



YR EGLWYS
YNG NGHYMURU



THE CHURCH
IN WALES

Gwella Inspection of Church in Wales Schools Report

Llangattock Voluntary Aided Church in Wales Primary School

Ysgol yr Eglwys yng Nghymru Llangatwg

Llangattock
Crickhowell
Powys
NP8 1PH

Diocese: Swansea and Brecon

Local authority: Powys
Dates of inspection: 23rd-24th February 2015
Date of last inspection: June-July 2009
School's unique reference number: 666-3048
Headteacher: Mrs. Hayley Smith
Inspector's name and number: Mark Lawson-Jones 370

School context

There has been a Church school in the village of Llangattock for 147 years. The school has occupied the current site since 1977, when it was moved from a building near St Catwg's church.

Children who attend the school are mostly drawn from the local village, with some travelling from Crickhowell, Gilwern, Govilon and Abergavenny. When they leave Llangattock Church in Wales school, almost all children will attend Crickhowell High School. The children are organised into classes of mixed ability over two year groups.

Following a positive Section 50 inspection in June 2009 the school was changed from a Voluntary Controlled (VC) to a Voluntary Aided (VA) school, bringing it into a closer relationship with the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon. This has brought benefits to its Christian character, ethos, vision and relationships. Children gain from this caring, outward looking community in which they flourish by applying Christian values to everyday situations and offering their experiences to God in worship together.

Established strengths

- The strong links between the church, the school and the wider community contribute to the pupils' understanding of partnership and Christian community.
- Interpersonal relationships are excellent between the staff and the children, promoting good teaching and learning, and a sense of shared vision.
- Attention to multicultural and multi-faith understanding is producing very good results. Children leave the school able to contribute as global citizens, understanding diversity.
- Strong and informed leadership flows from the Head Teacher through her strong Christian ethos
- Collective worship is outstanding in intent, delivery and impact.

Focus for development

- More rigorous planning is required in religious education (RE) to ensure the *values framework* is included in the teaching of RE.
- The RE Coordinator should create a PLC to benefit Llangattock and other church schools in the area.
- Involve the learners in improving the reflective areas in classrooms. Channel the strong pupil voice in the school effectively to support their teachers in this initiative.
- Ensure RE displays in classrooms are developed to as high a standard as they are in the open areas in and around the school.

Progress since last inspection

Since the last Section 50 inspection, undertaken in June 2009, the school has built on the established strengths, and addressed the recommendations made. The inclusion of collective worship into the school improvement plan has produced positive results, and the attention given to the importance of collective worship as something which binds together the school community has been excellent.

Prospects for Improvement

The school has **good** prospects for improvement.

KQ1: How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

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

Llangattock VA Church in Wales school is a warm and welcoming primary school where distinctive Christian values are clearly expressed.

The recent move of status to Voluntary Aided status from Voluntary Controlled, following the previous Section 50 report, is widely regarded as positive by parents, staff and children alike.

The School's Christian character enhances the achievements of learners by the presence of a positive learning atmosphere. Children feel able to express their opinions, and have a great degree of self-confidence. The focus on self-esteem and social wellbeing, and the proactive approach to social group mapping, underlines the value the school places on all children.

A large painting of the local church celebrates the link between school and church. A Church and Community links board and the abundance of Christian symbols throughout the school, provide good evidence of the distinctive Christian character of the school. The displays and the reflective areas suffer somewhat from a lack of space, but a more innovative approach is being considered.

The school's motto *Goleu o'r Ffordd – Lighting the Way*, is well understood by children, they can explain how the whole school were involved in choosing it. When questioned, the children could talk freely about the importance of being in a Christian environment, and how the atmosphere in the school has made a real difference to what they think about fairness, justice, courage and peace. Children spoke optimistically about the relatively newly adopted *values* approach to collective worship and the teaching of RE. In conversation, children in groups and individually talked about how *God* created us all equal, and with little prompting went on to explain their understanding of diversity in terms of disability, ethnicity, gender and religion. Children also readily linked their *values* and the school ethos to the newly designed school badge.

A whole-school discussion on the question '*Should school be banned?*' led to some interesting and thoughtful comments about the value of education, and how in Wales we are blessed with free schools. The sense that school, and education is a gift that helps us be the people God wants us to

be, was commonplace.

The locally supported links with an orphanage in Sri Lanka are well understood by the children as bringing the reality of the socio-economic challenges other children face to the attention of the school as a whole, whilst making a difference to those who have less. The challenge to provide a good home, education and medical care for the children in Sri Lanka is seen as part of the Christian duty of the children and the school community in Llangattock.

This good ethical underpinning of positive action is also found in the innovative approach to addressing the concerns of individual children. The children are encouraged to write anonymously a note with issues or concerns, place it in the *St. David's box*, and wait for a reply in the school newspaper. This approach ensures anonymity and a response that can be heard by the whole school. By doing this they are showing their trust that prayers are heard and support will be forthcoming in a Christian community.

The *St. David's box*, the locally supported links, the responses of the children to questioning and many of the established visual displays are good evidence of the strong Christian character of the school.

The well-attended parents' meeting was positive. Parents praised the work of the children, teaching staff and head teacher in securing a *green* banding for the school. They also commented on the sound interpersonal relationships between staff and children, leading to good behaviour, and how the children were being turned into well-rounded individuals. On the subject of meeting the individual needs of the children, the parents praised the good differentiation of work, the support and guidance children of all abilities, and how diversity is celebrated and applauded in the school.

The Christian faith is understood as an excellent foundation for life. Parents see good behaviour, the admirable relationships and the links between the school, church and community as all flowing from the Christian values demonstrated by staff.

The school is visited by local ministers and clergy to ensure Christian links are developed. The school visits the church regularly for special services and the parish priest uses '*open the book*' for teaching the faith.

