

# SAINT MATTHEW'S ACADEMY



## STANDARDS & QUALITY REPORT

JUNE 2023

St Matthew's Academy is a six-year denominational secondary school situated in Saltcoats, North Ayrshire. The catchment area of the school covers the whole of North Ayrshire. Pupils who attend the 10 denominational primary schools have the right to enrol in St Matthew's while others are enrolled through the placing request legislation. The current roll (September 2022) is 1278, a large number of whom live in recognised areas of socio-economic deprivation: 51% of leavers in 2021 live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1 or 2.

At present, the school has a teaching staff of 91.7 full-time equivalent (FTE). The Senior Management Team comprises the Head Teacher and 4 Depute Head Teachers. There are currently 6 Principal Teachers of Pastoral, a Principal Teacher of Pupil Support and 11 Curriculum Leaders each of whom manages a group of subjects. The teaching staff are supported by a full complement of Administrative, Technician, Librarian and Classroom Assistant staff.

St Matthew's Academy is a denominational school and, as such, we seek to be a centre of excellence providing the highest possible quality of education in a Catholic community where care, cooperation and mutual respect are at the heart of everything we do. We want to give all the members of our community the opportunity and encouragement to achieve their full potential.

### **Vision**

*Our vision for Saint Matthew's Academy is one of a community of faith and learning dedicated to Gospel Values. We work together to ensure the effective formation and development of the whole child by providing the highest quality of education. We strive to ensure our young people develop their talents and abilities in order to best support the common good.*

### **Values**

Our values underpin our ethos within Saint Matthew's Academy. Firmly rooted in the Gospel, they are CLEAR and we strive to ensure they are visible throughout our school.

Community - we understand that each of us - pupils, parents, staff, parishes and partners - are called to engage as full members of our Community of Faith and Learning. We must use our gifts and abilities to help and support those around us while at the same time allowing ourselves to be supported.

Love - Jesus teaches us that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart. The second is that we must love our neighbour as ourselves. We show love in our charity, in our service, in our forgiveness, in our compassion and in our patience. Love is the foundation of all our actions.

Equality - we believe that all people are created in the image and likeness of God. By recognising the equal dignity of all, we celebrate difference and strive to create an inclusive, tolerant and welcoming ethos where each individual has the opportunity and support to participate fully in our community.

Achievement - our Catholic school is one in which everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential. By providing high quality learning experiences we encourage all to achieve. We pursue excellence in all that we undertake to ensure each member of our community has opportunities to develop and grow their talents and skills in order to fulfil their potential in every area of their lives.

Respect - Gospel Values only truly exist in our interaction with each other and with the world around us. By ensuring that all relationships are built on a mutual and genuine respect we create a Community of Faith and Learning where all can attain their full potential. We have respect for others and for ourselves as we understand and greatly value the gift of life we have been given.

As a Catholic school, our aims are:

- *to promote Gospel values of love, understanding and respect through all our activities and at all times;*
- *to develop all members of our community spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially and physically;*
- *to provide the highest possible standards of learning and teaching;*
- *to develop in our young people awareness of and respect for different cultures and an understanding of our social responsibilities;*
- *to nurture in our young people creativity and aesthetic appreciation;*
- *to provide a safe, stimulating and welcoming environment;*
- *to work in close partnership with parents, the Church and the wider community; and*
- *to provide opportunities for the personal and professional development of staff.*

Our Gospel values are at the heart of the Curriculum for Excellence which Saint Matthew's Academy provides. We strive to ensure our young people have opportunities to put faith and learning into practice. We encourage our students to act justly and with compassion. We challenge them to use their gifts and abilities in order to work together for the good of the whole community so that they may aspire to become:

- successful learners;
- confident individuals;
- responsible citizens; and
- effective contributors.

In order to assess the school's current level of performance, a range of self-evaluation procedures were used including analysis of Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examination and other assessment results, visits to classrooms, consultations and discussions with pupils, parents, staff and outside agencies, and detailed consideration of some of the key Quality Indicators (QIs) from "How Good Is Our School 4" (HGIOS4) and "Developing In Faith".

A wide range of evidence was collected in the process of carrying out this evaluation of performance including minutes of meetings, pupil tracking data, classroom observation summaries, staff surveys and focus groups, departmental displays of pupil work, pupil evaluations, press articles, questionnaire results, presentations to various groups, draft policy and procedure documents, improvement plans and evaluations of the impact of initiatives.

Data is measured against a variety of comparators – Authority and National Averages are used to consider whether Saint Matthew's Academy is achieving in comparison to schools across the authority and the country. The key comparator is known as the "Virtual Comparator". This figure is based on young people from the same socioeconomic circumstances as our students and offers an insight into how similar pupils from across Scotland are achieving in other establishments.

