



St Matthew's RC Primary School

Alnwick Grove, Jarrow, Tyne and Wear, NE32 5YT

School Unique Reference Number: **108721**

Inspection dates:	11 – 12 September 2018
Lead inspector:	Carolyn Duffy

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Matthew's RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- St Matthew's is a vibrant, welcoming and nurturing school community. Faith, prayer and spirituality are at the very centre of the school, truly reflecting its mission statement and Catholic ethos.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because all who are involved in the school experience a living faith. The wellbeing of every pupil and family is at the heart of this faith community. Pupils enthuse about the many and varied opportunities which they benefit from.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding because it is central to the life of the school. Guided by skilled and committed staff, pupils plan and lead worship.
- Religious Education is outstanding. Strong teaching and good subject knowledge ensure learning and progress is good or better across the school.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Matthew's is an oversubscribed, average sized primary school with the vast majority of pupils from a white British background. Very few are from ethnic minority groups.
- The school serves the parish of St Matthew's, Jarrow and there are approximately 85% baptised Catholic pupils.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is low.
- Approximately 20% of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the provision for Collective Worship by:
 - extending the range of resources, knowledge and understanding for creative prayer.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are involved in evaluating and shaping the school mission statement and in determining how the school develops and extends provision.
- Pupils are proud of their mission statement, 'Let their light shine', and describe a wide range of occasions where they have the opportunity to live this out. Examples of charitable work include Tin Can Tuesday, Be a Goodie, Wear a Hoodie and various national charitable causes. Evidence of this is displayed and celebrated throughout school. Pupils confidently talk about these opportunities.
- Pupils fully understand and apply the mission statement in their own lives. A year six pupil described how he was able to make the decision not to retaliate as he thought about the mission statement and its meaning. He described how being a pupil in St Matthew's will influence him as he moves on to secondary education.
- Behaviour of pupils is exemplary and pupils talk easily about how they deal with any issues or problems which arise. Their sense of personal responsibility is evident and pupils are able to describe how they try to do their best for their parents and teachers. Pupils described how adults support them if they are in trouble or help them to sort things out when they have disagreements.
- All pupils are proud of the school and their own religious beliefs, whatever they may be. A pupil described how she was a member of a local Christian community but loved supporting her friends who made their First Holy Communion. She in turn, felt supported by them, feeling that they were genuinely interested in her church.
- Pupils are enthusiastically involved in a wide range of parish and diocesan celebrations and talk animatedly about the Year of Oscar Romero and the Year of Mary. They enjoy learning about and participating in activities beyond lessons which enrich their life and understanding.
- The school actively seeks to identify and reflect a wide variety of world cultures and faiths. These differences are celebrated through exploration of other faiths as well as a wide range of displays such as exchanging symbols of Christmas across Europe.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- St Matthew's is a dedicated and tangible faith community where the school mission statement is celebrated and lived by all. Parents, pupils, staff and governors are fully committed to the school and see the mission statement as a living example of how everyone is treated. References are made to the mission statement in liturgies, lessons and around the school in displays. One parent spoke movingly about how the school reached out to her before her children started school, making her family feel welcomed and valued.
- Throughout the school, in classrooms, corridors and shared spaces, there are concrete and imaginative signs of the school's Catholic character. For example, pupils have completed art work focusing on The Year of Mary. The Stations of the Cross displayed in the school hall, and a special bench dedicated to a former pupil, are used frequently by pupils for reflection.
- Staff and parents are deeply committed to ensuring that pupils experience the love of God. The headteacher described 'children and Christ' at the heart of the school and all decisions are made on that basis. The leadership team described the school as providing an evangelising role whereby parents are invited to 'tap into and experience' the Catholic life and ethos. As a result there are a significant number of adults including parents and pupils who have started the Journey of Faith.
- The pastoral needs of all members of the school community are given the highest priority; a counsellor is employed who works both with pupils and their families. The school does all that it can to ensure that pupils can access and benefit from all provision. One parent gave a moving testimony to other parents about how the headteacher had ensured that all obstacles were overcome in order that her child was able to fully participate in school activities and events.
- All policies including behaviour, relationship and sex education (RSE) and personal, health, and social education (PHSE) are rooted in Gospel values and have been planned and implemented in conjunction with parents, priests and partnership schools to support pupils.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The school's leadership is outstanding. The headteacher, together with staff and governors, portray a heartfelt commitment to Catholic education and the Church's mission for all pupils and their families. Parents describe the headteacher as a true representative of the Good Shepherd with Jesus in his heart. They describe a 'real sense of joy' when dealing with him and feel that he embodies an authentic Catholicity which is then evident in every aspect of the school's work.
- The school's self-evaluation is coherent and rigorous. Staff work closely together to monitor and evaluate the strengths of the school and analyse the impact of provision. Planning is conducted on an annual cycle and governors are skilful and effective in their challenge and support role. All stakeholders contribute to the self-evaluation process which is clearly focused on the Catholic Life of the school.
- New staff are inducted effectively into St Matthew's where a high priority is placed on their ability to make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. Expectations are

