

# St Matthew's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108721
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	395446
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	John Paddick

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Felicity Tolfrey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martin Humble
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	Alnwick Grove Jarrow NE32 5YT
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

John Paddick  
Wendy Richardson

Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed parts of 12 lessons taught by eight teachers. Two of these sessions were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors looked particularly carefully at work in all subjects produced by pupils in Years 2 and 6. They also looked at written work produced by pupils in last year's Year 6. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, the headteacher, members of staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, safeguarding policies and the school's analysis of pupils' progress. They analysed 72 questionnaires from parents and carers, and others completed by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

St. Matthew's is an average sized primary school. Pupils are mostly of White British heritage. Very few are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school meets the current floor standards which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. There have been several changes at senior staff level over the last two years.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key Findings

- St. Matthew's is an outstanding school with an exceptionally positive ethos, strongly rooted in Christian values. Pupils make rapid progress in response to the vision and drive of a highly-committed headteacher and staff.
- Achievement is outstanding because pupils make excellent progress as they move through the school. When they join the Reception class, their skills and abilities are well below those normally expected for their ages yet, by the time they leave Year 6, their attainment in English and mathematics is above average. By Year 6, several pupils reach very high standards, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils benefit from teaching which is always at least good and frequently outstanding. Excellent tracking systems show whether they are progressing quickly enough to meet the school's very challenging targets. It also identifies those who are struggling or who need expert help to overcome barriers to learning. Marking of work is of a high standard, but there are occasions when teachers do not provide planned opportunities so that pupils can follow up the advice they have been given by making corrections to their work.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils enjoy their education and respond exceptionally well to the school's very high expectations of them. Whether they are in class, in assembly, moving around the school or socialising at breaks and lunchtimes, their conduct is first rate. They respond extremely positively to the very wide range of opportunities that the school provides.
- Leadership and management of high quality at all levels have provided an excellent curriculum which underpins pupils' exceptional academic progress and their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to excellent development planning which has a high profile in the daily operation of the school. It strongly and very effectively focuses on the quality of teaching and the promotion of the high achievement. Arrangements for the performance management of staff are excellent.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that when pupils' work has been marked there are always planned opportunities for pupils to improve it and to correct errors.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers express very strong satisfaction with the progress that their children are making. One parent wrote: 'My child loves this school. She has learnt so much in a short space of time. She looks forward to going and misses it during holidays.' Children join the Reception class with skills and abilities which are well below those expected for their age; their competence in communication, language and literacy is low. Teachers and their assistants enable children to make rapid progress in the Reception year so that, when they join Year 1, they have reached broadly average levels of attainment. However, at this stage, many are still below average in the key areas of communication, language and literacy. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make at least good and often very rapid progress across many areas of learning, both with adult-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves.

As pupils move through the school, they first of all close the gap on average standards and then move to above average attainment in English and mathematics by Year 6. This has been a consistent picture for several years. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently good and frequently outstanding. A recent emphasis on reading, through the teaching of phonics (links between letters and sounds), is raising pupils' attainment in reading. Pupils' reading is currently above average in Year 2, and in Year 6, around a third of the pupils are currently reading at levels normally associated with pupils three years older. In mathematics, almost every Year 6 pupil has reached expected levels for their age but around half are competent at higher levels. For example, the highest attaining pupils can manipulate linear algebraic equations and work out the area or circumference of a circle. Attainment in music and art is also of a very high standard. Pupils who struggle to make progress are quickly identified and given very effective extra help. The success of this is reflected in the often spectacular progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Pupils make consistently good and frequently outstanding progress in lessons. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils made very rapid progress in writing emotive and humorous poetry in response to the teacher's instructions and gave a splendid visual presentation about key experiences they had had as they moved through the school. In a Year 4 music lesson, pupils reached very high standards as they rehearsed for a forthcoming performance at the Sage Theatre, Gateshead. Following the teacher's excellent demonstration of good breathing techniques and voice control, the class reached even higher standards of tuneful, rhythmic singing.

## Quality of teaching

Much of the teaching is outstanding and is at least consistently good. This is fully recognised by parents, carers and pupils. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils of all abilities and plan their lessons with precision so that the whole class can make rapid progress. They use the highly skilled classroom assistants exceptionally well in enabling disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to progress quickly towards the challenging targets in their individual education plans. Frequently, pupils benefit from stunning presentations, which both set the scene and fully engage them in moving to new learning at a very fast pace. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, the teacher very expertly captured pupils' attention by describing what was in the attractive bag she was holding without actually telling them what it contained. Pupils rapidly grasped the idea of the use of persuasive language when they had to describe the contents of their own bag. The subsequent exceptional presentation about well-known icons of the North East enabled them to very quickly use persuasive writing in describing people and places including the Angel of the North, the Tyne Bridge and Cheryl Cole.

