YR EGLWYS YNG NGHYMRU THE CHURCH IN WALES

Section 50 Inspection of Church in Wales Schools Report Proforma

Gladestry Church in Wales School

Ysgol Gynradd Llanfair Llwyth Yfnwg

Gladestry, Kington, HR5 3NR

Diocese: Swansea & Brecon

Local authority: Powys County Council
Dates of inspection: 4th December 2024
Date of last inspection: 2015
School's unique reference number: 666/3026
Headteacher: Mrs Rosalind Beck
Inspector: Jennie Downes

School Context: Gladestry Church in Wales VC Primary School is a welcoming, happy and thriving learning community. The school is valued by the local community who are invested in and fully support the work of the school. The 33 pupils on roll benefit from being part of the wider school community. The FSM banding is low, no pupils are recorded as being of ethnic minority or with English as an additional language. The school has identified around 18% of pupils as having additional learning needs and 32% of pupils who require support in the form of a universal provision. Attendance for 2023/24 was 96.4%.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Gladestry VC school currently as a Church in Wales school

'Gladestry CiW School supports its learners in a safe, creative, and inspiring learning environment. We offer experiences and opportunities which are underpinned by Christian Values. Our school family aims to inspire pupils to become independent, ambitious learners with a positive sense of self. Gladestry School offers real life experiences, within and beyond our local community, to prepare and empower young people as the future Citizens of Wales and the world'.

The Gladestry Church in Wales school vision has been developed collaboratively as part of a shared vision with partner schools. The leadership team promote a culture of collaborative working, their strategic vision is supportive of the local community and its Cynefin. Professional working relationships with the local cluster of schools are strong and have a positive impact in supporting leadership capacity. The school is a thriving Christian community where positive relationships and a sense of belonging is nurtured. The governors, staff and learners describe their school as being 'one big family'.

Established strengths

- The overarching Christian ethos, sense of family and community links.
- The school's reflective practice and opportunities for support and development of leaders of the future.
- The learners' enthusiasm for learning.
- The creative use of the learning environment including spaces within school and the local area.

Recommendations

- To develop and explore the school vision with learners.
- To continue to develop positive relationships with the local church and extend these to the diocese and Church in Wales education.
- To share good practise regarding 'Church school leadership in a rural context'.

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

The school's vision upholds the Christian foundation of the school and is supported with the phrase 'Love, Learn, Listen - Respect for God's world'. Christian values are identified as the 'roots and aspirations of the school's curriculum design' and are integral to the four purposes of learning. Community support for the school is strong and staff encourage intergenerational links and community cohesion. The community have recently supported enhancement of the outdoor learning area. Learners write letters to members of the village, thanking them for their contribution to village life.

The caring ethos and links with St. Mary's church is a strength of the school. The presence of the clergy in school is important in the life of the 'school family. A small group of learners work with Rev Rach to develop the weekly prayer club. Learners are offered opportunities to draw on their personal sense of Cynefin and develop a relationship with God. They explore and share what is important to them in the world, such as using their understanding of the natural world to give thanks to God for global eco-systems and to pray for the animals and the environment.

The 'roots' curriculum has been developed collaboratively as a shared vision with partner schools. This approach to curricula design ensures that the school is working as a learning organisation focussed on professional research and enquiry led learning. The impact of an enquiry approach is evident through the theme of 'Curiosity'. The theme is developed across the whole school with early-stage learners exploring the traditions and values of the season of Christmas through sensory experiences in the outdoor learning environment. The learners prepare and serve Christmas dinner in the mud kitchen. Further along in their learning journey older learners confidently engage with a personal response to the Nativity through the creative use of enquiry using 'I see, I think, I wonder' questions. The learning experiences reflect the school's commitment to integrating RVE and spiritual development across all the areas of learning experience.

The impact of collective worship on the school community

Gladestry school has a well embedded culture of prayer and inclusive worship. Learners play an active role in Collective Worship. Older learners confidently lead the whole school in worship focused on exploring Advent and the Christian message of hope. Collective Worship has an Anglican focus with an invitation to gather followed by a call and response. A biblical narrative of Angel Gabriel's visit to Mary is shared with the whole school who reflect on and interpret the meaning in the text. The older learners leading worship ask deeper questions of their peers such as, 'How do you think Mary felt?' The responses are considered, learners make suggestions of how Mary may have felt, 'shocked, surprised, a bit sad, astonished'. There is an open invitation to join in prayer. Through the symbolic use of a candle, learners are invited to 'send up' their prayers. Music and singing create moments of both stillness and of praise.

The strong links with St Mary's church and the positive relationship between school, church and community impact positively on learners who are supported in their individual spirituality. The youngest learners enjoy singing Autumn Days, and recall taking part in services linked to the church liturgical year. Older learners are confident in articulating their beliefs. Those learners confident in Christian faith expression are encouraged to lead prayers in a variety of authentic context which includes school, church and the cathedral. The whole school is sensitive to diversity and the differing needs within the school community. The governors have a real understanding of difference and the importance of supporting the unique individuality of all within their school and wider community. The diocese offers advice on initiatives which encourage the use of the churchyard and its 'Quiet Garden' for learning.

Collective Worship is responsive to local, national and global events. Following the riots of September 2024, learners reflect on the importance of values such as love, kindness and empathy. Exploring through Collective Worship the importance of unity they think about the valuable contributions made by the different people in their own community.

The effectiveness of the leadership of the school as a church school

The executive headteacher has a strategic vision which is focussed on ensuring that Gladestry Church in Wales primary school supports its learners in a safe, creative, and inspiring learning environment. The school fosters a sense of belonging which extends to all members of the school and its wider community. The school's vision is to inspire pupils to become independent, ambitious learners with a positive sense of self. The church and wider community support this vision and work in partnership with the school creating a learning environment through which learners are offered the opportunity to grow and flourish as a child of God. The message which underpins the vision is to 'Love, Listen, Learn – Respect for God's World'. This Christian message is at the heart of school life.

The distinctive Christian ethos is evident in the lived values of the school family and reaches out to all in the rural village community and its surrounding hamlets. The response to this message is evident in the school's nurturing, inclusive and supportive ethos. The ethos is of 'one big family'. The description of working together and of being 'one' is articulated by learners, staff, governors and parents.

The learners at Gladestry are invited to be leaders and to use their voice positively as they prepare to become Citizens of Wales and the world. They question the ethics of choice, drawing on their knowledge of Cynefin of the local area and beyond they consider issues such as those faced by the local farming community. Governors work closely with the senior leadership team to establish and promote positive relationships with the local community. The school's relationship with the playgroup has supported the development of a curriculum which considers the continuum of learning from the formative early years to primary and through to the transition into secondary school. The impact of this is evident in the confidence of learners as they discuss how they feel prepared to leave their peers upon transition into several different secondary schools.

Governors maintain the culture of continuous development through monitoring and evaluation of the impact of Collective Worship.

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**