

Alice Ingham Roman Catholic Primary School

Millgate, Halifax Road, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL16 2NU

Inspection dates

4–5 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement in the school, particularly in Key Stage 2, requires improvement because over time, teaching has not been good enough to secure consistently good progress for its pupils. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards, although improving, remain well below those of all pupils nationally.
- Most pupils make the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, but few do better than this. They often have to work their way through easier examples, particularly in mathematics, before moving on to harder work and so are not consistently challenged.
- Opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they have learnt, across other subjects are not always routinely provided to extend pupils' learning.
- Marking comments are not always specific enough to help pupils to improve their work. Not enough time or opportunities are given for pupils to learn from these comments.
- Pupils' learning targets are not always clearly understood. Therefore they are not always effective in moving learning forward.
- Newer members of the school's leadership and middle management team have still to develop their skills in order to play a full part in whole-school improvement.
- Leaders' action plans sometimes lack milestones against which the school can judge the impact of its actions and the next steps it must take to improve further.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards and progress in Key Stage 1 have improved sharply over the last two years because of better teaching. Progress across Key Stage 2 is now beginning to accelerate, as staffing has now stabilised.
- Pupils feel safe and happy in school and parents unanimously agree this is so.
- Attendance has improved from below average to above average in this school year.
- Pupils are at the heart of this caring school. Their behaviour is good. They are courteous and respectful towards staff and each other.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium and those with special educational needs achieve as well and often better than their peers.
- Despite previous disruption, the headteacher is developing a staff team, strongly focused on improving results for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 10 part-lessons, of which four were observed jointly with the headteacher. All teachers in the school over the two days were observed at least once. In addition, inspectors made other short visits to classrooms and listened to six pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteachers and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with two members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions were held with parents who brought their children to school at the start of the school day. The 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were also taken into account, alongside the views expressed in the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors visited the breakfast club run by the school.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and scrutinised the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, the school's improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection were also considered.

