



St Matthew's Catholic Primary School

Highfield Lane, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 6EY

School Unique Reference Number: **141828**

Inspection dates: 09 – 10 June 2015

Lead inspector: Barbara Simpson

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School is a good Catholic school because:

- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the well-being and personal and spiritual development of each pupil is at the heart of the school's vision and the staff are united in implementing this across all areas of school life.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good because it is central to the life of the school and all pupils from a very young age are reverent and respectful during worship.
- The quality of Religious Education is good because pupils enjoy Religious Education, can explain its value and are keen to do well, leading to good progress in most lessons.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Pupils across the school are not yet skilled in planning and leading Collective Worship independently in a variety of forms.
- In Religious Education there are inconsistencies across the school in the range and variety of activities provided for pupils.
- In Religious Education there are inconsistencies in the quality of assessment, marking and feedback provided by teachers.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Matthew's is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in six classes, from nursery to year six. Some classes are of mixed age and the organisation varies from year to year.
- Almost all the pupils are from white British backgrounds.
- There are no pupils of other world faiths.
- The proportion of pupils with special needs is above average.
- Half of the teaching staff have been appointed in the last year.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education by:
 - Ensuring that marking provides clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.
 - Ensuring that pupils are given the time they need to respond to feedback in order to move their learning forward.
 - Developing the skills of leaders for Religious Education so that they are able to provide examples of outstanding practice across the school.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Developing opportunities for pupil involvement in planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship independently across the school.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- 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.

1

1

2

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

- Pupils are at the centre of the school's mission statement: 'Together we pray, play, work, learn and grow'. In fact, they are responsible for its recent rewording and have a good understanding of how to live it out through their actions. The mission statement is displayed prominently throughout the school.
- Pupils have a deep sense of belonging to their school family. They speak confidently of the school's Catholic character and what this means. 'We learn about how to behave properly from the Gospels.'
- Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of the liturgical calendar and the key events and celebrations of the Church's year, for example some classes had organised a Pentecost party and invited others to attend.
- Pupils enthusiastically take a leading role in activities which support the Catholic ethos of the school, parish and wider community, such as Mini Vinnies, a pilgrimage to Holy Island and supporting the 5p bus.
- St Matthews is an inclusive school. Pupils enthusiastically welcome newcomers and are very accepting of pupils with disabilities and difficulties.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary because pupils develop the skills of negotiation, tolerance and forgiveness.
- Pupils contribute to the monitoring and evaluation process through the 'pupil voice' process. They feel they are listened to and their suggestions acted on.

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

- The school's mission statement is central to the life of the school and is very evident in the warm welcome that all receive on entering the school, in displays and artwork around the school and in particular in relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves.
- Parents describe the school as 'a lovely, caring, nurturing school,' and a school where the ethos is 'implicit in everything'. They speak of feeling included whether they are Catholic or not.
- Clear policies are rooted in the teaching of the Catholic church and provide very high levels

of pastoral support to pupils and families. There are many examples of vulnerable families being supported and nurtured by the school. Work done through the Rainbows project is particularly effective and the headteacher is a diocesan committee member for Rainbows.

- The learning environment is a reflection of the school's Catholic character, evidenced through displays, artefacts and the creation of sacred spaces throughout the school. A newly developed prayer garden is valued by pupils, staff and parents.
- Statements to live by are prominently displayed throughout the school and are clearly used to help pupils to live in the way Jesus wants them to.
- Personal, social and health education programmes and relationship and sex education programmes are in place and refer explicitly to the teachings of the Catholic church.

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

- The headteacher has a clear understanding of Catholic education and the role of the Catholic school in the mission of the church. She acts as a positive role model and effectively monitors and promotes the Catholic Life of the school, with the support of governors.
- The school knows its strengths and areas for development very well, but as yet, formal monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school is only just being developed.
- The Religious Education subject leader is new to the post and has yet to develop the skills necessary for very effective leadership by example.
- The Catholic Life of the school is included in the performance management process of staff, when specific targets are set.
- Leaders and managers give high priority to the development of the Catholic Life of the school and seek out new ways to enhance it, supporting staff, parents and pupils in their faith journeys. They attempt to reach out to families who no longer practise their faith by encouraging them to take part in school liturgies, celebrations and Masses in school and in church.
- The school is constantly working on developing and enhancing links with the parish, supported by parents and carers, who are very supportive of the school's mission.
- Governors contribute to the leadership of the Catholic Life by challenging, supporting and having high expectations. Together with the headteacher they share their vision by living it and clearly articulating it, for example on the school website.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

- 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.

