

Inspection of St Matthew's Catholic Primary School, Jarrow

Alnwick Grove, Jarrow, Tyne and Wear NE32 5YT

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Eve Alderson. This school is part of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Brendan Tapping, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daniel O'Mahoney.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Matthew's Catholic Primary School, Jarrow under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Matthew's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness before it opened as St Matthew's Catholic Primary School, Jarrow as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive, personally and academically, at St Matthew's Catholic Primary School. The school aims to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to 'let their light shine'. Pupils are able to talk about what this means to them as individuals. Pupils are proud to be themselves and to celebrate the things that make themselves special, but know that while other people may be different, they are equally special.

This culture of respect permeates all aspects of the school. When issues arise, pupils and adults work together effectively to overcome them. Behaviour in lessons and outside is calm. Relationships are warm and respectful. This is a happy school where attendance is high.

Pupils learn effectively. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standards in Year 6 national assessments has increased over the last few years and is well above national averages. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in subjects that are not part of national tests are impressive.

Where pupils have potential barriers to being successful, including special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the school is highly effective at working with families to overcome these. Where pupils need extra support to help them learn, appropriate strategies are identified and used effectively. Pupils leave this school well prepared for the challenges and adventures ahead. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their appreciation of the work of the school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils benefit from exceptional personal development opportunities that allow them to be actively involved in the life of the school and the community. For example, members of the eco-group lead a 'cut the carbon' programme. A wide array of well-attended after-school clubs, including karate, enhance pupils' personal development. One pupil explained the impact of these opportunities: 'I used to be shy, now I am brave.'

Through assemblies and taught lessons, pupils develop a strong knowledge of issues such as healthy friendships, protected characteristics and democracy. Pupils talk about how they apply this knowledge to their everyday lives. They have a very strong understanding of the role that faith plays in peoples' lives.

The school ensures that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in their locality and beyond. For example, when new homes were being built in the area, the school invited the building company to deliver assemblies about the dangers of building sites. Staff ensure that these crucial messages are understood by pupils with SEND by providing additional support where necessary.

Children get off to an exceptionally strong start in Reception. Staff work highly effectively with parents and pre-school settings to get to know children before they start school. They use this knowledge of children's interests and stage of development to inform the

activities they make available for children to engage with. Staff's knowledge of individual children allows them to make expert decisions about when to intervene and when to step back while playing. These decisions have a positive impact on children's learning. In adult-led learning, staff use carefully chosen songs, stories and rhymes to capture children's interest and develop their vocabulary and number sense. Children are taught how to behave appropriately in school and other settings. This strong start develops good behaviours that continue as pupils move through the school.

Staff are well trained in teaching phonics. Pupils quickly develop phonics knowledge and use it to read appropriate books in school and at home. Staff identify pupils who need extra support quickly. These pupils receive additional phonics teaching, extra practice through appropriate games and read to adults more often. The support they receive is effective in supporting them to learn to read. As pupils progress through school they are exposed to a wide range of texts through daily story time.

The school has designed a curriculum that captures the interests of pupils and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to recall and use things they have learned previously. Where these are most effective, pupils develop an impressive depth of knowledge. For example, in art, older pupils are able to talk confidently about artists they have studied. They can compare artistic styles and movements. However, where pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to recall and use previous learning, such as with aspects of problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics, learning is less secure.

Leaders, at all levels, are determined that pupils will benefit from an exceptional education that values both academic and personal development. This ambition is very largely met. Where not, leaders quickly identify the issues and put in place steps to improve provision.

Governors and trustees have a strong commitment to the school maintaining its own unique identity so that it can serve the local community. Governors have effective systems to monitor the work of the school. They provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. Staff value the fact that leaders take their well-being seriously and take all reasonable steps to ensure that workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to practise some of the more complex aspects of their previous learning. This limits their ability to secure prior knowledge and apply some of the more challenging ideas that they study. The school should ensure that pupils have the opportunity to revisit learning often, including more

complex aspects of the curriculum, so that they are able to deepen and strengthen their learning over time.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	149035
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10323156
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel O'Mahoney
CEO of the trust	Brendan Tapping
Headteacher	Eve Alderson
Website	www.stmatthewsrc.org
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust. It joined the trust in April 2022.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic primary school within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in September 2018. The next inspection from the Catholic Education Inspectorate is due in the academic year 2025-26.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, to discuss behaviour, attendance, personal development, early years provision and safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to some younger pupils read and spoke to some older pupils about their reading.
- Inspectors looked at aspects of the curriculum in art and science. They met with leaders and spoke to pupils about their work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils formally and informally, including those who hold positions of responsibility within school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for parents and staff. They spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed information on the school website and considered documents provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation and minutes of the local governance committee.
- Inspectors met with a group of governors and a trust representative and spoke to a representative of the board of trustees.

Inspection team

Steve Wren, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

John Downs

Ofsted Inspector

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