*For 2020 and 2021 the absence of external assessment information has led to different patterns of attainment than we have seen in previous years. The results for 2020 and 2021 should not be directly compared to those in previous years or future years. The 2020 and 2021 Insight data cannot therefore be used to directly demonstrate subject, school or authority improvement compared with previous years. Care should also be taken when comparing attainment to the Virtual Comparator, or indeed when making comparisons across schools.*

### **Literacy and Numeracy – Leavers Data**

*(Leavers data is calculated based on those students who left in Summer 2022 – Summer 2023 leavers data does not become available until Spring 2024 and will be presented in the 2024 Standards and Qualities Document.)*

Attainment in Literacy at Level 4 for school leavers continues to outperform Local Authority and National data and is consistently higher than the Virtual Comparator school, which is a measure from the Insight Benchmarking Tool. Attainment in Literacy at Level 5 for school leavers continue to

outperform the Virtual Comparator school. The 2021 data recovered from the dip in 2020. Following this dip a review of the collation of the Literacy data was carried out and more robust processes were implemented to ensure all possible data was captured in time for the release of Insight Data.

The English Faculty continues to work to improve Literacy at all levels and delivered very good outcomes for leavers with 97% achieving at least at Level 4. This reflects the quality of learning and teaching in the Faculty. Effective use of Pupil Equity Funds allows for additional English staffing and this has also had a positive impact.

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>% Level 4 Literacy</b>	<b>% Level 5 Literacy</b>
Saint Matthew's Academy	2020	95.29	78.53
Virtual Comparator	2020	90.63	75.60
North Ayrshire	2020	94.99	81.48
National	2020	93.93	81.80
Saint Matthew's Academy	2021	98.96	94.79
Virtual Comparator	2021	95.73	86.09
North Ayrshire	2021	94.76	85.00
National	2021	94.60	83.41
Saint Matthew's Academy	2022	97.41	94.40
Virtual Comparator	2022	93.88	79.18
North Ayrshire	2022	95.07	83.75
National	2022	94.39	82.02

Attainment in Level 4 Numeracy outperforms all comparator data. A careful focus on Level 4 Numeracy in S4 drives this consistent performance in Leavers data. Effective use of Pupil Equity Funds allows for additional Mathematics staffing and this has also had a positive impact.

Level 5 Numeracy attainment outperforms the Virtual Comparator. Following the 2020 gap between Saint Matthew's Academy Level 5 Numeracy and that of Authority and National averages significant work was carried out to ensure there was no repeat. The subsequent two years has seen Saint Matthew's Academy outperform the all comparator data and our next task is to ensure this becomes a consistent feature of our three year review. 2020 and 2021 data present the highest and second figures since Level 5 Numeracy was recorded.

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>% Level 4 Numeracy</b>	<b>% Level 5 Numeracy</b>
Saint Matthew's Academy	2020	94.74	64.40
Virtual Comparator	2020	88.32	64.03
North Ayrshire	2020	92.05	70.83
National	2020	91.59	71.24
Saint Matthew's Academy	2021	97.40	77.60
Virtual Comparator	2021	93.13	75.42
North Ayrshire	2021	89.58	72.32

National	2021	91.70	72.70
Saint Matthew's Academy	2022	93.10	75.43
Virtual Comparator	2022	89.18	66.64
North Ayrshire	2022	91.18	71.38
National	2022	91.26	70.73

### ***Improving Attainment for All – Leavers Data***

Lowest 20% - our school continues to ensure that pupils in our lowest 20% are given opportunities to be successful and are fully tracked to ensure that they achieve a positive set of qualifications and experiences. Pupils in this cohort do better at Saint Matthew's Academy than the Virtual Comparator in each of the previous three years. We have also produced stronger outcomes than all comparator data in the past two years.

Middle 60% - attainment for 2020 leavers was below all comparator data. Work was carried out to address this for future leavers. The 2021 data showed stronger performance against all but the National picture. The 2022 data outperformed all comparator data. Work will continue in this area in order to ensure this improving picture continues.

Highest 20% - attainment has outperformed the Virtual Comparator data in two out of the previous three years. It has consistently outperformed North Ayrshire data and the most recent year shows a stronger performance than all comparator data.

Tariff points for all Leavers showed a significant improvement in the past two years. . Careful review of tracking and effective parental engagement has helped to ensure that fewer pupils opt to drop subjects in S6 following unconditional university offers. S6 students are encouraged to aspire to achieve at the highest level possible and in many cases this means success at Advanced Higher level. In addition to this we have worked hard to introduce of a wider range of learning experiences in Senior Phase. Increasing learner pathways means that our young people have more courses to choose from and this is also driving improvement. The school is two years into this new approach and the long term impact will take time to be clearly established. However, data from 2021 and 2022 would suggest an encouraging start

	Year	Lowest 20% Tariff Points	Middle 60% Tariff Points	Highest 20% Tariff Points
Saint Matthew's Academy	2020	130	713	1794
Virtual Comparator	2020	97	757	1715
North Ayrshire	2020	140	782	1665
National	2020	151	888	1829
Saint Matthew's Academy	2021	249	943	1816
Virtual Comparator	2021	211	930	1830
North Ayrshire	2021	161	845	1797
National	2021	165	955	1930
Saint Matthew's Academy	2022	189	935	2156
Virtual Comparator	2022	137	802	1884
North Ayrshire	2022	156	819	1914
National	2022	156	887	1968

