



A Guide to the Primary Phase for Students aged 3 - 11 years

We are offering a 21st century Catholic education,
in a nurturing and creative environment
that has a simple focused mission in life:
to let the light of every student shine.



The St. Matthew Academy Primary Phase

The Primary Phase of St. Matthew Academy provides the highest standards of Catholic care and Catholic education for children from 3 to 11 years of age.

It is well known that children who succeed in the secondary phase of education are those who have benefited fully from high quality teaching and a rich experience of primary education. Our staff holds the same high expectations for all our students. We will ensure that they grow up as highly competent and confident learners and communicators who are healthy in mind, body and spirit. They will be students who are secure in their sense of belonging, knowing how to lead fulfilled lives and make a valued contribution to society.

It is our belief that, while children have much in common, every child is unique. We therefore make sure they derive full benefit from learning together and from programmes that are challenging but carefully designed to meet their individual needs. We are committed to ensuring that every child achieves his or her full potential, at their own rate of learning.

Students are taught in a stimulating school environment where they use sophisticated information and communications technology to assist in the research and presentation of many aspects of their work. They are encouraged to plan and perform tasks that involve investigating, observing and reporting. Exciting and interesting fieldwork and excursions extend their learning beyond the walls of the classroom.

All primary children have a class teacher who teaches them for most of their programme. They also benefit increasingly from studies taught by teachers who are specialists, for example, in information and communication technology, art, music, a Modern Foreign Language and physical education as they move through their primary years. This specialist teaching enriches and enlarges their learning and helps them to develop their talents to the full.

Formal examinations will be held annually for all students from Year 2 upwards. In addition, Year 2 and Year 6 students sit the English National Curriculum End of Key Stage tests (SATs). See Assessment and reporting section.

The Primary Division is organised in three stages:

- ✦ Foundation Nursery & Reception: 3-5 years old
- ✦ Key stage One, Year 1 & 2: 6-7 years old
- ✦ Key stage 2, Year 3 to Year 6: 7-11 years old

NB Although students are taught in these age groups there will be opportunities for mixed age groups to work together.

Learning

Helping children learn - academically, socially, spiritually, emotionally and physically - is the real purpose of schools. What your children learn should respect tradition but must also prepare them for a world in which they are going to live. That's why the St Matthew Academy focuses on academic and personal development, and the development of a global awareness. Learning should be active and engaging, and, above all meaningful to children.

Teaching

The purpose of teaching is to help children learn. Teaching should be as enjoyable and rewarding for teachers as much as learning is enjoyable and rewarding for children. We will encourage the teaching of cross curricular projects in the Primary phase to fully realise this goal.

The many extra-curricular opportunities at the Academy will help students learn skills of leadership, of working in a team and of co-operating with others. They will learn to communicate in a variety of circumstances, to take initiative and exercise responsibility.

The curriculum builds upon the social, physical and academic foundations established in Nursery and Reception. Priority is given to making sure that key areas of literacy, mathematics and computing skills are well taught. The End of Key Stage One assessments provide a clear benchmark of attainment in both English and mathematics.

Attention will be paid towards the development of children's speaking and listening skills. High quality, systematic phonic work will be taught discreetly. Phonic work will be established with a broad and rich language curriculum that develops all strands of learning. Priority will be given to the early teaching of reading to students.

Primary Curriculum and Learning

Age 3 to 5 years The Foundation Stage

The Foundation Stage of the Academy consists of the Nursery and Reception classes. Children follow a learning day based on the Early Learning Goals which provide a seamless link to Years One and Two. The Early Learning Goals cover the following areas and aim to develop the whole child at a pace that is suitable for each:

- Citizenship including Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- Communication, Language and Literacy**
- Mathematical Development**
- Knowledge and Understanding of the world**
- Physical Development**
- Creative Development**
- Spiritual Development and R.E.**

Through well planned, enjoyable and challenging play, the children will learn about teamwork, decision making, problem solving and communication. They will be supported in making friends and will learn about care, respect and consideration for others. In Reception the early elements of reading and writing and developing phonics will be further introduced. Mathematics will focus on number to provide a strong foundation for entry into Year One. In the early days of schooling, parental involvement is essential and parents are welcome.

Moving On...

Age 6 to 11 years Key Stages One and Two

These phases of the school will offer teaching and learning that develops the child's knowledge and understanding across the range of subjects. They ensure progression in terms of content, understanding and skills as the children move up from Year 1 through to Year 6. The nature of the Academy as a 3-16 school means that the children will enjoy a mixture of specialist teaching and facilities as well as a strong class base with their own Year teacher. As the children move up there will be a gradually increased focus on Science and Technology and specialist teaching and practical lessons. Foreign language specialist teaching will be introduced from Year 3 and specialist teaching will also be introduced for the Arts curriculum and PE. Effective daily literacy and numeracy teaching provides an opportunity to link learning to other curricular activities, strengthening children's knowledge, skills and understanding and

emphasizes the role that literacy and mathematics play in communicating, quantifying and explaining. There is an increased focus on science and technology as children progress through the year levels. Students are also encouraged to take a more active role in planning their programmes of work and to develop their sense of responsibility and independence in preparation for key stages 3 and 4, encouraging personalised learning where necessary. They are taught to be creative, independent thinkers and self-motivated learners.

From the earliest years we will ensure the acquisition of good ICT skills through both specific ICT lessons and through the use of the latest technology in the classroom and through all areas of learning. We will emphasise the development of the children's research and reporting skills in order to develop their self confidence as independent learners. To the same end, as they mature children will be encouraged to take a more active role in planning their own programmes of work and developing their sense of responsibility for and independence in learning in preparation for their secondary school education. Our children will be taught to be creative, independent and reflective thinkers and self-motivated learners.

Our main aims in the primary phase are:

- ★ To support children in their development as independent, inquisitive, creative, critical thinkers and learners.
- ★ To support children in developing their own, unique personalities while maintaining consideration and compassion for others.
- ★ To build on the Foundation Stage and ensure that our children have the essential knowledge, self-confidence and learning and inter-personal skills to transfer smoothly and successfully to the secondary school phase of education.

We believe firmly that education has to be more than the experience of the classroom. We are therefore planning many activities and trips throughout the year to develop the children's wider interests and support classroom learning. We will have a very active Education Extra programme, encompassing a wide variety of clubs and activities in which we encourage all children to participate. This programme will operate after school and during holiday periods.

Parents will be very welcome visitors to the Primary phase as our essential partners in their child's happy and successful Academy career and we will ensure regular communication throughout the year designed to keep them well-informed of their child's progress and achievements.

The Curriculum

Key Stage One and Two will offer a broad curriculum spanning some 12 subjects. Children will study these as individual subjects and through integrated and topic work, ensuring both depth of knowledge and an understanding of the inter-relatedness and transferability of knowledge and concepts.

English	History
Mathematics	Physical Education
Science	Art
Information and Communication Technology	Music
Design Technology	Foreign Languages (Years 3-6)
Religious Studies	Citizenship including Personal, Social and Health Education
Geography	Enterprise Education

The Primary phase of St. Matthew Academy will have a very strong pastoral focus supporting children in developing positive relationships with their peers, older students and the adults they interact with. Children will attend assemblies regularly where they will be encouraged to participate as much as possible, contributing individually and in groups.

This participation develops self-confidence and self esteem as well as children's public speaking and performance skills through the many opportunities for drama, singing and playing musical instruments.

Through House Assemblies, children will meet students from the secondary phase as both role models and supporters. Assemblies are important for developing the sense of St Matthew Academy community and family, for spiritual reflection and worship and for celebration of achievement.

Home and School Partnership

We value greatly the partnership between Home and School. Parents and teachers together play an important role in educating children and need to support each other in order for children to benefit fully from their education. We welcome parents into School and appreciate all offers of help. Parents work alongside staff and children in a variety of roles including student reading, assisting on school excursions and as leaders of after school activities. We are always approaching parents to request help with specific tasks but we welcome any skills or expertise that parents feel they can offer. The relationship between staff and parents is open and friendly. Communication is regular and occurs in formal situations such as Parent meetings and Parent/Teacher consultations and during informal situations such as a brief chat at the end of the day.

As well as having the facility of the telephone and the fax, School offers information directly to parents using e-mail and text. Parents wishing to receive newsletters, etc. may have their e-mail address added to the register. The school website has this brochure on-line and will be updated regularly. There are successful open evenings, open days and special events when parents and friends are invited to come and see the Primary Phase in action.

Enrolment to the Primary Phase

Parents will need to complete an application form for admission to the Primary School along with the St. Matthew Supplementary Admission Form.

Phase Organisation

The Deputy Principal leads the Primary Phase. Coordinators for Foundation, Junior and Middle School Phases assist the Deputy Principal in this role along with the Heads of House.

Year teams plan the work to be covered and find the most effective ways of teaching and grouping the children in their care. Specialist Subject teachers teach and plan across the Primary Phase in close liaison with the class teacher.

Primary Phase Day

RECEPTION TO YEAR 6

Morning session: 8.50 am

Afternoon session: 12.50 pm

Break times: Morning: 10.30 am Lunch: 12.00 pm

Start of the Day

School starts at 8.50a.m. Children should not arrive at School until 8.30a.m. as children in the playground will not be supervised before 8.30a.m. It is important to note that the School cannot be responsible for any accidents or injuries before that time. It is important that your child arrives in time for the 8.50 a.m. start.

End of the Day

The Primary Phase finishes classes at 3.20 p.m. Parents will be informed in advance if their child will be taking part in Education Extra Activities. If children are to be picked up later than 3.30 p.m. e.g. they have after school activities or for any other reason, they are not to be left unsupervised. If they do not have any after school activity or other organised school activity they are expected to attend the After School Care Room where they are supervised until 6.00p.m. No child should be wandering around the School grounds or buildings unsupervised if they are waiting to be collected.

NURSERY

The morning session: 8.50 am – 11.20 am

The afternoon session: 12.45 pm – 3.15 pm

Nursery children should be delivered to and picked up from their rooms by parents and/or carers. Teachers should be made aware that the child is present in the room at the start of the session and has been collected at the end of the session. Teachers will be in their rooms from 8.40a.m. onwards.

High Standards of Behaviour

Our School aims to provide a happy, caring and secure environment where all students and staff relate positively to foster respect and self-esteem in an atmosphere of good manners and interactive learning. Our approach to managing behaviour places great emphasis on reward and praise with an insistence on fairness and politeness. We will not tolerate bullying or misbehaviour that obstructs the learning and well-being of the individual concerned or that of others. Children need to be clear about the behaviour that is expected and that certain behaviour is unacceptable. We always try to help children understand the implications of their actions, by using a range of strategies to ensure students are aware of the appropriateness of their behaviour and ensure they take responsibility for their own decisions.

We encourage positive discipline through the use of class and School reward systems. Children achieve public acclaim in the form of points and certificates for academic achievement and positive behaviour.

A positive partnership between home and School is essential in establishing good behaviour. Parents will always be consulted to discuss particular concerns relating to their child's behaviour should the need arise.

Religious Education

The Catholic vision of education promotes the dignity and freedom of every person as created in the image and likeness of God. This vision inspires and encourages the beliefs and values which are lived out in the daily life of the Catholic school. Within this vision, religious education is very much a journey of formation involving every member of the school community, together with a pupil's family and parish community. It is in this context that the elements of religious education, catechesis and evangelisation, coexist, providing mutual support and reinforcement.

For all children religious education is a proper subject in its own right in the school's curriculum. It is a rigorous academic discipline, and as such it is to be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject. For those already engaged in the journey of faith religious education will be catechesis, and for some children and young people religious education will be evangelisation, the first opportunity to hear the good news of the gospel.

Personal and Social Development

We aim to provide an education, which will help children develop as complete individuals with the emphasis on social, emotional and personal skills. We encourage children to value and respect themselves and others.

All children have the right to be treated equally and have access to the whole curriculum irrespective of ethnic difference, gender or social disadvantage. Parents and carers should be aware that the Primary Phase has a duty to take reasonable action to ensure the welfare and safety of its pupils. The Academy has a full time Lay Chaplain who will work with students of all ages to foster their spiritual intelligence as part of the students overall personal development.

Sex education and drug awareness are taught within our PSHE curriculum. In Year 6 the school matron visits both the boys and girls showing them a video clip on growing up followed by a talk. Parents will be invited to view this video before it is shown to the children.

House Groups

There are three House groups at St Matthew Academy: Mandela House - Green; Romero House - Red; Teresa House - Yellow. Student members of the same family will be placed in the same house group on enrolment. During the year House points are awarded for a variety of reasons including house competitions, academic achievement, sportsmanship, kindness, co-operation etc. At regular intervals during the term the points are tallied and the leading House recognised in various ways. At the end of the year the overall winning House is presented with the House trophy. Students in the Junior Phase have the opportunity to nominate themselves and be voted in as House Captains for their year level and the Yr. 6 House Captains form the Student Council. This group and the overall running of the House system is coordinated by the appointed staff House Coordinator and each House has a volunteer staff leader.

The House system is in place to provide an avenue for positive competition and camaraderie amongst the students through social, sporting and creative interaction.

Emergency and Health Issues

Fire Drill

Fire Drills are held regularly during the year. The children have well defined paths to their designated class assembly points. A full roll call is taken.

All children are familiar with the routine and expectations. The register is taken each morning. If your child is late to Phase it is important that you notify the Primary Phase office in order to update the roll.

Phase Procedure for Illness or Accidents

It is important that the emergency contact information is given to the Academy is up to date. This allows us to make the necessary arrangement when children are taken ill during the day. Student's health records should be given to the Health Centre when they join the St. Matthew Academy.

School should be informed of any disabilities or medical problems that are cause for concern. A list of children and relevant health issues will be put on the School intranet for whole school reference. If a child is not well when they wake in the morning please do not send them to School.

In the event of a minor accident or sickness children will be taken to the School Matron in the Health Centre and given first aid and made comfortable until they are able to return to class.

If an injury causes us concern or hospital treatment is required we first seek the advice of the Matron and then make every effort to contact a parent or the listed emergency contact as soon as possible. Where this is not possible we will make arrangements to accompany and transport children to hospital and seek further medical advice whilst trying to make contact. If appropriate the services of an ambulance will be used.

Sickness

Please let us know if your child is unwell. If you think it is something that could be passed on to others, please keep your child home so we can limit the spread of illness. If they are recovering from illness and are not able to take part in Physical Education lessons, please inform us through their homework diary or by letter to their class teacher.

Medication

No form of medication can be given during the day without consultation with the Matron. Class teachers are not allowed to give out medication or tablets with the exception of children who require inhalers to control their asthma. Instructions in this case need to be in writing to the class teacher

with details of times and dosages. If medication other than this is required parents are asked to see the Matron before school with instructions and the medication should be marked with the child's name, class and time of administration.

Meals at School

School meals will be served each day. A charge is made for these. See the School office for details.

Children may bring food and drinks from home in suitable containers. All containers should be CLEARLY marked with your child's name and class. They may buy food at break times from the Primary Phase canteen.

The canteen operates before and after School. It serves a variety of hot and cold foods, snacks and drinks. A selection of hot meals are available at lunch break. We would like to encourage healthy eating and the importance of water to drink during the day.

The supervising staff will give any assistance if needed. Your co-operation in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Excursions

Each year as part of their studies, students are given the opportunity to make field trips to visit places of local interest. These visits form a critical component of the Phase's educational programme. As students progress through the primary years greater opportunity exists for extended trips away from school, culminating in a residential Year 6 camp where students are able to develop interpersonal skills in an educational environment.

Independent Learning

It is the policy of St. Matthew Academy to give formal homework. Please refer to Year level information. We appreciate your interest and support in encouraging your child to complete these tasks. The time allocated to student homework begins at a minimal level in Year 1 and increases as students progress through the primary years.

Take Home Readers

The Early Years are where children develop their learning at the greatest rate. We encourage families to take an active interest in all areas of their development. Spending time reading with children helps heighten their understanding of how important and how much fun reading can be. Regular reading at home with family members will help develop their interest and skill level.

Obviously, once children have learned to read they can read to learn thus opening the way for enrichment across the curriculum, private study and self-teaching. Hence we regard the teaching and learning of reading and writing with the highest importance in the primary phase. It is very important to any student, particularly those learning to read, to feel that this is a skill that is valued at home. If the child's efforts are shared and supported enthusiastically by parents then success is more likely. This involves listening to your child read at home on a regular basis, showing encouragement and praise.

We understand that it may be quite difficult for many families whose home language is not English to be able to do this comfortably. If this is the case, please let your child's teacher or the English as Additional Language (E. A. L.) teachers know, so that help from school can be arranged.

Reading books are not only valued, they are expensive and every care should be taken of them – particularly keeping them away from baby sisters and brothers! Class teachers check books going home and each child is provided with a folder to carry their book home. We ask students to take responsibility for them and treat them with care.

Assessment and Reporting

We use standardised assessments to collect data about a child's progress and make judgements about their future needs. Teachers also assess informally their classes' individual needs and use this information when planning for further learning.

We also gather data on individual pupils using assessment materials which looks at progress and attitudes. These assessments are part of a UK wide project thus allowing us to assess the individual students' progress and can be used to build a powerful profile of each child's progress as they move through the primary phase.

We also use End of Key Stage Assessments to assess all students from Year 2 – Year 6. Parents receive information about their children in the Primary Phase in distinct ways:

- ✦ At the end of the first term, an interim report will be given out during the parental consultation, to highlight their child's progress and enable the class teacher to discuss ways forward using target setting. Such targets will be further discussed in the next parent teacher consultation meeting in March.
- ✦ At the end of the final term a detailed written report is sent home where the teacher gives summative judgements on the progress attained and again, highlights further targets.
- ✦ Carefully planned and evaluated lessons encourage staff to create a learning environment which tailors learning to the individual student. Regular assessments inform these plans and provide parents with an accurate gauge of the child's abilities.
- ✦ Good teaching should be lively, engaging and involves carefully planned blend of approaches that direct children's learning. The pitch and pace of the work is sensitive to the rate at which the children learn, formulated from appropriate assessments.

Inclusion

Where possible through the use of appropriate strategies and support, students with learning difficulties will be working towards the same learning objectives as their peers. From time to time those working well below the level of the whole class may be working towards related objectives chosen from the relevant programme from an earlier year.

Children who are working well above the overall level of their class or group will be engaging with a range of experiences designed to broaden or deepen their learning while working on the same learning objectives as

their peers. From time to time they may be accelerating the pace of their learning by working towards objectives from programmes designed for older students.

English as an Additional Language (E.A.L.)

Many students at St. Matthew Academy regularly speak a language other than English. It is important that as well as finding ways to build on these students' knowledge of other languages and cultures, we ensure that these students develop as competent and confident speakers, readers and writers of English.

Additional language learners learn in a different way to native speaking pupils. It is necessary for the curriculum to be delivered in such a way as to ensure that student's progress is appropriately linked to the school curriculum.

E.A.L. staff are involved in this work through providing support to teachers and E.A.L. students. This is done at the Academy in many ways depending upon the different needs and level of competency in English of each student.

E.A.L. staff support students by working in class with teachers, withdrawing groups of students or individuals and teaching a specific E.A.L. group during a class Literacy Hour. They also share planning, monitoring and assessment and evaluation with other staff, taking the needs of E.A.L. learners into account. All areas of the curriculum are adapted or modified to allow second language learners to understand and achieve their best.

Special Educational Needs

The Academy aims for each student to fulfil their potential by using a range of teaching techniques in order to maximize learning. Assessment for learning and to track children's progress will be an integral part of the support they receive throughout the Academy.

All children take assessment tests when first enrolling for the Phase. These tests provide data on the child's ability in English, Mathematics, cognitive skills and motivation.

If we feel that children are at risk of falling behind and certain areas need to be targetted for development an Individual Education Plan will be written by the teachers and shared with the parents. This plan sets out targets that need to be met and systems that the teacher will use to ensure this happens.

All children with special educational needs are identified as soon as possible. Wherever possible, children with special educational needs will be taught alongside their peers in school. Partnership with parents is essential. There must be close co-operation between all agencies. It is important that children with special educational needs feel valued members of the group. All staff foster children's self esteem and plan programmes of work that will support special needs children within their class.

Able Children

We aim to identify and challenge the more able children. Where appropriate we will use ability groupings for either Mathematics or/and English to ensure able children reach their full potential.

Education Extra Activities

The Primary after school activities programme offers students from Year 1 upwards the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities. The promotion of essential physical and personal skills including social, communication, cooperation and problem solving skills form the focus of the Education Extra activities programme.

All activities are designed to enthuse students, encouraging them to offer input willingly, to challenge their understanding and stretch their imaginations. Each term students make their selections based on the activities on offer.

Students who remain at school, waiting either to be collected or for older siblings to finish, may attend the After School Care Centre. Here there are a wide variety of opportunities for them to play with others, use the computers or start their homework. To ensure the safety of all, students are supervised at all times. Students are expected to attend either the After School Care Centre or Education Extra Activities when they are the responsibility of School. Students may use the Library and the Learning Centre if they are with their parents. These facilities are not available for unaccompanied primary students.

Optional Music Lessons

Music lessons are available as an individual lesson or as a group lesson. There is a moderate charge for these and the hire of musical instruments. Parents may enquire through The Primary Phase Office about the availability of any specific instruction.

Parent Teacher Community Group

The St. Matthew Academy PTCG is an informal, voluntary group whose purpose is to provide support for students, parents and staff, develop a hospitable environment at St. Matthew Academy and provide opportunities for social interaction between students, parents and staff.

This is an active group encouraging family involvement in the Academy. This Group aims to provide links with the home and School through a variety of informal and formal evenings. Please contact the school if you would like to join this group.

Primary Phase uniform

All students at St. Matthew Academy are required to wear the correct school uniform. Parents/caregivers are requested to actively supervise the wearing of the school uniform and to encourage high personal standards in dress and grooming. The physical education uniform is to be worn by all students for any physical activity.

Nursery girls' uniform

Nursery sweatshirt or white polo shirt, navy blue skirt, trousers or pinafore.

Nursery boys' uniform

Nursery sweatshirt or white polo shirt, navy blue shorts or trousers

Reception - Years 6 girls' uniform

White shirt/blouse, navy blue Academy pullover, Academy House tie, Academy Tartan skirt or navy blue trousers, Academy fleece jacket, black shoes, white socks, book bag.

Years 1 – 6 boys' uniform

White shirt, navy blue Academy jumper, Academy House tie, navy blue trousers, Academy fleece jacket, black shoes, white socks, book bag.

Physical Education

Academy House T-Shirt, navy blue shorts; sports socks and soft soled, non-marking sports shoes of student's choice, Academy cap, sports bag, joggers

Parent and Toddler Group

For children aged between 0-3. This group meets regularly providing toddlers a place to meet and play informally. This group is organised by parents of the school and newcomers are always welcome. Contact the Primary Phase office for more details.