

Alice Ingham Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105832
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	355851
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Jim Kidd

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	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Joseph Sweeney
Headteacher	Mrs Briega Sivills
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons taught by all seven teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, pupils, members of the governing body, teaching assistants and learning mentors, subject coordinators and the senior leadership team. There were also meetings with the School Improvement Partner and representatives of external agencies working with the school. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including school improvement planning, policies in relation to safeguarding, local authority reports, pupil progress and attainment data and pupils' workbooks. Inspectors also analysed 81 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 17 completed by staff and 75 returned by pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Whether the school's view that pupils' progress across the school is satisfactory and improving is justified.
- Whether the school has arrested the decline in attainment, suggested by data.
- Focus and challenge in teaching and whether they are good enough to foster better progress and higher attainment.
- The quality of leadership and management at all levels to bring about improvement.
- How and with what impact the school is attempting to improve the attainment of those pupils who are persistently absent.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than those of the same type but its intake is rising over time. The percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is more than three times the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below that usually found and there are few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average and has almost doubled since the previous inspection. There is also a high percentage of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times. Alice Ingham has Healthy School Status and holds the Eco Green Flag award. It is also an Investor in People and has the Collaborative Working Leading Aspect award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a rapidly improving school, which provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils and with a satisfactory capacity to improve further because some of the improvements, although secure, are relatively new and are not embedded fully. It has excellent relationships with parents and carers and the effectiveness of the care, support and guidance for pupils, including from teachers, the talented team of learning mentors, teaching assistants and the behaviour support leader, is outstanding. The context in which the school operates has changed markedly since the previous inspection but strong leadership has risen to the challenge and has ensured that the school continues to move forward with confidence. Pupils enjoy Alice Ingham, feel safe within its walls and represent both the school and their families with pride.

Pupils enter Year 1 with well below average skills. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school in their academic studies but progress well and sometimes outstandingly well in their personal, social and emotional development. Teaching is now good and this, combined with a good curriculum, is leading to attainment rising rapidly. By the end of Year 6, attainment is below average, although there are still weaknesses in mathematics and writing. Many more pupils than is usually seen join the school partway through the year and their progress accelerates during their time in the school. Pupils' achievement is, therefore satisfactory overall, but pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because of the high-quality support they receive.

Pupils are very proud of their school and behave well in lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes. They have an enviable social conscience, support a primary school in Kenya and raise money for a wide range of charities. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to become more aware of and to celebrate the wide variety of cultures represented within the United Kingdom. They have a high regard for the adults who work them and say, 'There is always someone to talk to if we have a problem.' Older pupils, acting as 'Playground Pals' and school councillors support younger children and are not afraid to express their views on how the school can develop. Attendance is broadly average but has improved markedly since the previous inspection and there are now no pupils regarded as persistent absentees.

The school knows itself well and leaders amend their approach in the light of changing circumstances and after regular evaluations of performance in all areas of its life. The well-being of pupils, personally, socially, emotionally and academically, lies at the heart of everything the school tries to do. Parents and carers are fulsome in their praise for the work of the school, commenting, 'Alice Ingham does everything it can to raise the self-esteem of our children and to ensure they are happy.'

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in mathematics by:
 - ensuring there is even more focus on developing their skills in basic calculation
 - giving them more opportunities to reinforce their skills in mental mathematics
 - building upon the successes already evident in the one-to-one tuition for selected pupils.
- Raise pupils' attainment in writing by:
 - further developing their oral skills as a preparation for their writing assignments
 - giving them more opportunities to write about real-life situations.
- Place more emphasis on the promotion of community cohesion by enabling pupils to find out more about and celebrate cultural diversity within the United Kingdom.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most pupils are eager to learn, enjoy their lessons and work well collaboratively with their peers. They are generally engaged in the activities and are delighted when they reach their targets. They are keen to show their work to visitors and are only too willing to explain exactly what they are doing. Pupils make satisfactory progress across both key stages and reach below average attainment by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence and recent test results demonstrate that the decline in attainment and achievement since the previous inspection has been reversed and that pupils' attainment in reading is now broadly average. Attainment in writing and mathematics is rising also, but not at the same rate as in reading. Pupils' skills in mental mathematics and in basic calculation, for example, remain underdeveloped. Similarly, a significant number of pupils have weak oral skills and find any extended talk difficult. However, excellent support from teaching assistants leads to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also those new to learning English making good progress and the one-to-one support, in particular, is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress in numeracy.

Pupils behave well, feel safe in school and they also have a keen understanding of what makes a balanced diet and why keeping physically fit is important. Older pupils, acting as 'Playground Pals' and members of the school council, are proactive in their support for their younger counterparts. The school has an impressive reputation for its fund-raising and a wide range of charities benefit from its work. Pupils also support a school outside Nairobi in Kenya. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The choir meets regularly and pupils are actively involved in a drama project to raise their confidence and improve their oral skills. Pupils' self-esteem is raised by the thought-provoking assemblies, which encourage them to recognise their strengths and

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to aim for success in everything they do.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall and there are examples of outstanding practice in both key stages. In the best lessons, an excellent numeracy session in Year 6, for example, there is an ideal balance between the development of pupils' academic skills and the fostering of their self-confidence and belief in what they can achieve. By the end of the lesson, in which challenge was high and assignments increasingly more complex, pupils were beside themselves with delight at how well they had done. One spoke for many with the words, 'I used to think adding decimals was difficult, but I think it is easy now!' In all lessons, behaviour management is very effective and teachers' questioning encourages pupils to go further in their thinking. On occasions, opportunities for pupils to explain their progress towards the learning targets are missed and writing assignments are not linked sufficiently closely to real-life situations. Assessment is accurate and marking is regular, detailed and gives pupils extensive comment on how they can improve their work. The emphasis on 'steps for success' is most effective in enabling pupils to monitor

