



YR EGLWYS
YNG NGHYMRU



THE CHURCH
IN WALES

Gwella Inspection of Church in Wales Schools Report

St Andrews Major Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Primary School

St Andrew's Road, Dinas Powys, Vale of Glamorgan CF64 4HB

Diocese: Llandaff
Local authority: Vale of Glamorgan
Dates of inspection: 19,20 September 2016
Date of last inspection: October 2009
School's unique reference number: 673/3364
Headteacher: Mrs G Hallett
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Dilys Williams, NS Registration Number 511.

School context

St Andrews Major Primary School is situated in a semi-rural location on the outskirts of Dinas Powys, just outside the village of St Andrews. It serves the parish of St Andrews Major with Michaelston Le Pit, which includes a community of three churches: St Andrew's, St Peter's and St Michael's.

Its 235 pupils span the age range 4-11, with 126 boys and 109 girls. They are 98% while British. 7 pupils (3%) receive free school meals (national average is 20%) and 17 pupils (8%) require special needs (national average 25%). Very few pupils are first-language Welsh. The school has a morning and an afternoon Nursery, and one class for each Year Group from Reception to Year 6.

Established strengths

The strengths of the school are:

- the nurture and support given to all pupils, reinforcing a Christian ethos lived out daily in the school
- the vision, commitment and drive of the headteacher and her senior leadership team to create a Christian learning environment where pupils can develop personally and academically
- the impact which the school's chosen Christian values have on learning, behaviour and relationships
- its strong links with the priest and local church
- the strong and dedicated support from governors

Focus for development

The school has six areas in which to focus development:

- refresh the faith garden as an area for reflection and prayer to foster pupils' spirituality
- create more visible Christian displays and artefacts at the approach to the school entrance so that visitors know they are entering a Christian learning environment
- ensure the RE Scheme of Work includes more detailed coverage of other faiths to increase pupil knowledge and understanding of world religions
- involve the local priest more actively in worship and RE in KS2 to ensure older pupils are challenged and stimulated in their learning
- improve pupils' appreciation of the Christian heritage of Wales
- develop more consistency in teaching, learning, assessment and moderation to ensure pupils of all abilities are challenged.

Prospects for Improvement

The overall judgement of the school is GOOD. The school has excellent prospects for improvement.

KQ1. The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is GOOD at meeting the needs of all learners.

Pupils at St Andrew's Major school grow up in a very caring and supportive Christian environment. The Christian ethos is reflected in the way pupils are stimulated and challenged by the rich and varied learning opportunities on offer within the curriculum. The high expectations now set in most classrooms are beginning to have a positive impact on pupil achievement and behaviour. The school's nurturing and inclusive Christian character reflects the school's Christian values in action in the daily life of the school. Pupils feel they are valued, respected and listened to.

Inside the school building, the colourful displays and art work help to create a welcoming and distinctive impression of the school as a vibrant Christian community.

Parents' appreciate the work being done by the school to nurture and support their children. They affirm that they "are all extremely aware of the ethos and Christian influence of the school in developing the individual faith of our children". They say their children are happy to come to school and enjoy the exciting activities that are planned for them. A parent said "the school has an excellent relationship with both parents and the church. I am very happy with my children's education".

The governing body are positive in their encouraging but challenging support of the school. They believe its Christian character influences the way the pupils behave and show respect. They share the headteacher's vision for the school and are keen to assist her and the staff in moving the school forward.

Links with the local priest and the parish have quickly grown into a strength of the school. This relationship is starting to have a real impact on the life and work of the school. Through their regular visits, clergy support and promote the pupils' spiritual development and well-being.

Pupils have some understanding of the importance of their Welsh heritage and its role in promoting the growth of the Church in Wales, but further work needs to be done to develop their knowledge.

Pupils are currently updating the school's vision statement. The headteacher is excited about this project, feeling it will shape the thinking and vision of the school in the future.

Christian service is developed through the range of charitable projects undertaken. Pupils talked with enthusiasm about their involvement, especially about their growing awareness of living in an unjust world where so many people have less than them.

KQ2. The impact of collective worship on the school community is GOOD.

Collective Worship (CW) is central to the ethos of the school. Pupils demonstrate knowledge of a range of biblical material and a good understanding of how Bible stories link closely with the school's Christian values. CW makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development and pupils readily talk about and understand that Christian worship is central to the life and work of the school.

Pupils are actively involved in planning and participating in CW, which they take pleasure in and would appreciate doing more. Year 6 pupils reported their enjoyment at each being asked to look after a Reception pupil during CW on a Tuesday and a Friday morning; this emphasised the caring family-feel of the school.

