

INSPECTION REPORT

ALICE INGHAM ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Millgate Halifax Road Rochdale OL16 2NU

Inspection date November 2010

Reporting Inspector Mr. J. Brierley

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Primary
URN	105832
Age range of pupils	4-11
Number on roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Rev. J. F. Sweeney
Headteacher	Mrs. B. Sivills
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Mrs. B. Sivills
Date of previous inspection	April 2008

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	2	
The quality of Collective Worship	1	
Achievement and standards in Religious Education	2	
The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education	2	
The quality of the Religious Education curriculum	2	
Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Alice Ingham is a smaller than average sized voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving the parishes of St. Patrick, Sacred Heart and St. Mary. The school is situated in the most deprived ward of the borough approximately 2 miles from Rochdale town centre. Most pupils are of White British heritage drawn from a multi-ethnic community. 12% of the pupils have English as a second language. Since the last inspection the school kitchen has been refurbished, new provision for outdoor learning has been provided and two new classrooms have been added to the school in order to accommodate the rising pupil roll. Indicators suggest that children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below the national expectation for the age group. The age range of pupils is from 4 to 11 years. The indicative admission number is 24. There are currently 153 pupils on roll. 73 of the pupils are baptised Catholics. 49 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs with 2 children having a statutory statement of special educational need. 67% of the children are entitled to free school meals. 6 of the 8 teachers (75%) are of the Catholic faith.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Alice Ingham is a good Catholic school committed to making improvements and raising standards for the benefit of its pupils. The senior leadership team is encouraged and strongly supported in its work by the governing body and staff of the school. Together they have established an agenda for raising standards which is recognised as a priority by all staff. This priority has produced a unity of purpose based on a clear understanding of the school's strengths while recognising areas for development. Strategies have been put in place to help both staff and governors assess and evaluate planned improvements. The Catholic life of the school is central to the school's Mission Statement and produces a warm, welcoming and caring environment in which all aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are of a high standard as a result of the hard working and dedicated staff. Pupils are happy, well-behaved, polite and friendly. They enjoy coming to school where they feel safe, secure and valued by the staff. Governors and the school leadership have provided a team of support staff to meet the individual and sometimes challenging needs of the learners. The excellent relationships existing between all members of the school community create an atmosphere of trust, strengthening the school's unity of purpose. Teaching of Religious Education is good. In the context of the learners' starting point pupils' achievement in Religious Education has reached a good standard by the time they reach Year 6. The school has developed a strong relationship with a school in Kibera in Kenya by providing very active support which includes helping to publish the bi-annual magazine 'The Herald'. The school has gained the Healthy Schools, Eco Green Flag, Investors in People and Collaborative Working Leading Aspect awards.

Improvement since the last inspection

Although there were no areas identified for improvement at the last Section 48 inspection the school has continued to build on its resources to support and enhance the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum and prayer and worship. Teachers have further developed visual, auditory and kinaesthetic opportunities to engage all pupils in their Religious Education.

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and the governors and staff recognise the academic needs as well as the spiritual, social and emotional needs of the children and have put a School Improvement Plan and Religious Education Action Plan in place to meet the specific needs of the children of Alice Ingham School. This unity of purpose by the school leadership, staff and governors make the capacity to improve to be good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring greater rigour to the monitoring of teaching and learning in Religious Education through exercise book scrutinies and lesson observations to include recorded feedback to staff as an aid to raising standards and establishing a consistent approach.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. Since the last inspection there have been significant staff changes both in personnel and roles and responsibilities. The dedicated headteacher and senior leadership team are actively supported by the chair of governors and the governing body in giving strong leadership in the Catholic life of the school. The Mission Statement is fundamental to the life of the school, its policies and practices. Following a full consultation with all stakeholders the annual review of the school's Mission Statement is seen as an important process in ensuring that the school community has a shared understanding of the school's mission. The Mission Statement makes the school's mission very clear: "Alice Ingham is proud to be a Catholic school. We will endeavour to provide for the comprehensive and systematic study of our Catholic faith, seeking to further the growth of fundamental Christian concepts, values attitudes and actions." The leadership and governors recognise the challenges presented by the pupil roll and constantly endeavour to meet the diverse and changing needs of the school community while retaining the school's Catholicity. The leadership of the school is committed to promoting community cohesion stating in the school prospectus: "We are a wholly inclusive school where every child, irrespective of gender, culture or ability feels happy and valued. Alice Ingham is a "Fair Share" school which ensures that every child has an opportunity to take part and we all share with the wider community." Parents are kept well informed and pupils are given a voice in the school through their School Council.

