

Section 50 Inspection of Church in Wales Schools Report Proforma

Priory Church in Wales School / Ysgol yr Eglwys yng Nghymru Priory

Pendre Close
Brecon
LD3 9EU

Diocese: Swansea & Brecon

Local authority: Powys

Date of inspection: 19th March 2025

Date of last inspection: 2016

School's unique reference number: 400568

Headteacher: Claire Pugh

Inspector's name and number: Jennie Downes

School context

Priory Church in Wales Voluntary Aided Primary School extends a welcome to all. The school has a well-established culture of social action. Of the 146 learners on roll, 44% are identified as having ALN and 5.5% with EAL. The school supports 8% of learners through the SSCE Cymru. The number of pupils entitled to FSM is 24.5%. The complex needs of the community served by the school are evident through analysis of the school data.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Priory VA as a Church in Wales school

Celebrating Imagination, Creativity and Belief

'At Priory Church in Wales Primary School, we are dedicated to developing a learning environment that enables God's children to realise their true potential.'

'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' John 10:10

The vision unites the school's historic Christian foundation with true understanding of the importance of enabling God's children to develop and thrive. The headteacher describes Priory Church in Wales school as a place where 'every child matters because they make us who we are'. The staff are dedicated to celebrating the uniqueness of every individual's imagination, creativity and belief. Describing its Christian distinctiveness as a 'golden thread' the school encourages a sense of spiritual belonging. Located in a unique space, the school stands proudly with the 12th century priory building of Brecon Cathedral. Priory school is a safe place for learners, a place to which they belong and describe as 'home'. Rooted in the heart of the community, the school is a place where all are welcome, valued, nurtured and supported.

This support is reciprocated by the wider community; strong partnerships with stakeholders ensure the wellbeing of all in the community is considered. The creative approach to pedagogy encourages learners to develop their personal Cynefin. Learners confidently share their individual learning journeys. For many this includes their

relationship with the natural environment and some learners describe Cynefin as being connected to their personal journey of faith and belief. The school ethos encourages all stakeholders to value their unique contribution to the life of Priory Church in Wales school. The distinctive and effective learning environment encourages and fosters a sense of belonging and encourages empathy. Christian values are strongly evident and lived out by learners, staff and governors. The values spoken of as holding significant value include 'the virtue of wisdom'. The learners share the importance of valuing perseverance, friendship and the Christian value of love.

Established strengths

- The school's Cynefin, its historic Christian foundation and valued place in the community of Brecon today.
- The provision of a safe, nurturing and welcoming environment which ensures all within the community of Priory Church in Wales VA school are enabled to thrive.
- The school's dedication and commitment to developing an enquiry, learner-centred and creative approach to RVE pedagogy.

Recommendations

- Clarify the children's contribution to the vision, ensuring learners' have ownership of the vision and what it means to them and the future of their community.
- Develop and build on the collaborative links with the Diocese, Brecon Cathedral and with Church in Wales Education, ensuring the VA status of the school is fully understood and supported.
- Develop greater understanding of the instrument of government and the role of foundation governors to create leadership capacity through development of the Governing Body's strategic role.

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

Priory Church in Wales school is a nurturing, caring visible presence which reaches out to the whole community. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of creating sustainable relationships between school, families and the community. The school's focus on health and well-being is well developed. All staff are committed to ensuring the school is a safe and inclusive learning environment with a strong focus on learners' readiness to learn. The school is a place where every learner is provided for to be enabled to succeed. This commitment extends to the wider school family and beyond. An example of this is the valuable work carried out with the Invisible Walls initiative. The impact of the school's nurturing approach is evident in the many positive outcomes, especially those realised through building trusting relationships. The warm greeting each child receives on arrival at school is extended to their families. The positive focus on healthy relationships helps to create an inclusive, safe environment where families feel able to ask for help and support and are keen to give back and support others.