explicitly shared and relationships are developed to support and encourage new staff in order that they understand both what it means to work in a Catholic school and to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school.

- As a result of very positive and welcoming relationships, parents are highly engaged with school, including those who may have traditionally found that difficult. They fully understand and support the school's mission. Parents reported that pupils are energised by the school and talk of belonging, being loved and cared for and doing the same for others who may be less fortunate.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Collective Worship engages all pupils. They respond with deep thought, enthusiasm and reflection. They are reverent when listening to the Word of God and when thinking about what that means for them in today's world. After listening to Mark's Gospel (7:31-37), pupils were able to make links to what healing means. They were able to identify how as Christians they too can be healers in school and in their homes.
- Pupils work confidently in liturgy groups to plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship. This is well embedded and pupils take increasingly more responsibility as they move through the school. Pupils are experienced in following a format and are confident in using music, scripture, silence and religious artefacts in their liturgies with increasing skill.
- Throughout the school, there is an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, special feasts and liturgical colours. Pupils were able to explain that the colours on the prayer tables will change depending upon the liturgical season.
- Respect for other faiths is also central to St Matthew's and pupils reflect sensitively and with genuine enthusiasm when celebrating other world faith festivals.
- Pupils joyfully embrace all aspects of Collective Worship which has a strong impact on their personal growth and development. Recently pupils made written applications to become an apostle of Jesus, directly connecting their experience of worship into a real-life situation.
- Pupils' heartfelt response to liturgies is celebrated in photographs, drawings and portfolios around the school. One major display highlights the many ways in which pupils' are following in Jesus' footsteps whilst another evidences pupils' examples of love in everyday life.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The headteacher and senior leaders describe Collective Worship as central to everything in school. Parents and pupils are highly engaged, respectful, enthusiastic and joyful. They are keen for even more opportunities to be involved in the prayer life of the school. Opportunities for pupils to be involved in Collective Worship take place throughout the week as a whole school and in class liturgies.
- All Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The school uses Statements to live by as the basis for Collective Worship and each class takes the message

from the liturgy back to their classroom. It becomes the focus for prayer and reflection throughout the week and is placed in a prominent position for all to see, read and reflect upon. Pupils readily describe how this influences their behaviour as they think about it and try to act on it daily.

- Senior leaders, together with other staff, are excellent role models in liturgies. They lead well prepared liturgies and pray reverently using a variety of resources and styles to engage and inspire pupils. Collective Worship forms the heart of every school celebration and pupils cherish these times.
- Staff also pray together daily in a variety of ways and have opportunities for their own spiritual development and reflective time together. This spiritual time is an essential part of their ongoing formation as leaders of Catholic education.
- Opportunities for parents, governors and parishioners to share in Collective Worship with pupils are planned throughout the year and attendance is outstanding. Parents reported that these times are very moving and powerful for them when they see their own children so reverently engaged in worship. Recently parents were invited to a special liturgy where year six pupils and their reception buddies performed a liturgical dance together. Parents also reported that, 'there's a wonderfully calm and respectful atmosphere where children feel at one with Jesus'.
- Governors and senior leaders have been astute in their recruitment. Together with regular opportunities for training and sharing of good practice, staff have an excellent understanding and knowledge of the Church's liturgical heritage, and are skilled in promoting and modelling high quality liturgies for pupils.
- The Religious Education coordinator participates in diocesan training and regularly updates the staff on developments to promote or enhance liturgy. All staff are keen to share their experience and support each other in this inclusive school.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The headteacher and senior staff have a wide experience and excellent knowledge of how to plan and lead high quality Collective Worship and model outstanding practice to help develop the skills of their colleagues. All staff are continually supported in their spiritual and liturgical development.
- Provision has been made for all staff to benefit from training in worship and prayer using a variety of formats and resources. This has led to staff enriching their liturgies with imagery, music and artefacts to engage pupils and others.
- Daily opportunities for staff to pray and reflect together are voluntary but fully attended. This has resulted in exceptionally good and trusting relationships across the school workforce.
- Leaders and managers frequently monitor the quality of Collective Worship using a range of strategies and as a result, the quality of Collective Worship continues to enrich the school community.
- The views of parents and pupils are sought regularly and acted upon immediately. Parents have recently requested more opportunities to share in the school's prayer life and provision has already been made for this school year.
- As part of the appraisal process leaders ensure that all teachers have a target related to Collective Worship. Staff regularly provide feedback on their experiences and leaders value