Teachers always utilise a wide variety of techniques and teach at a pace. Pupils respond to their high expectations because they enjoy their lessons and recognise that they are learning very quickly. Systematic checks on pupils' understanding through excellent questioning are characteristics of all lessons. Successful teaching is built on a clear understanding of the best ways of presenting lessons to pupils of all abilities. Teachers take great care in marking pupils' work. They praise them for what they do well and clearly indicate what they need to do to improve. However, there are a few occasions when they move on without ensuring that pupils follow their written advice. For example, the instruction 'use finger spaces' is often repeated in pupils' books without a follow up exercise to ensure that pupils use large enough spaces between words in their writing.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils conduct themselves in an exemplary manner in lessons and around school. They are polite and courteous and enjoy excellent and extremely productive relationships with the adults who work with them. They fully recognise that members of staff will 'go the extra mile' to help them and give support when they need it. Bullying or unacceptable behaviour are extremely rare and pupils say that they are fully confident that the school's systems for dealing with such incidents are effective. The vast majority of parents and carers share these positive views but a very small number have concerns. Inspectors scrutinised the school's records and found that documentation relating to behavioural issues was exemplary and actions taken were effective. Pupils respond promptly to instructions from adults and, in many lessons, concentration is so strong that one could hear a pin drop. Outside lessons, pupils are eager to take on responsibilities and help others. For example, older pupils are keen to help Reception class children. Pupils of all ages are proud of their efforts to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves.

The school provides pupils with an exceptionally supportive and safe environment. Pupils say that they really enjoy school because the teachers and their assistants look after them so well and frequently make learning fun. They say that they feel perfectly safe in school because the site is secure and they trust all of the adults who work with them. Pupils have an excellent understanding of matters concerning risks to which they might be exposed, for example, in relation to types of bullying, internet chat rooms, water and roads. Very

considerable efforts are made to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. The effectiveness of these actions is reflected in the fact that attendance is above average and persistent absence is low. The school very effectively uses the expertise of a range of agencies and professionals to support pupils who have problems with attendance, learning or behaviour. Inspectors found many instances where parents and carers were absolutely delighted in the positive changes in their children resulting from these interventions.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and senior staff provide outstanding leadership. They are very ably supported by members of staff at all levels who are all exceptionally committed to providing the pupils with the best possible education. Staff morale is excellent. Accurate self-evaluation provides a solid basis for excellent development planning which is very clear about intended improvements in teaching and pupils' attainment. It is perfectly clear who is responsible for the coordination, monitoring and evaluation. Rigorous monitoring of these plans by staff and the governing body mean that intended developments materialise. Successful recent foci on the best ways to teach reading and writing are telling examples. The planning document has such a high profile in the daily operation of the school that targets within it are frequently exceeded.

Excellent systems of performance management, lesson observation and scrutiny of work all combine to inform the school's very effective programme for the professional development of staff. The school does not just target high achievement. Splendid planning ensures that the pupils benefit from an exceptionally rich curriculum which helps to underpin their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, observing how even the youngest pupils related to an hour-long celebratory mass with the parish priest was a moving experience.

Members of the governing body provide the school with excellent support and guidance. They probe and challenge when appropriate and have developed an excellent system for monitoring the school's work on a first-hand basis. Safeguarding procedures meet all statutory requirements well and all adults who have access to pupils are checked rigorously before they are allowed to enter the school. The school's success is based upon the firm belief among all members of staff that all pupils, whatever their ability and background, have an equal right to a high quality of education. Consequently, there is no evidence of discrimination of any description. Given the excellent leadership and management, the high quality of education, the successful action to raise achievement, the school is exceptionally well-placed to secure further improvements.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



9 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Matthew's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School, Jarrow,  
NE32 5YT**

Thank you for making the team so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. A particular 'thank you' goes to those of you who filled in our questionnaires or met with us to read aloud or talk about your school and the progress you are making. We really were impressed by your excellent behaviour and your eagerness to do well at school.

We found that your school is providing you with an outstanding quality of education. All of you are making excellent progress as you move from Reception to Year 6. We were particularly impressed by the standards that some of you in Year 6 are reaching. Teaching is outstanding and makes you keen to learn. Teachers and their assistants know exactly how much progress you are making and quickly provide you with extra help if you have problems. We found that your school is exceptionally well run and that the atmosphere for learning is superb. Your teachers do all that they can to provide you with lots of exciting visits and activities outside normal lessons.

Your school can still improve further and we have asked the governing body, headteacher and staff to make an improvement to enable you to learn even more quickly. This is to:

- ensure that when you have had your work marked you are given time to do corrections and follow up the advice that your teachers have given to you.

You can help by continuing to approach your work with such excellent attitudes.

With every best wish for the future,

Yours sincerely

John Paddick  
Lead Inspector

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