YR EGLWYS YNG NGHYMRU THE CHURCH IN WALES

Section 50 Inspection of Church in Wales Schools Report

St George Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Primrose Hill
St. George
Conwy
LL22 9BU

Diocese: St Asaph

Local authority: Conwy
Dates of inspection:19th March 2025
Date of last inspection: January 2020
School's unique reference number: 400249
Headteacher: Mrs Sian Wilkinson
Inspector's name: Mr Neil Roberts B.Ed.

School context

Ysgol St. George is situated in a rural setting in the village of St. George, some three miles from Abergele. It is a co-educational English medium school catering for pupils from 3 to 11, with 72 pupils on roll, including 9 part-time nursery children. Pupils travel to the school from towns outside the village and areas just outside the village boundaries. The school consists of 3 classes: Nursery (Meithrin), Reception and Year 1; Years 2 and 3; and Years 4,5 and 6. Nursery pupils attend in the morning only. The Headteacher has been in post since September 2022 and has a 0.6 teaching commitment. The school has no administrative support. The school identified 11% of pupils as having Additional Learning Needs. The FSM indicator is 25%. One pupil speaks Welsh at home and one pupil is EAL. Attendance for the last academic year was 93.4%. At the time of the inspection, no child had been withdrawn Collective Worship.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ysgol St George as a Church in Wales school

St. George Church in Wales school is a happy and welcoming Christian place of learning with a strong and established ethos of love, care and mutual respect evident throughout the school. 'Caring for myself and others' is central to the school's vision statement of 'Learning and succeeding in our caring Christian community'. The school aims to provide interesting, stimulating and meaningful learning experiences in which Christian values are included in all aspects of school life. Pupils are well supported by all adults to reach their full potential, develop a positive self-image and recognise their uniqueness in God's eyes. Pupils value their membership of the school community and enjoy learning. They are encouraged to grow and develop as kind, caring, tolerant and inquisitive individuals, and this is reflected in their excellent behaviour. The school encourages and develops the spiritual, moral and social development of all pupils across the curriculum. RVE and Collective Worship make significant contributions to the life and Christian ethos of the school. Children are given opportunities to worship God and reflect on the school's core Christian values to guide them in their work and lives. Pupils are curious, questioning and reflective about the world they live in, spiritual issues and moral challenges. The school is proud of its links to the church and the village. The school is at the heart of the village and pupils are placed at the center of everything that the school and community set out to achieve. Quality teaching and learning, together with high expectations and a positive, personalised approach to each child, is at the heart of this school.

Ysgol St George aims to serve the community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. The school promotes a good understanding of the Christian faith and helps to foster respect and tolerance of all other races, religions, and ways of life.

There are clear indications that this is a Church in Wales school, with signage, symbols, displays and artefacts in entrances, classrooms and communal areas. The prospectus, website and documentation also make the school's Church status clear. Areas within the school have a focal point for prayer and reflection and an area within the spacious school grounds is being developed as an area which staff and pupils can use for quiet contemplation and reflection.

Established strengths

- The Christian vision and leadership of the Headteacher which is well supported by staff and governors.
- The strong family ethos of the school is enhanced by positive and respectful relationships between pupils and staff within a loving, caring and secure learning environment.
- Christian values are embedded in all aspects of school life, encouraging pupils to demonstrate high standards of behaviour and respect for others.
- Strong links with the church and local community reinforce the school's Christian ethos.

Recommendations

- To encourage pupils to plan, organise and lead class and whole school Collective Worship on a regular basis. To establish a worship group to support and develop pupil involvement in worship.
- To ensure a Liturgical focus in Collective Worship planning that includes more Anglican responses and practices.
- To continue to develop the RVE curriculum, focusing on planning, teaching and learning and the use of the lenses. To continue to seek advice and support from the Diocese when required to assess progress.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is meeting the needs of all learners including the contribution of Religion, values and ethics to the Christian Character of the school

Ysgol St George provides a happy, sociable and stimulating learning environment which impacts positively on the health and wellbeing of staff and pupils alike. The school is a welcoming and caring Christian community where the sense of fellowship is evident. Pupils feel secure, loved and valued. They are welcomed at the school gate every morning and are waved off at the end of the school day. The school aims to serve its pupils by providing an education of the highest quality in accordance with the principles of the Church in Wales. It strives to provide equal access to a curriculum that reflects the issues and needs of a diverse society. Learning experiences help reinforce pupils' understanding of the importance of contributing positively to their community. Considerable importance is given in promoting a sense of belonging and developing positive attitudes. Children demonstrate pride in their school and community.

