

Section 50 Inspection of Church in Wales Schools Report

Wick and Marcross Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Street,

Wick, Cowbridge,

CF71 7QE

Diocese: Llandaff

Local authority: Vale of Glamorgan.

Dates of inspection: March 17th, 2026.

Date of last inspection: February 2019

School's unique reference number: 673 3321

Headteacher: Mrs Ceri Thomas

Inspector's name and number: Mr Neil Roberts B.Ed.

School context

Wick and Marcross Voluntary Aided Primary School, situated in the village of Wick, near Cowbridge, is an English medium school. There are 127 full time learners on roll with an additional 15 part time nursery learners. The school is organised into six classes plus afternoon only nursery provision, with two mixed age classes. In addition to the Headteacher, there are 5 full-time teachers and 2 part-time teachers. The school employs 4 full-time and 1 part-time learning support assistants. There are also 3 agency learning support assistants to support the needs of additional learning needs (ALN) learners. 50% of teachers are new within the last 3 years. The school has identified 5.4% of learners as having ALN. The percentage of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM) is 17.69%. Attendance for the last academic year was 95.4%

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wick and Marcross V.A. as a Church in Wales school.

“Walking in Jesus’s footsteps, We Learn, We Play, We Care, We Pray “

Wick and Marcross Church in Wales School is a safe, caring and inclusive Christian place of learning. The school is proud of its established Christian culture and heritage. The very strong, nurturing relationships that exist across the school promote a deeply embedded ethos of love and mutual respect for one another, that permeate all that it sets out to achieve and enables it to function very well as a thriving Christian community. The school's Christian vision is entrenched in its vision statement: **“Our Church School develops a distinctive Christian character which makes God’s love and presence made known to the world. It is a place of mission and witness to the Gospel”**. Gospel values are at the centre of all aspects of school life. This vision, alongside core Christian values, shapes the thinking of the school and influences the context for learning. Christian

values are lived out by learners, staff and governors. There is a strong sense that by working collaboratively, the school community will learn the importance of Christian values and their influence on their lives through regular, spiritual and meaningful worship and daily prayer. At the start of the school year all learners participate in a two-week led project that roots the school in its Christian foundations, culminating in a whole school prayer festival. An enriched curriculum which contains well planned, purposeful and engaging religion, values and ethics (RVE) experiences helps learners to live as ethically informed individuals. Learners are very well supported by all adults to achieve their full potential, develop a positive self-image and recognise their uniqueness in God's eyes.

Established strengths

- The Christian vision and leadership of the Headteacher which is very well supported by staff and governors.
- The commitment shown to the care and nurture of all learners based on strong Christian principles.
- Effective and imaginative planning for RVE, together with quality teaching and learning experiences.
- Well established links between the school and the Ministry area which contribute positively to the spiritual development of learners.

Recommendations

- To review and refine the pilot assessment tracking to ensure the school effectively tracks learners' attainment across a range of RVE skills.
- To involve the Pupil Voice Faith Group in relocating and re-establishing the outdoor area as a focus for prayer and reflection.
- To share the school's good practice and achievements and further develop links with other Church in Wales schools and the Diocese.

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

Wick and Marcross Church in Wales School has a strong Christian ethos that underpins the life of the school. It provides a secure and stimulating learning environment, which impacts positively on the health and wellbeing of staff and learners. The school aims to serve its learners 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. Excellent relationships exist between the school and the Heritage Coast Ministry Area. Through their regular visits to the school, clergy support and promote the spiritual development of both staff and learners. Learning experiences help to reinforce learners' understanding of the importance of contributing positively to their community. Considerable importance is focused on developing positive values and attitudes. As a result, learners demonstrate pride in their school and locality.

A feature of the school is its strong family ethos where love and respect for one another are evident. Relationships are founded on a clear sense of understanding and care for others. There is an emphasis on recognising and celebrating diversity.

All stakeholders feel well cared for. Learners are nurtured within a praise culture and there is a natural focus on pastoral care. Each child is valued as a unique member of the school family and guided and inspired to reach their full potential. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and are provided with opportunities to contribute to their learning experiences. The curriculum provides activities to develop a wide range of skills and talents alongside their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Learners are stimulated and engaged. They enjoy the experiences provided for them.

