

Alice Ingham Roman Catholic Primary School

Millgate, Halifax Road, Rochdale, OL16 2NU

Inspection dates 31 October–1 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	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

- Achievement requires improvement. While more pupils are reaching the nationally expected standards by the time they leave school than they did in previous years, they make better progress in some classes than they do in others.
- Teaching requires improvement because it varies in quality between classes. In some classes, teaching is good and sometimes better. However, in other classes, teaching is weaker.
- Leadership and management, including governance, require improvement. Leaders and managers have not yet been able to make sure teaching is good in all classes or that all pupils achieve well. This is because many systems to check on the quality of teaching have been very recently introduced and have had little effect yet.

The school has the following strengths

- Noticeable features of the school are how well pupils behave, how safe they feel and the positive relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults.
- Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress as a result of the high quality support they receive.
- Gaps between how well pupils who are and are not eligible for free school meals have closed over the past three years.
- Improvements in the way reading is taught in Key Stage 1 means that pupils are making more progress than they have done in previous years.
- Children in the Reception class achieve well because they are well taught.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons of which four were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Additionally, the lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the nine responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection in addition to letters received from parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents including school improvement plans, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Chris Maloney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those pupils in local authority care, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- An above-average proportion of pupils arrives or leaves the school other than at the normal times.
- In 2012, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Following the retirement of the previous headteacher, an acting headteacher has been in post since September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is at least good in all classes in order to raise pupils' achievement by:
 - making sure teachers use what they know about pupils' abilities to set work that always helps them to do their best
 - asking questions that help all pupils to respond, to think deeply, to answer in full sentences and that challenge them more
 - giving more opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills across all subjects
 - improving the quality of feedback that teachers give to pupils so that pupils are left in no doubt what they must do to improve their work
 - making sure that pupils work more on their own or in groups rather than listening to long instructions from teachers.
- Develop further the leadership and management systems that have recently been put in place since the acting headteacher took up her post by:
 - observing teaching regularly to help teachers learn from each other and establishing a programme of training to make sure that all teaching quickly rises to at least good quality
 - rigorously holding teachers to account for the progress of all pupils in their classes
 - improving the systems used to track pupils' progress so that if any fall behind, senior leaders can spot the problem and take prompt and effective action
 - ensuring the governing body receive regular and reliable information on how pupils are getting on in each class so that they are better able to challenge school leaders.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the Reception class with skills that are generally below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development.
- They make good progress during their time in the Reception class, and quickly learn how to work together and behave well. They learn the sounds that letters make and staff give children every opportunity to develop their communication skills through talking.
- In Key Stage 1, support from the local authority has helped to develop pupils' reading, speech, language and communication skills. This has led to overall standards rising steadily over the past three years in Key Stage 1. However, pupils' abilities at the end of Key Stage 1 remain well below those expected for their age. This is because the quality of teaching varies too much and is not strong enough overall to ensure pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' writing skills across the school have lagged behind reading and mathematics. There are signs of this now improving through giving pupils exciting writing activities that stimulate their interests and helps them to improve their writing. For example, pupils used a staged alien landing in the school grounds as a stimulus for creative writing. However, pupils do not have opportunities to practise their writing skills within other subjects during the school day.
- By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are doing as well as similar pupils across the country. However, while pupils have made good progress during their time in Key Stage 2, it is not good in each class, which means the progress they make is uneven.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress because the help they receive from teaching assistants is of high quality throughout the school. Moreover, the plans that support those pupils with a statement of special educational needs are of a high quality and help teachers and teaching assistants to make sure these pupils receive just the right amount of help.
- Pupils who start school midway through the year settle quickly into their new surroundings and, because of the very welcoming nature of the school, make friends quickly and do as well as other pupils.
- Those pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, do as well as other pupils because the additional funding allocated for them is used to make sure they are not disadvantaged in any way and have an equal chance to succeed in their studies.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There are examples of good teaching in the school, where teachers make good use of time to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
- In the best lessons, pupils are very well involved in their learning and make links between subjects. In a science lesson, pupils worked out how to rescue plastic animals trapped in ice by melting it and were asked searching questions to stimulate their interest and develop their speaking and reasoning skills.
- Children in the Reception class quickly develop an interest in stories which, in turn, encourages them to read. During the inspection, children were eager to talk to inspectors about the books they had been reading in class.
- Teaching assistants give good quality close support to those pupils who need it most. They are careful not to give too many answers to pupils and, therefore, help pupils to solve their own problems.
- Throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching varies too much, which is why pupils' progress is erratic.