*What is meant by “Tariff Points”? They provide a summary view of a wide range of achievements and different awards from a range of providers. They capture the latest and best achievements of a learner – for example if your child has sat National 5 in Geography and then Higher in Geography the tariff point that is captured is from the Higher.*

*If a course is SCQF accredited it will be given tariff points – if you are interested in learning about tariff points then please access the Insight Help pages on <http://insight-guides.scotxed.net/support/InsightTariff.pdf>*

Almost all our young people are motivated to learn and behave well in class and this is reflected both in the continuing improvements in examination performance as well as by the fact that Saint Matthew’s Academy performs above expectations and better than the Virtual Comparator in many attainment indicators.

### **Broad General Education**

Positive progress continues to be made with regard to the Broad General Education (BGE). All pupils from S1-3 engage with the Experiences and Outcomes in the 8 curricular areas. Staff are confident in their delivery of the BGE and significant progress is being made with regard to assessment and moderation. In many areas, S3 pupils are progressing through the Fourth Level.

The school continues to identify targets for improvement and makes effective use of detailed target setting using the planning and attainment history reports within the school’s electronic management system, SEEMIS. Our bespoke BGE tracking system continues to be used to track learners’ progress and attainment. Education Scotland previously identified our systems as supporting teachers to make effective use of assessment information to plan targets in learning, monitor young people’s progress and make appropriate interventions, where required. They are also helping teachers to make robust judgements of achievement of CfE levels based on each learner’s progress.

### **Leavers Breadth and Depth**

Attainment continues to be very good at Saint Matthew’s Academy.

This section breaks attainment down into the number of qualifications achieved (A to D as shown on the Benchmarking tool - Insight) by a pupil at the end of S4, S5 and S6 compared to the Virtual Comparator school. From the data below, you can see that in all measures, positive trends are apparent over the past five years. This very good achievement is due to the strong commitment of staff, parents and pupils to establishing an ethos of achievement and maximising potential. The school usually delivers a strong supported study programme that takes place in November. This is usually complemented by a similar programme in March and an Easter School programme and Masterclasses that takes place just prior to each SQA examination.

An important aspect of this improvement has been the tracking and monitoring system in Senior Phase which is robust and ensures that all children are tracked regardless of level. Detailed learning conversations take place with all pupils at three key points in the year and this ensure pupils have a clear understanding of where they are in their learning and the next steps they should take. In order to maintain and enhance improvements in attainment we reflect on all existing learner pathways, identify alternative courses which provide greater opportunities for young people to achieve and continue to review the Broad General Education in S1-S3. This final step ensures young people have the appropriate skills in order to succeed in the Senior Phase.

Category	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
1+ SCQF 6/H	85% (63%)	82% (74%)	67% (60%)	59% (58%)	63% (63%)
3+ SCQF 6/H	60% (48%)	64% (56%)	55% (48%)	44% (43%)	48% (46%)



5+ SCQF 6/H	48% (35%)	49% (38%)	38% (34%)	33% (30%)	31% (31%)
1+ SCQF 7/AH	24% (23%)	24% (26%)	25% (21%)	20% (18%)	19% (20%)

*All percentages taken from the Scottish Government Insight website. Data in brackets represents Virtual Comparator data.*

Session 2022 was the first time all pupils in S4-S6 sat formal SQA exams. As such this was a challenging time for all pupils. Some S5 in particular felt 5 Higher exams in one diet was too stressful given they had no experience of SQA exams. This meant that fewer pupils attempted 5 Highers. Instead they opted to tackle this over two years. With the current S5 having experienced the exam diet in S4 data would suggest that significantly more pupils are sat 5 Highers in the 2023 SQA diet.

Careful consideration of prior departmental and whole school attainment had previously been employed to establish anticipated outcomes and this data was shared with SQA in the form of Estimates. The 2022 data above the percentage for school leavers achieving 1, 3, 5 or more Highers or Higher equivalent and the percentage of school leavers achieving 1 or more Advanced Higher or Higher equivalent.

Attainment outcomes form the basis for ongoing discussions/monitoring within departments and between PTs and link SMT members. These strategies are shared across the school as well as with the local authority and lead to a number of whole-school initiatives that contribute to improvements in performance on an ongoing basis. The strategies included:

- close ongoing monitoring (pupil by pupil);
- target-setting and tracking reports in S4 – S6;
- gathering evidence early in the session in order to ensure that pupils either improved their performance or were placed at a more appropriate curricular level;
- undertaking a comprehensive analysis of both S4 and S5/6 prelims and using this analysis to target pupils whose performance lay on the boundaries between levels/grades;
- making further use of the analysis to inform anticipated SQA outcomes at Departmental and Whole School level;
- reviewing the existing curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of each cohort;
- participation in Skills Academy: Life opportunities to recognise wider achievement;
- and sharing information between PTs on strategies to raise attainment.

