



## Gwella Inspection of Church in Wales Schools Report

### St Brides Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Primary School

Heol yr Ysgol, St Brides Major, nr Bridgend, CF32 0TB

Diocese: Llandaff  
Local authority: Vale of Glamorgan  
Dates of inspection: 15,16 June 2015  
Date of last inspection: March 2010  
School's unique reference number: 673/3320  
Headteacher: Mr Duncan Mottram  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Dilys Williams, NS Registration Number 511.

#### School context

St Brides Major Primary School serves the parish of Ewenny with St Brides Major. The school is situated in the heart of the village. Most of the pupils attending the school live in St Brides Major or in the nearby villages of Ogmere, Southerndown, Ewenny and Comtown. The school was built on its present site in the 1970s; additional classrooms and facilities were added later in a separate block. The infants and junior sections have separate playgrounds. The school gardens include a wild-life garden, Easter garden and multi-faith section.

The school has a one form entry. There are 191 pupils in the school. The school has 7 teachers, 1 PPA teacher and 10 LSAs/Pupil Support.

#### Established strengths

The strengths of the school are:

- the spiritual development of both pupils and staff helps to shape and develop the school's Christian character
- the strength of relationships between the local priest, church community and governors which significantly adds to the Christian ethos of the school
- pupils' exceptional attitude to all aspects of worship: their enthusiastic singing, excellent behaviour and respect for the distinctive features of worship
- the nurture and support given by all adult members of the school community to the pupils in their care
- the commitment of the pupils involved in the worship & values group.

#### Focus for development

The school has four areas in which to focus development:

- resource and equip all staff so that high quality Religious Education (RE) can be delivered in each class
- develop the role of the RE curriculum leader so that all staff can contribute fully to the merging schemes of work and make them bespoke to the school
- improve strategies to make effective use of the Diocesan tracking system to embed consistent assessment of pupil progress
- continue to develop self-evaluation procedures and build on the good collaborative practice already in place, so that the development of the school's Christian character links clearly to school development targets.

#### Prospects for Improvement

The overall judgement of the school is GOOD to 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.**

Under a strong and dedicated leadership team, the Christian values of kindness, friendship, compassion, honesty and love are not only written in the school's prospectus but are visibly lived out in the daily life of the school. These values make an important contribution to the progress pupils make. One parent commented 'all children are encouraged to reach their potential within a framework of care, consideration and respect for each other and the adults who support them'. Based on national data and the school's analysis, pupil achievement is in line with or above their school group, local authority and all Wales.

Attendance is consistently above the Wales average and is a significant feature of the strength of the school. Parents confirmed that their children enjoy going to school.

Colourful and engaging displays in the school entrance hall, main hall and every classroom promote the Christian character of the school. Pupils appreciate that they are growing up in a very special place and talk eagerly about how every pupil in the school helped to create the mosaic depicting the seasons of the church. The individuality of the spirituality areas found in every classroom is delightful. They are used for prayer and reflection, and are changed each half term to reinforce the chosen Christian value. Pupils spoke very positively about their different uses.

The teaching and learning support staff are committed to ensuring the Christian character of the school permeates everything that they do. Parents and pupils all feel they are listened to and that 'staff go above and beyond to support all children in their care'.

The school is strengthened in its drive to give pupils high quality experiences by the care and guidance offered by the local priest. He is a regular and welcome visitor to the school and makes a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all members of the school community.

Pupils are actively involved in fund raising projects and support local, national and international appeals. They are able to articulate the importance of caring for each other and are sensitive to the needs of others who are not as fortunate as themselves.

The school fosters positive relationships based on its Christian values. Pupils are taught to forgive and trust each other and they convey a clear understanding that the school rules are linked to the teachings of Jesus.

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

Collective worship (CW) is central to the life of the school, takes place each day, is distinctively Christian, always contains the key elements of worship, and is valued by pupils. The headteacher firmly believes that worship 'is at the heart of the school'.