A strong feature of the school is its strong family ethos where love and respect for one another are evident. This family atmosphere is enhanced by respectful and positive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are nurtured within a praise culture and there is a strong emphasis on pastoral care. Each child is valued as an important and unique member of the school family and encouraged to reach their full potential. They are inspired to take responsibility for their own actions and develop skills that will help them to be effective members of their community. Christian values are central to all the school aims to achieve and are embedded in its daily life. These values have a positive influence on the attitudes and behaviour of the children.

Pupils show confidence, are enthusiastic to learn and are courteous and welcoming to visitors. Older pupils show a particularly caring attitude towards the younger children.

The school's Christian nature, supported by clearly defined Christian values, has an important positive effect on the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, and academic development of all learners.

The school's links with the church and community are very strong. The Vicar (who has recently retired) and Bishop's Visitor visit the school regularly to lead and participate in worship and advise on religious matters. Both play significant roles in developing links between the school, church, diocese, and local community. Their roles are highly valued by the school.

Pupils visit St George's church regularly as planned aspects of the RVE curriculum and to celebrate significant Christian festivals – Harvest, Christmas, Easter etc. These occasions are well supported by parents and members of the local community. The relationship between the school and the church is at the heart of community life. This has had an important effect on pupils by encouraging and promoting a sense of belonging and commitment to the community. It has also given the children a better understanding of the values of the Christian faith.

Children are encouraged to take an active role in their learning and are able to work independently and with confidence. They develop skills that enable them to be effective members of the school and community. Learners are encouraged to discuss and reflect regularly. They confidently discuss issues, questions, or concerns they may have and share ideas and plans with enthusiasm. regularly plan and support what they can do to help others - they show concern and passion for those in need. Following the Harvest service in the church in 2023, the school participated in the "Bring A Tin" monthly food collection and have continued to make monthly collections ever since for the Conwy Food Share scheme. Pupils contribute to village events and help in activities such as litter picks and tidying the church yard. At Christmas, children make gifts which are distributed throughout the village. The Senedd are actively involved with school activities. Pupils work keenly when considering and implementing issues that impact on the daily life of the school family. Funds were raised for a cancer charity following the school's Eisteddfod held at the village hall. The school effectively promotes the children's understanding of sustainable development, fair trade, global citizenship, healthy living, recycling, and the stewardship of God's earth.

Relations with parents and guardians are very good and well established. Parents are made to feel welcome by the school and are very supportive. The school's open-door policy allows parents to approach staff with any issues or concerns they may have with confidence.

The school has developed a broad and balanced curriculum informed by pupils, staff, and governors. It has strong links to the community. Staff work collaboratively to develop and deliver high quality provision across the school. The school offers a range of learning opportunities and staff work hard to deliver engaging, stimulating and challenging learning experiences that meet the needs of learners. As a result, many of the pupils are making expected or more than expected progress. Pupils are encouraged to explore, investigate and question. Their curiosity and wonder are welcomed and responded to with positivity. Skills, knowledge and authentic experiences are incorporated into the curriculum, enabling pupils to learn about their community, Wales and the world. RVE is a priority in the SDP and staff have received regular training from the Diocese. RVE is planned within a 3-year cycle of topics. Planning is thorough and incorporates a variety of teaching and learning styles, ensuring that pupils are engaged in purposeful activities.

Scrutiny of teaching, learning, and planning through a robust monitoring timetable ensures that high standards are set. Support staff are deployed effectively across the school. When questioned, pupils were able to recall many biblical stories, displaying a good understanding of underlying moral messages. They spoke confidently and enthusiastically about the topics they had been involved in and were able to communicate their thoughts and understanding of their experiences, for example, referring to a topic which focused on the experiences of others through celebration, food and education.

The outdoor learning environment is spacious and attractive and offers exciting opportunities for a range of educational, investigative and recreational experiences. Development of the Curriculum for Wales and RVE in particular, is led effectively by all members of staff.

The impact of collective worship on the school community

Collective Worship is delivered on a daily basis and reflects the school's core Christian values. Whole school worship takes place three days a week and classes hold their own worship on other days. The school endeavours to ensure that the principles for all acts of worship are inclusive, spiritual, and educational. Worship is central to the life of the school and is regarded as a special occasion which provides all members of the school community with an opportunity to come together as one Christian family, providing a clear focus for the day.

Children enjoy participating in worship and are confident in discussing issues which may arise. It is a positive experience for most pupils and helps to develop an awareness that life involves choices of belief, attitudes, behaviour, and relationships. Festivals from other cultures are acknowledged and celebrated. These acts of worship are underpinned by the school's Christian values.

Collective Worship is carefully planned, and themes are balanced to include the school's core Christian values and observation of the cycle of the Christian year. Innovative and meaningful uses of the "Roots and Fruits" resource and other sources help support and enhance these themes. Christian values and teachings are highlighted through Biblical stories. Children are encouraged to model their behaviour and attitudes on these important features and relate them to their everyday life where possible.