2

2

2

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

- St Matthew's is a very prayerful community. Collective Worship engages the interest of all the pupils and they respond enthusiastically.
- All pupils from nursery to year six participate with reverence and respect; they join in prayers with confidence and sing with great enthusiasm. They enjoy writing their own prayers too.
- Pupils know what constitutes the various elements of Collective Worship and are able to prepare and lead class worship with increasing confidence. Pupils said that they are now given more responsibility to organise liturgies and that they enjoy doing so, however some teachers still do not have the confidence to stand back and let the pupils lead.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of religious seasons and feasts, for example early years pupils recently celebrated Pentecost with a party and decorations.
- Pupils throughout the school are able to discuss what being part of a prayerful community means to them and Collective Worship contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Some classes enjoy using their prayer journals and the newly created prayer garden is greatly valued by pupils and well used.
- Pupils enthusiastically and respectfully talk about other world faiths that they have learned about in their Religious Education lessons.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Prayer is central to the life of St Matthew's and this is apparent when you enter the school as the entrance reflects the school as a place of worship.
- Opportunities for prayer are provided for staff either collectively at the start of meetings or on a voluntary basis during 'prayer of the day' in the school hall or during the daily spiritual reflection.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to pray in different forms and settings, e.g. using the prayer garden, keeping prayer journals and expressing prayer through liturgical dance.
- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship and the school ensures that it is regular and inclusive. Themes are based on the liturgical calendar, the scheme of work and current topics. Families are involved in pupils' religious development through the use of 'travelling cribs', 'prayer bags' and the 'Wednesday Word'.
- Parents greatly value and enjoy taking part in liturgies. They attend school Masses once a term but would like these to be more frequent. Attendance at liturgies and Masses is

actively encouraged by the school, although attendance is not huge, so leaders are always looking for ways to increase it.

- Acts of Collective Worship are very well resourced and planned using diocesan guidelines. The music coordinator has very effectively produced an index of music recordings appropriate for all themes and topics. This is a very useful resource which enhances Collective Worship across the school.

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

- The headteacher and senior leaders are enthusiastic and know how to plan and deliver good quality experiences of Collective Worship. They have a deeply rooted understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols and ensure that displays and artefacts around the school reflect this.
- Through the school's monitoring and evaluation systems, including formal monitoring of class worship, leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of Collective Worship.
- This system is underpinned by liturgical and spiritual development being part of the professional development cycle for leaders. Leaders are keen to continually improve the quality of provision of Collective Worship in all its forms.
- Leaders offer staff the opportunity for professional development in Collective Worship both in school and through the diocese and local Catholic cluster of schools. Response to these opportunities is good, having a significant effect on the spiritual life of the school.
- Leaders gather the views of pupils, staff and parents and carers, through questionnaires, regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship in school and respond appropriately.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school, taking part in Collective Worship and some contributing to its monitoring and evaluation.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- 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.

2

2

2

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

- Most pupils enjoy Religious Education and can explain its value. They understand that it is a core subject and are keen to do well. They work hard during lessons and behaviour for learning is excellent.
- Pupils spontaneously use a variety of religious vocabulary and are able to make links between their own lives and experiences and the life of Jesus. Reception class pupils are able to enthusiastically role-play stories from the gospels.
- Pupils in most classes acquire knowledge quickly and are able to identify links with previous learning. They are developing well in their knowledge and understanding, as well as in their ability to reflect on meaning and are able to consider the impact of religious ideas on their lives.
- All groups of pupils make good progress in Religious Education within lessons and over time, given their starting points.
- Pupils have an understanding of how well they have done and how to improve, although most are not aware of the levels of attainment achieved in pieces of work.

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

- The quality of teaching is never less than good and some is outstanding. Therefore most pupils and groups of pupils make good progress over time.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use diocesan plans and guidance to good effect. Tasks are often differentiated although some differentiation is by outcome.
- The school has a good range of resources and strategies to promote learning and teachers usually use time well. Lessons observed during the inspection included very effective use of information and communications technology, paired, individual and group work and role-play, however the range of activities is not consistent across the school.
- Most teachers have high expectations and plan a variety of activities, as a result, pupils concentrate well and the presentation of written work is usually of a high standard. Occasionally teaching loses sight of the learning objective and therefore pupils lose concentration. Pupils usually respond articulately and reflectively to teachers' questions.
- Additional adult support is used well, ensuring good progress for most pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
- Marking and feedback are carried out regularly, but not consistently across the school. This is becoming more effective; especially where feedback is of high quality and pupils are given time to improve. Pupils are increasingly using 'I can' statements to good effect but

they are used not consistently across the school.

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

- Senior leaders are committed, knowledgeable, enthusiastic and well informed about current developments in Religious Education.
- Leaders ensure that their vision for Religious Education is shared through staff meetings, briefings and staff attendance at diocesan training events. As a result Religious Education has a high profile in the school and is well planned to meet the needs of all the pupils.
- Religious Education compares favourably with other core subjects in terms of staffing, resources and time; although very few staff have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Leaders are, however committed to providing training when there are staff changes.
- Through a range of systematic and rigorous monitoring activities, including lesson observation, work and planning scrutiny and moderation, leaders have an accurate picture of achievement.
- Robust tracking and analysis provide a firm basis for diagnosing strengths and areas for development. Planning for improvement is therefore based upon sound evidence and data and the school is well placed to further improve and support teaching.
- Governors are increasingly holding leaders to account for performance in Religious Education and becoming more closely involved in monitoring activities.
- Pupils have access to good quality sacramental preparation led by parish catechists in the parish and supported by the school.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**2****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

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

1

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

1

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

2

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**2**

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

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

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

2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**2**

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

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

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

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Matthew's Catholic Primary School
Unique reference number	141828
Local authority	Northumberland
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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Date of previous school inspection	July 2010
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