



Gwella Inspection of a Church in Wales School

Gwenfo Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Primary School

Old Port Road, Wenvoe, Vale of Glamorgan CF71 7SZ

Diocese:	Llandaff
Local authority:	Vale of Glamorgan
Dates of inspection:	3-4 July 2017
Date of last inspection:	April 2010
School's unique reference number:	6733057
Acting Headteacher:	Miss N Starke
Inspector's name and number:	Mrs Dilys Williams, NS Registration Number 511.

School context

Gwenfo Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled Primary School is in the heart of Wenvoe village and serves the parishes of Wenvoe and St Lythans. Most pupils live in Wenvoe or nearby on the outskirts of Cardiff and Barry. It has 218 pupils on roll, of which 7.5% are eligible for free school meals, 9% are on the SEN register, with 1 pupil statemented.

The school has a Nursery, Reception class and separate classes for Years 1 to 6. It has an Acting Headteacher and two Acting Assistant Headteachers, five other full-time and two part-time teachers, 10 Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), Admin/Finance officer, caretaker and four lunchtime supervisors.

Established strengths

The strengths of the school are:

- the strong links between the school, church and local community
- the Christian leadership of the Acting Headteacher and her two experienced Acting Assistant Headteachers
- its committed staff, who constantly encourage all pupils to do the best they can
- the leadership and delivery of a variety of styles of worship
- the pupils' communication skills, showing maturity and thoughtfulness
- class worship, which is carried out weekly and is always led by pupils.

Focus for development

The school has four areas in which to focus development:

- develop the Peace Garden into an even more special reflection area which includes a focus on other world faiths
- encourage all parents to reinforce the school's Christian values at home using the sheets displayed on the school's website
- ensure progression in the pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths, Christianity and their relevance to our lives in the present day
- involve the vicar in the work being done by the Religious Education (RE) coordinator to redesign the RE Scheme of Work to ensure it meets the needs of the pupils

Prospects for Improvement

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

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

As visitors walk through the entrance to the school, they know they are entering a Church in Wales school. One feels the warm, welcoming Christian ethos which is encapsulated in the school's mission statement, "Growing and Learning together in a Christian Way". On every wall of the building, colourful Christian displays are thoughtfully presented and include Bible quotes which reinforce the Gospel message. The central reflection area has a table and writing materials to encourage pupils to write their prayers and reflections. Throughout each day of the inspection, the inspector observed many pupils pausing at the table to write their spontaneous prayers.

The school's distinctive Christian values are explicit and embedded in its daily life. The values are clearly visible in and around the school and pupils talk with understanding about the importance they play in their lives. The school prayer "*Dear Lord Jesus, as we begin a new school day help us to grow and learn in a Christian Way*" reinforces the positive and happy learning environment created by all staff in their respective classrooms. Pupils care for each other, are happy at school and feel supported and cared for by their teachers. The Chair of the Governing Body said, "the school is a happy Christian environment which is conducive to learning. Pupils want to achieve". As a result of the positive learning environment, standards of pupil achievement are high in all subjects and Religious Education is treated as a core subject.

Pupils' behaviour is of the highest standard and relationships between all members of this close Christian school family are excellent. All teaching and non-teaching staff members are exceptional role models for pupils, and consistently attribute this to distinctive the Christian character and values of the school.

The school has excellent links with the vicar and the local church community. The vicar is a regular visitor to the school and pupils recognise the role of the Anglican church in their local community and are aware of its Welsh Heritage through visits to the local church and question time with the vicar. They learn and understand that Christianity is a world faith.

Parents feel that the pupils work well with each other, are kind and treat others equally. They think standards are high in the school as pupils are "not afraid of failing because they are always encouraged. It makes a massive difference as it is a Christian school", one parent commented. They say that their children talk about the Christian values at home. However, parents could be encouraged to use the Christian values sheets, which are placed on the school's website each half term, at home with their children. This would help to reinforce the importance the school places on the relevance of the values in their daily life.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils is given high priority in the school. The school's Golden Rule, "Treat others as you would like to be treated" makes a big impact on the pupils. They are encouraged to think about others who have less than them, raising money for both local and international charities.

KQ2. The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is EXCELLENT.

Collective worship (CW) is extremely well-planned and led. It is firmly based on Bible teaching, Christian values and the Church's year. The CW coordinator liaises with staff, LSAs, pupils and local clergy to ensure worship is vibrant, interesting and rooted in the school's core Gospel values. Collective Worship makes a positive impact on the pupils. They take pleasure in the daily acts of worship, sing enthusiastically and are quiet and respectful at appropriate times.

The inspector observed five acts of worship. In the whole school worship led by the local vicar, pupils were animated, engaged, challenged and confident in their responses. The prayers had been written by pupils and the Acting Headteacher drew the worship to a close by reinforcing the Christian message. In the Foundation Phase worship, the leader was relaxed, carefully focused the pupils and had a lovely relationship with the pupils which meant that even the youngest pupils were happy to take part. Both these CW services were excellent.

