Section 50 Inspection of Church in Wales Schools Report Proforma

Model Voluntary Aided Church in Wales School

Ysgol Wirfoddol Eglwysig y Model

College Road
Carmarthen
SA31 3EQ

Diocese: St David's

Local authority: Carmarthenshire
Dates of inspection: 19 May 2026
Date of last inspection: 23-25 June 2014
School's unique reference number: 6693322
Headteacher: Amanda Bowen-Price
Inspector's name and number: Jennie Downes

School context

Model Voluntary Aided, Church in Wales Primary School, founded in 1847, combines a strong Christian ethos with a rich Welsh cultural heritage. This English-medium with significant Welsh school fosters a deep sense of belonging and community, emphasising the Welsh concept of cynefin to ensure all learners have a strong connection to the language and traditions of Wales. Set within the Diocese of St David's, the school maintains its historic teacher-training legacy through a close partnership with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Currently, the school has 508 pupils on roll, including nursery. The school community celebrates local diversity, with 27% of learners speaking English as an additional language (EAL). Among pupils of statutory school age, 14% are eligible for free school meals (FSM). The school is an inclusive learning environment with 5% of learners identified as having Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Model Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church in Wales school

The foundational vision of Model Church in Wales School is anchored in prayer:
Jesus our Model helps us to share, learning and kindness, friendship and care.

Dysg caredigrwydd a ffrindiau cytun, a Iesu'r Model sy'n helpu pob un.

The school prayer captures the special child-centred vision, guiding and inspiring everyone involved in the school community. The Governors, School Leadership Team, and Staff describe the Christian vision as a golden thread anchored in the heart of the school, which positively impacts children's learning and all aspects of school life. The inspiring vision creates a welcoming and caring environment where the whole school community works together to ensure every child can thrive. The school brings 'everything to the table' to create a whole-school ethos that genuinely shines. With a deep sense of cynefin, Model Church in Wales Primary School is warm and inviting, a place that fosters belonging, as a learner describes: everyone can feel accepted, safe, and connected to God.

The school culture is built on trust, honesty, and compassion. The inclusive ethos encourages all members of the school family to become active participants. Communication is open and informed, while strategic, trauma-informed, and restorative approaches ensure that all learners are valued and enabled to flourish. Spirituality is expressed and lived out in practice across the wider curriculum, as evidenced by community projects such as transforming the school's pond area into a memorial garden. Popular initiatives such as Cegin y Plant, Tîm yr Urdd and Eglwys y Model further nurture the spiritual well-being of the entire community. The inclusivity of Model Church in Wales Primary School ensures that a diversity of faiths, traditions and non-religious beliefs are respected and validated.

The importance of fostering belonging extends from the heart of the school family into the wider Carmarthen community. Through engagement with their own cynefin, learners connect and identify with their local, national, and global communities. Participation in activities such as sports, choir, and enterprise initiatives empower learners to use their unique talents and personal agency. Ultimately, the school's Christian vision equips the children of Model Church in Wales School to bring positive, transformative change into their community.

Established strengths

The deeply embedded commitment to the spiritual well-being of the children and the wider school community, through initiatives such as Eglwys y Model.

Recommendations

Establish a structured, comprehensive programme of professional development and induction for new members of the Governing Body to ensure they deepen their understanding of the school's distinct Christian character and confidently fulfil their strategic roles.

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 Model Church in Wales Primary School upholds its distinctive Christian character through a caring restorative practices policy that encourages, supports, and nurtures each learner's growth, laying a solid foundation for their future. This nurturing approach relies on collaboration among children, the school, families, and the community, with each playing a vital role. This holistic vision shapes a school community that truly values relationships, positive behaviour, curriculum design, and strategic decision-making. Welcoming artwork in the main school hall highlights the school's core values. These displays brighten the environment, demonstrating the ethos of Model Church in Wales Primary School, a friendly, inclusive, and caring community where everyone is recognised and valued. Consequently, nearly all younger learners report feeling happy and safe at school, and most older learners see the school's core values as one of its greatest strengths.

