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THE CHURCH
IN WALES

Gwella Inspection of Church in Wales Schools Report

St Aidans Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Primary School

Wiston

Haverfordwest

Pembrokeshire

SA62 4PS

Diocese: St David's

Local authority: Pembrokeshire

Dates of inspection: October 1st, November 12th and 13th

Date of last inspection: November 17th-19th 2008

School's unique reference number: 6683315

Head teacher: Mrs D Rainer

Inspector's name and number :Mrs Anne Murawski

School context

St Aidan's Church in Wales VA School opened in 1977 and is situated in North Pembrokeshire. It serves the areas of Slebech, Clarbeston Road, Walton East, Llanhawden and Robeston Wathen. A large percentage of pupils travel to school by coach or taxi.

There are 91 pupils aged 4-11 at the school .Around 6.7% of pupils receive free school meals and the school has identified 12% of pupils as having additional learning needs.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Aidan's Voluntary Aided School as a Church in Wales school is GOOD

The school has a strong Christian ethos which underpins its life and work and has a very positive impact on the pupils' all round development. This ethos makes a significant and positive contribution to the quality of relationships in the school at all levels, where everyone is valued and treated with respect.

Established strengths

The strengths of the school are:

- Its strong Christian ethos based on Christian values which make a significant contribution to the personal development, well being and learning of all pupils
- The quality and planning of daily collective worship sessions
- Its respect for all faiths in both worship and RE sessions
- The school's accurate and realistic self evaluation as a Church School
- All recommendations from the previous inspection have been met

Focus for development

- Further enhance the school's distinctive Christian ethos and environment by providing effective prayer and reflective areas around the school.
- Develop the use of bilingualism in all worship sessions
- Review and update the RE scheme of work to produce a single document incorporating the core skills and AFL strategies
- Consider arranging worship sessions to include opportunities for separate key stage worship sessions so that learners of different ages can participate more fully at their own level.
- Form a PLC with other church schools within the area to share good practice

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

The school has a caring and welcoming ethos securely based on Christian values and strongly supported by staff, pupils, parents and governors. These values are embedded throughout the school, within classrooms and on documentation and engender a culture of care, support and concern that nurtures the development of each child in all aspects and makes for a community where pupils and staff respect one another.

Pupils well being is given a high profile and a 'check in' system daily offers them opportunities to share and discuss happy or sad feelings with members of staff. Pupils say they feel 'safe and happy in school and staff are always willing to listen 'They are fully aware and proud to say their school is' a church school where we all care for one another'. They are able to make the link between their Christian values in action and behaviour and readily spoke about concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation giving examples of how they could build on this in their everyday life where conflict or misbehaviour has arisen.

There are strong links with the local church and St Davids cathedral and whilst awaiting a new incumbent the school continues to have the support of neighbouring clergy and recently retired Bishop Saxbee.

Pupils understand the importance of Christian giving and are aware of the importance of their own actions in supporting the need of others. Various fund raising events support charities locally, nationally and internationally with their link school in Zanzibar.

Parents are highly supportive of the school and value its close links to the parish church. They comment on the 'exceptional standards met in Christian values' and the ' warm and welcoming Christian environment'

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

Collective worship is given a high priority in the life of the school. The new altar, cloths, candle and cross in the main hall enhance the environment and provide a clear focus for worship and reflection. Use of ICT to project prayers, responses and reflective images are used appropriately to induce a calm respectful atmosphere

Music on entry sets the tone as does the lighting of the candle by a pupil. Children were attentive, responding thoughtfully to questions and enjoyed participating in reading and role play. The singing was particularly enthusiastic and uplifting and as recommended in the last inspection contained aspects of movement and actions in which all present participated. Opportunities for spiritual growth and reflection were present within sessions as were clear Anglican responses and prayers. The 'Ciw

Cymraeg' have produced a Welsh hymn book for worship sessions and occasional Welsh songs are sung but bilingualism within worship is an area that could be developed more extensively in particular in responses and prayer, 'Ein Tad' being of prime importance.

