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THE CHURCH
IN WALES

Gwella Inspection of Church in Wales Schools Report

St. Chad's Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hanmer,
Whitchurch
Shropshire
SY13 3DG

Diocese: St Asaph

Local authority: Wrexham

Dates of inspection: October 7th/8th 2019.

Date of last inspection: July 2014.

School's unique reference number: 665/3326

Headteacher: Mrs Gaynor Purcell

Inspector's name : Mr Neil C. Roberts



School context

St. Chad's is a Voluntary Aided Church in Wales Primary school situated in a rural setting in the village of Hanmer, approximately nine miles south-east of Wrexham and close to the borders of Shropshire and Cheshire. It is a co-educational English medium school catering for children from 3 to 11 with 76 pupils currently on roll, including 11 part-time nursery children. There is also an established Playgroup which runs within the school.

The Headteacher has been in post since 2012. There are currently 3 full-time teachers and 4 Teaching Assistants. The school has recently undertaken a redundancy process which resulted in the loss of a 0.5 class teacher position.

The school consists of 3 classes : Nursery and Reception, Years 1 and 2 and Years 3-6.

The school dates back to the reign of Charles II and has undergone several major refurbishments, most notably in 2001, when the building was extensively extended and remodelled. The school is well appointed and maintained, with maximum use made of available space and resources.

The outdoor learning environment is spacious and attractive. In recent years it has been developed extensively and is used for a range of educational and spiritual activities, including a Faith Garden, Forest School and improved recreational areas.

The school identified 5.3% of pupils as having Additional Learning Needs. 5.3% of pupils are registered for free school meals.

No pupils speak Welsh as a first language.

No pupils have been excluded from school during the last twelve months leading up to the inspection.

As at the beginning of the inspection, no child has been withdrawn from Religious Education or Collective Worship.

The school was inspected by Estyn in September 2019.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St.Chad's as a Church in Wales school are excellent.

St. Chad's Voluntary Aided Church in Wales Primary School is a caring and inclusive Christian place of learning. The school is very proud of its long and established Christian culture and heritage. Its deeply embedded ethos of love, care and mutual respect for one another permeates all that it sets out to achieve and enables it to function very well as a Christian community.

St. Chad's aims to provide a distinctive, high quality education which reflects God's love for humanity. The school aims to promote an understanding of our world as a gift from God to be respected and valued while ensuring equal access to a curriculum that reflects the issues and needs of a diverse society.

The school's core Christian values have a strong influence on the lives all those within the school community. These values have been identified and developed collaboratively by pupils and are displayed prominently throughout the school in the form of an acrostic poem, " St. Chad's " :

- S - Showing GENEROSITY
- T - TRUTHFUL, TRUSTFUL, THANKFULNESS
- C - COMPASSION, CREATIVITY, COURAGE
- H - Having HOPE
- A - APPRECIATION
- D - DETERMINATION
- S - SHARING – FRIENDSHIP and FORGIVENESS

The school's Mission statement supports and promotes these agreed values.

Pupils are very well supported by adults to reach their full potential, develop a positive self-image and recognise their uniqueness in God's eyes. In return, pupils feel valued and well cared for. The school encourages and develops the spiritual, moral social, cultural and academic development of all pupils within a safe, happy and stimulating learning environment.

Pupils value their membership of the school family and show a strong enthusiasm to learn. They are curious, questioning and reflective about the world they live in and are given many opportunities to contribute to their learning environment and the wider world. They are keen to express their own opinions and feelings. The school's Christian ethos also encourages them to behave respectfully, sensitively and responsibly.

Religious Education and Collective Worship make significant contributions to the life and Christian ethos of the school, providing pupils with regular opportunities to worship God and reflect on Bible teachings and the school's values to guide them in their lives and work. St. Chad's aims to develop an appreciation and understanding of the Christian faith while also respecting those of other beliefs and cultures.

The school incorporates its Church School status into all aspects of school life, enjoying very good links with the church and the community it serves. The school makes effective use of the convenient location of the historical St. Chad's church to promote its Church School status. The contribution of the Vicar and Bishop's Visitor highlight a meaningful and developing partnership of service to the community.

St. Chad's has a very good relationship with parents and members of the local community who are very supportive of the school. The school has an open door policy and visitors are made to feel welcome at all times.

There are clear indicators to visitors that St. Chad's is a Church in Wales School with signs at entrances clearly identifying the school's name and status. Christian values, artefacts, displays, examples of work and resources are displayed throughout the school alongside the Mission Statement. The prospectus, website and documentation also make the school's Church in Wales status clear. Areas within all classrooms have a focal point where worship can be conducted and provides an area for prayer and reflection. The historical school hall with its scrolls depicting The Lord's Prayer, The Creed and The Ten Commandments provides a stimulating, thoughtful and reflective background to all occasions of Collective Worship. The Faith Garden has been well developed into an area which all members of the school community can use to reflect, pray and contemplate.