All departments are utilising a wide range of learning and teaching approaches to deliver the curriculum which is resulting in developing our pupils to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. All students from S1-S3 participated in the Broad General Education last session in line with Curriculum for Excellence expectations. The various approaches being used in classrooms have enabled young people to develop their skills by taking greater responsibility for their own learning as well as developing their ability to work in partnership with others. Through use of Pupil Equity Funding a PT Raising Attainment is in place and delivers a variety of strategies to increase results. Strategies such as active learning, critical skills and assessment for learning are widely used and teachers are reporting notable improvements in young people's thinking and communication skills, increased confidence and a continued improvement in classroom and whole-school ethos. Learning pathways have been developed in Mathematics to allow young people to access the curriculum at the most appropriate level while learning logs are employed across year groups to encourage reflection on feedback.

All attainment is underpinned by high quality learning and teaching. Education Scotland defined learning, teaching and assessment in Saint Matthew's Academy as "Very Good" and we have continued to provide opportunities for colleagues to develop their professional skills. A Principal Teacher (PT) Learning and Teaching has been appointed through use of Pupil Equity Funding. This PT is required to oversee our Continued Lifelong Professional Learning programme, which is designed to ensure skill sets remain current and relevant for all staff.

As part of classroom practice, pupil views are sought both in relation to the learning experience and in connection to individual target setting. All departments display pupil voice outcomes which show the impact of pupil consultation. Senior Students lead quality improvement focus groups involving S1 pupils.

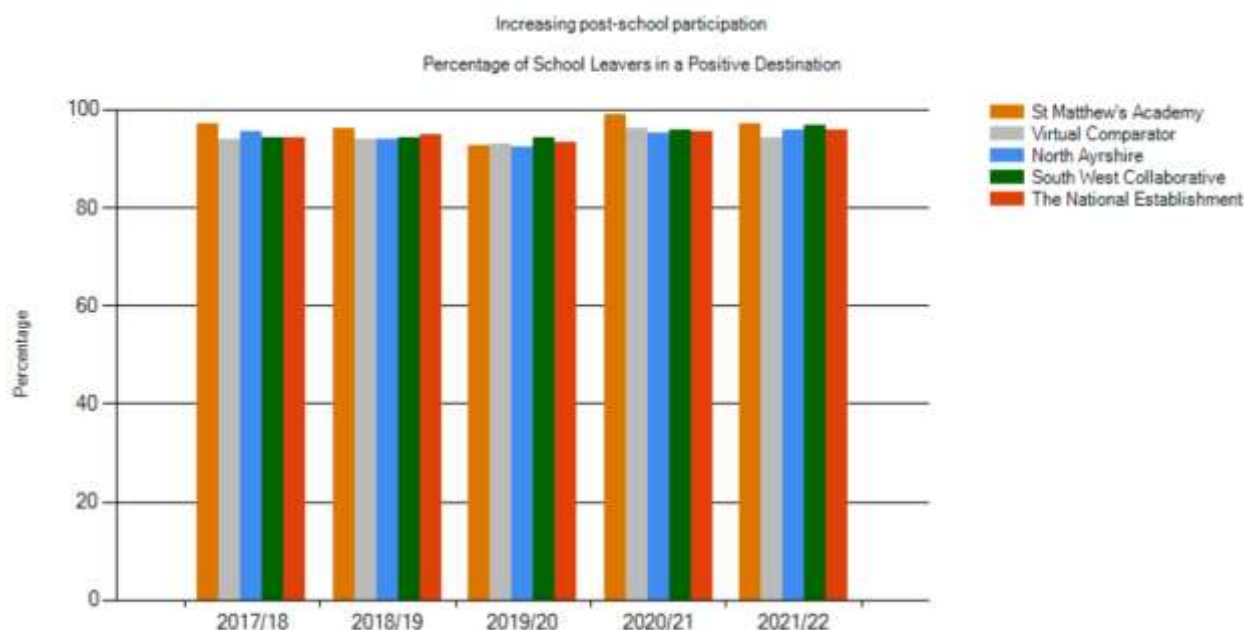
Young people are increasingly able to evaluate their own and others' work. Pupil voice is accessed through regular Pupil Council meetings. The information obtained was reviewed alongside the programme of reflective questions undertaken by all stakeholders. The Improvement Planning group used this data to inform and direct the school improvement agenda.

Skills seminars are delivered at the end of each year of the BGE. This allows pupils to evaluate the skills developed over the course of the past year. Pupil evaluations of the successful strategies employed in S1-S3 were shared with departments and form a key aspect of their self-evaluation and reflection.

Study seminars are delivered to targeted students in S4 and S5 with significant peer learning provided by S6 students.