Pupils articulate their thoughts, feelings and beliefs in a mature way, linking the values to CW and Religious Education lessons. One pupil was keen to share what he had heard in CW about the current Christian value and what he was being asked to do in Religious Education (RE). He showed clearly his understanding of its relevance to his daily life.

Pupils' confidence about attending church is enriched by being involved in planning and leading acts of worship and taking part in the Eucharist in the two local churches. They are comfortable and familiar with the customs and traditions of the Church in Wales.

The inspector observed three acts of worship. All three were good with aspects of excellence very much in evidence in all three. Pupils were exceptionally attentive, involved in spontaneous prayer and sang with enthusiasm. All three leaders had a lovely rapport with the pupils, using their own personal styles of interaction. In one act of worship the reflection was well focused and supported pupils in their quiet time.

Pupils write their own prayers and some are happy to pray spontaneously as they put out the candle at the end of worship.

The local priest meets regularly with the headteacher to discuss and plan worship to ensure the school community receives a rich and varied regime and style.

Worship occasionally takes place in the faith garden, but the garden is in need of refurbishment to ensure it becomes a special place for prayer, reflection and worship.

Staff and pupils' attitudes to worship are mostly positive and the school performs above the Mean when compared with other schools in the Diocese and across Wales (Attitudes Surveys July 16th). However, there are discernible dips in the attitudes in Year 6. The priest should become more actively involved with Key Stage 2 worship to stimulate and challenge the older pupils.

KQ3. The effectiveness of Religious Education is GOOD.

Religious Education (RE) has a high profile in the curriculum and is treated as a core subject. The headteacher, who is the Curriculum Leader for RE, is improving the planning and delivery of the subject and is competently supported by two members of the senior leadership team. They are currently working on the Diocesan Scheme of Work to enhance its effectiveness in meeting the needs of all learners in their school.

Pupils enjoy RE lessons and are stimulated and challenged by a good range of activities which focus on increasing their knowledge and understanding of the subject. The local priest supports teaching and learning in RE and the headteacher plans to involve him even more in KS2 lessons to keep the older pupils motivated and engaged.

The inspector observed four lessons. They were all good with aspects of excellence in some. Teachers used very good questioning techniques which were imaginative and encouraged pupils (especially in KS2) to think at a deeper level. In one Foundation Phase classroom the Philosophy for Children initiative (P4C) inspired pupils to respond spontaneously with phrases like "God is always with you" and "your journey might be in your heart or in your soul". In each lesson, plenaries were taken seriously and gave pupils opportunities to reflect on their learning. It was clear that most pupils had made progress in their lesson.

Pupil progress is tracked using the Diocesan tracking system. This allows teachers to match learning to outcomes. Moderation of pupils' work takes place, and staff are given the opportunity to consider pupil attainment in RE compared to the other core subjects. Staff are seeing the benefits of doing this and the RE coordinator is working well to embed consistency and accuracy into school assessment procedures.

RE books are marked regularly. Comments often focus on improving literacy skills but in some books there is evidence of the focus being given to improving RE skills. Photographic evidence demonstrates the variety of experiences the pupils receive and supports the evidence of the different styles of teaching and learning activities which the staff give pupils.

KQ4. The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is GOOD.

The headteacher and her deputy are passionate in their vision to continually develop a school that values each child as an individual and gives the best learning opportunities within a distinctively Christian environment.

She ensures that Collective Worship, Religious Education and the Christian values of the school link seamlessly and consequently contribute to pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. As RE and CW coordinator, she provides strong leadership for her staff who work as a close team and contribute fully to all aspects of school life. Staff are given every opportunity to develop as leaders to enhance their career prospects.

The highly effective partnership between the school and the local church and church community ensures that the distinctiveness of the school as a Church school continues to evolve. The local priest is a welcome and regular visitor to the school. Pupils feel very comfortable in speaking and seeking advice from him. Pupils said, "we love his worship".

Governors take their role very seriously and actively reinforce the Christian values and ethos of the school through regular contact and involvement in a number of sub-committees such as the values sub-committee. They feel that pupils are nurtured, cared for and encouraged to achieve their full potential. Relationships between individual governors, the priest and the headteacher are developing positively.

Parents are very aware of the ethos and Christian influence of the school. One parent commented “the Christian values are a strength of the school: they are woven through all the academic curriculum, not just an add-on in collective worship. The values permeate everything”. Parents like the open door approach which they feel comes from all members of staff.

The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	YES
The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education	YES