Established strengths

- The school's Christian character has a high profile. Distinctive Christian values are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school.
- The Christian vision and leadership of the Headteacher which is very well supported and promoted by the staff and governors.
- The caring and inclusive nature of the school which is enhanced by positive and respectful relationships between all members of the school community.
- The pastoral care and support provided to all pupils which encourages them to demonstrate high standards of behaviour and strive to achieve their full potential

Focus for development

- To review the school's Religious Education scheme and become familiar with the R.E. content within the National Curriculum for Wales document in order to begin evaluation of how planning and teaching will need to develop.
- To develop and embed the role of Worship Leaders in the process of planning, delivery and evaluation of Collective Worship.
- To further develop Pupil Voice by involving pupils in activities and events in order to share and promote the school's Christian values and achievements.
- To further develop links with the church, diocese and local community and continue to work with other Church schools to share good practice and discuss developments.

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

St.Chad's Voluntary Aided Primary School has a strong and long established Christian ethos that underpins the life of the school. It provides a happy, secure and sociable learning environment which impacts positively on the health and well-being of staff and pupils alike. The school aims to serve its pupils by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice, in accordance with the principles of the Church in Wales and in partnership with the church at parish and Diocesan level. Learning experiences help to reinforce pupils' understanding of the importance of contributing positively to their community. Considerable importance is given to developing positive values and attitudes. As a result, children demonstrate pride in their school and community.

A strong feature of the school is its close family ethos where love and respect for one another are evident. St. Chad's is an inclusive learning community in which pupils feel safe, happy and valued. The family atmosphere is enhanced by positive and respectful relationships between all pupils and members of staff. There is a clear focus on pastoral care, Pupils are very well supported by staff. All pupils are aware that members of staff can be approached at any time to discuss personal or sensitive issues. Each child is valued as an important and unique member of the school family and nurtured to reach their full potential regardless of ability, race or gender. A strong emphasis is placed on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and develop the skills that will help them to be effective members of the community. Older pupils demonstrate a caring and thoughtful attitude towards younger children. Buddy systems are often used where older pupils mentor younger colleagues.

Christian values are at the heart of all that the school aims to achieve and are embedded in its history, tradition and daily life. These values have a positive influence on the attitudes and behaviour of the children. Pupils behave very well and consistently show respect, care and consideration towards others. Most pupils are confident and display a positive attitude towards learning. Children are encouraged to discuss and reflect regularly and are willing to discuss any issues, concerns or questions they may have with adults. They share opinions and ideas and talk about how people with different beliefs, religions and cultures can live alongside each other. Pupils are very supportive of each other and are courteous and welcoming towards visitors. Personal and Social development strategies fully complement the school's values and themes of worship.

The school's links with St. Chad's church are very strong and well embedded. The Vicar and his wife and the Bishop's Visitor visit the school regularly to lead and participate in worship and advise on aspects of Religious Education and Collective Worship. All play important roles in nurturing and developing links between the school, church, local community and Diocese. Pupils visit the church as

planned features of the R.E. curriculum and to celebrate important festivals and services of the Christian year e.g. Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas and Easter.

Members of the local community are very supportive of the school and a wide range of events have been held at both the school and church. These have included events such as Pancakes and Puddings, Harvest Lunches and Suppers, Pick a Christmas tree for school, Bluebell walk and many charity fund raising events for local charities.

Pupils show care, compassion and a strong commitment to helping others in need. The school supports a range of charities annually – both locally and nationally. These have included Hope House, Send a Cow, Macmillan Nurses, Nightingale House and Children in Need.

The School Council are actively involved with the development of the school. Pupils work enthusiastically when considering issues that impact on the daily life of the school and its future development.

The school's strong and embedded Christian ethos, supported by clearly identified Christian values, have a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and academic development of all its learners.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The Headteacher, staff, and governors are aware of the statutory requirements for Collective Worship. These are met in full. A member of the teaching staff has responsibility for developing Collective Worship.

Whole school worship takes place on a daily basis and follows a distinctly Christian structure. Worship is a special occasion and provides a central focus for the school day. The school endeavours to ensure that the principles for all acts of worship are inclusive, spiritual and educational. These acts of worship provide all members of the school community with an opportunity to come together as one Christian family. As a result, worship makes a significant contribution to the Christian ethos and values of the school.

Worship is led by teaching staff, pupils and the Vicar. As well as having a Christian focus, it 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 always underpinned by the school's Christian values.

