



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

URN: 132793

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Archbishop Malcom McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool.

Date: 8th and 9th November 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

1

Catholic life and mission (p.2)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.....

1

Religious education (p.4)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

1

Collective worship (p.6)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

✓

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

✓

The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The leadership is inspirational, the children at St Matthew's truly do come first in every decision.
- Relationships are a strength of the school, at all levels which enriches a warm and welcoming Catholic environment.
- There is a strong sense of community and belonging, wherein pupils and parents are proud to be part of this school family.
- Pastoral support for pupils, staff and families is exemplary.
- The learning environment is a rich tapestry of the children's interpretation of their Catholic life and mission.

What the school needs to improve:

- Consistent use of the language of assessment across the school
- Introduce even more creative ways of teaching and learning in religious education.
- To ensure that the selected scripture for prayer and liturgy is age and stage appropriate.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

St Matthew's Primary School is an affirming and welcoming Catholic community. The mission 'Love, Learn and Shine Together with Jesus' is known, lived and embraced by pupils and fully endorsed by governors, staff and parents. Christ truly is at the centre of this school and positive relationships permeate across the school at every level. Pupils feel happy, safe, loved and cared for. Pastoral support is a strength of the school. This offer is not just for pupils but staff and families too. The attentive pastoral care they receive illustrates what it means to be part of a loving Christian school family. Support is explicit and concrete and demonstrates true commitment to the most vulnerable, pupils, staff and families. Pupils actively seek to lead, respond to local and global concerns, and are able to talk about their role whilst valuing greatly their Catholic identity. Examples of this include class Cafod World gifts, Macmillan Coffee mornings, CLIC Sargent; initiatives which serve the common good through which pupils clearly understand that they are following the teachings of Jesus. Catholic Social teaching is a particular strength of the school, which is outward looking, and proactively finding exciting ways to help others. The school community food bank is a living example of this.

Catholic life and mission provision is outstanding because there is a lived sense of community. The mission statement has recently been reviewed and because of the involvement of staff, parents,

pupils, governors and the Archdiocese, the mission is fully understood and owned by all. 'Love, learn and shine with Jesus' was carefully thought through with the understanding that the pupils need to be loved before they can learn. This is very evident at St Matthew's. Staff are totally committed to all that the school has to offer and as a result the school excels at being a deep-rooted Catholic community, faithful to the Word of God. There is a lived culture of welcome, valuing and supporting all, without exception. Staff pride themselves on being strong role models and are a consistent witness to their faith from generation to generation. Relationships, sex and health education is expertly planned to meet all the statutory requirements and the content is bespoke to the school. Scripture for teaching and learning of religious education is carefully selected, which builds on complexity and allows the pupils to celebrate holistically.

Leaders and governors truly ensure that the children at St Matthew's really are at the centre of every decision made. Leaders and Governors are joyful and energized; they are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel. They are dedicated and have a shared vision for the school. Leaders support Archdiocese priorities, lead by example and make a highly significant contribution. Leaders ensure that harmonious partnerships are nurtured, well established and greatly valued. Quality policies are in place to ensure that the highest level of pastoral care is provided, with a concrete commitment to family life which staff value greatly and appreciate. Parish links at St Matthew's are well established, fruitful and flourishing. Both school and parish value the support given to one another. Governors have a real presence and fulfil their strategic roles effectively, supporting and challenging the leadership team. Leaders embrace that parents are the first educators of their children and school is highly successful in engaging parents and carers. Parents are overwhelmingly grateful for this support and the mutual respect is obvious to all. Inclusivity is evident and all pupils know that they are unique, valued and treated equally.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....	1
Pupil outcomes How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....	1
Provision The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....	1
Leadership How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....	1

Pupils at St Matthew's consistently achieve the best possible outcomes in all year groups and phases. Pupils are articulate and religiously literate. They are clearly interested in their learning and confidently discuss key concepts using subject specific vocabulary. Pupils take pride in their work, and their books are to be celebrated. Pupils engage well and demonstrate a deep investment and ownership of their education. As a result, they are able to reflect with insight and curiosity. Independent learning is embedded, which enables pupils to concentrate for long periods. Work across the school is, without exception, of a very high quality. This is celebrated in the whole school Come and See display. Pupil outcomes in the early years and foundation stage are exemplary. All areas of provision are used to maximise the children's learning in religious education. Pupils clearly enjoy religious education because they are highly motivated, know when they are doing well and are committed to improvement. Pupils appreciate the efforts of staff to make lessons interesting and varied. Self-assessment is embedded into all subjects and therefore from a young age pupils can confidently articulate what they have learned. The progress that pupils make is due to staff building on prior knowledge, so that they know more and remember more.