Most young people are taking part in a wide range of opportunities outside the classroom where they can demonstrate their talents in a variety of ways. Leadership, volunteering and buddying in the Senior School are supplemented by musical, sporting, creative, linguistic and other opportunities many of which are developed in partnership with the local community and outside organisations.

### **Positive Destinations – Leavers Data**



Saint Matthew's Academy continue to have significant success in ensuring that our young people move onto positive destinations when they decide to leave school. In four of the past five years, positive destinations have outperformed all available comparator data. This continues to be a key priority for all within the school. By allying our award winning Skills Academy: Work programme with a robust Careers Education programme delivered through Personal and Social Education and our very good partnership working with local businesses, Skills Development Scotland and Ayrshire College, we ensure that our learners receive appropriate advice and valued experiences. This enables students to make informed decisions regarding their next steps when they decide to leave school.

Young people found it particularly challenging to find employment in the summer of 2020 and significant time and energy was invested in ensuring as many pupils as possible could move to a positive destination. While leaver numbers are up on 2020 we continue to see fewer young people have chosen to leave at the end of S4 than in pre Covid years and we are working with Skills Development Scotland to ensure all young people have the skills needed to move to a positive destination. We intend to continue to develop this highly successful aspect of our curriculum to



ensure all young people move directly to a positive destination. Through use of Pupil Equity Funding a PT Positive Destinations has been appointed to support young people to access College, University, Work or Training related opportunities.

We continue to benefit from our MCR Pathways Co-ordinator in partnership with North Ayrshire Council and the MCR Pathways national charity. Through this post we seek to ensure that every care-experience young person achieves the same educational outcomes, career opportunities and life chances as every other student.

By delivered group work sessions in S1/S2, our Pathways Co-ordinator supports pupils to build their confidence, improve literacy and numeracy and engage fully in the life of the school. S3 pupils work with an identified mentor from the local community. The young person usually meets with their mentor once a week for one hour. Mentors come from all walks of life and help young people to develop their abilities and confidence which in turn supports them to move into a positive destination when they leave school. More information relating to becoming an MCR Pathways Mentor can be found here - <https://mcrpathways.org/faqs/>

### **Pupil Equity Fund Allocation**

In session 22/23 Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) was applied as follows:

Resources were allocated to address Cost of the School Day issues. A Breakfast Club ran every morning. This was led by volunteer staff before the first school bell of the day and provided all young people with access to free and healthy breakfast options.

Resources were allocated to wider achievement experiences to ensure pupils at risk of missing out had the opportunity to participate in school trips and alternative experiences in order to close the activity gap.

Our Community Wardrobe was opened to all pupils. Resources were used to purchase additional uniform to ensure all members of our school community could benefit from a sense of belonging and pride in being part of the school.

A 6 week Parents in Partnership programme enabled parents and carers to participate in learning and build relationships with school staff.

PEF was used to fund full time Nurture Teacher and Nurture Classroom Assistant. This enabled the Nurture Base (The Nest) to be available to young people at all times.

A PT Learning and Teaching was appointed to lead professional learning, oversee the Learning and Teaching strategy and develop our Skills Framework.

A PT Wellbeing was appointed to lead all aspects of our Whole School Mental Health strategy.

A PT Raising Attainment was appointed to oversee all aspects of attainment, tracking and monitoring and data analysis.

A PT Positive Destinations was appointed to support young people into positive post 16 pathways.

A PT Family Engagement was appointed to enable parents to support their child's education.

An additional Teacher of Mathematics was funded to provide smaller class set and improve Numeracy outcomes.

ICT resources were purchased to enhance digital learning.

Alternative qualifications were sourced and provided young people with opportunities to evidence skills in employability.

### **Wider Experiences**

Young people had significant opportunities to participate in learning beyond the classroom in session 22/23.

53 students achieved the Caritas Award which involves volunteering in school and in their local community.

2 students represented Saint Matthew's Academy at the coronation in London.

SCQF Student ambassadors successfully led the school to SCQF School Silver Status.

Rights Respecting School ambassadors successfully led the school to Rights Respecting School Gold Status.

Senior students were trained as Wellbeing Ambassadors and supported younger peers.

The Head Girl, Head Boy and Deputies led S1 Improvement Planning Focus groups and met with Senior Management to identify priorities for Session 23/24.

S3 pupils successfully completed the Prince's Foundation "Food for the Future" programme.

After a two year COVID inflicted pause, our Duke of Edinburgh students finally received their Bronze awards.

One senior student won the RSA regional award for the West of Scotland and was presented with her award at Brodies LLP in Edinburgh.

One senior student won North Ayrshire singer of the year and represented the authority at the Young Musician of the Year awards.

Ten students graduated from the North Ayrshire Active Schools (NASA) programme.

The Harbour Arts Centre hosted our BGE pupils' Art exhibition.

The S2 Boys football team participated in the Lisbon Lions inter school tournament in Glasgow.

The Athletics Team won the Evelyn Hercus - Best Team Trophy at the North Ayrshire Athletics Championship.