The school's Christian values are at the heart of worship. Collective Worship is carefully planned and themes are balanced to include the school's core values and observation of the major festivals in the cycle of the Christian year. Christian values and teachings are highlighted through Bible stories. Children are encouraged to model their behaviour and attitudes on these values and teachings and relate them to their own lives where possible. Pupils are given opportunities to share their thoughts and time to reflect on issues or concerns they may have.

Acts of worship reflect broad Anglican traditions. The Christian ethos of the school is reflected in the provision of a visual focal point with Christian symbols and artefacts, appropriate music and hymns, responses and prayers and a period of silent reflection. A candle is lit to signify the start of worship. This reminds pupils of the presence of God represented as the light of the world. The candle is extinguished to signify the end of the act of worship. Children prepare for worship by entering the hall quietly and respectfully. They listen carefully, respond well when questioned and participate enthusiastically when invited to do so. They read stories and passages from the Bible, perform acts of drama, and use a variety of prayers and affirmations, including The Lord's Prayer and The Grace. They often read their own prayers for special occasions. Pupils often plan, organise and lead worship. They are encouraged to work independently and only seek advice from staff when required. They also evaluate their role in leading worship and its impact on other pupils. Pupils sing very well and with obvious pleasure. They appreciate singing as a special form of prayer. Singing is full of joy and supports the Christian ethos very well. Pupils also lead and take part in worship at St. Chad's church on important occasions in the Christian year e.g. Harvest and Christmas. Parents and members of the community are invited to these special occasions.

The Vicar makes a significant contribution to worship provision at the school. His regular visits to the school and his participation in worship reinforce the Anglican tradition and support the Church school ethos very effectively.

Celebrating achievement is one of the school's strengths. Worship focuses on important moments in the life of the school and the community. Recognising and celebrating personal achievements is something the school does well. Success and diversity are celebrated appropriately. "Seren yr Wythnos" and "Gwaith yr Wythnos" awards are given to pupils as a recognition of their achievements.

The school has a good range of appropriate resources to support worship. Good use is made of relevant displays, literature, music and artefacts to promote interest and understanding. Every opportunity is used to ensure that acts of worship are interactive when appropriate.

St. Chad's makes good use of the Welsh language in prayers, songs, responses and instructions. Good focus is also given to celebrating important occasions in Welsh Christian history and culture. The school's commitment to the development of the Welsh language and bilingualism is enhanced through its Collective Worship provision.

The Collective Worship co-ordinator works very well with the Headteacher in delivering and developing worship at St. Chad's. Both are focused on promoting links with the church, community and Diocese. They also work regularly with other Church in Wales schools to discuss and develop important issues. The school has worked to develop and introduce an effective evaluative framework for recording Collective Worship which involves all participants. All members of staff are committed to the school's provision for worship.

St. Chad's has a positive and embedded process of Collective Worship that is relevant to the aims, needs and Christian ethos of the school. Worship contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

All statutory requirements for Religious Education are met in full. A member of the teaching staff has responsibility for developing Religious Education.

Religious Education has a high profile within the school's curriculum. It is taught in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus and the Church in Wales R.E. syllabus. Lessons are delivered as part of the weekly timetable and provision is monitored as part of the school's planned monitoring cycle by the Headteacher, Subject Leader and Vicar (as governor with responsibility for R.E.).

Planning for Religious Education is detailed and thorough. Planning strategies make the most of cross curricular links and encourage pupils to develop a broad range of skills. Planning together across key stages ensures that there is continuity and progression throughout the school. The Subject Leader teaches R.E. across the school and this arrangement enhances provision. She is also the Collective Worship co-ordinator and this responsibility also has a positive effect on R.E. provision. The school's core Christian values are incorporated into planning strategies together with links to the Christian year. Planning also includes a strong focus on Literacy and Numeracy. The DCF is also included. Information Technology is used well and imaginatively.

Planning also incorporates a range of tasks and learning styles, ensuring that pupils are given the best opportunities to achieve their full potential. Opportunities are built into planning for pupils to explore and experiment with new and innovative learning experiences including role-play, visiting special/religious places (e.g. St. Chad's church, St. Asaph cathedral), and making and using artefacts. The school's outdoor environment is also used effectively to enhance teaching and learning experiences. Provision is well supported by good quality resources.

Pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes towards Religious Education. They show interest and are well engaged in activities. Children respond thoughtfully and express their views and ideas confidently. They listen well and dramatise, discuss and comment on Bible stories. They display a good knowledge of the key aspects of Christianity and the Bible and have a good awareness of the significance of festivals and notable days in the Christian calendar.

Pupils' knowledge and achievement in Religious Education is good. Most pupils make progress in line with their age and ability. Pupils are consistently encouraged to discuss, respond, ask thought provoking questions and reflect upon the meanings and messages they have received. They show a developing understanding of the impact of R.E. on their own lives and those around them. Whilst maintaining its strong Christian ethos, St. Chad's encourages its pupils to respect and understand other religious beliefs, traditions and cultures.

