation for and teaches about the source of the Christian centred values that drive the school. Children express their thorough enjoyment of RE and the impact that it has on their lives. Consequently, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is of a very high standard. However, the children are not yet fully aware of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.**

Collective worship, which lies at the heart of St Oswald's, is sincere, varied and relevant. As a result, it has a very clear focus on Christian teaching, biblical references and children's spiritual development and inspires the day to day actions of the whole community. Acts of worship such as the Harvest celebration are respected, valued and enjoyed by staff, children and parents who talk about how they enrich their lives. Worship leaders are firmly committed to ensuring that high levels of spiritual and moral reflection are an intrinsic part of every act of worship. The children are very familiar with The Lord's Prayer, Anglican responses and Christian symbols. They speak with clarity about the Holy Trinity and the related symbolism of Bible, cross and candle. They describe Jesus as the light of the world, the prince of peace and a guide for life. The chosen songs are sung both prayerfully and with enthusiasm by the whole school community. This creates a spiritual experience for all involved as was the case when gifts were presented during the Harvest celebration. Personal prayer is important to children and there are many occasions when they can go to be quiet and reflect. Children are offered many opportunities to respond to worship such as in the classroom prayer and reflection areas which are frequently visited by children as places where they can write their own prayers and make prayer requests. The newly established outdoor reflection area is being put to very good use by children who truly value opportunities for spontaneous prayer throughout their daily lives. Their prayers link Christian teaching with Christian values such as hope, love and trust. The worship group and individual classes research, plan and lead worship confidently, creating a relaxed yet reverent atmosphere. Links with the local church are strengthened by the dedication and involvement of foundation governors. Excellent links with the diocese have enriched the worship experiences. The children enjoy their visits to the local church at Christmas, for the end of year Leavers' service and for other festivals throughout the year. Parents say that worship is a celebration and that it actively promotes the Christian message with a clear focus on love and friendship. They are delighted to join their children for worship because it allows them to feel part of the school's strong Christian family. They see the school as their church and feel part of its worshipping community. The introduction of a family Eucharist each term is one of the successful ways in which the school is encouraging families to actively engage in collective worship. Governors have an excellent understanding of standards in this area as a result of their presence in school and the discussions that they have with senior leaders.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.**

Religious Education makes an outstanding contribution to the school's distinctiveness and to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth. The expertise and passion of the subject leader is infectious and shared by colleagues. RE is seen as a core subject and the learning permeates through the school, influencing all aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are excited by their learning because lessons are very well-planned and cater for a range of different learning styles. Teachers make effective use of creative and varied learning opportunities which meet the needs of all learners. For example, in a Key Stage 2 (KS2) lesson that focussed on the theme of Life as a Journey, the children were eager to share their own life experiences and relate them to their own faith. Extremely good and often outstanding teaching ensures that children are always fully engaged. They are challenged to extend their thinking and as a result use higher level skills to great effect. They work together very well, sharing ideas openly and honestly. KS2 children are able to reflect upon different aspects of the Eucharist, sharing thoughts such as, 'I ask for forgiveness and I feel better because my sins will be washed away.' All children make excellent progress and standards in RE are high. These standards are reflected in the comprehensive class scrap books and portfolios of evidence as well as in the children's work and displays. Children are involved in assessing their own work and know how to improve it because of the feedback they are given by their teachers. The school has, however, identified marking and feedback as an area to improve. A highly appropriate balance of the study of Christianity and other world faiths exists. Parents comment on the diversity of knowledge that their children demonstrate. One parents said, 'My children know about other holy books and faith traditions, they know about how our religion (Islam) is different to Christianity and Judaism.' The balance achieved between learning about and learning from religion is excellent.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good.**

The headteacher, governors and staff promote and exemplify a distinctive Christian vision for the school. The Christian ethos and values are lived out to excellent effect along with the fruits of the vine. Parents, grandparents and carers are immensely grateful for the way in which love, care and friendship are prominent. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. They ensure that the curriculum and other provision, such as that of a family support worker, meets the needs of all children, raises aspirations and leads to rising levels of improvement. Parents and carers are immensely proud of the school and see it as a school family. They feel they have ready access to the school and that they are regularly reminded that 'the door is always open'. One parent commented on the support provided by the school through the Family Wise group saying 'Nothing is too much for the school, they'll always find some way of helping. There is always someone who will listen.' Members of the newly reformed PTA are eager to promote the Christian ethos. They are committed to contributing to school life both to the benefit of all learners and to enable the school community to gather and celebrate as was the case with the production of the school's recipe book. The responsibilities given to children are wide and varied. They accept them eagerly and are extremely proud of their achievements. They explain how they raise funds for local and national charities because God wants them to show love and concern for the less fortunate. The children have some awareness of global issues through overseas projects such as the bishop's harvest appeals and the Bethany project in Tanzania. Members of staff are actively encouraged to pursue professional development linked to church schools. A number of them have successfully completed Christian leadership training and have gone on to other school leadership roles. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and appreciate the work that she does in raising their awareness of the key features of Church distinctiveness. As a result, they speak confidently about the school's effectiveness although their evaluations are not always formally recorded This limits their ability to ensure that relevant church school issues become part of the development planning process.