KQ2: What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

The impact of collective worship on the school community is excellent.

The collective worship witnessed by the inspector was excellent. One was an exciting and vibrant celebration of a shared purpose and togetherness in Christ. The scope was broad, and there was a degree of risk-taking that really enabled the children to engage with the worship and provide evidence of the good relationships that exist.

After the time to focus and say a prayer, with suitable liturgy and music, the teaching was delivered by two year six children, who presented the Value 'courage'. The themes of religious tolerance, Islamic tradition and practice, gender equality and bravery were all explored, with children asking probing questions of the children presenting the talk.

An exploration of when children had showed courage, speaking to each other, then offering responses to the whole school, was managed excellently, even to the extent of making an offer to bring those difficult issues to staff confidentially. This was followed by a quiet time in prayer, offering times and situations to God. The act of collective worship ended with the Head Teacher offering the day, and indeed the inspection week, to God that all may give the best account of their work; teaching and learning. Pastoral and interpersonal links were extraordinary and more than a little moving, as this whole school family offered their best to God, through Jesus Christ; their successes, challenges, their times of courage and their times of concern.

The Head Teacher clearly ministered to the staff and children alike with her pastoral concern, words of prayer and support for the inspection week ahead. Bringing other faiths into focus, the children leading, the open questioning, the time for meaningful reflection and the promise of confidentiality to hear concerns outside the worship, were all excellent.

Other acts of collective worship in smaller groupings were similarly vibrant, with the solid foundation of the whole school understanding of a faith lived out.

Collective worship in this school is clearly changing the lives of children and staff.

The use of the Welsh language in collective worship was above expectation, as was the use of incidental Welsh throughout the school.

Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is in place, and can be further developed to ensure consistency.

Parents, governors, staff, the parish priest and local minister take part in collective worship in the school from time to time.

KQ3: How effective is the religious education?

*The effectiveness of religious education is **good***

Llangattock Church in Wales VA primary school follows Church in Wales syllabus for the teaching of religious education, and has done so since 2010. A timetable for improved self-evaluation of RE has been put in place, where results are collated and reported to the Governing Body.

Lesson observation showed that teachers have a good up-to-date knowledge and have high expectations of the pupils. Skillful questioning allowed children to bring out the human story of faith from history.

The inspector observed a lesson on the teachings of Jesus, investigating the main events surrounding the beginning of his public ministry. This solid and well-paced lesson was engaging and used support staff effectively when small groups broke out to perform tasks and investigate the subject.

The second lesson observed considered the teaching of the Christian heritage of Wales, and the importance of religious freedom. Excellent use of multimedia resources was supported by a good narrative style. Prayers produced in the lesson were very good, global in focus, and demonstrated a clear understanding of the topic and direction of the lesson.

All lessons observed were well planned and well delivered

Circle time, where the children listened to a story and thought about feelings, attaching colours to their emotions, was exceptional.

In Llangattock, the attention to detail to a multi-faith approach and the investigation of cultural diversity is very good, and was observed not only in collective worship but also in lessons.

Book scrutiny returned some excellent examples of work from children of all abilities, and there was evidence of good differentiation. The work covered not only Christianity, but also other faiths.

There was evidence of a high standard of literacy in RE with some books showing some evidence of children achieving a level 6 through their writing standard and depth of reflection.

Children's work is marked on a regular basis and they are provided with both written and verbal

feedback. What their goals are, and what needs to be done to achieve them, is made clear. Parents reported useful and informative reports, and were pleased with the school's open door policy to discuss progress with teachers.

All teaching is at least good, with no important shortcomings. To build on existing good work, the school should improve RE Assessment, embed-self-evaluation more effectively and increase opportunities for children to experience at first-hand mosques, temples and synagogues.

KQ4: How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

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

The Head Teacher has a pivotal role in driving the ethos of the school and holding in balance its concerns, hopes and aspirations. She does this with skill and wisdom. She has a strong and effective pastoral leadership, seen notably in whole school collective worship, in her attention to detail in communication and relationships with stakeholders and in her Christian beliefs. The Head Teacher clearly ministers to the staff and children alike with her pastoral concern. The spiritual response of the Head Teacher to the life of the school, and the importance with which she holds the Christian ethos of the school is excellent. Under her leadership, many are encouraged to see the importance of a faith lived out.

The Chair of Governors has a clear understanding of the distinctive Christian nature of the school, and a well-informed grasp of the work of the school within the community. His understanding of standards and data, the vehicles for reporting, and the correct lines for decision-making were also clear. He described the relationship between the Head Teacher and Governing Body as one which creates a shared vision for the future of the school, by strong and effective leadership, good communication and a real sense that the focus on the whole child is what is needed to turn out well-rounded individuals with a good sense of right and wrong: children able to deal with moral and ethical concerns in a robust way, based on their understanding of the Christian faith.

Governors reported that meetings are open and informative, where they are given every opportunity to learn about how the school is performing, and to ask probing questions.

The importance of community cohesion is seen as paramount, as is the importance of working in a proactive way to promote the school as a focus for the celebration of all that is good about life in Llangattock.

The move to VA from VC status was very positive and has built on the success highlighted in the last Section 50 report. Ecumenical relationships with other local churches have produced a rounded approach to the delivery of the Christian message, and the increasingly affirming relationships with the Diocese and Cathedral are good.

Parents are positive about the school, as are staff, the local vicar and governors, who all see the school as on a productive journey of faith. Good things are happening in Llangattock VA Church in Wales primary school, under the strong leadership that flows from the Head Teacher. The school lives out and promotes a vision rooted in distinctively Christian values. Distributed leadership is evident, with staff being encouraged to develop their Christian leadership and investigate good practice in many areas.

The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	Y
The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education (where inspected)	Y