The three class worship sessions observed were also outstanding. Class worship is a strength of the school. The pupils in Year 3 were a delight: they listened attentively to their peers who were leading the worship, sang with enthusiasm and talked about their own special places. One pupil prayed spontaneously

and everyone was quiet and respectful. The PowerPoint presentation had been thoughtfully and creatively produced and pupils were excited about when it would be their turn to lead.

In the Year 4 worship, their loud, animated singing contrasted movingly with their quiet, reverent singing. The prayers led by three pupils were delightful. The pupil worship leaders were enthusiastic and the bible passages were beautifully read. Pupil-teacher relationships were excellent.

The Year 6 worship demonstrated the journey the pupils had made in their leadership of class worship from the start of KS2. The style of leadership was sophisticated, the class supported their peers by answering questions and behaving with maturity. At the end of the worship, the teacher worked with the class to write their evaluation of the worship and again pupils wanted to know when it would be their turn to lead.

Prayer is an integral feature of the school day. Pupils know and use traditional prayers such as the Lord's Prayer, but also write their own prayers in class at various times and in their Religious Education lessons. Pupils are confident in praying during CW using their own and the traditional church prayers. In the attitudes survey carried out by the school, 95% felt prayer was important at Gwenfo school.

Links with the local church are strong and Holy Eucharist is held in the school once a term. Pupils are comfortable in attending the church both for worship and for lessons in RE. Each week the vicar leads confirmation classes for pupils in Year 5 and 6. This year there are twelve pupils who attend these classes.

Parents and governors are invited to attend worship whenever possible, but especially for Holy Eucharist, Remembrance services, Christingle, Celebration worship and class worship.

KQ3. The effectiveness of Religious Education is GOOD.

By the time pupils leave the school, they have made very good progress in RE. They are effectively tracked using the Diocesan tracking system in the Foundation Phase and using INCERTS (the whole school tracking system) at Key Stage 2. A very high percentage of pupils choose to attend faith schools for their secondary schooling, which makes tracking pupil progress in RE even more important. There are strong links with the local secondary schools, enhanced by faith cluster moderation: this collaboration has had a positive effect on teaching and learning at Gwenfo.

The inspector observed five lessons - all were good with many elements of excellence. Pupils were engaged, challenged and obviously enjoyed their work in RE. Relationships between teachers, LSAs and pupils were excellent. Teachers used a variety of imaginative activities to capture the pupils' attention, instructions were clearly given and pupils responded with confidence. From Nursery to Year 6, teacher questioning techniques were very good and age appropriate. In Year 6, the progress pupils had made on their journey through the school was clearly observable. Pupils were knowledgeable and spoke with maturity which allowed the teacher to become the facilitator of the discussion work going on in the lesson.

RE has a high profile in the school and makes a big contribution to the Christian values of the school. Where possible, the values are linked to the work being done in the classroom and to collective worship. This reinforcement means pupils successfully link the current Christian values to the Gospel message.

The RE coordinator leads and manages the subject effectively, and supports the teaching and learning that takes place. She ensures the Diocesan Scheme of Work is covered in detail and adapts it to avoid too much repetition. The "other faith" section of the scheme needs to be developed to ensure progression when similar aspects are taught in different Year groups.

As the RE coordinator continues to enhance the Scheme of Work to meet the needs of pupils at Gwenfo school, it would be beneficial if she worked closely with the vicar to draw on his expertise.

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

The Acting Headteacher has a clear Christian vision for the school and a quiet strength of purpose. She leads by example, is clearly visible around the school and gives freely of her time to attend parish events. The local vicar said, "she always has time for the children, she is the person who stills the storm. The school

has always been good, but she has built on the existing strong foundations". In her short period of office so far, she has significantly increased the intake of the Nursery, introduced Pupil Voice groups across KS2, brought in PASS to enable closer monitoring of well-being and widened tracking meetings to include well-being, organised "Place2Be" training, improved communication with parents including the use of social media to celebrate achievements, and strengthened relationships within the Faith cluster. Consistent and collaborative leadership is very apparent in everything that goes on in the school. The vicar went on to say, "the Acting Headteacher supports and encourages all her staff, she has a super relationship with everyone from the caretaker to the youngest pupil in the Nursery". The Governing Body works with, challenges and supports the Acting Headteacher and believe she has effectively moved the school forward since she took up her post.

The senior leadership team live out and promote a strong Christian vision for the school, well supported by a dedicated team of teachers and Learning Support Assistants. Staff know their pupils and demonstrate their Christian faith daily in the way they support and care for them. One parent said, "Gwenfo Primary school upholds all Christian values. My children have grown into caring and considerate individuals due to the school".

The school has a well-established culture of self-evaluation. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and the detailed School Improvement Plan clearly identifies priorities for improved standards. The school's Prospectus is explicitly Christian. Anyone reading the booklet receives the message, "at Gwenfo we place Gospel values at the heart of our teaching and develop the whole child". The school's prayer is given a clear focus on the school's website.

Parents say the school has an open-door policy and is an inclusive community. They are invited to attend school worship especially when their children are involved. One parent commented, "Gwenfo is a fantastic school. Both my children attend and they could not be happier".

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