Christian values are at the core of the school and are embedded in its daily life. The Christian nature of the school promotes excellent and positive behaviour based on the code provided in the Bible through Jesus's teachings. The school's Relationship and Behaviour Policy effectively promotes the importance of relationships in establishing a calm and purposeful community. Learners are very supportive of each other and demonstrate a good understanding of the differing needs of their peers. Older learners have especially caring attitudes towards younger children. Learner voice is an essential and influential part of school life and contributes significantly to the Christian culture of the school. Learners take on leadership roles through several committees, actively contributing and organising activities and projects while developing key skills. They are able to articulate the impact that the school's values have on their lives and relate them to Biblical teaching. The act of Christian service is developed through participation in a range of charitable projects, for example, the No Card Christmas charity appeal for the Oasis refugee support, litter picks and bulb planting for the Wick sustainability group and planting 100 trees at Little West Farm. National and international appeals are also regularly supported.

In June 2025, the school was privileged to have been the first school in Wales to have been awarded Christian Aid's Global Neighbourhood Award. Notably, the assessor stated that "The school's vision of learning, playing, caring and praying is lived out through its strong commitment to global citizenship"

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community.

Collective Worship takes place daily and follows a distinctly Christian structure, carefully planned to cover a wide range of themes with a clear emphasis on Christian values and significant Christian festivals. The school endeavours to ensure that all acts of worship are inclusive, spiritual and educational. Worship is valued as a special occasion which provides all members of the school community with an opportunity to gather together as one Christian family, providing a distinct and unifying focus for the start of each day, giving learners an opportunity to reflect and share praise. Worship makes an important contribution to the Christian status and ethos of the school. As well as having a Christian focus, worship helps to develop an awareness that life involves choices of belief, attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Festivals from other cultures are drawn upon and celebrated to deepen learners' understanding of shared values and are underpinned by the school's Christian values.

Acts of worship reflect broad Anglican traditions and practices, enabling learners to become familiar with the customs and practices of the church and helping to gain an understanding of the nature and scope of worship itself. Liturgical colours are

used on the altar, and the worship table is set with a Bible, cross and candle to symbolise the Trinity. A candle is lit to signify the beginning of worship and extinguished at the end. Children prepare for worship by entering the hall quietly and respectfully. They listen attentively, respond well when questioned, and participate enthusiastically when invited to do so. Learners sing very well and with obvious pleasure. Learners are confident when leading worship. Their spiritual development is enhanced through leading worship. When planning worship, learners use a worship planner to collate their ideas and decide the form the act of worship should take. All members of staff attend and lead worship, reinforcing the importance to the whole school family. Clergy from the Ministry Area also lead worship weekly, ensuring that the school experiences a variety of worship types and styles. These occasions have included Lent reflections, Pilgrimage, Experiencing Easter through Holy Week, Carols on the yard, Remembrance reflection in the school garden and Diocesan worship at Llandaff cathedral. The school's strong relationship with the church is reflected in its worship provision. Acts of worship are not restricted to the school building. Learners and staff are regular visitors to St. James's church to share in worship with parents and members of the local community to celebrate important Christian festivals.

Prayer has a prominent place across the school. There are many valuable opportunities for personal prayer and reflection during the school day. Reflection areas can be visited by learners independently. Younger children use the prayer characters from Understanding Christianity as a means of support. Older learners often compose their own prayers which they often read during worship. Learners enjoy participating in worship and are confident to discuss issues which may arise. They demonstrate a broad knowledge of Biblical material and show a good understanding of the underlying moral messages.

Wick and Marcross V.A. School has a positive and embedded process of Collective Worship that is well structured and relevant to its aims, vision and Christian ethos.

The effectiveness of Religion, values and ethics

As a Voluntary Aided school with a well-established learning culture, the school encourages a spiritual approach across all Areas of Learning. This approach aligns well with the Church in Wales curriculum guidance and the locally agreed syllabus, encouraging and celebrating creative, compassionate learning. The pedagogy of enquiry is used very effectively throughout the school, focusing particularly on the rich, distinctive and diverse culture of Wales. This celebration and underpinning of diversity is fundamental to the ethos of the school and determines its approach to the teaching of RVE. The school aims to promote the understanding and respect for all religions, beliefs and non-religious world views. This approach celebrates a creative and compassionate education that embraces and empowers, ensuring that learners are supported to engage with matters of "purpose, faith and belief", and can fulfil their roles as valued members of society ready to play their part in life as ethically informed citizens. Learners are encouraged to develop a systematic knowledge of Cynefin through the school's curriculum provision and also through the landscape, music, art and literature of Wales. They engage well in the teaching of RVE, which highlights the teachings of Jesus and their relevance to them.