Teachers at St Matthew's have high levels of confidence when teaching religious education. They are deeply committed and communicate this effectively to pupils. The early years and foundation stage has successfully adopted the new Religious Education Directory and their floor book is a celebration of quality learning in this stage. Teachers questioned skillfully, adapted explanations and tasks for all pupils. There was a clear culture of celebration. Praise and feedback is relevant and affirming. Teachers at St Matthew's have an acute understanding of the impact of religious education and recognise its place in the spiritual and moral development of all pupils. High quality resources are used effectively. Each lesson had a clear moment of reflection. Planning is sequential,

reflecting precise knowledge of individual pupils. Lessons consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge, so allowing them to internalise learning in their own minds.

Religious Education at St Matthew's is the core of core subjects. Leaders ensure religious education has full parity with other core subjects. This parity is evident in timetabling, marking, staffing and resourcing. The school confidently and effectively delivers the Come and See programme. It is implemented with fidelity. Thoughtful planning meets the needs of different groups of pupils ensuring each phase of learning is enriching the previous phase. Leaders and governors ensure that continued professional development is ongoing, supportive and relevant to the needs of the school community. The experienced subject lead has an unequivocal and inspiring understanding of outstanding teaching. He uses high levels of expertise to ensure outstanding teaching across the school. He shares his expertise humbly and willingly with clarity and kindness. This passionate subject lead has made a significant contribution to the Archdiocese and cluster groups. Self-evaluation at St Matthew's is honest and robust. Monitoring and analysis is used strategically, which in turn leads to outstanding outcomes. The subject leader has a full overview of what is happening in religious education across the whole school, through well focused monitoring.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

Prayer and liturgy are deeply rooted, firmly embedded and a natural part of daily life at St Matthew's. Planned and shared prayer experiences engage pupils and lead them to full and active participation. Pupils share their worship through song, liturgical music, prayer and reflective silence. They are extremely reverent, prayerful and respectful. Pupils work collaboratively with their teacher, in activities appropriate to their age and stage, playing an active role in prayer and liturgy. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of the liturgical year and have a vast array of prayer experiences to draw upon. It is evident that the pupils experience and celebrate a wide range of prayer and liturgy. Through prayer, pupils can and are encouraged to reflect upon their own lives and the lives of others. Pupils can articulate to whom and why they are praying. They can talk about how to improve these experiences. Prayer is discussed with ease and pupils talk naturally and in detail about what helps them, and they use this to demonstrate their discipleship.

Prayer and liturgy at St Matthew's is well planned and follows the liturgical year. It is integral to gatherings. Daily prayer is engaging, respectful and reverent and is naturally embedded into the rhythm of school life. Staff are role models of exemplary practice. School works hard to enrich a flourishing partnership with the parish, so enriching the pupils' experiences. These links are sustained, sincere and valued. Prayer spaces around school, in classrooms and outside are used creatively, imaginatively and cherished by all. Staff are well skilled at creating prayerful experiences, which make links to the mission, their own lived experiences and current events. The school offers a range of liturgies throughout the year including a Mass to celebrate the feast of St Matthew. They provide many opportunities throughout the year to celebrate Mass as a school family. The headteacher, senior leaders and teachers are inspiring role models of exemplary practice and expertly support the development of pupil led prayer and reflection.

Prayer and liturgy have been given a high priority in continuing professional development. Quality support and guidance helps all staff understand and promote the centrality of prayer and liturgy at St Matthew's. Leaders are imaginative in their development of space for prayer and liturgy. Leaders' plan and deliver a timetable to celebrate the Eucharist regularly both in school and in the parish. These demarcate significant moments in the lives of the children and the liturgical year. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is carefully and thoughtfully formulated and implemented. The subject leader is skilled in facilitating others in the delivery of affirming prayer and liturgy. There is a detailed, comprehensive long-term plan that is bespoke to the needs of all staff. All staff are well supported and feel confident to lead worship. They are committed to taking an active role in the ministry of the parish. Resources for prayer and liturgy are of a high quality. The strategic provision in the school budget is generous and reflects the commitment of leaders and governors to sustaining high quality prayer experiences for their school community. Prayer and liturgy are regularly evaluated and the voice of the pupil and the whole school are valued and considered. The school calendar clearly identifies holy days of obligation and provides opportunities for the sacraments of reconciliation and eucharist to be celebrated by the whole school community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Matthew's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	132793
Full postal address of the school	Queens Drive, Walton, Liverpool L4 8UA
School phone number	0151 226 1871
Name of head teacher or principal	Claire Sime
Chair of governing board	Deacon Ronald Burke
School Website	www.matthews.school.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Not Applicable
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Archdiocese of Liverpool
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	October 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Joanne Harrison

Lead inspector

Lyn Rawlinson

Team inspector

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement