



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Matthew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Poplar Road
Stretford
Manchester
M32 9AN

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Trafford

Date of inspection: 28 January 2016

Date of last inspection: October 2010

School's unique reference number: 106337

Headteacher: Thomas Johnson

Inspector's name and number: Nigel Castledine (652)

School context

St Matthew's is a smaller than average-sized primary school. It serves a diverse community in an urban setting of high social deprivation as well as areas of more affluence. The proportion of disadvantaged children and those supported with special educational needs or disabilities are above average. Approximately 50% of pupils are White British, with the other 50% comprising other ethnic groups. Approximately one third of the children have English as an additional language. The main faith groups within the school are Christian, Sikh and Muslim. The headteacher took up his position in 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Matthew's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The exceptional impact of the headteacher has motivated the school community to successfully revitalise the Christian ethos of St Matthew's
- The school's pervasive core Christian values positively influence every aspect of the children's learning and nurture
- Affirming relationships, stemming from gospel teaching, create a vibrant Christian family in which the God-given value of each child is paramount
- Inspirational collective worship and the quality of learning in Religious Education (RE), sustain and enrich the children's spiritual growth

Area to improve

- Extend the children's involvement in collective worship, giving them appropriate independence in planning, presentation and evaluation, thereby enhancing their leadership skills

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

St Matthew's is a dynamic church school. It has successfully refocused its gospel vision and Christian distinctiveness to enable it to serve its community even more effectively. The school's core Christian values of compassion, respect and peace, selected by the whole school community are embedded and highly effective. Greatly improved pupil outcomes are now evident by the end of Key Stage 2, from a below average starting point. Disadvantaged and vulnerable children make particularly good progress because of focused support that enables them to engage in their learning. Children want to be in school because they enjoy their learning. This has increased attendance data to national expectations. The school's chosen Christian values support the spiritual, social, moral and cultural (SMSC) development of the children. From this learning comes the understanding and respect shown by all for diversity of faith, ethnicity, culture and spirituality. This open acceptance is enhanced through worship themes, high quality RE and well-presented interactive faith displays. Children say how much they value their classroom faith focus areas when they want to pray or reflect. Class visits to the church help children to deepen their understanding of their faith topics. The school council not only works for the school as in its project to provide new playground seating. They also lead the school community in thinking of others. The school's chosen motto, taken from St Matthew's gospel, is 'Let your light shine'. On St Matthew's day, every child takes part in community service, 'shining' out into the locality. This desire to express Christian compassion and generosity has also led the school family to support local and global charities. The children's exceptionally good behaviour stems from the positive Christian role models provided by all adults in school. This is supported by the behaviour and discipline policy which emphasises Christian forgiveness and a fresh start each day. Carefully planned development work supports pupils to grow in respect and inclusion for all. An example of this is the successful anti-bullying week focus which addressed homophobia through its theme of 'different families, same love'. Children's understanding of Christianity as a global faith is aided by the school's work for international charities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is central to the life of St Matthew's. It is carefully planned, well led and thoughtfully evaluated to have a positive impact on the school community. This is carefully co-ordinated by the effective RE and worship lead teacher. It supports the children's understanding of Christian teaching and values, thereby promoting their spiritual growth and social and emotional learning. Worship contains significant elements of Anglican tradition and the children are confident with church liturgy, traditional prayers, including the Lord's Prayer and worship songs. The liturgy of worship gives added meaning to the children's understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Christian calendar is followed, marking the major celebrations and seasons of the year. Services take place in the parish church at festivals which are well attended by families, uniting the school community in worship. The school week starts with a special time of reflection – the 'affirmation' – in the courtyard at the heart of the school building. It is conducted by the children who are the worship leaders, setting the school's Christian message and worship theme for the week. The themes affirm the St Matthew's school family as a community of faiths. Pupil punctuality on Mondays has improved because children are keen to be present at the affirmation. Daily worship generates an engaging atmosphere of reverence and calm. Stimulating and engaging presentations enhance the children's understanding of Bible teaching, prompting them to take part and share their opinions. However, children do not independently plan, deliver and evaluate worship without adult intervention. Prayer through the school day gives the children a sense of God's continuing presence. Worship is led by senior staff, the RE coordinator and the parish priest, as well as occasional visitors. Whilst worship is primarily Christian, due attention is given to the special days and sacred texts of other world faiths. This reflects the mix of faiths within St Matthew's school. This is further supported by pupils' learning experiences in RE. The school meets statutory requirements with regard to its collective worship.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

The strong Christian commitment of the headteacher has brought about a significant renewal of St Matthew's distinctiveness, ethos and vision as a church school. The embedding of the school's core values has been fundamental to this process. Thus St Matthew's now enables every child to 'shine and succeed'. This is because focused leadership has ensured that the school community understands the gospel message and purpose of each Christian value. Therefore these Christ-centred principles are now the key ingredients for each child's nurture and academic success. Because children's needs are carefully met, rapid improvements in their achievement continue to be made. Ongoing methodical evaluations of the performance of the school ensure that this momentum is maintained. This thorough scrutiny is carried out by both senior staff and the governing body. It includes evaluation of the impact of the Christian distinctiveness of St Matthew's on all aspects of school life. The school has taken the necessary steps to act on the two development points from the last inspection. These focused on improvements which have further enhanced children's spiritual growth. The school recognises the importance of professional development for all staff in order to ensure the highest standards of church school provision. The school now generates its own capacity to grow new leaders. St Matthew's has strong and mutually positive links with its parents and carers. The sense of being part of the school family is welcomed by parents who appreciate the high levels of support and encouragement offered. Parents comment on the inclusivity of the school where those of any faith or none are all respected and made welcome. This beneficial relationship has resulted in the Leading Parents Partnership award being made to St Matthew's for a second time. Links with the diocese have provided support, advice and development courses for governors and staff which have improved their knowledge and expertise. There are also mutually supportive links with other local schools. The school's partnership with the parish priest and church enhances the school's faith life and gives children wider experiences of Anglican tradition.

SIAMS report January 2016 St Matthew's CofE VC Primary School, Stretford, M32 9AN