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THE CHURCH
IN WALES

Gwella Inspection of a Church in Wales School

Llantilo Pertholey Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Hillgrove Avenue, Mardy, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire NP7 6LZ

Diocese:	Monmouth
Local authority:	Monmouthshire
Dates of inspection:	23, 26-7 September 2016
Date of last inspection:	July 2009
School's unique reference number:	679/3004
Headteacher:	Mrs Joanne Bayton
Inspector's name and number:	Mrs Dilys Williams, NS Registration Number 511.

School context

Llantilo Pertholey Primary School, in the village of Mardy on the outskirts of Abergavenny, is in an area which is neither prosperous nor disadvantaged. Its 201 pupils span the age range 4-11. 12% of the pupils receive free school meals (national average 20%) and 18% require special needs (national average 25%). 5% are from ethnic minorities, two pupils have English as an Additional Language and two pupils are on the child protection register. No pupils are first-language Welsh. The school has a Reception Class and one class each for Years 1 to 6. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year, and the deputy headteacher is new in post this term. The school has 6 full-time teachers, 2 part-time teachers, 9 teaching assistants, 2 part-time administrative staff and a caretaker.

Established strengths

The strengths of the school are:

- its links with the local church and community, which support all aspects of the work of the school
- the work being done by the headteacher, the religious education/collective worship coordinator and the staff to embed Christian values into the daily life of the school
- the support of the Governing Body in reinforcing the school's aim to ensure its Christian character continues to develop
- the commitment of the local priest in preparing Year 6 pupils for confirmation, giving the pupils a deeper understanding of being part of a worshipping community
- the increasing influence of its Christian values on the pupils, both pastorally and academically
- the pupils' singing in collective worship, which is inspiring.

Focus for development

The school has seven areas in which to focus development:

- introduce a more detailed 'other faiths' section in the religious education Scheme of Work to enhance the pupils' understanding of faith
- increase pupil involvement in collective worship
- construct a comprehensive evaluation system for collective worship, including pupil feedback
- use more distinctively Christian displays and symbols around the school to promote the values of the Gospel
- give the 'values boards' in classrooms a higher profile in developing spiritual growth
- augment the values 'Reflective Diaries' with carefully prepared prompt sheets to help focus pupils' thoughts and responses
- collaborate with other Church schools, to reinforce the changes in hand and to assist the professional development of the headteacher and her deputy as Church in Wales school leaders.

Prospects for Improvement

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

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

In the last 18 months the headteacher has worked hard to increase the Christian character of the school. A new Christian vision statement (“In God we believe, together we achieve”) was formulated after discussions between all members of the school community, and the headteacher is sure it is now relevant to the school. The vision statement is displayed outside the school as a welcoming mosaic, and pupils are proud of their involvement in its building. They enjoyed taking part in writing the new school prayer and the design of a new Christian school logo. These changes are having a positive impact on the pupils’ understanding of what it means to be part of a Church in Wales school community. A member of staff affirmed “the identity of the school as a Christian place of education has been enhanced by the changes made over the last eighteen months”. These changes place the school in the GOOD category for this KQ, but they are a “work in progress” and could be consolidated by more distinctively Christian presentations and symbols displayed throughout the school building.

The school’s ‘Golden Rules’ run alongside the school’s chosen Christian values. They encourage pupils to think carefully about the different situations they have to deal with, and are positively influencing pupil behaviour and attendance. Staff and pupils have a good relationship: they value, respect and care for each other, and pupils are happy to speak to any member of staff knowing they will be listened to.

Links with the local church and community have been built up over the years. The present priest is building on those foundations by his involvement with the pupils at collective worship each week and his participation in a number of initiatives to enrich the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

The religious education (RE) coordinator is embracing his role as leader of the subject. His enthusiasm, support and commitment to pupils and staff are clear, and he is helping to develop understanding of the Christian faith through promoting a variety of teaching and learning opportunities. Lesson observations by the inspector confirmed that pupils are provided with a rich variety of experiences to encourage them to think deeply about God, the Bible and Christian values. The teaching of other faiths in more detail would enrich their understanding of all world faiths.

Parents are aware of the Christian character of the school. Some noted “collective worship, together with the songs learnt, give a distinctively Christian focus” and “the visible and regular presence of the priest adds to the growing Christian ethos of the school”.

School reports now enable staff to make a personal comment about each child’s progress in RE throughout the year, as though it were a core subject. This demonstrates the importance placed by the school on its promotion as a Christian learning community.

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

The place of collective worship (CW) is being more firmly embedded into the school day and this is having a direct and positive impact on the life of the school, earning the GOOD mark for this KQ.

The singing of all pupils and the piano accompaniment of the collective worship coordinator is inspiring. Pupils enjoy CW and give their reasons enthusiastically: “CW teaches what God does for us: that Jesus sacrificed himself for us and we love God because He cares for us”. A worship table now gives a focus for the pupils: their involvement in setting it up adds significance and reverence to the proceedings.

CW is developing the Christian vision of the school, and its links to the Christian values studied each half term heightens pupils’ knowledge and understanding of the Gospel message.

In the three CWs observed by the inspector, most pupils listened attentively and willingly participated when asked. The leaders referred to sections of the Bible and drew out the links to the current Christian value. In one, the pupils were asked to consider what had been said by discussing it with the person sitting next to them: they enjoyed this activity and produced some thoughtful responses which showed they knew and understood the Bible links.

The local priest takes CW once a week and pupils attend the local church at special times in the year. Pupils take pleasure in these services. During the summer term, Year 6 pupils attend a church Eucharist one morning each week and the priest runs confirmation classes at the school. Not all the pupils are then

confirmed but all of them are given a strong foundation on which to build their lives. The priest meets with the headteacher on a weekly basis and supports her in her efforts to develop CW.

Collective worships could be even more relevant to pupils if there were more opportunities for them to take part, to be involved in their planning and involved in their subsequent evaluation.

There is evidence of prayer writing in RE books and pupils willingly join in with the prayers in CW and at other times in the day. Some reflection time occurs, but pupils are not always given sufficient focus or time for personal prayer. More effective use could be made of the 'values boards' in classrooms, and the values 'Reflective Diaries' could be augmented by prompt sheets to encourage pupils' thoughts and responses.

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

Under the direction of the headteacher, the Christian vision of the school is well articulated, is clearly evident and has a priority in the school's Development Plan. She is managing sensitively the changes that are being put in place.

The newly-appointed deputy headteacher asserts that she has "joined a staff team where everyone is working together to promote the Christian character of the school and where everyone wants all pupils to achieve the best they can". She wholeheartedly supports the headteacher and is happy to join the caring team of classroom teachers and Learning Support Assistants.

Neither the headteacher nor her deputy was previously in Church in Wales schools. Their personal impact (whilst already earning a GOOD mark in this KQ) and their own professional development, could be reinforced by closer links with and exposure to other Church schools through meetings and collaborative work.

Governors have a clear understanding of the purpose of a Church school and they work enthusiastically to both support and challenge the headteacher and her senior leaders. The chair of governors has undertaken a self-assessment activity with fellow governors to help her reflect on where they are now and where they would like to be in their ongoing collaboration with the school.

Links with the local church and relationships with the church community are solid and based on mutual support.

The leadership of RE and CW is the responsibility of one member of staff. He is committed to improving and developing his role, and understands the importance of these two aspects of school life.

The headteacher and staff have ensured that the pupils have a voice through various school councils and that they know that their opinions are valued. The school is actively involved in local and international charities and the staff recognise the value of developing the pupils' sense of their place in a wider world. Links have been developed with a 'Love Zimbabwe' project and a 'March for Africa' which occurs annually in Abergavenny: the school choir has sung and marched at this event.

Parents are very supportive of the work of the school and are confident that their children are happy and nurtured in a Christian environment.

All members of the school community are keen on improving and promoting the school. The caretaker said "this school is coming on in leaps and bounds. I love it here!"

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