Inspection team

Yvonne Mills-Clare, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Hints

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Alice Ingham is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- There are fewer pupils than average who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well-above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection there has been substantial disruption to staffing, at both classroom and leadership levels. Two assistant headteachers, appointed from inside the school, had been in post for two days at the time of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, so that all is consistently good or better in order to accelerate progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly at the higher levels by:
 - using on-going assessment in order to adjust and reshape learning activities, when necessary, so that pupils of all abilities are consistently challenged to do as well as they can
 - ensuring that marking comments are specific enough to enable pupils to reach the next level of learning
 - allocating time for pupils to respond to these comments
 - ensuring that the purpose of pupil learning targets is clearly understood by pupils themselves, so that they are often referred to and frequently used by both teachers and pupils to support improvement in their work
 - providing opportunities for pupils to routinely apply the skills they have learnt to real life problems, particularly in mathematics, and across other subjects
 - ensuring that expectations of how pupils present their work, particularly in topic work, are as high as in literacy and mathematics.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management further by:
 - developing the skills of new senior leaders so that they are able to play a full role in whole-school improvement
 - ensuring that school development and action plans created by leaders at all levels contain specific milestones against which to measure the impact of actions taken and the next steps necessary to bring about further improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils across the school, while improving, is not yet consistently good, particularly in Key Stage 2, where disruption in staffing has led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils over time.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills that are generally below those typical for their age and with key aspects of their learning, such as speech, communication and writing, being well below typical. Good teaching and well organised indoor activities promote children's curiosity, interest and an excitement in learning. They make good progress. As a result, by the time the children enter Year 1, skills are slightly below average.
- Progress in Key Stage 1, which has been less affected by the staffing turbulence, has been improving much faster than the national trend in reading, writing and mathematics over the last three years. This has resulted in standards in 2013 in reading, writing and mathematics that are now much closer to average.
- Despite recently accelerating progress also being made by some pupils in Key Stage 2, standards at the end of Year 6 remained well below average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013. A legacy of underachievement means that improving progress has yet to impact on the standards pupils reach. Nonetheless, all pupils made the progress expected of them in reading and mathematics, which is better than pupils nationally, while the proportion making the progress expected of them in writing was broadly similar to national figures. However, fewer pupils than is average made better than expected progress in 2013.
- Pupils in the current Year 6 are set to reach slightly higher standards than in 2013. However in real terms, this represents much better progress by this small group of 16 pupils. Standards reached by this group of pupils, at the end of Key Stage 1, were far lower than those of the 2012 year group. This demonstrates the school's improving picture.
- Writing, an issue from the last inspection, is improving year on year. Opportunities to write, both in literacy and across other subjects are regularly offered to pupils. However, in the topic work seen, expectations of the quality of work produced are not as high. Whilst work in literacy and writing books is generally neat, in topic work presentation can be untidy.
- The results of the 2013 Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening test were above average. This is the result of the effective teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1.
- As pupils move through the school, they develop an enjoyment in reading. The school has done much to nurture and develop this love of books. Sharing a book with dad, dressing up for World Book Day, reading 'buddies' sharing books with younger pupils and rewards for regular reading, mean pupils are 'buzzing' with excitement about their reading.
- The progress of the most-able pupils requires improvement and not enough of these pupils reach the higher levels in both Key Stages 1 and 2. In some lessons pupils must work their way through easier examples before moving on to work that will really make them think. As a result, too few pupils attain the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics. A new 'Puzzle Time' initiative is raising the profile of mathematics in the school in a 'fun' way. However, much of the work seen in numeracy books was calculation, with little evidence that pupils routinely extend their learning through regular opportunities to apply the skills they have learnt to real-life problem-solving.
- The pupil premium is spent wisely on small-group and one-to-one tuition and support for pupils' varying needs. As a result these pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make progress that is equal to and sometimes better than that of their classmates. This demonstrates the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities for all.
- The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language, make similar progress to that of their peers.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive invaluable support from the talented support assistants in the school. As a result many of these pupils do better than similar pupils nationally and as well, if not better, than their peers.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Although improving strongly, teaching is not yet consistently good across Key Stage 2, to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress by the time they leave the school. Staff turbulence has led to inconsistencies in progress for some pupils. However, recent changes in staff are bringing new stability and strengths to the team of teachers. As a result, pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate.
- On-going assessment information is not always used well enough to adjust and re-shape tasks, so that pupils are consistently challenged to achieve their best. For example, pupils often work their way through a plethora of easier examples, before moving on to work that will stretch them.
- Most marking of work identifies 'next steps'. However, these are not always specific enough to guide pupils to their next level of learning. Books contained few opportunities to respond to these comments and so this limited the effectiveness of the marking.
- Pupils have a bank of targets designed to help them reach the next level of working. However, pupils are often unclear as to how these targets will help them to improve. Consequently they are not always routinely used in their learning. As a result pupils are often unsure of what they need to do to improve.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to their learning and are generally keen to take part in their lessons and do their best. They are confident learners, have complete faith in their teachers and the help they will be given, should it be necessary.
- Activities are chosen to enthuse and motivate pupils and capture their imagination.