Children's work is displayed prominently in classes and communal areas. Pupils have been especially proud of the story sacks they have produced in R.E. lessons which have focused on significant stories from the Old Testament – Adam and Eve, Jonah and the whale, Daniel in the lion's den, Moses, Joseph the dreamer and Noah's Ark.

Since the last Section 50 inspection, the Subject Leader has led the staff in developing a portfolio of levelled children's work in Religious Education. The portfolio displays examples of work and gives teachers a clear understanding that standards of attainment in R.E. are in line with other core subjects. The Subject Leader and Headteacher have worked together as part of a local cluster working group to focus on key areas of Christian ethos and values and focusing on how the "Understanding Christianity " scheme can be incorporated into R.E. lessons.

St.Chad's promotes the development of Welsh Christian history and culture through its R.E. provision. Significant attention is given to celebrating important occasions in the Christian heritage of Wales – e.g. St. David's day is celebrated as part of "Yr Wythnos Cymraeg". Year 5 and 6 pupils worked on a project entitled "Hanmer Unearthed" which had links with the church and community. A Welsh heritage initiative enabled pupils to work on a project which focused on Owain Glyndwr, who had strong links with St. Chad's church.

Religious Education makes an important contribution to the life and work of St. Chad's Voluntary Aided Primary School and to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all its pupils.

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

St. Chad's Voluntary Aided Primary School is very well led by the Headteacher who is open and determined in her desire to move the school forward. She has a clear Christian vision, high expectations and a clear strategic direction for the school. She has ensured that the Christian nature of the school has been communicated and modelled to pupils, parents and visitors alike. Her vision has permeated through the whole school community, who all share this ambition. The Headteacher, Governing Body and all staff work effectively together in promoting the Christian ethos and values of the school. All staff and governors are involved in the strategic planning processes of the school and work to ensure that the school provides the education, support and opportunities for all pupils to achieve their full potential. The prime focus is on the unity of the family – an ethos where all children are valued equally and taught in a safe, loving and happy learning environment through the promotion of key Christian values.

Members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and involve themselves enthusiastically in plans and activities aimed at taking the school forward. The Subject Leader has played a prominent role in the school's development. The Headteacher and staff have worked to ensure that Religious Education, Collective Worship and the general curriculum are informed by distinctive Christian values that contribute positively to learners' good behaviour and positive attitude towards learning. The school team are committed to the school's clear focus for improvement.

The Headteacher and Governing Body work very well together in promoting the vision of the school. Governors have a very good understanding of the nature and purpose of a Church in Wales school. They contribute positively to the life of the school and fully support the school's future development. The Chairman meets regularly with the Headteacher. She is very supportive and especially effective in offering advice and encouragement based on a mutual bond of respect and trust.

Parents, guardians and members of the local community provide important and valuable contributions to all aspects of school life and are very supportive of the school. The school recognises the importance of developing close partnerships with parents and the community and ensures that good communication has a high priority. Parents are appreciative of the school's open door policy and are encouraged to visit the school regularly. Parents are kept fully informed about their child's progress. R.E. and other important issues have a clear focus in written reports and parents' evenings. The great majority of parents are aware of the school's Church in Wales status and are very supportive of events and special occasions held in school and in St.Chad's church.

St. Chad's Voluntary Aided Primary School is very well led and managed with a clearly articulated vision for future development. The Headteacher, staff and governors work effectively together to promote the Christian ethos and values of the school for the benefit of all its pupils.

The school has fulfilled the recommendations from the last Section 50 inspection in July 2014.

The content of this report should be considered alongside the Estyn team's Section 28 report. I would like to thank the Headteacher, Staff, Governors and Pupils of St.Chad's for their warm welcome and cooperation.

Mr Neil C. Roberts B.Ed. Dip. Man

Report under Section 50 of the Education Act 2005
St. Chad's V. A. School - Parents' Questionnaire
There were 26 responses

	Yes	NO
Are you aware that this is a church school?	26	-
Do you believe that the school is a caring institution built upon clear Christian values?	26	
This is a Church School, that is a school with a Christian character. Was this a factor when you were choosing a school for your child/children?	16	12

	Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
The school has a distinctive Christian character	17	9			
The school's distinctive Christian character makes a significant contribution to pupils' education.	14	11		1	
Pupils find Collective Worship a valuable experience.	15	9	2		
The school has effective links with the local church and other faith communities.	19	5	2		
The school keeps parents well informed about the work pupils do in Religious Education.	11	13	2		
The school encourages pupils to care for God's Creation (the environment), as well as for themselves.	18	8			
The school encourages pupils to consider people in other countries , and how they can help assist them, when help is required.	15	10	1		
The school ensures that links are made with the local community.	21	4	1		