Pupils particularly enjoy whole school worship and especially when it is at the start of the school day because 'the prayers prepare us for the day and the Bible stories help us to think about Jesus'. Older pupils understand how CW can help them to develop a personal spirituality. One Year 6 pupil wrote 'we think that the Holy Spirit is something which isn't visible but it goes through people's hearts which makes them believe in Jesus and God'.

The whole school Eucharist service which took place in the local church was inspirational. Pupils were respectful and silent during the formal aspects of the service, sang with passion, their faces animated and happy. There was a very close relationship between the priest and the pupils. They responded to his questions with confidence and maturity. The prayers, led by a group of Year 3 pupils, were thoughtful and made an impact on everyone who was present. Members of the local church community said they found the monthly Eucharist with the school a very uplifting experience.

A whole school worship led by the Worship and Values group was well prepared. Effective links to the Christian value and a Bible reading enhanced the Christian message which was reinforced by use of role play. The worship was further enriched by high-quality singing performed by both staff and pupils.

In both acts of worship pupils were engaged, showed reverence, respect and empathy with each other in their journey of faith.

The Worship and Values group are very involved with all aspects of worship. They help to plan, choose the hymns in both English and Welsh and enjoy taking part whenever possible. An effective system for pupil evaluation of worship is in place and taken seriously. Pupils believe they are listened to and their suggestions for improvement will be acted upon.

The headteacher and local priest hold regular meetings to ensure there is a varied rota of contributors, including regular input from the priest, staff, pupils and outside speakers. The content of worship is rich and varied, ensuring pupils receive a balanced programme that includes coverage of the liturgical calendar, the Values for Life initiative and other faiths.

### **KQ3. The effectiveness of Religious Education (RE) is GOOD.**

The Diocesan tracking system for Religious Education (RE) is in place and staff are becoming familiar with using the data to evaluate pupil progress. The RE coordinator monitors the results to ensure pupil attainment is in line with the other core subjects. The inspector's examination of portfolios of evidence, scrutiny of pupils' books and discussions with pupils all indicate that pupils enjoy a wide and varied RE curriculum. Pupils are challenged by some very imaginative learning activities which are helping them to become independent learners. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of many of the key aspects of Christianity, the Bible and other world faiths. They are able to make links with the Christian values which have been adopted by the school.

Lessons are well planned using the Diocesan scheme of work but more needs to be done to make the scheme of work bespoke to St Brides. As the RE coordinator settles into her role, staff and pupil evaluations of their current practice should help her with future planning. This will ensure a more consistent approach to marking, use of learning objectives and how they can be linked to success criteria.

Teaching in the Foundation phase and KS2 is good with elements of excellence observed in the Foundation Phase. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and the active involvement of learning support assistants enhances pupil learning in a positive way. In the future the school should involve all classroom teachers in the teaching of RE .. this would be beneficial for teacher/pupil Christian relationships.

The local priest supports RE lessons when needed and is actively involved in curriculum meetings with the headteacher to ensure the curriculum is informed by distinctive Christian values.

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

The headteacher and his leadership team are clear in their Christian vision for the school. In the short time that he has been in the school, the headteacher has moved the school forward. Under his strategic style of leadership, staff have become very clear about their roles and responsibilities. He has seen where improvements need to be done and is putting the necessary changes in place.

The staff work well as a team and show a personal commitment to each other and the pupils in their care. Parents feel they can approach anyone at the school about anything and they like the school's open door policy. Teachers care about the children and not only about their education.

The Governing Body are fully informed about what goes on at the school. They support and actively challenge the headteacher and his leadership team in their pursuit of continually raising standards. Governors assess the school's progress, expecting value for money. Their rigorous support for the school to become excellent has meant that they have been given The Governors Wales Bronze Award.

The headteacher and the local priest meet regularly to ensure that all aspects of school life have clear Christian benefits for pupils. The priest supports the leaders of CW and RE to ensure the Christian ethos of the school contributes to pupils' good behaviour, attitudes and achievement.

All members of the school community are involved in the self-evaluation process and the priorities which emerged have been carefully linked to the school's improvement planning.

<b>The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education</b>	<b>YES</b>