The S1-S3 girls football team won the North Ayrshire Super Cup.

The S6 students raised £400 for SCIAF as part of their last day charity event.

The Young Sports Ambassadors Team raised £300 to assist with St Peter's in Chains repair costs.

Our Malawi exchange programme restarted with 2 staff members and 2 pupils joining us for 5 days from St Peter's Secondary School Mzuzu. Events included trips to Loch Lomond, bowling and attending Hampden to watch Scotland defeat Spain.

One of our S4 pupils won North Ayrshire Traditional Musician of the Year.

We held our first BGE Young Poet Awards.

In their first year of competing, our Debate Team reached the semi final of the Donald Dewar Debating Tournament.

S1 pupils created our Rights Respecting School Charter which is now in every classroom.

Two of our senior students guest edited the November edition of The Scottish Catholic magazine for Catholic Education Week.

Our S3/4 Girls Football team were crowned North Ayrshire Active Schools champions after winning the tournament without conceding a single goal.

One of our ICT Teachers was nominated for Ada Scotland's inspiring Teacher of the Year.

*To see a full range of the wider achievement opportunities available to our young people please follow our very active twitter account - @stmatthewsac*

## Review of Improvement Planning

### School Priority 1:

Improvements in Attainment, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy

#### National Improvement Framework Priority

#### How Good is Our School? (version 4) Quality Indicator

"Improvement in children's and young people's health and wellbeing"

2.3, 3.2

"Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people."

#### **Quality learning, teaching and assessment**

*We will continued our work towards embedding our Excellent Learning and Teaching Strategy by focusing on Differentiation and Assessment & Feedback.*

*All staff engaged with CLPL and sharing good practice relating to Differentiation and Assessment & Feedback*

*All staff participated in our first Learning Festival designed to encourage Practitioner Enquiry and participation in Professional Learning.*

*We resumed delivery of effective feedback strategies using our Learning Logs. Further work in this area will continue in the session ahead.*

*We re-established a number staff working groups designed to review various aspects of our delivery.*

#### **Raising Attainment**

*We continued our strategy to improve literacy and numeracy attainment through implementation of PEF by appointing additional staff in English and Mathematics.*

*We made additional appointments in Pupil Support designed to enhance the delivery of Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy in small group settings.*

*We continued to review the range of pathways offered to meet the needs of all learners and improve high quality outcomes for all learners. This led to the full implementation of Higher Maths Apps.*

*We continued to work with Primary colleagues to ensure effective transition.*

*We used our Insight Summary Analysis to inform improvement in practice.*

*Faculty Heads worked with Senior Management to review whole school attainment.*

*We continued to use school BGE tracking system in tandem with standardised testing to inform improvement and next steps.*

*Senior Management reviewed whole school attainment, whole school curriculum and in order to support moderation.*

*Departments reviewed Departmental attainment,*

*Departmental analysis of curriculum was used to support moderation.*

*We promoted wider achievement across whole school and with pupils and parents and this led to the school being awarded SCQF Silver Status.*

#### **Next Steps:**

*We will continued our work towards embedding our Excellent Learning and Teaching Strategy by focusing on Questioning.*

*We will continue to deliver a well considered programme of professional learning to ensure Learning and Teaching returns to very good.*

*We will continue to encourage young people to make effective use of Learning Logs to encourage ownership of learning.*

*We will continue our strategy to improve literacy and numeracy attainment through implementation of PEF by appointing additional staff in English and Mathematics.*

*We will work with Insight Advisors to review our attainment data and identify potential areas for improvement.*

*Faculty Head will engage with the SQA toolkit to inform improvement.*

*We will work towards SCQF Gold Status.*

## School Priority 2:

We will continue to design and implement programmes to achieve excellence and equity for our learners, with a clear focus on reducing the poverty-related attainment gap.

### National Improvement Framework Priority

“Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy”  
“Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.”

### How Good is Our School? (version 4) Quality Indicator

1.1, 1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2

### **Use of Pupil Equity Fund to close the Attainment Gap**

*Pupil wellbeing was supported through initiatives such as the breakfast club. This ensured all young people had access to a healthy breakfast at the start of each school day.  
Additional uniform was purchased to support families who were experiencing barriers to learning due to the school dress code.*

*The Community Wardrobe was established to support uniform.*

*We secured additional staffing to focus on Literacy, Numeracy, Engagement and Support for Learning. This allows us to deliver Literacy and Numeracy in smaller class sizes and continue our approach to mixed ability in the BGE.*

*Raising Attainment PT was funded through PEF to ensure we had access to current and relevant attainment data that could positively affect learning and teaching.*

*Positive Destinations PT was funded to ensure all leavers were supported into a positive destination.*

*Learning and Teaching PT was funded to ensure high quality Learning and Teaching remained a core focus and to oversee the Digital Schools programme.*

*Wellbeing PT was funded to support Mental and physical wellbeing for all pupils.*