Worship sessions are well planned and based on the Values for Life scheme together with recognition of Christian festivals and celebrations. All staff participate and take part in leading worship and local clergy attend once a week to lead a more structured service based on Anglican format. The introduction of timetabled separate worship sessions for KS2 pupils or classroom worship would further enhance the spiritual development of the pupils by offering opportunities to discuss and reflect on issues in greater depth within their own peer groupings.

Pupils spoke positively of worship sessions and particularly those where they played an active role in preparation and planning as in the family sessions held every half term. During the Harvest Service in church they appeared at ease in their surroundings and read and sang with confidence, interacting well with the incumbent leading the service. Parents also appreciated the value of being involved in worship sessions and spoke highly of their' uplifting and spiritual effect 'There are some children in school who undertake the right to withdraw from worship. These children are given the opportunity to undertake their own reflection with a member of the support staff. Consultation with their families and careful planning and preparation of resources ensures that these children follow the school themes through their own faith perspective. This is to be commended.

Monitoring records by governors and RE co-ordinator include an element of evaluation of worship sessions however a more robust system of recording and evaluating collective worship, including involving and gathering responses from pupils, would enhance and inform future planning to ensure consistent progression to excellent results.

The effectiveness of the religious education.

The school follows the Church in Wales's scheme of work for the teaching of RE. The RE co-ordinator is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and passionate about the teaching of RE and ensures it has a high profile within the school and a clear sense of direction. Through thorough planning and consultation with families, pupils from other faiths participate and contribute in RE lessons and are encouraged to share their own beliefs. Together with the link governor, RE is monitored and evaluated regularly by the RE co-ordinator and an action plan developed to ensure progression. In its self evaluation the school has identified a need to review the current scheme of work to incorporate the core skills and AFL in one document as well as making links with the literacy and numeracy framework . This would assist the school to further develop the already established high profile of the subject and maintain standards.

Teaching observed was good with a range of teaching approaches used. Lessons were planned effectively and pupils of different abilities supported appropriately. During the upper KS2 lesson on Marriage pupils responded thoughtfully and expressed their ideas with confidence whilst also listening and respecting other opinions. They showed sensitivity to others beliefs and were thoughtful about what they had learned. Activities during a lesson on Baptism in the Foundation were differentiated and practical. The plenary session with the lighting of a candle and asking the children to suggest what they would do to let their light shine was suitably levelled to allow even the youngest child to reflect and relate the lesson to their everyday life. Standards in most books were good and comments constructive.

The teaching of RE provides pupils with a good knowledge of the Christian faith as well as an understanding of, and respect for, other faiths. Pupils understand the importance of RE in their lives and generally enjoy lessons. They particularly show enthusiasm for practical activities and visits and value their links with Ty'r Perein and the cathedral. They demonstrated good knowledge of topics covered and of major Christian festivals. RE topics feature on the class monthly newsletters and a number of parents commented on this favourably.

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

The Head teacher has set a clear Christian vision for the school and the aims clearly relate this. This vision is shared and supported by the rest of the staff, governing body and the wider school community resulting in a happy and welcoming school forming a secure basis for individual learner development.

The governing body clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and reports on RE and distinctiveness of a church school from the head teacher are a prominent feature of all meetings. In addition the nominated governor for RE and worship has worked closely with the school and regularly monitors and reports back on the progress and standards achieved.

The senior management team have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas of development and this is reflected in a comprehensive and honest self evaluation document which leads directly to improvement planning. All recommendations from the previous inspection have been met and distinctiveness as a church school is included in the school improvement plan.

The school has strong links with the local Parish, the Cathedral and the Diocesan Director. Following the recommendation of the last inspection all staff now partake in a staff retreat annually. Pupils are also given opportunities for an annual pilgrimage and this year utilised Ty'r Pererin at the Cathedral Partnership with parents is strong and they speak very positively of the head teacher and staff emphasising the strong links with the local community and church and clearly perceiving this as a school where Christian values are important.

Whilst awaiting a new incumbent to the parish the school continues to maintain a steady and regular input from other clergy in the area and support and input by a retired Bishop living locally is highly valued.

The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship

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The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education (where inspected)

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