Section 50 Inspection of Church in Wales Schools Report Proforma

School name: St Teilo's Church in Wales High School (Voluntary Aided)

Circle Way East
Llanederyn
Cardiff
CF23 9PD

Diocese: Llandaff

Local authority: Cardiff
Dates of inspection: 19 and 20 September 2024
Date of last inspection: 2013
School's unique reference number: 401890
Headteacher: Ian Loynd
Inspector's name and number: Allyson Taylor NS 768

School context

St Teilo's new building opened in 2013. While within the family of the Diocese of Llandaff, the building is sited on land in the Diocese of Monmouth. The school, therefore, has links with both dioceses as well as the national Church in Wales. The school caters for pupils aged 11-16 and offers Sixth Form education. St Teilo's accepts children from a wide catchment area and from between 40 and 50 feeder primary schools. The headteacher and senior leadership team have been in post since 2019. The headteacher is a member of the governing body of the Church in Wales and a canon of Newport Cathedral. As such, the school is uniquely placed to serve a wide and diverse community through its strong Christian heritage. St Teilo's has a high number of pupils who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and who have additional learning needs. At the time of the inspection 1398 learners were on roll.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Teilo's as a Church in Wales school

St Teilo's has a clarity of Christian mission around 'Excellence, Equity, Faith' that ensures it is a blessing to its community. The school's vision as a place of 'learning and formation' is powerfully lived out in its mission and actions. Christian-based love enfolds and drives the school. There is an authentic welcome and consequently, adults and pupils grow and thrive as cherished individuals. They are guided to become who they are meant to be. Lives are transformed.

Established strengths

- St Teilo's is a model for other schools, whether Christian or community in foundation. Its highly inclusive culture means that means there are no 'Lost Sheep'.
- Leadership inspires adults and pupils with its profound commitment to each person becoming who God intends them to be. Consequently, personal development and academic outcomes are exceptional.
- Staff provide a vibrant, secure environment for learning that allows all pupils, especially those who need additional support, to have a fresh start where needed and hope for the future.
- Partnerships with families and carers are compassionate and respectful. In this way, the school ministers beyond its gates.

Focus for development

- Extend the shared language of spirituality so that adults and young people may more confidently articulate and express their spiritual growth.
- Formalise systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the Christian mission so this explicitly informs next steps as a Church in Wales school.
- Explore ways to enhance the experience of religious education for young people in the Sixth Form.

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

'They do religion here but in a good way,' said a young person. They meant that the Christian character of the school supports them while allowing them to consider their own beliefs. They have 'faith' in themselves and in the staff to help them. This unequivocal commitment is at the heart of the school. Each person is welcomed, upheld and supported to make the most of the opportunities to learn and grow. St Teilo's is a shining example of a Christian community in action. This means that the distinctive Christian character is fundamental to how staff meet the needs of the school community. This is remarkable when a relatively small number of members identify as Christian. Great care is taken to accept and respect those of other faith traditions and worldviews. Christian, radical hospitality abounds. The pupil who is quoted above was clear. They said they are not Christian, but they respect those who are and can see the impact that being a Church school makes to the lives of those on roll.

The school has few non-negotiables in terms of conduct. Consequently, young people understand and endeavour to relate well to each other and to adults. Staff receive expert guidance on how to help learners who have barriers to learning. This means there is a consistent approach to learning and a fostering of positive relationships. Pupils cite examples of staff 'going the extra mile' and 'never giving up on me'. Learners flourish because they are known and loved as unique and precious. An example of this is the effort teachers make to learn new names. In one lesson visited in week two of the term, the teacher with a fresh Year 7 class, knew individuals' names, their siblings' names and even where there were identical twins in families. Learners who receive additional support are a living testament to the impact of the Christian mission. Several spoke of how they know other schools would have moved them on but not St Teilo's. 'We belong here, we matter' said one.

Spiritual growth is intrinsic within the curriculum. A culture of reflection is developed across the subjects so that learners express their thoughts and views with a refreshing openness. In Art, for example, while exploring the concept of 'integrity' pupils were encouraged to consider their own identity and to value it. As adults and young people state, 'we can be ourselves'. Considerable work has been done to ensure spiritual experiences are creatively woven into subjects. The joy of trampolining clearly inspired learners to aim higher! However, adults and pupils are less confident to talk about their individual spiritual growth. At this time, they lack the explicit language to express themselves. This is an area that leaders are ready to explore further.

Teaching, and so learning, are of high quality. Additional learning support is extremely effective. For example, up to half of new Year 7 need help with basic literacy skills. This is provided within the curriculum timetable and allows rapid progress. Once reluctant readers are enabled to be regular library visitors. Passion for learning is ignited. Teachers skilfully adapt learning so that it is accessible and engaging. More able pupils also thrive with an impressive number of leavers progressing to university and college places, including Oxbridge. Self-belief is the outcome of an ambitious curriculum and dedicated teachers who constantly strive to enhance their own skills. Adults and pupils continue to learn at St Teilo's. The use of expert questioning helps pupils to extend their thinking and convey it clearly: 'say it better' is a regular phrase used in lessons. This exemplifies both the aspiration and humility that characterises the school community. Within the deep and broad curriculum, due focus is given to the acquisition of Welsh and an appreciation of the culture and heritage of the Principality.