*Family Engagement PT was funded to support parents and address Cost of the School day issues.*

*Funding was used to ensure the Nurture programme remained available for 5 days a week.*

*Wider achievement opportunities were funded to support pupils at risk of missing out.*

*A rigorous tracking and monitoring programme was continued to be delivered through use of the fund to identify pupils for targeted support.*

### **Family Engagement Strategy**

*We engaged with families alongside the Welfare Rights Officer to access appropriate support*

*We provided targeted support for care experienced learners through MCR pathways*

*We delivered increased opportunities for parental engagement through a variety of Family Learning events, subject taster events, health and wellbeing sessions and curriculum information evenings.*

*Family Engagement Ambassadors in all year groups supported remote learning through delivery of online 'how to' videos which encourage parents to support their child's learning at home.*

*Our Parent Council continued to play a key role in the development and implementation of our school policies and quality assurance processes.*

### **Next Steps:**

*We will continue to use Pupil Equity funds to provide additional staffing in core subjects where possible.*

*We will continue to review all approaches to Learning and Teaching.*

*We will continue to ensure moderation in BGE and in the Senior Phase delivers positive outcomes for young people.*

*We will monitor and review Insight data for Literacy and Numeracy.*

*We will set further ambitious targets for BGE level attainment and for SCQF 4 and 5 outcomes.*

*We will build on the Skills Framework programme and deliver to further year groups.*

### School Priority 3:

Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

#### National Improvement Framework Priority

“Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.”

“Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.”

“Improvement in children's and young people's health and wellbeing”

#### How Good is Our School? (version 4) Quality Indicator

1.5, 2.5, 2.6. 3.2

#### ***Partnerships to improve post-school learner outcomes***

*We continue to develop a targeted curriculum for those pupils at risk of not achieving a positive destination.*

*We continue to deliver a curriculum designed, including Skills Academy, to ensure identified pupils have opportunity to develop Skills for Learning, Life and Work.*

#### ***Skills Framework***

*We reviewed and redeveloped the skills framework to assist young people in making of connections across their learning to inform pathways through the BGE and beyond. We identified approaches to tracking skills. This will lead to a relaunch in the forthcoming session.*

#### **Next Steps:**

*We will review and build upon the skills framework to assist young people in making of connections across their learning to inform pathways through the BGE and beyond.*

*We will continue to develop a targeted curriculum for those pupils at risk of not achieving a positive destination.*

## School Priority 4:

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

### National Improvement Framework Priority

"Improvement in children's and young people's health and wellbeing"

### How Good is Our School? (version 4) Quality Indicator

1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.7, 3.1

### **Whole School Approach to Nurture**

*Nurture UK evaluated our approaches to nurture and awarded the school their Marjorie Boxall Quality Mark.*

*The Steering committee continued to meet to implement our programme and approaches.*

*The Nest, our Nurture base, continued to provide a safe and welcoming environment for identified pupils.*

*These approaches continue to be designed to ensure our children and young people feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.*

*The success of our programme is evidence in the fact that young people tell us they feel known as individuals by key staff in the school.*

*We continue to work with partners to create environments where children and young people feel listened to and are secure in their ability to discuss personal and sensitive aspects of their lives because they know they are valued as individuals.*

### **Development of Emotional Wellbeing Strategy**

*We continued to promote our Emotional Wellbeing strategy and approaches.*

*Senior students were trained in wellbeing approaches and served as Wellbeing ambassadors in support of younger pupils.*

*Staff had opportunities for professional learning and training which enhanced the implementation of the emotional wellbeing strategy.*

*Pupils had access to Mental Health counselling, bereavement support, MCR mentors, anti bullying groups and suicide prevention training.*

*Pupil Equity Funds were used to appoint a Principal Teacher: Wellbeing who had overall responsibility for the strategy.*

### **Promoting Positive Relationships strategy**

*The Promoting Positive Relationships policy and strategy is now embedded in practice with annual exclusion data now below pre COVID levels.*

*We continue to deliver opportunities for staff professional learning in restorative practice and de-escalation strategies.*

*We delivered the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme to volunteer S6 students. Students delivered this programme to all pupils in S1 and S2.*

*We continue to work to deliver a learning environment built on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships, which lead to high-quality learning outcomes.*

### **Next Steps:**

*We will review our Whole School Approach to Mental Health in light of Government documentation.*

*We will continue to deliver support to young people as they manage their emotional wellbeing.*

*This will include individual, group, stage and whole school approaches.*

*We will consider working towards Nurture UK's Whole School Award to evaluate our Nurturing approaches.*

*We will further develop the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme.*

*We will seek to introduce NQs in Wellbeing at key points in the curriculum.*

*We will extend the Attendance Mentors Pilot programme that was introduced this session for targeted pupils.*



## School Priority 5:

Placing human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

### National Improvement Framework Priority

"Improvement in children's and young people's health and wellbeing"