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision for collective worship is outstanding. The purpose of prayer and worship is a core part of the school's Mission Statement and the children's version of the Mission Statement states: "Through prayer and worship we will aim to develop our relationship with God, both as individuals and as members of a worshipping community". The school's prayer and worship policy provides a clear guidance for all staff to help them achieve this mission. The parish priest is very active in the prayer life of the school. He comes into school every week to celebrate a class Mass or Mass for the whole school to which parents and parishioners are invited. Pupils help plan and prepare the liturgy for the Mass and take a lead role in readings, prayers, offertory procession and singing as witnessed at the whole school Mass: "Remembering and Celebrating Lives". Members of staff provide good role models on these occasions by taking a full and active part in the celebrations. The headteacher leads a Key Stage 2 assembly every Monday and a Key Stage 1 assembly every Tuesday with separate hymn practices to include prayer and worship for each key stage on Wednesday. A whole school "Golden Book" assembly is held every Friday led by a class, headteacher or deputy headteacher. On other days collective worship is carried out in class. The impressive Year 4 prayer and worship witnessed during the inspection showed the children to be reverent, responsive and engrossed throughout. Collective worship is further enhanced by children celebrating events linked to the liturgical year while taking into account other faiths, beliefs and cultures reflected both in the local and wider community.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good. Indicators suggest that on starting school the majority of the children's attainment and knowledge is well below national expectation for the age group. The diverse pupil backgrounds, the lack of faith experience and the higher than average pupil mobility all affect the standards and levels of achievement in Religious Education. During Early Years Foundation Stage children settle to school life and make good progress as a result of good teaching and the excellent provision of support staff to aid learning. In response to good teaching children continue to progress and achieve a good standard in Key Stages 1 and 2 when judged against their starting point. This level of achievement and standards in Religious Education are greatly enhanced by the level of achievement in the personal, social, and emotional development of pupils. This area of success is brought about by the extra effort put in by dedicated teachers, support staff and learning mentors providing individual intervention strategies, the Pyramid Club and Rainbow Counselling when needed. The development of the pupils' self esteem and confidence provide an ongoing challenge which is seen as a collective responsibility and to which all staff actively contribute. The standards achieved in Religious Education are greatly aided by the strong Catholic life of the school which is a constant presence in the school through prayer and worship opportunities, displays and exemplary relationships. The establishing of assessment for learning and teacher marking towards lesson objectives is helping to ensure that progress is made.

THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The overall quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least good with some outstanding features. Teachers consistently demonstrate good subject knowledge. Lessons are based on the diocesan programme of study for Religious Education and teachers use both medium term plans and short term planning. Learning objectives are clearly identified on lesson plans and written at the beginning of children's written exercises. The writing of the objectives aids children's self assessment and teacher marking as part of the school's assessment for learning programme. The exercises set for children in Religious Education are appropriate to the age range and offer a variety of methods by which children can enjoy and record what they have learned. Children's written Religious Education exercises often encourage the development of literacy skills. As an aid to raising standards and establishing a consistent approach by all teachers it is recommended that the school brings greater rigour to the monitoring of teaching and learning in Religious Education through exercise book scrutinies and lesson observations to include recorded feedback to staff. During all lessons observed the children were well-behaved, attentive and responsive to thoughtful and stimulating teaching. This was exemplified during an excellent Year 6 lesson 'to find out how God cared for his chosen people the Israelites'. The children were engaged by a task which required the children to think about religion. Through differentiated and probing questioning the teacher matched the lesson to all abilities as the children analysed the story and identified the 'good' and 'bad' events .

THE QUALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of the Religious Education curriculum is good with outstanding features. The significance of curriculum Religious Education in the school is clearly visible through displays and the presence of religious artefacts and a focal point for prayer in every classroom. The school's Mission Statement is displayed through the school and 10% of curriculum time is given to the teaching of Religious Education. The school uses the Salford diocesan Religious Education scheme which is supplemented by other schemes and by reference to the annual cycle of religious activities that further stimulate children's knowledge and understanding of the religion and its traditions. The curriculum is enhanced by the inclusion of a multi-faith programme being taught throughout the year to raise awareness of and teach tolerance and respect for other faiths and cultures. A further aid to the development of the Religious Education curriculum is provided by the school creating cross curricular links with Religious Education in its adoption of a creative curriculum approach. This helps to engage pupils in their own learning and encourages them to enjoy their learning while impacting positively on their attainment and achievement. The regular inclusion of Religious Education on staff and governors' meetings agendas ensures that its profile within the school remains high and that the Religious Education curriculum is regularly reviewed and developed. The school's Religious Education curriculum is further enhanced by the school's support of a number of national and international charities which include: Jeans for Genes, Comic Relief, Francis House, CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny and Heart Foundation Charity

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education are good with outstanding features. The senior leadership team is committed to ensuring high standards in the provision of the Religious Education curriculum. They are knowledgeable and committed to their own practice constantly seeking to lead by example and raise the profile of Religious Education curriculum. The conscientious headteacher, who is also the Religious Education co-ordinator as a result of recent staff changes, is aware of the major strengths and areas for development. The governing body sees Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school as priorities for the school and have a designated governor with responsibility for Religious Education. The Religious Education governor meets with the Religious Education co-ordinator each term and reports to governor meetings on the subject. The chair of governors is a regular and welcome visitor to the school and helps lead the subject through the extremely generous amount of time he puts into prayer and worship, the Sacramental Programme, class visits and discussions with the headteacher. Religious Education is recognised by the school leadership and governors as a very important area for staff development. Two teachers have been recently awarded the Catholic Certificate for Religious Studies while another teacher has recently started the course. A four point Religious Education Action Plan has been implemented to engage staff in evaluating the delivery of the subject, improve resources and raise standards in teaching the subject to incorporate assessment for learning and being part of the creative curriculum.