A sense of cynefin, the Welsh concept of a place-rooted identity, underpins the school's Christian character. Grounded in biblical teaching, learners develop a mature understanding of belonging, place, and responsibility. The children take immense pride in their school family, readily welcoming others and looking to positive role models within the wider community as examples of how their own contributions are valued. Nearly all upper school learners agree that their school works closely with the church and the local community, demonstrating love, respect, and kindness through meaningful engagement.

Spiritual development stands out as a notable strength across all age groups. Learners enjoy frequent, high-quality, and varied opportunities to reflect, pray, and engage with 'Big Questions.' This exploration occurs naturally through collective worship, the curriculum, and the dedicated spaces throughout the school's learning environments, such as Corneli Adlewyrchu (Reflection Corners), the special prayer space with prayer mat, and the popular values tree. Prayer opportunities are carefully designed to be fully inclusive, enabling all learners to participate meaningfully in their personal spiritual journey.

This sensitive approach to children's holistic spiritual development is further enhanced by the innovative, child-led development of Eglwys y Model, the children's 'own' church in the school grounds. Here learners speak confidently and maturely about their personal faith, belief, and spirituality, often using reflective language spontaneously. Inclusion is a hallmark of this provision, ensuring learners from diverse faith backgrounds are validated, respected, and affirmed. The school offers rich experiences that link faith to community engagement and the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales. Through environmental initiatives, celebrating Welsh culture (such as the choir travelling to north Wales to participate

in Eisteddfod yr Urdd), and purposeful fundraising for Glangwili Hospital and the local Food Bank, learners are encouraged to actively translate Christian values into everyday actions. Through these community-focused projects, alongside initiatives like Eglwys y Model and Cegin y Plant, learners understand the importance of community contribution and belonging.

This social action is further enhanced by curricular innovations; in partnership with neighbouring Church in Wales schools and the St David's Diocesan Education Team, the school has introduced the Bishop's Award. This initiative effectively supports the School Leadership Team in integrating Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) throughout the curriculum, allowing learners to explore cross-curricular RVE, for example, through stories of local historical figures from the town's Blue Plaques Heritage Trail. Inspired by such role models, learners are encouraged to draw on their moral courage and ethical awareness to make a positive, lasting impact on the wider world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community

At Model Church in Wales School, collective worship is a highlight of the school day. This special time fosters a warm, inclusive atmosphere where the school community gathers to share stories and explore spiritual reflections. Most parents agree that collective worship is a meaningful and inclusive part of school life. The worship leaders create a balance between Anglican structure and spontaneity. As the whole school gathers to a lively song about friendship, the meaningful Anglican call to worship is met with the children's confident responses in both Welsh and English. Singing and clapping along to Psalm 47 expresses worship that blends Christian tradition with a child-friendly approach. This engages learners with the central theme of 'sharing,' inspiring a response from the children rooted in wonder.

The school provides a wide variety of authentic worship experiences throughout the liturgical year that help deepen children's understanding of Christian history and local cynefin. Collective worship is held in many authentic locations, including the school hall, local parish churches, and the historic chapel at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, offering learners the chance to experience Anglican tradition and engage with a sense of awe. Regular online worship sessions from the Diocese of St David's maintain a connection with the wider church community. The Leavers' Pilgrimage and the Year 6 Leavers' service at St David's Cathedral mark a significant milestone, which features a pilgrimage walk.

Key seasonal services for Remembrance, Christmas, and Easter, as well as dedicated Class Assemblies, serve as important multi-generational bridges. Families and community leaders frequently join these special events, turning important school milestones into joyful, shared celebrations of community spirit, stewardship, and school tradition. The successful implementation of the Bishop's Award has transformed learner-led collective worship, moving children into active

leadership roles. Children who serve as Faith Ambassadors for the school demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of liturgical structure. They confidently navigate the transition from the initial greeting through the core biblical message to the active prayer response and the final 'sending out.' This framework enables the children to connect worship themes directly to their daily choices, behaviour, and attitudes.