### How Good is Our School? (version 4) Quality Indicator

1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.7, 3.1

### **Catholic Ethos**

*Our Catholic Ethos continues to be central to all we undertake here in Saint Matthew's Academy. We welcomed our new Chaplain, Father Willie Boyd, who celebrated weekly mass and Year Group masses for our young people.*

*We provided a robust programme designed to support our Caritas students.*

*Students participated in liturgical celebration including Cluster Mass, P7 Welcome Mass and S6 Graduation Mass.*

*We visited all parishes as part of Catholic Education Week.*

*We continued to clearly articulate our vision and values and, through the embedded Promoting Positive Relationships (PPR) Policy, we worked to ensure our values were clear and visible throughout all interactions in the school. The return of whole year group assemblies meant that our values assemblies were delivered to all students in each year.*

*We achieved Rights Respecting School Gold status.*

*We continued to work with parents and parishes as they support young people on their faith journey.*

*A notable success was the 53 students who successfully completed the Caritas Award – this translates into 2120 hours of volunteering in the local community and parishes. An excellent example of our school vision in practice.*

### **Activity Tracker**

*We continue to develop the Activity Tracker and embed its use across the school to support targeted interventions.*

*Members of the school community make use of the Activity Tracker to promote equity and support inclusion.*

*We have begun to explore tracking skills developed through Activities within the school.*

### **Next Steps:**

*We will continue to prioritise our Catholic Ethos, our vision and our values in all that we seek to achieve.*

*We will begin the process of ensuring we maintain Rights Respecting School Gold Award.*

*We will continue to develop our use of the Activity Tracker to ensure all young people have the opportunity to develop key skills.*

*We will reviewing our Learner Participation programme with a view to aligning it with How Good Is OUR school.*

## Quality Indicators

Our self evaluation include surveys, observations and analysis of data. This allows us to review the 4 core Quality Indicators and judge ourselves against the National guidelines.

### *1.3 Leadership of Change is evaluated as Very Good.*

As part of our engagement with North Ayrshire's Quality Improvement Framework we established that we have a strong shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community. Pupil voice and leadership opportunities were considered to be a particular strength.

### *2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment is evaluated as Good.*

Recovery work is ongoing post COVID. Our classes are returning to the creative spaces they were prior to COVID. Classroom observation showed that in many areas, but not all, Learning and Teaching was very strong. In the year ahead we must strive to return to the consistency of pre COVID.

### *3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion is evaluated as Very Good.*

Support for all pupils is a key feature of our school. Pastoral support is a strength of Saint Matthew's Academy. Pupil Support likewise. There are a large range of additional supports available to young people including MCR, School Counsellor and Campus Police Officer. The recent awards obtained in Nurture and Rights Respecting School Gold point to a high quality system of support for young people.

### *3.2 Raising Attainment & Achievement is evaluated as Very Good.*

Attainment continues to be strong across the school with Saint Matthew's outperforming the virtual comparator is almost every measure. SCQF silver status shows a school making effective use of the full range of curricular options available to our young people.

## Conclusion

Session 22/23 saw a welcome return to more normal method of working following the removal of COVID restrictions. Evaluation of the improvement plan suggests many improvements are becoming increasingly embedded in our approaches.

The return of whole school interval and lunch meant that year groups were no longer kept apart and this helped to quickly re-establish our very strong school identity. This, in turn, helped to address difficulties in behaviour and conduct with a welcome drop in exclusion and a return to the calm working environment witnessed pre COVID.

2022 leavers results are particularly notable given the fact that no student had ever sat an SQA exam before May. It is significant that attainment has remained at the high levels achieved under the change in practice implemented during COVID. This would suggest that young people have coped well with the academic challenges Covid-19 caused and, while the effects of the pandemic will be felt for a number of years to come, students should be very proud of their success. It is hoped that students take confidence from this success.

We are gradually seeing a return to the high level of ambition and confidence that was a feature of pre Covid-19 times. Pupils will continue to be supported throughout this time to ensure they have every opportunity to achieve their potential.

Throughout all that we try to achieve we must never lose sight of the shared vision for Saint Matthew's Academy - *Our vision for Saint Matthew's Academy is one of a community of faith and*

*learning dedicated to Gospel Values. We work together to ensure the effective formation and development of the whole child by providing the highest quality of education. We strive to ensure our young people develop their talents and abilities in order to best support the common good.*

The last few years have been challenging for all but Session 22/23 should be seen as a return to normality. The challenges presented in building our community due to the necessary isolation Covid-19 have passed and the community spirit which is the hallmark of school was evident throughout the year. The return of in person Parents' Evenings has helped to re-establish our strong partnership working which in turn is paying dividends for our young people. It is this partnership with parents and parishes that leads to the high quality learning experiences we see in Saint Matthew's Academy. We are confident that our partnership approach enables us to provide our young people with the values and skills required to best support the common good and make a positive difference to the lives of others. This will always be the guiding principle of our Catholic secondary school.

Stephen Colligan  
Head Teacher  
June 2023