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

The worship life of the school embodies its mission of inclusive love. All ages, including Years 12 and 13, receive the offer of daily worship. The impact is, therefore, one of consolidating the sense of belonging and of the intrinsic worth of each person. Acts of worship, mostly held in form time, are focused on current topics and encourage consideration of 'big questions.' Each theme is linked to Christian teaching. For example, when considering the theme of 'leadership', classes discovered the good and bad aspects the Jewish prophet and ruler King David showed in his life and how God helped him become a better person. Pupils lead aspects of class worship, sharing the powerpoint slides and encouraging responses from their classmates. The impact of this time is clear. Many young people appreciate the time to settle, to reflect, to be together with a trusted group and teacher and the opportunities to consider themes of interest. When inviting reflection or prayer, care is taken to be respectful to those of a range of faiths and worldviews. For example, prayers are invited to 'God' not 'our God' which would be inappropriate for many. Collective worship is greatly enriched by the offer of worship in the beautiful chapel. This space provides time for calm reflection. Pupils are guided to be calm, to focus on their breathing and to think of the positives in their lives. This practice is based on the Christian 'Ignatian Examen' and is much appreciated by many adults and pupils. Clergy preside at chapel worship and provide outstanding pastoral and spiritual support across the school. This post is funded by the school and exemplifies leaders' commitment to spiritual nourishment. It is commendable that leaders insisted that spaces for worship be included in the new build. Within the building there are places used regularly by Muslim students and an ecumenical room, the sanctuary, which offers additional space for reflection and worship. The programme for worship is currently planned by the headteacher and chaplain. Moving forward, this key task is planned to be undertaken by a wider range of adults. It is clear that the headteacher's expertise results in creative worship that is deeply thought provoking, Christian focused and relevant.
Pupils who are keen to explore their own faith established and lead a Bible study group. This is in its early days but already attracts those whose personal Christian faith is fostered at St Teilo's.

How effective is the teaching or religious education (RE) and Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE)?

RE and RVE have a high profile at St Teilo's. Almost all pupils sit the GCSE exam. Results confirm that the subject is effective in delivering the mission. Those whose learning needs prevent exam entry still study RE. The subject, therefore, continues to enrich their academic and personal growth. RE is a popular and notably successful subject offered at A Level. Those not studying for A Level, continue to learn about religions and worldviews through 'Culture Days' and other thematic events. There is scope for leaders to consider how to extend ongoing learning to those Sixth Formers not sitting the A Level. An example of the impact of RE is the way pupils campaigned to support refugees, going beyond what might be offered locally. The head of department has an enviable depth of subject expertise. Their passion and skill support other teachers to deliver the curriculum to a high standard. Assessments and exam outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of excellent subject leadership and highly skilled teaching. Pupils take pride in their work. Written tasks demonstrate consistently high expectations. Pupils are challenged to respond to questions in more detail. They speak with confidence and maturity of the importance of the subject. RE enables them to have a wider perspective on our multi-cultural world. Leaners speak of the respect which the subject fosters and how it is important to them to understand the views of others. Lessons visited during the inspection were impressive. Learners' recall of previous lessons is well-developed, so knowledge is deep. Study skills are explicitly taught so that pupils are ready to sit assessments. The use of subject-specific vocabulary, known as 'religious literacy', is particularly strong. The subject is well-resourced, and leaders ensure staff receive appropriate support to develop their own skills and knowledge. Staff are to be commended for their insightful teaching of the new RVE curriculum. This is moving through the school so that currently it is taught to Years 7,8 and 9. Very much in line with the mission of excellence, the RE and RVE curricula are engaging and provoke curiosity. The study of Christianity is prominent in the curriculum. This gives pupils a foundation upon which to extend their knowledge to a range of religions and worldviews. It also makes a significant contribution to affirming the Christian character of the school.

How effective is the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

Leaders, particularly the inspirational headteacher and his talented senior team, are united in their deeply held commitment that each individual can be true to themselves and to their beliefs. Since 2019, the school has developed a mission, expressed through its 'intentions and purposes,' that are the touchstones in decision making. For example, the decision to site different curriculum subjects in adjacent classrooms creates a sense of shared belonging. Teachers in RE work alongside those in English and share best practice while giving and receiving mutual support. Innovative approaches to learning and character formation are evident in the outstanding progress and exam outcomes. More importantly, the mission is seen in the stunning, positive relationships between adults and young people. Great care is given to support staff to be living examples of #TeamTeilo. As a result, many staff are reluctant to leave, and others join from elsewhere because of the explicit Christian-based culture. The wellbeing of all ages is paramount. Staff support each other and express pride in being part of this vibrant community. Teaching and non-teaching staff honour leaders and appreciate the care shown to them. A highly effective programme of ongoing professional development underpins the success of the school. Strategic decisions are consistently made through the lens of being a Church school. Decisions on improving the quality of lunches and in making uniform more affordable exemplify that young people's needs are foremost. They have a voice and are both heard, and their views considered. The mantra is of achieving 'Excellence, Equity and Faith'. These intentions are held in equal balance and have equal weight. Actions must enhance each of the three intentions. For this reason, admission to the school is now more widely open to all families, with a lower number of 'church places' offered. Admissions, therefore, are more 'equitable'. It is no surprise that the school is consistently oversubscribed. Leaders know their pupils and understand the challenges they and their families may face in their lives. Governors bring expertise, support and guidance to the leadership team. They hold leaders to account and are equally mindful of their welfare. While governors know the school well and are active in their work, formal systems for them to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a Church school are underdeveloped. Partnerships with families are sought and fostered. To many parents and carers, the school is their main, indeed often only, source of emotional and practical support. As one family member commented, 'you won't get this in other schools.' It is the view of the inspector that this is because of exceptionally devoted leaders.

St Teilo's is a school led with open minds, open hands and open hearts. It provides a special Christian mission-based education that is both life-affirming and life-enhancing.

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