Learners have actively developed their own outdoor school church, Eglwys y Model. By partnering with the Christ Church community and the school governing body, the learners hosted a special 'church-tea' to learn from the congregation. This intergenerational project successfully bridges age differences, strengthens community understanding, and enables children to translate their school prayer into meaningful action.

The school ensures its distinctively Christian call to worship remains universally accessible and safe within its pluralistic community. The thoughtful leadership and invitational call to worship ensure the environment is spiritually safe. Learners from diverse religious and non-religious backgrounds are respected and affirmed. An inclusive ethos is practically applied across the school for example in Eglwys y Model, learners engage with the biblical story of Moses parting the Red Sea, together the children explore the name of the Red Sea and Pharaoh's response upon realising that Moses had set God's people free. The discussion naturally and respectfully involves learners from different faith perspectives, illustrating how the school ensures all learners are involved in spiritual life.

Dedicated, quiet learning environments across the school, some equipped with prayer mats and a values tree, allow all learners to find space for personal reflection and calm. In an environment of open enquiry, learners have opportunities to discuss personal faith, belief, and spirituality. Ultimately, collective worship at Model Church in Wales School achieves a balance. It anchors the community firmly in its Anglican roots while serving as an inclusive space for critical thinking, philosophical curiosity, and the holistic well-being of every child.

The effectiveness of Religion, Values and Ethics

The inclusive and cross-curricular approach at Model Church in Wales Primary School is designed to raise aspirations for all learners. Driven by the strategic priority areas identified in the School Development Plan, the school's Senior and Middle Leadership Teams work collaboratively to ensure the ongoing development of a structured learning environment that fully supports the development of Religion, Values and Ethics, which is objective, critical, and pluralistic.

The whole-school framework, linked to the Bishop's Award, effectively identifies meaningful opportunities to apply the sub-lenses of RVE across the curriculum, helping learners connect RVE concepts such as identity, belonging and community directly to the four purposes of their learning. Examples include learners reflecting

on life as a journey, considering key milestones in their own lives and their personal aspirations for the future. Messages and encouragement from past pupils inspire current learners to 'believe in your dreams.' Staff and the local church community actively encourage learners to explore and pursue their personal learning journey. The 'Walk Through the Bible' project offers valuable opportunities for learners to contemplate meaning and purpose. This initiative anchors bible stories in real-world values such as compassion, respect, and community care.

The practical application of RVE concepts is demonstrated through environmental stewardship and a deep connection to the local community. Learners from across the school develop a profound understanding of how to care for the natural world and living things. Grounded in their sense of cynefin, younger learners explore their local environment by experiencing nature, while older learners investigate the broader significance of place through creative and meaningful activities, such as designing and creating an environmental 'window.' Many learners agree that RVE supports their understanding of how to live well and make good choices.

An objective and critical approach is integrated within thematic learning. For example, Year 5 pupils explore the concept of cynefin and what it means to belong to a church school. By linking ethical RVE concepts directly to their wider learning, learners grow as ethical, informed citizens and healthy, confident individuals.
The school's RVE curriculum actively reflects contemporary, pluralistic Wales by validating diverse religious faiths and non-religious philosophical convictions side by side. This directly strengthens community cohesion and fosters a culture of mutual respect. Younger learners build an introductory awareness of other world faiths and traditions, laying a vital foundation of tolerance and inclusion.

As they progress through the school, learners encounter a balanced curriculum where different worldviews are explored objectively. This pluralistic approach encourages learners to appreciate the diverse cultures in their locality, directly supporting the school's inclusive family ethos and ensuring that every learner feels valued.

Critical enquiry is a visible strength of the school's pedagogy, ensuring that learners have regular opportunities to engage with profound, existential 'Big Questions.' Interactive teaching methodologies encourage learners to encounter a deeper understanding of faith, belief, and ethical principles. The impact of this approach is evident in many learner-led projects, such as Eglwys y Model and environmental projects, where learners demonstrate their developing sense of belonging to an inclusive community. The approach is illustrated by Year 6 learners developing their critical thinking skills through exploration of abstract concepts, such as 'Do we need to see to believe?' This question promotes rich, reflective classroom discussions

and empowers learners to evaluate alternative viewpoints with maturity, empathy, and respect.