The development of the 'Feed your Family for a Fiver' initiative has grown into an event where parents demonstrate how a family meal can be created using the typical ingredients of a Food Bank box. This is just one of many examples of the value placed on engagement with the wider, intergenerational community who are encouraged to share their skills. The Swap Shop is one of the initiatives developed through the school's

relationship with The Green Man Trust. The environmentally themed concept of the Swap Shop serves the school community and the Brecon's wider community. Those families needing more focused guidance are thoughtfully considered. Help is provided via the school's well established and trusted family link officer who liaises and builds partnerships to support the complexity of some family circumstances. The importance of offering and building a 'no stigma' response has ensured families are given hope through being able to confidently trust in the Christian values of Priory Church in Wales school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community

Collective worship is valued by all as a special time at Priory Church in Wales school. The learners look forward to gathering together. The youngest learners say how they look forward to spending time with their headteacher in collective worship. Older learners reciting the creed all agree it makes them feel 'peaceful'. As the candle is lit, the school family sit collectively and there is real sense of Cynefin and togetherness. The learners enjoy listening to a story of how all people have a right to feel they belong. The theme continues with reflection upon Psalm 89:14. The school community sing and sign the words of a popular song which reflects the worship theme of 'identity and belonging'. There is a natural expression of God's love for all people in the worship which weaves contemporary worship with Anglican tradition and includes the creed and grace. Through collective worship, the children are offered an opportunity to share in the Christian prayer and values taught by Jesus.

The learners at Priory Church in Wales school enjoy the school's culture of learning. The youngest learners sit happily in the reading corner where they choose a Children's Bible to look at. Older learners enjoy contemplating upon complex, biblical concepts both in class with their teachers and with their Vicar when they visit the Cathedral. This holistic introduction to theology is learner-centered and the outcome can be seen in learners who are beginning to be curious about belief and faith. The learners are confident and express their own ideas and thoughts, having a genuine interest in philosophy and theology. The school ensures prayer and reflection is offered as part of the school day. The learner-led prayer group is attended by children of all ages from across the school, who enjoy choosing prayers to read to their friends. The school describe their Christian ethos as a golden thread which reflects the teaching of 'treat others how you would want to be treated yourself'. The positive impact of this ethos is evident throughout all aspects of life in the school and the school's extensive work in the community.

The effectiveness of religion, values and ethics

The learning culture within Priory Church in Wales schools is well established, encouraging a spiritual approach to learning across all Areas of Learning. This approach aligns well with the Church in Wales curriculum guidance, encouraging and celebrating creative, compassionate learning. The pedagogy of enquiry is used effectively throughout Priory Church in Wales school. Early on, learners of RVE are encouraged to engage with the awe and wonder of nature through forest school and enthusiastically engage with life as a process and explore the lives of the birds and animals, building nests in Forest School and creating a group tableau to explore animal narratives and consider dilemmas.

Further along learners explore the narrative of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem through engaging with 'the hopes and dreams' of people who were witnesses. Imagination is used to stimulate discussion of differing perspectives, including that of Mary and of the Roman soldier. Emotional and religious literacy is evident throughout the whole school, learners articulate and engage well with narrative and text. Learners speak of how they value having the opportunity to ask searching questions in RVE. An example is of the critical engagement with the challenging concept of 'sin'. This is described by one learner as 'something that can be both good and bad, it is part of being human. If we learn from it

that is good'. Older learners choose faiths they wish to explore in more depth. This has resulted in some older learners developing an interest in researching in depth the religious and philosophical belief of Taoism and working to create through Minecraft an interfaith landscape which includes the Christian church and the sacred Bodhi Tree of Buddha. The school is developing its curriculum design through integrating RVE sub lenses more fully into their pedagogy as they collaboratively develop understanding of the requirements of the Church in Wales Supporting Guidance for RVE.

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

The effective leadership of Priory VA Church in Wales primary school is realised through dedication and commitment. The impact of the Governing Body's strategic vision is evident throughout the school community and beyond into the wider community. Through compassionate leadership and the dedication of all staff, each individual learner is known, understood and valued. The staff team work diligently to ensure all learners are given the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and values necessary to support their unique learning journey.

Relationships are key to the successful realisation of the school's ambitious vision. The leadership team work tirelessly to develop their compassionate approach into the wider community. A successful outcome of the school's community focus is the Swap Shop, developed in partnership with the Green Man Trust. This has enabled and empowered families to work together to offer a system of reciprocal support. In addition, the funded family liaison officer has enabled the school to develop strong links from within the local community, enabling a culture where families in need can be offered professional assistance.

The newly formed Governing Body understands that strong governance is key to ensuring the work of Priory VA school is fully supported. This will enable the school community to continue to flourish. The school is keen to reflect the Church in Wales vision for RVE within Curriculum for Wales. The Governing Body of Priory Church in Wales VA school supports the vision of the Church within the local community and within the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon. Their aim now is to build capacity and to collaborate further in order to empower Priory Church in Wales School to aspire to a successful future viewed through a Christian lens.

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