

The Opening of St. Matthew's Academy

Marie Mann, Chaplain



The Right Reverend Bishop Patrick Lynch SSCC celebrated a service to mark the opening of [St. Matthew's Academy](#) an exciting new school for children from age 3 to 16.

The opening celebration was held in the new £32 million high tech building, which was attended by many of those involved in the starting of this new school, including some of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary and the De la Salle Brothers who had run the two predecessor schools of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Joseph's. The De la Salle Brothers continue their support of St Matthew Academy as Brother Terry Collins is a member of the Project Steering Group.

The whole opening service was video streamed to all of the classrooms enabling all of the students to have the opportunity to join in the event, many of the younger classes joining in enthusiastically with the singing.

Bishop Pat Lynch and Fr. Wilfred McGreal O'Carm Prior Provincial and the school chair of Governors blessed crucifixes which were specially commissioned for the school; these were received by student representatives during the service and taken to be hung in their classrooms.

Situated in a multicultural and multi-faith community, St Matthew's Academy is sharing its Christian ethos in a caring and inclusive school environment

that seeks to support children of all faiths and develop understanding and love between children from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The Chaplaincy team helped to organise the opening ceremony and have since the start of the year organised services and masses in Our Lady Help of Christians Parish Church and St Margaret's Anglican Church which is opposite the new school, as well as a retreat to Rome and a year 11 Mass which was celebrated by Fr. Eddie Higgins SSCC who is part of the Chaplaincy team at Christ the King sixth form college which is on an adjoining site. A retreat to [St Cassian's](#), Kintbury by all of the Year 7 students is planned for September.

The opening ceremony ended with a tricolour balloon release representing the three vertical stream house groups of Mandela, Romero and Teresa three modern role models who worked for racial harmony and Christian charity towards all people. Students led tours of the building at the end of the service enabling guests to meet some of the students in their classrooms, the afternoon ending with refreshments and the opportunity to meet more of the staff.

The Bishop replaced Archbishop Kevin McDonald as he continues his convalescence. We pray for his full recovery.