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

Leadership at Model Church in Wales Primary School is clearly structured, from strategic policy to daily classroom practice. The school's overarching vision, built on a Christian foundation, is sustained by a collaborative network among the community, the church, and the school. The school has cultivated a nurturing ethos in which all within the inclusive learning environment are valued and given opportunities to flourish. Governors proactively safeguard whole-school well-being through robust policy frameworks that underpin a restorative, trauma-informed approach. This ensures the foundational Christian vision is actively lived out at all levels of school life. To sustain this strategic, whole-school approach, a structured development programme is now needed to build capacity and expertise among newer members of the governing body.

School leaders align the Christian foundation with the philosophy of the Curriculum for Wales. By strategically mapping core values and concepts across the learning continuum, the Senior Leadership Team works with the whole school community to ensure that academic aspiration and spiritual development reinforce one another. The school is committed to providing all learners with the opportunity to realise their valuable contributions and responsibilities as members of their local, national, and global communities. This culture of developing the skills of the whole school is an area the school is committed to further developing. Leaders are keen to build governance capacity by creating an effective approach to enhancing the skills of new members of the governing body. The school continues to develop and foster effective partnerships with other educational settings, local organisations, the diocese, and the wider community, ensuring the vision is lived out, resulting in a well-defined ethos.

Through successful initiatives such as Cegin y Plant and the school's entrepreneurial projects, learners develop practical leadership, financial and organisational skills. Operating a local market enterprise in the town gives learners a real-world platform to understand how their personal efforts directly impact positive community relationships.

The learners' active and inspirational development of Eglwys y Model has fostered deep intergenerational relationships. Local church members value the children's participation in the building of a 'church,' the adults speak proudly of how the children have developed their own spiritual space. It is evident that the children at Model Church in Wales Primary School are respected and recognised as members of the local community.

Regular participation in the school's choir and sports clubs, alongside active engagement with the Urdd, enables learners to share their talents, serve others, and work as a team through creativity, celebration, and community participation. These experiences significantly reinforce the children's personal confidence, a deep sense of belonging, and a developing understanding of their cynefin.

The school's governors and leaders demonstrate a deep, shared commitment to maintaining an ethos of distributive leadership. Senior and Middle Leadership Teams present positive challenges, ensuring that responsibility is authentically shared across the whole school setting. The impact of this approach is most evident in learners' development as leaders. By actively engaging with structured leadership initiatives, such as the Bishop's Award, children develop agency and develop their personal attributes. The school is developing into an active learning organisation that nurtures learners as leaders through authentic learning experiences. This distributed approach is creating a learner voice that has a significant influence within Model Church in Wales Primary School, empowering learners to confidently take on roles that encourage them to act as independent agents of positive change beyond the classroom and school, and into the wider community.

Spotlight

Eglwys y Model: Creating a Child-Centred Spiritual Space

The school's outdoor, child-led church, Eglwys y Model, serves as an example of learner agency and intergenerational partnership. Developed through active collaboration among peer Faith Ambassadors, the local Christ Church community, and the school's governing body, this unique project provides learners with opportunities to collaborate, learn from one another, and take ownership of the spiritual aspects of their own learning environment.

By hosting events such as a collaborative 'church-tea,' learners interact meaningfully with older generations and discuss the meaning of 'church'. The learners use Eglwys y Model to share ideas, values and biblical narratives. This inclusive approach to open enquiry ensures that the children's outdoor 'church' is spiritually accessible and safe for all learners.

Eglwys y Model successfully blends traditional Anglican identity with contemporary learner voice. It transforms abstract religious principles into a child-centred vision, providing a purposeful space where learners can begin to create the words of their school prayer into meaningful social action.

The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	**Y**

The school meets the statutory requirement for religion, values and ethics (where inspected)	**Y**
Religion, values and ethics is objective, critical and pluralistic	**Y**