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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their own progress. In addition, the work of teaching assistants is highly focused on pupils' individual learning needs.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal and emotional development well and also encourages them to be creative in their learning. It fosters an 'I can do' culture and does much to raise pupils' confidence and belief that they can succeed. In addition to an appropriate emphasis on key skills, the curriculum also encourages teamwork and pupils speak highly of the experienced coaches who visit the school to develop their skills in football and dodgeball, for example. Pupils' involvement in the arts is encouraged and tuition in a variety of musical instruments is a strong feature. There is a wide range of clubs and enrichment activities and older pupils have opportunities to attend residential visits.

Care, guidance and support are of the highest order. Individual and small group tuition delivered by teaching assistants, learning mentors and also by outside agencies abounds, is delivered with the utmost sensitivity, and has a profound impact on pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are identified rapidly and accurately and they receive focused support closely tailored to their individual needs and interests. The Thinc and 'Nurture' rooms are highly popular among pupils who regard them as, 'Quiet and calm places where we can recharge our batteries.' Parents and carers cannot speak highly enough about, in their words, 'The excellent support, encouragement and understanding our children receive in this very happy and caring school.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The perceptive and forward-thinking headteacher leads by example and has engendered high levels of teamwork among teaching, support and administrative staff. As a result, the school has been able most successfully to modify and develop its practice to meet the ever-changing needs of its pupils since the previous inspection. Improvements in teaching, the development of the creative curriculum and the establishment of an increasingly wide variety of support strategies for pupils with both learning and emotional problems have borne fruit: achievement is satisfactory and improving securely and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress in their academic work.

The governing body is both supportive and challenging. Members have a keen

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awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development and they hold the leadership to account with rigour.

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. The school's learning mentors, the family support worker and the extended school coordinator liaise closely with families and have established a wide variety of events to encourage parents and carers to become more involved in their children's learning. Child protection and safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements but the school recognises that relevant policies are sometimes not updated regularly enough. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and encourages both pupils and staff to reject all forms of discrimination.

The school is a racially harmonious community but pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to gain more understanding of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom. Nonetheless, strategies to promote community cohesion are satisfactory overall and the school has close links with a school of the same name in Kenya.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

This is a good setting in which children are happy and settled and in which relationships between children and between children and adults are warm. Similarly, communication between home and school is strong and recognised as such by parents and carers.

Children enter the Reception class with low skills and knowledge for their age, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. As a result of good teaching, outstanding care and support and a

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welcoming and vibrant environment, children make good progress in all areas of learning but their skills are still well below those typical for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Their personal skills, in particular, are developing apace and a visit to the area shows how inquisitive they are about the world around them and how they enjoy working with each other to experiment in their learning. They have many opportunities to initiate activities and have confidence when using computers. They behave well, greet visitors with a smile and have the highest regard for their teachers and teaching assistants.

Leadership and management are good and characterised by accurate self-evaluation, thorough planning, strong teamwork and an overriding emphasis on the well-being of the children. Outdoor provision has been improved since the previous inspection but staff recognise that opportunities for children's physical development are underdeveloped.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a 53% return of questionnaires. Of these, all parents and carers expressed the view that their children enjoy school. The overwhelming majority of respondents are entirely happy with their children's experiences at school, believing that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors represented the views of many with the words, 'Alice Ingham is everything you would expect from a school and it cares for and supports our children superbly.' A very small minority of parents and carers believe their children are not making enough progress at the school. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view and judge pupils' progress to be satisfactory and improving securely. Moreover, they judge the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alice Ingham Roman Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 153 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	70	24	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	69	24	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	60	30	37	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	57	30	37	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	53	65	24	30	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	62	30	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	60	30	37	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	50	62	30	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	57	33	41	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	56	34	42	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	58	31	38	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	50	62	29	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	72	22	27	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



29 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alice Ingham Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale, OL16 2NU

Thank you all so much for your warm welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. You were very polite and kind and we lost count of the number of times you asked us how we were and opened classroom and corridor doors for us! We are particularly grateful to those of you who gave up your time to meet us on Monday lunchtime. We really enjoyed talking to you. I would now like to tell you what we found during the inspection.

Alice Ingham gives you a satisfactory education, but it is improving all the time and some things about your school are really good. You are making satisfactory progress at least with your work. Your teachers and teaching assistants give you excellent support when you are finding things hard. You behave well in class and around school and older pupils, such as members of the school council and 'Playground Pals', enjoy looking after the younger children. The teaching you receive is good and your teachers always mark your work well and give you advice on how you can improve it. You have lots of lunchtime and after-school activities and your parents and carers also have chances to come to school for meetings and coffee afternoons.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are very proud of you and they want to make the school better and better for you. I would like to help, too and so I have asked them to improve your progress in numeracy by giving you more opportunities to practise your basic calculation and mental mathematics skills. I would also like them to give more of you one-to-one help. I have also mentioned that it would be a good idea for them to help you more with your speaking skills and also to give you more chances to write for real-life situations. Finally, I have asked them to help you to become more aware of the many different cultures within the United Kingdom.

Thank you again for your kindness to us. Please keep working hard and looking after each other.

Yours sincerely

Jim Kidd

Lead inspector

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