The school has developed a three yearly cycle inquiry model when developing its approach to teaching RVE. This approach is very well supported by rigorous, effective and imaginative planning procedures and provision is regularly and collaboratively reviewed.

The school demonstrates that the implicit teaching of RVE links to the wider experiences that learners encounter across the whole curriculum, likening it as a gateway to learning. Learners are provided with opportunities to reflect on what they have learnt through other areas of learning and experience. For example, texts with an environmental focus link closely to work as stewards of God's creation. Very effective use is made of the school Forest School provision, which fosters independence and creativity. At the conclusion of each inquiry unit, learners are encouraged to reflect and take action in one of four ways: direct action, indirect action, advocacy or research. This approach empowers them as ethically informed citizens to develop their understanding of their roles and the impact they can have on our world.

Very good use has been made of the advice and support of the Church in Wales RVE advisor who has shared her expertise with staff to plan effectively for both explicit and implicit teaching. This has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and also learning experiences. The carefully planned programme of staff training has focused on ensuring that staff fully understand what makes good teaching and learning while also promoting skill development.

The teaching of RVE is consistently good across the school and most learners show a good understanding through an inquiry led model.

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

Wick and Marcross V.A. school is very well led by the Headteacher who is at the forefront of the drive to promote the school's development as a Church School. Her passionate and inspirational leadership has set a clear strategic direction for the school, ensuring that the Christian nature of the school has been communicated and modelled to learners, staff, parents/carers, governors and visitors alike. She has high expectations and her vision has permeated throughout the school family and wider community. The staff and governors share this vision and work effectively together in promoting the Christian ethos and values of the school. All leaders provide a clear sense of direction and are involved in the strategic planning processes. The School Development Plan (SDP) is an accurate, open and honest planning tool which supports school improvement through carefully planned incremental change. The prime focus is on the unity of the school family- an ethos where all learners are equally valued and nurtured in a secure, loving and happy environment through the promotion of Christian values.

Members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are fully supportive of the school's aims and strategies. They possess good knowledge and expertise to develop and deliver a comprehensive and stimulating curriculum and a determination to provide interesting and meaningful learning experiences for all

learners. They work very well as a united team. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together for the benefit of all learners.

The Governing Body play a full and active part in establishing and articulating the strategic direction for the school. There are regular opportunities for governors to take part in learning walks, participate in lessons, complete book scrutinies, talk and listen to learners and staff and monitor school improvement. They are challenging and provide valued support, advice and encouragement. Governors have a good understanding of the nature, purpose and vision of a Church in Wales school and are fully aware of their statutory responsibilities. They work with staff to ensure that the school's continued development is a high priority.

The development and nurture of all staff members is a strength of the school and plays an important role in the school's capacity for school improvement. The school works well with the Diocese and Church in Wales to discuss plans for key developments.

Parents and guardians are very supportive of the school. Communication between the school and parents/carers is very good. Parents/carers are very appreciative of the school's open door policy and feel welcomed when they visit the school to meet with staff and governors. They are positive and praiseworthy about the school's stimulating learning environment and complimentary when discussing the school's warm and nurturing ethos and the caring and attentive attitude of all members of staff. Members of the village community are also very supportive of the school and are regularly invited to attend events at the school and worship at school and St. James's church. Leaders have recognised the importance of developing close links with local residents and several provide valuable contributions to school life.

The Headteacher, staff and governors work effectively to promote the Christian ethos, vision and values of Wick and Marcross Voluntary Aided School. They ensure that the curriculum, (including RVE), Collective Worship and other important aspects pertinent to the status of a Church in Wales School, are informed by distinct Christian values that contribute positively to learners' good behaviour and attitudes together with their spiritual, moral, social and academic development.

The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	Yes
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The school meets the statutory requirement for religion, values and ethics	Yes
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Religion, values and ethics is objective, Critical and pluralistic	Yes
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