



## **St Asaph Diocese Statutory Section 50 Inspection**

Forden Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales School

Forden, Welshpool, Powys SY21 8NE

Date of Inspection: 02.12.2013

Date of last Inspection: October 2007

School's unique reference number: 666/3016

Headteacher: Mr S Newson

Inspector: Rev'd Pam Powell

### **School Context**

Forden school serves a dispersed rural community and has 87 pupils on roll. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and free school meals are below average. Attendance has been 95% for over 5 years. After a full time member of staff left in Aug 2013 Years 1 & 2 are taught by two part time supply teachers.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Forden Church in Wales school is “good”**

The ethos is distinctive and is effective as values evolve from worship and permeate throughout the school. Distinctiveness is also grounded through RE. Pupils make connections across the curriculum in KS2 and this is developing in KS1. This is evident on work on “dilemmas”, “caring” and “sharing”. The use of St Michael's Church as a resource has increased and deepened since the last inspection. The distinctiveness also makes a positive contribution towards learning and personal development.

### **Established strengths**

- The quality of relationships between all members of the school community
- The value put on daily acts of worship in the school and its extension throughout the curriculum.
- The passion and commitment of the staff in developing the school's Christian commitment

### **Focus for development**

- There is some recording of worship but there needs to be more evaluative comments to help future planning

- Ensure that pupils develop their language and thoughts to articulate opinions at a deeper level in Religious Education and in the wider curriculum.
- Ensure that Governors are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's Christian values on the personal development and learning of pupils.

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

The school is a small, caring school with a pastoral system that supports the learning. It has made good progress since the previous inspection in placing links with St Michael's Church more prominent as part of school life. Through use of the 'Values for Life' resource and extension materials, Collective Worship has a heightened awareness in the school and this is explicit in the vision of the school. Pupils are comfortable to express their views on matters of faith and belief. For example, when talking about Advent, pupils recognise the commercialism of Christmas and reflection encouraged them to think in terms of those who “have” and those who “have not”. Core data shows that in Personal and Social Development the school is amongst the top performing schools in the Family. The school is meeting the pupils' spiritual needs by encouraging them to think and basic philosophy (Habits of Mind and Philosophy for Children) is taught alongside other subjects. Pupils have positive attitudes about the school and the older pupils are confident that belonging to a church school will ground them at secondary school and beyond. Pupils also appreciate the care within the school shown by adults and reflected that this was replicated throughout the school and was also noticeable in the playground. Children feel safe at school and know who to talk to if they are worried or upset. Achievement is fostered and pupils record their achievements on the “proud board” which extend beyond the classroom. Signs, symbols and photographs promote the Christian character of the school. Good relationships have been nurtured with all staff including meal time staff. Pupils feel secure to question but remain disciplined. The sense of right and wrong is central in the life of the school.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school is “good”**

The headteacher leads most of the worship although other members of staff are willing and have the competencies to do this. The designated worship space is small but it is respected by pupils. They lead in quietly to music and a candle is lit at the start and blown out at the end. The time between is considered as special. Pupils interact well and respond at their own level. Cwricwlwm Cymreig is used to reinforce and question and pupils appear comfortable and familiar with this, including Early Years. Pupils sing well with enthusiasm, choose and perform relevant music and lead prayers confidently although there could be more use of Anglican liturgy and modern day translation of scripture. Teachers use the message from the Collective Worship to reflect upon in class. This short period of daily reflection after lunch helps pupils to understand the importance of periods of quiet in maintaining a healthy mind. 'Values for Life' provides extension activities from the theme. Pupils know the principle bible stories and can express how they help us to lead our lives. As a result of action from the previous inspection, the School Council focused on Collective Worship and collected and collated responses from pupils who considered not only organizational matters but also decisions on the theme, participation of pupils and use of music and poetry to enhance worship. Children enjoy

visits to church to worship and these occasions have increased, encouraging family and community members to join in.

The school meets the statutory requirements for Collective Worship.

### **The effectiveness of the Religious Education is good**

Pupils have respect for Christianity and other religions and learn about major festivals and symbolism. The curriculum (Powys and Church in Wales) has been carefully developed to give a balance between world religions and also to look at similarities, in particular, how different religions celebrate festivals. Multicultural days, for example, celebration of the Chinese New Year are ways in which diversity is celebrated. Visits to St Michael's Church enhance the work achieved in RE and pupils have practical experience of how the church celebrates festivals. Class 2 identified with the Advent wreath from St Michael's and could discuss its symbolism. Older pupils are encouraged to use bibles and were challenged to compare the Christmas story in the different gospels. Foundation Phase are aware of Advent and the importance of waiting for Christmas and the coming of baby Jesus. All the RE which was observed reflected aspects of the Collective Worship. Attitudes are positive and pupils are engaged to respond. Discussion and role play observed is lively. The RE leader has a good understanding of the curriculum, how it can be developed and how it can be better assessed. Quality of teaching was good and knowledge and faith were related.

The school meets the statutory requirements of Religious Education

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

The leadership of the school ensures that all pupils are secure in a well ordered, purposeful and harmonious learning environment. Pupils know the 'Golden Rule' and this is promoted as a way of everyone being happy in the school. The Governing Body provides vision, support and challenge to the Headteacher and school leadership although, minutes of meetings indicate that there could be more acknowledgement of church links and evaluation of worship. The trust and confidence that the leadership of the school generates in staff and pupils creates a learning community which is supportive, has high expectations and reflects Christian values in a climate of worship, achievement and celebration. The contribution made by the Headteacher to the effectiveness of Christian worship is appreciated. This is reflected positively in pupils' attitudes and views on worship. The Headteacher and staff are committed to, or supportive of, the distinctive Christian ethos of a Church school and provide an appropriate example to pupils and staff in their interpersonal relationships and conduct. Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their leadership qualities, for example, through the School Council. Communication is effective and supports teaching and learning, as evident in the current job share. Support is used effectively so that there is differentiation and a variety of tasks. Isolated incidents of inappropriate behaviour are curbed because of the coordinated team approach, which, as part of the Christian ethos form the school's Behaviour Policy. The school consistently articulates its vision through the promotion of Christian values in the Mission statement and prospectus. There is good communication with the Incumbent and members of the community to help promote this vision. Community members take roles on in school for example reading and

helping with sport. A parent commented that the school is made welcome at church and pupils are known by name. All the parents who completed questionnaires were all aware of the school's denominational characteristics and its valued place in the community. Dispersed leadership is developing and staff are keen to take responsibility for curricular areas. The school is small and therefore models family values and good pastoral support.