- Pupils work together well in pairs and small groups. They share, discuss and help each other. Classrooms are generally bright, with a calm working atmosphere.
- Classroom assistants are extremely talented. They give worthwhile support, while ensuring that pupils think for themselves and do not become over reliant on adult help.
- Probing questioning, good use of assessment techniques and many opportunities for pupils to articulate their learning, ensure that progress is strong. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils were asked to explain their reasoning behind the method of working. This served well to develop the pupils' thinking skills, but also acted as a scaffold for less confident mathematicians.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helped to settle into school well from the outset. A particular strength is the focus staff place on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and their reinforcement of good learning behaviours. This prepares them well for the rest of their time in school. The use of space and resources, particularly in the indoor area, supports children's learning well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils **are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils, staff and parents agree that behaviour is good. Pupils are welcoming, friendly and courteous towards each other and staff. They conduct themselves well in and around the school. They wear their uniform with pride, classrooms are generally neat and orderly, demonstrating their respect for the school environment.
- Pupils play together well at break times and during wet playtimes. This is because the school promotes the development of social and moral skills particularly well. Lunch times are a real social occasion, pupils happily chatting with their friends in the dining room.
- Relationships in the school are good and pupils display good attitudes to learning. Only where activities are not challenging enough, do some pupils become distracted and concentration wanes.
- Pupils are learning independence and developing their leadership roles well. They relish having some form of responsibility, from helping younger pupils to read, to undertaking tasks in their own classrooms.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the different types of bullying. They feel safe and have full confidence in the adults around them. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe when using the Internet and the dangers that may be posed by mobile phones.
- Determined efforts and initiatives, such as employing a learning mentor to support pupils and their families have improved attendance from below average to figures that are currently above average this year. This demonstrates that the school's strategies are working and that pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school.
- The school operates a breakfast club that is open to all pupils and is well subscribed and supervised.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher of the school has steered the school through a period of upheaval. Despite this, there has been some success and the school has run smoothly during this time.
- The school's development plan establishes the correct priorities, but, at times, lacks specific milestones against which leaders can measure the effectiveness of the actions taken and the next steps needed to bring about further improvement. Consequently, this limits the accuracy of the evidence the school has available to measure its successes fully, leading to the overgenerous judgements of the school's performance, sometimes seen in the self-evaluation document presented by the school.
- Two new, enthusiastic assistant headteachers, recently appointed to replace the senior leaders who have left the school, are currently developing their roles as part of the senior leadership team and, therefore, have yet to play a full part in whole-school improvement.
- Systems for tracking pupil progress are becoming more effective. In addition to tracking individual pupils, the school is now presenting and analysing data on the different groups of pupils. Success can be seen in the valuable support given to pupils with special educational needs and those pupils supported by the pupil premium, both of whom achieve as well and sometimes better than their peers.
- Systems to check on teachers' performance have been established. Targets focus on improving performance and salary rewards are closely linked to achieving targets. Regular meetings with staff ensure that teachers are held more accountable for the progress of their pupils.
- Greater stability and regular monitoring of teaching in the school are leading to improvements that have resulted in the higher standards seen at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013 and the indications of better progress across Key Stage 2. In addition, attendance is much improved and governors feel well-informed and better able to support the school and provide challenge to leaders about the school's performance. These improvements, together with the strengthening of the leadership team, demonstrate the capacity of the leadership to move the school forward.
- The curriculum broadly meets the needs of pupils, although opportunities to challenge pupils to do their best are not always strong. Similarly, opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills during lessons are inconsistent. Writing is used across other subjects, but in topic work, pupils do not take the same pride in their work as in literacy lessons and expectations of presentation are not as high. Trips, visits and visitors enhance the curriculum well and promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to good effect.
- The primary school sport funding is used well, with many sporting activities available regularly to all pupils through the 'Link 4 Life' sports' service and the weekly dance programme in the school. In addition, equipment has been bought to supplement that which is currently available.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school when requested and it has an accurate picture of the school's development.
- The Catholic ethos pervades the school, which provides a warm, welcoming and calm environment for pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong through the many opportunities within the school and the religious programmes of study. This ensures that

the school is a harmonious community and demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities. However, not all pupils have achieved equally well due to the variations in teaching over time.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors say they feel well-informed and better placed to support and challenge school leaders on the progress pupils make and the standards they reach. They are involved in the reviewing of school data and are aware that more needs to be done to raise pupils' achievement. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching, often observing lessons with the headteacher. They are routinely linked to individual subject areas in the school, meeting with subject leaders to gain an overview in their subject. They are consulted on issues of rewarding teachers through pay and supporting others, where necessary. The governing body manages the headteacher's performance well and targets reflect the school's priorities. They have a good understanding of how the pupil premium is spent and that it is effective in supporting pupils through small-group and one-to-one work. They are aware that these pupils make similar and sometimes better progress than their classmates and attain similar standards. The safety of the pupils is paramount and governors ensure that safeguarding meets requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105832
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	442343

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joseph Sweeney
Headteacher	Sarah Joynes
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2012
Telephone number	01706 341560
Fax number	01706 710261
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