- Teachers frequently check on pupils' progress, and they generally do this well and accurately. However, they often do not use the information they have gathered to set work that enables pupils of all abilities to do their best. Sometimes a 'one size fits all' approach is adopted, where pupils are given the same work to do. This means some find the work too easy and others find it too difficult.
- Teachers frequently ask questions to check on pupils' understanding, but they rely on pupils to raise their hands to answer. This means quieter pupils generally do not answer questions or those who are unsure of the answer sometimes keep quiet and do not attempt an answer. Moreover, too many questions that teachers ask require pupils to answer in single words rather than in full sentences. Consequently, questioning does not always help pupils develop their language or help them to think deeply.
- Teachers use imaginative approaches to teaching writing. For example, to help pupils write about a camping trip, teachers set up a camping expedition in the school grounds. This gave pupils the vocabulary and experiences to enable them to have fun while making good progress with their writing in those lessons. Such activities also develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. However, there are frequently missed opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across all subjects.
- The feedback pupils receive on their work varies between classes. Where it is most helpful, pupils receive comments that pinpoint exactly what they should do to improve their work. Too often though, comments are vague or work is left unmarked. Sometimes pupils say they receive comments, but time is not set aside in the lesson for them to read the comments and decide how they should act on the advice given.
- Teachers sometimes talk too much and give over-long explanations that take up too much time in lessons. Where this happens, pupils have too little time to work on their own or in groups.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- From the moment pupils arrive in the Reception class, teachers place a great deal of importance on teaching pupils the importance of taking turns and speaking politely to each other. As a result, a strong feature of the school is how polite pupils are around the school and in lessons. They welcome newcomers to the school with open arms, which enables them to settle quickly into their new surroundings.
- The records of pupils' behaviour show that over time, behaviour in the school has improved. Far fewer pupils are now being excluded for fixed periods of time. Behaviour is now good in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils learn how to appreciate each others' differences and have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures through the school's link with a school in Kibera, Kenya and fund raising for CAFOD. These activities develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- Pupils feel safe from the threats of bullying and say it only occasionally happens. They say there is always a caring adult to turn to should the need arise. They have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying, including the potential threats of the internet and social networking sites.
- Attendance has, in previous years, been poor when compared to other schools across the country. It has now improved as a result of better quality checks on attendance, although it is still below average.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) are of the opinion that behaviour is good in the school. Inspectors agree.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The acting headteacher has quickly identified which areas need urgent improvement and is also well aware of the school's strengths. In the short period of time she has been in post, she has

enthused and motivated staff.

- At the time of inspection, many of the systems were very new to the school and some had not yet begun to be used. However, inspectors were impressed with the energy and vision of all school leaders and their commitment to improve the school so it becomes good and better.
- A key reason why the quality of teaching varies so much in the school is that leaders and managers do not yet check its quality rigorously or often enough. This means that teachers do not share tips and ideas with each other enough or yet have a good programme of training to improve teaching.
- Funding provided by the pupil premium is used to ensure all pupils have an equal opportunity to take part in school visits and to provide one-to-one support where necessary. Many pupils enter the school with speech and language problems. This has prompted the governing body to use pupil premium funding to appoint a specialist speech and language therapist who will make sure those pupils who need specialist support receive it promptly.
- The local authority gives good quality support to the school in developing the teaching of how sounds relate to letters and developing pupils' speaking skills in Key Stage 1. This has ensured more pupils leave Key Stage 1 ready for the next stage in their education.
- Meetings are held with teachers where the progress of some pupils who are falling behind with their work is discussed. However, teachers are not held to account well enough for the progress of all pupils in their classes.
- Middle leaders are keen and enthusiastic. They share the headteacher's knowledge of how to make the school more successful, including how they can improve the quality of teaching across the school. The literacy leader has made an excellent start in making sure reading is taught systematically across the school and her checks and advice on this have enabled teachers to improve quickly in this area.
- Pupils' progress is tracked, although the systems are not used effectively enough by senior leaders to measure progress from year to year. This means that if pupils do not make enough progress in a class, leaders are not fully aware of the situation and cannot take action promptly.
- The curriculum has good features. In Year 1 pupils make good links between subjects by taking part in learning that involves them in play activities. This helps them to make the transition from the Reception class. There are many trips and visits that enliven pupils' experiences. Activities, such as the gardening club and becoming a member of the active 'eco council', help pupils to appreciate and understand environmental issues and develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes frequent visits to the school to check for themselves how things are improving. As a result, members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what the school needs to improve for it to become good. In particular, they have supported the headteacher well in overhauling the systems to monitor teachers' performance. They rigorously monitor the school's funding provided by the pupil premium and have ensured pupils benefit well from it. Governors have adopted a fully inclusive admissions policy which greatly benefits families who are new to the area and whose circumstances potentially make them vulnerable. However, because the systems to track pupils' progress are not yet fully used, the governing body do not receive regular and reliable information on how pupils are doing in each class. This is preventing them from challenging school leaders on the quality and consistency of teaching across the school.

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	405011

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Joseph Sweeney
Headteacher	Ms Sarah Joynes
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2010
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