Acts of worship reflect broad Anglican traditions. The Christian nature of the school is reflected in the provision of a focal point with Christian symbols and artefacts, appropriate music, songs and hymns, prayers, and a period of reflection. Worship begins with each class bringing a candle to the focus table and ends with the school prayer. The school has recognised a desire to include more Anglican responses in some aspects of worship.

Pupils listen carefully, respond well when questioned and participate well when invited to do so. They occasionally lead worship and enjoy this responsibility. Worship includes a Gwasanaeth Cymraeg each month. This is sometimes led by Senedd members from Class 3. The school makes good use of the Welsh language during worship and good focus is given to celebrating important occasions in Welsh Christian history and culture.

The school is very proud of its connection to St George's church. Parents and residents from the village are invited to monthly services of worship at the church. These occasions are well supported. Pupils always lead these services and enjoy their participation. Parents and residents acknowledge and treasure the joy these occasions for worship give to the whole community. They recognise that the school and church together, are at the very heart of this village community. Pupils visit the church regularly to celebrate significant occasions in the church Liturgical calendar and to participate in activities as planned for the RVE curriculum. Pupils and staff are involved in numerous community events often held at the church – Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, Carol Services, Flower Festivals. In March 2024, the children led a dedication service to a new window depicting St Christopher at St George's Church.

Worship focuses on significant moments in the life of the school and community. Celebrating achievements and success is something the school is proud and the school reflects and celebrates the achievements and experiences of all its pupils. Success, individuality, and diversity are celebrated appropriately. Good use is made of a range of resources to support worship. Effective use is made of relevant displays, music, and artefacts to promote interest and understanding. Every opportunity is used to ensure that acts of worship are interactive when appropriate. Collective Worship at St George's Church in Wales School meets all statutory requirements. Worship makes an important contribution to the life and work of the school and enhances its Christian ethos.

The effectiveness of the school as a church school

Ysgol St George is very well led by the Headteacher who is open and enthusiastic in her determination to move the school forward and further develop its Church in Wales status and ethos. Since her appointment in September 2022, she has been at the forefront of the drive to further the school's development. The headteacher has a clear Christian vision for the school, high expectations and has set a clear strategic direction for the school – focusing on learner outcomes, standards, wellbeing and the distinct Christian nature of the school. Her clear vision for the school has permeated throughout the school – to pupils, staff, governors, parents and the extended school family, who all share this vision. The school is at the very heart of this village and the Headteacher is very effective in promoting good links with the church and the local community. Both play significant roles in the life of the school. There is a good understanding within the community that this is a Church in Wales School. The Headteacher ensures that the professional development of all staff is considered and prioritised when required. Staff have attended relevant courses associated with RVE within the curriculum together with other developmental issues which reflect the school's Church in Wales status.

All members of staff are involved in the strategic planning processes of the school and strive to provide the best education for all pupils in order that they can achieve their full potential. They possess good knowledge and expertise to deliver the curriculum to a high standard and work very well collaboratively as a united team. All members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are valued for their commitment and contribution to the family team ethos. Teachers and learning assistants work very well together within an engaging and motivating learning environment. Pupils are taught in a safe, caring, respectful and happy learning environment through the promotion of key Christian values.

The Governing Body have a clear understanding of the purpose and vision of a Church in Wales School and are fully aware of their statutory requirements. They recognise the importance of the ethos of the school and its deep-rooted Christian nature. Governors contribute positively to the life of the school and are enthusiastic, challenging and keen to develop further. They are extremely supportive of the school and work hard to ensure the school's continued development is a high priority. Governors are a regular presence in school and contribute significantly by providing support, advice and encouragement to all members of the school team. Governors regularly take part in book scrutinies, learning walks, listening to learners and joining in Collective Worship at school and at St George's Church. They visit school to monitor the progress of the SDP and to gather evidence at first hand. Information regarding the life of the school, progress reports and details regarding RVE and Collective Worship are provided to the Governing Body by the Headteacher.

Parents and guardians are very supportive of the school. Communication between the school and parents is very good. The school works hard to ensure that parents are kept fully informed about their child's progress. RVE and other important issues have a clear focus in written reports and discussions at parents' meetings. Parents regularly attend worship at school and church.

The Headteacher, staff and Governing Body work effectively to promote the Christian ethos, vision and values of St. George's school. They ensure that the curriculum, including RVE, Collective Worship and important aspects of school life are informed by distinctive Christian values that contribute positively to children's good behaviour and attitudes together with their spiritual, moral, social cultural and academic development.

The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	**YES**
The school meets the statutory requirement for religion, values and ethics (where inspected)	**N/A**
Religion, values and ethics is objective, critical and pluralistic	**YES**