



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Oswaldtwistle St. Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Union Road,
Oswaldtwistle,
Accrington,
Lancashire.
BB5 3DD

Previous SIAMS grade: Inadequate

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: Thursday 27th November 2014

Date of last inspection: March 2011

School's unique reference number: 119451

Headteacher (Executive): Joan Smith

Inspector's name and number: Anne B. Woodcock 445

School context

St. Paul's Church of England Primary School serves Oswaldtwistle in East Lancashire, an area of significant socio-economic deprivation. The school supports a higher than average number of children with additional needs. The number of pupils attracting the Pupil Premium grant is also high. Of the 144 pupils, approximately 20% are of Pakistani heritage and 14% come from the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller community. The school works in collaboration with St. Peter's Church of England Primary School, Accrington. The headteacher works in the school for half the week. Inward and outward mobility is high.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Oswaldtwistle St. Paul's as a Church of England school are good

- The inspirational Christian leadership and determination of the headteacher and deputy headteacher has resulted in the dramatically improved Christian character and distinctiveness of the school. This has impacted very positively on all aspects of school improvement.
- The Christian care, nurture and support provided for all pupils and their families which has resulted in improving standards of achievement and attendance.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They grow in confidence and self-esteem because they know that they are valued and loved within a supportive Christian environment.
- The strong, purposeful links with the church ably supports the spiritual development of pupils and all who work in this church school.

Areas to improve

- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate acts of collective worship so that they can demonstrate their understanding of the nature of worship more effectively.
- Develop and formalise the way in which governors monitor and evaluate church school distinctiveness to further improve the self-evaluation process.
- Find ways to involve parents in church school self-evaluation to broaden their engagement in church school issues.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners

Christian values are explicitly expressed and clearly understood by all members of the school family. The firm belief that 'all children can achieve' and that all are loved by God motivates the work of the school. Pupils know that they are valued and respected. They explain that their key Christian values are inspired by Jesus and say, 'We treat each other with respect so everyone in this school is friendly and helpful.' Relationships across the school are extremely strong and nurturing. Excellent support is provided for all pupils and their families, particularly the vulnerable and those with additional needs. Children have great trust in and respect for their teachers, saying that they make lessons fun, care and keep them safe. All pupils make good progress from their starting points and standards of achievement are good. Pupils' behaviour is good because it is firmly rooted in their understanding of Christian trust, respect and forgiveness. Children take pride in their work and achievements. This is reflected in displays and pupil work books. Attendance rates are improving because issues are well managed and parents feel supported rather than challenged. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Special themed weeks such as the multi-cultural and recent World War I weeks, together with regular visits and a creative curriculum, provide children with repeated opportunities to explore and express their ideas through art and collaborative projects. They are increasingly reflective and make effective use of the prayer corners provided around school. Pupils have a growing awareness of their place in God's world. They recognise issues such as poverty and injustice and are increasingly able to identify ways in which they can help. As one pupil explained, 'God engineered the world and it is our responsibility to keep it running.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important and integral feature of the daily life of the school. It has been instrumental in re-building the school's Christian character and effectiveness. Worship is well-planned and led by staff, clergy and visitors. Children enjoy worship because they feel included and inspired. They say, 'We sing great songs and talk about important things like God. Christian values lead a lot of our worship. They're important because they come from Jesus and tell us how to behave with one another.' Children's understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is developing. Pupils are often involved in acting out stories, reading from the Bible and saying prayers but they do not yet have regular opportunities to plan and lead worship independently. Children sing with great joy and enthusiasm, considering this to be a very important part of their worship. The prayer life of the school is very strong and pupils are increasingly reflective. Children know a number of traditional prayers and they write and use their own prayers, both for personal and collective use. Their understanding of the nature and purpose of prayer is clearly demonstrated in the way in which children volunteer to express their personal response to the worship theme using spontaneous prayers. The church provides strong support. The vicar is a regular visitor, leading worship in school and church. The recently introduced monthly Eucharist service held in school is having a positive impact on staff and pupils. Some members of the church also attend these services. The church is used for special services such as Harvest and Christingle. Parents attend these events in growing numbers, valuing the opportunity to share in the work and worship of the school. The impact of collective worship is effectively monitored and evaluated through feedback from staff, pupils and governors, resulting in dynamic and continuing improvement.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Children value and enjoy religious education (RE) because, 'It teaches you about God and Jesus and other religions.' Through the passionate and highly effective leadership of the subject leader, RE has been re-established and prioritised within the curriculum. It makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Teaching is good. It is well-planned, using creative approaches which engage all learners. Effective professional development has resulted in improved teacher confidence and creativity. As one pupil explained, 'RE is fun because we do a lot of art and often act out stories.' Children are challenged to consider 'big questions' and reflect upon their own ideas and beliefs in an open and honest atmosphere. For example, in one lesson, the teacher shared her own experience of adult baptism, encouraging the children to ask questions and compare it with the way in which Jesus was baptised. Standards of achievement are in line with those achieved in other core subjects and the vast majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' work is very well-presented and displayed in books and collaborative work. The vicar supports learning in RE and the church is used as a resource. Children have a good knowledge of Bible stories and the life of Jesus. They talk knowledgeably about holy books and customs used by those of Jewish and Muslim faiths. Muslim festivals, such as Eid, are celebrated with the help of parents, who provide food and traditional dress. Robust assessment procedures are now in place, ensuring that pupil progress is tracked and gaps in learning are identified. RE is very effectively monitored and evaluated, providing support for teachers and ensuring that the ongoing development of the subject is maintained.

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

The executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have worked tirelessly to re-create the school's distinctive Christian character. Clearly expressed, shared and agreed Christian values impact upon all aspects of the work and life of the school, placing the needs of pupils and their families at the centre. The core values of love, respect, friendship and forgiveness have driven the very dramatic improvement in pupils' behaviour and attitudes which have resulted in much improved standards of achievement, progress and attendance. The well-being of all members of the school family is provided for very effectively. Governors ensured the school's Christian distinctiveness through wise and prayerful appointments. They support and challenge the work of the school. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and needs. They ensure that RE and collective worship are effectively managed to secure improving standards. They visit regularly, monitoring collective worship and RE, supporting learning and meeting parents. However, although this impacts upon their knowledge of the school, it does not yet inform the church school self-evaluation process effectively. Governors ensured that all issues from the previous inspection have been fully addressed, leading to significant and ongoing improvement. Links with the diocese and collaborating school have been effective and have had a significant impact on collective worship, RE and all aspects of pupil progress. Purposeful links with schools in Sri Lanka and the Rossendale Valley support pupils' understanding of global and national issues. Pupils are confident that their voice is valued and respected. They talk proudly of the way in which they influence decisions about charitable giving and playground equipment and they are eager to accept responsibility. Parents are increasingly engaged with, and supportive of the school, knowing that their children are safe and nurtured. However, they are not yet involved in the church school self-evaluation process, Weekly 'chill and chat' sessions, and opportunities to work alongside their children, such as the recent Christmas decorations workshop, are well attended and valued. Parents say, 'We feel part of the school because staff are always there for them and the door is always open.'