this and act swiftly to improve and extend provision and opportunities for staff and pupils in school.

- Support for all staff to further their own knowledge and experience is given high priority. Time and resources are allocated to ongoing formation. Continuing professional development is given a high priority and appropriately resourced. In a recent staff meeting it was agreed to seek further training to develop creativity in prayer.
- Sacramental preparation is well embedded and in line with diocesan policy.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Behaviour for learning is exemplary; pupils are deeply committed to their learning, concentrate very well, are highly engaged and are rarely off task.
- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education. One year six pupil described learning in Religious Education as becoming, 'ever more interesting as you move through the school because you understand more deeply the stories and you can interpret them for today'.
- Good progress is made by almost all pupils as they move through the school and teachers have an excellent understanding of the strengths of pupils and plan creatively to extend their knowledge. There is little variation in the progress made by different groups within school.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further. One year four pupil described how, 'the teacher helps me improve by pointing out errors or writing a question in my book which I then answer'.
- As a result of interesting and enjoyable lessons, pupils develop a range of theological skills including the ability to ask deeper questions and to engage with religious ideas and apply them to their own lives. One parent described how her son's question triggered a family discussion on the nature of God, showing the depth of his learning.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.

- The majority of teaching in Religious Education is outstanding and ensures that pupils make good or better progress across key stages.
- Expectations are consistent and made explicit by knowledgeable teachers who are enthusiastic about Religious Education and pupils respond positively.
- Creativity in lessons is a strength of the school. During a recent debate pupils compared the story of Jacob and Essau with Mo Farah and his twin. This prompted some very mature discussions which had a profound impact on pupils thinking.
- Assessment for learning is evident in all lessons where teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and intervene appropriately to ensure good progress. Pupils are regularly involved in debate and challenged to deepen their understanding. As a result, teachers and managers have an excellent awareness of pupils prior learning and capabilities.

- Moderation takes place very frequently in school and between schools to ensure that standards are accurate and that marking is consistent across the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to improve or correct their work by responding to questions or challenges from teachers.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- The headteacher, together with the Religious Education coordinator, provides strong and effective leadership. Together with governors, they have conducted a wide range of monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes in Religious Education.
- The headteacher is very well respected by parents, pupils, staff and governors. He is deeply committed to ensuring that Religious Education is of the highest quality and that pupils benefit greatly from the provision offered.
- Evidence from a range of rigorous monitoring activities accurately informs the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. Leaders and managers ensure that all staff understand both strengths and areas for development leading to high quality teaching and learning.
- The Religious Education curriculum is imaginative and creative drawing on relevant topical issues to deepen pupils' understanding. Discussions with staff, pupils and parents show how Religious Education is not just limited to lessons but the whole school experience contributes to and complements the subject. Pupils described exploring issues raised in art lessons and wild about adventure mornings.
- Religious Education has a high profile in school as a result of the leadership. The learning environment is testimony to the wide range of opportunities and experiences offered to pupils. This enables them to understand the liturgical life of the Church as well as other religious and belief communities.
- Resourcing for Religious Education is given the highest priority and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Governors and senior leaders ensure that sacramental preparation is given the highest priority. As a result, there is a very close relationship with priest, teachers, parents and catechists who work effectively together to provide outstanding sacramental preparation.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**1****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

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The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**1**

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**1**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

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How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Matthew's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	108721
Local authority	South Tyneside
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
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