



Gwella Inspection of a Church in Wales School

Magor Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Primary School

Sycamore Terrace, Magor, NP26 3EG

Diocese:	Monmouth
Local authority:	Monmouthshire
Dates of inspection:	15 – 19 May 2017
Date of last inspection:	2010
School's unique reference number:	6793310
Headteacher:	Ms Angela Davies
Inspector's name and number:	Mrs Dilys Williams, NS Registration Number 511.

School context

Magor Voluntary Aided Primary School is in an area of mixed private and rented homes and a range of economic backgrounds. It is linked with St Mary's Church in the Magor Ministry Area.

The school has 354 pupils (180 boys, 174 girls) aged 5 to 11 years in 13 classes, of which three have mixed ages. It also has a nursery which has morning and afternoon provision. None of the pupils has Welsh as first language. 14 pupils are entitled to free school meals, and 50 (14%) have Additional Educational Needs. 5 pupils are from other ethnic groups.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprises the Headteacher, two assistant heads and a Foundation Phase leader. There are 11 full-time teachers in the main school and one in the nursery.

Established strengths

The strengths of the school are:

- the care, support and guidance given to pupils by staff
- the strong links the school has with the local church and clergy team
- pupils' communication skills and their ability to talk about their Christian involvement in the school
- a growing awareness of the need to take care of God's world, well led by a passionate Eco Committee
- the inclusive nature of the school whereby all children are treated equally

Focus for development

The school has five areas in which to focus development:

- produce a Religious Education (RE) Scheme of Work which will meet and challenge the needs of all pupils
- involve all pupils in evaluating and planning Collective Worship (CW) and continue to develop the WAVE group
- formulate a shared vision with the SLT, staff and governors and communicate it to all stakeholders
- ensure the reflective areas in classrooms and around the school are used consistently and effectively
- create an effective tracking system for RE which is in line with all other core subjects and which feeds and informs planning, monitoring and assessment

Prospects for Improvement

The overall judgement of the school is Adequate. The school has Adequate prospects for improvement.

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

The school has a caring and inclusive Christian ethos, built on strong Christian foundations which have developed over a long period of time. The school's Christian values are displayed in all classrooms and underpin teaching and learning in both Religious Education lessons and daily Collective Worship. Behaviour is good. Pupils are happy in school and relate well to each other. They are supported in a Christian environment where they are treated with respect and compassion. One pupil commented, "I like how everything is fair". A Year 6 pupil said, "I like the way everything is linked to God; I've been taught this way since I was in Nursery".

The school's vision and mission statements reinforce the Christian ethos of the school and there is much evidence to support the statement "the school aims to provide a happy, caring Christian environment". Pupils are happy at school and feel cared for.

Nearly all pupils make expected progress in all subjects in Foundation Phase and in Key Stage 2. However, lessons should be more carefully differentiated and the more able pupils consistently challenged.

The Christian character of the school contributes effectively to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Displays in the school entrance, in classrooms and around the building have been created by teachers, pupils and members of the local clergy team. They reinforce the Gospel message, help pupils to obtain a greater understanding of other faiths and how we must care for God's world and celebrate His creation. Most pupils use personal prayer and one pupil said, "if we feel sad we can pray to God". Pupils respond positively to the classroom reflective areas that were introduced by the headteacher and they are becoming confident in using them. Pupils feel these areas are "calming". In a number of classrooms the reflective areas are attractive, colourful and reinforced the current Christian value. However, they are not consistently used to enhance reflection and prayer. A number of pupils do not know about or how to use the communal reflection area in Key Stage 2.

There are close links between the school and the local church. Members of the ministry team are regular and visible visitors to the school. They lead collective worship on a weekly basis and offer pastoral support to staff, children and their families when needed. Pupils and parents are happy to approach any member of the clergy team.

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

Collective Worship has a high profile in the school and takes place daily. Pupils recognise the importance of worship, respond positively and are always willing to take part. Themes are relevant and the key elements of worship are followed. Pupils sing enthusiastically and behave well in all acts of worship. They particularly enjoy worship led by members of the clergy team and can talk about the links between the school's Christian values and the Bible stories they are taught. One pupil said, "I was worried about the National tests and worship helped me, worship helps to set you free". Another said, "we learn stories from the Bible which we like".

The inspector observed a number of acts of worship, both whole-school and class. All worship sessions were of a high quality, well led with warmth and charisma, and the relationships between leaders and pupils were very good. The message in all acts of worship reinforced the school's distinctively Christian character. Pupils responded thoughtfully to moments of quiet and wholeheartedly to the lively teaching sections.

The local clergy team ensure pupils understand Church in Wales traditions by holding termly school Eucharist services for children in Key Stage 2: twice a year in church and once a year in school. In addition on special celebrations in the Church year, parents and pupils are invited to attend worship at the local church. Pupils like going to church, "it helps us to connect to God" said one.

An enthusiastic group of Key Stage 2 pupils are beginning to make an impact on pupil involvement in CW. The group (named the Worship and Values Encouragement Team - WAVE) now lead worship on a weekly basis. They enjoy their leadership role and are working hard to develop the function of the group. If in the future acts of worship are more consistently evaluated by pupils, this would assist the CW coordinator and the WAVE group to develop even more exciting and effective worship.

There is some evidence of worship planning and delivery. This is done by the CW coordinator, supported by the Rector and the headteacher. However, a more detailed and consistent planning and monitoring structure should be developed to ensure a variety of styles of leadership and resources, so that worship continues to make a difference and be relevant to all pupils at the school.

KQ3. The effectiveness of Religious Education is ADEQUATE.

Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and are offered a wide range of learning opportunities to help them understand the Christian faith and the main practices and beliefs of the other faiths they study.

Most pupils make expected progress in RE and in the four lessons observed by the inspector, teaching was good. Pupils were engaged by stimulating and creative activities which had been thoughtfully prepared. Teacher-pupil relationships were very good and consequently most pupils' behaviour was good.

In some classes, pupils were encouraged to work independently and teachers had high expectations for what they expected pupils to achieve in their lesson. However, there were occasions when some pupils went off task when they were insufficiently challenged, or tasks went on too long.

Pupils communicated with each other and their teachers with enthusiasm and they made some mature and thoughtful responses in all year groups. In a Year 2 class, pupils were encouraged to write personal prayers which they obviously enjoyed and were happy to talk about.

The scrutiny of work books generally showed that teachers had taken time to prepare their lessons and follow the Diocesan Scheme of Work (SoW). There was also evidence of teachers creating imaginative activities to suit the requirements of their classes. The RE coordinators must aim to capture these fresh ideas and include them in a bespoke SoW, which should be written to both challenge and motivate pupils of all abilities in the school.

More effective strategies to monitor RE should be put in place, to ensure that all teachers adopt a consistent approach to assessment and marking. A more up-to-date portfolio of moderated evidence should be created under the leadership of the subject coordinators, to ensure all teachers understand and are able to level pupils work proficiently. An improvement in these areas would help to give all teachers a greater understanding of RE's standing as a core subject, and make certain that tracking pupil progress occurs regularly and effectively.

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

The headteacher is able to articulate an explicit Christian vision for the school. She is a caring and deeply Christian person, but her vision has not been shared with all stakeholders and therefore is having limited impact on the daily life of the school. She must formulate a shared vision with her SLT, staff and governors and communicate this vision to everyone involved in the daily life of the school. The school can then move forward as a united, Christian, learning community.

The Senior Leadership Team is very aware of the distinctively Christian values of the school and is anxious to work collaboratively with the headteacher to ensure that strategies for improvement are developed. They are not at present established in their roles, but their individual strengths, if channelled correctly, will greatly enhance the Christian leadership of the school.

Members of the Magor ministry team effectively support the Christian work of the school and the Rector is regularly available to encourage the headteacher and her staff. The clergy have played an active role in planning and leading worship on a weekly basis.

In September 2016, the Governing Body was restructured, with governors given different areas of responsibility. As yet this is not sufficiently established and it is difficult to make further comment on the impact the changes are making.

The Section 50 Self Evaluation Report does not provide a detailed picture of the school and gives very little evidence of the impact on learners. The School Development Plan has RE as one of its targets, but timescales for completion have not been met.

Most parents are happy with the Christian ethos of the school and, in general, their comments were supportive of the work of the school. They were pleased with the teaching staff, felt they were approachable and thought their children were being educated in a caring, safe and nurturing environment. They liked the close links between the school and the local church. However, they would like to see a more open-door approach and improved communication with them.

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