

INSPECTION REPORT

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Name of School **Alice Ingham R.C. Primary School Millgate, Rochdale OL16 2NU**

Inspection date 28th June 2018

Reporting Inspectors Anne Heard and Brendan Hennessy

Type of school	Voluntary Aided
URN	105832
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	161
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board / Directors of the Academy Trust (St. Teresa of Calcutta)
Chair of Governors / Director of the Academy Trust	J McGrath / M Garside
Executive Headteacher	Monica Walczak
Head of School	Donna Malcolm
Religious Education Co-ordinator	Roisin Knight
Date of previous inspection	November 2010

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	1 = Outstanding
The quality of Catholic Leadership	2	2 = Good
The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	2	3=Requires Improvement
The quality of Religious Education (incorporating Word)	2	4 = Inadequate
The quality of Worship	2	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Alice Ingham R.C. Primary School is an Independent Catholic Academy serving the parishes of St Patrick's and The Sacred Heart in Rochdale. In October 2018 Alice Ingham opened as a sponsored Independent Catholic Academy supported by St Patrick's R.C. Primary school. The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2016, being accountable for both St Patrick's and Alice Ingham schools. The head of school was appointed in September 2017. Up until this time the school had encountered many years of instability and following an inadequate judgement at their last OFSTED inspection, the school was served with a compulsory Academy order. The school serves a community with high levels of social deprivation and complex social needs and is one of the most deprived areas in the country. 31% of pupils are from Catholic families. 54% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium with 43% eligible for free school meals. 10.5% of children have English as an additional language. 72% of teachers and 46% of support staff are Catholic. Six members of staff currently hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies with another staff member currently undertaking the course and another due to join the CCRS programme in September 2018. Two members of staff have completed the Catholic Middle Leadership Programme with two others having completed the Catholic Leadership Programme. The school is a member of the Rochdale Catholic School Improvement Federation.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- **Leadership by the executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders, including governors and the parish priest, are committed to a shared vision for moving this truly Catholic school forward**
- **The welcome offered to parents and carers and the dedicated outreach support they can access**
- **The effective team spirit now established is helping the school to improve rapidly**
- **The well behaved, happy and enthusiastic children**
- **The love, guidance and support offered to all children particularly those experiencing difficulties**

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS GOOD

Under the direction of the executive headteacher, Alice Ingham school has been on an improving journey. Whilst it still has a long way to go, systems and procedures are now in place to support effective change and this is having a rapid impact on behaviour and attitudes to learning which is slowly beginning to be reflected in attainment and progress. This is not however consistently evidenced in written work, but the quality of teaching observed on the day of the inspection was always good with some outstanding elements. The Catholic ethos and values referred to in the Mission statement are now reflected in all aspects of school life. The care and concern for all within the school community are evidenced in the strong and effective relationships that are forged between the staff, the children and their families. Gospel values are known and lived through the respect and tolerance now shown for one another. The desire to improve in all areas of the Catholic life of the school is a growing team aspiration which is coming to fruition through access to appropriate continuing professional development offered to staff to support them in being the best. This in turn is providing creative and stimulating opportunities for children to learn about the Catholic faith, the Gospel teachings and to develop the prayer and worship life of the school community. Leadership at all levels including governors, the parish priest and pupil leaders are effective in developing positive change at Alice Ingham School. The children talked proudly about their school and they were clearly able to vocalise how the school had changed in the past two years. The fabric of the building has been enhanced and care is given to ensure that the building reflects part of the change for the better that is visible and tangible. Children are proud of the Religious displays and Prayer areas that have been created around the school and are therefore keen to ensure that these are well cared for and respected. The purchase of a new uniform for each child when the school reopened in October 2017 as part of the Academy Trust has further enhanced the prospect of new beginnings and a brighter future. The seeds that have been sown at Alice Ingham in the last two years are beginning to show that the roots grounded upon Gospel values are gaining strength and will in time lead to a successful harvest.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS GOOD

Under the direction of the much respected executive headteacher, the school is rapidly improving in all aspects. The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2016 and set about introducing new policies and procedures in order to establish a framework for effective teaching and learning. Similarly, the Catholic ethos and vision of the school had lost direction and purpose. This was very quickly addressed to ensure that Religious Education became the core of the core of the curriculum across the school. The executive headteacher has striven tirelessly to create a strong Catholic ethos for the school. Her commitment and determination to enhance and enrich the lives of all within the school community is now beginning to have a positive impact. The successful recruitment of key staff i.e. the head of school and deputy headteacher, have strengthened the strong and effective leadership team, supporting the executive headteacher with her true and authentic vision for Catholic education. The governing board and directors of the Academy Trust share the values of the senior leaders in striving to rapidly improve all aspects of school life whilst always ensuring that Gospel values are at the forefront of everything they do. The governors are well informed and provide excellent support and challenge to the school. They hold senior leaders to account and have high expectations for moving the school towards good and eventually outstanding. The relatively new teaching team share a desire to improve standards and effective, distributive leadership is in place to ensure that everyone has a responsibility to improve curriculum standards in teaching and learning. At the centre of every decision made are the children. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school. He has an excellent relationship with pupils, staff and parents and is keen to look for ways of developing links between the Church, school and community. Pupil leadership is growing as different opportunities are taken to provide pupils with a voice. The establishment of a GIFT team ensures that young role models are proactive in the mission of the school. Leaders at all levels are moving this truly Catholic school forward. The shared goals and small achievements are a significant sign of improvements in standards, attitudes and belief in success.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) IS GOOD

The Welcome offered to all at Alice Ingham is something that parents value. They talked about how previously they had never felt welcome, but under the new leadership team many opportunities are provided for all parents to feel welcomed and valued. This has led to an increase in the number of parents attending Assemblies and Acts of Collective Worship. Parents welcomed the support they receive from the pastoral manager and family support worker. The school induction process for parents of children joining the school has at its heart its mission as a Catholic school and sets out for parents and children the welcoming atmosphere of joining the family of Alice Ingham. On the day of the inspection, inspectors witnessed the children singing together enthusiastically their patrons song. Alice Ingham was a strong advocate of Social Justice and her legacy is evidenced in the acts of common good undertaken by staff and children in support of others. Older children take responsibility for younger children, playground ambassadors support children through unstructured times of the day and fundraising events are used to support Cornerstones and other local and national charities. The welfare of children, their families and staff are at the forefront of everything that is good in this school. Previously, pupils who displayed behavioural difficulties did not have their needs fully catered for and this led to disruptive behaviours and poor attitudes for learning. With the introduction of the Oasis Room, Rainbows and Think Groups, children talk confidently about their issues and how staff have supported them in overcoming these barriers, so that they and their peers now exhibit positive attitudes for learning. The introduction of the Growth Mindset Curriculum is also supporting pupils in developing emotional literacy skills to communicate positively with their peers and the adults who support them. This is helping to significantly reduce the number of irrational outbursts of emotional behaviour. Staff are well supported and whilst the pace of change has to be rapid, the emotional wellbeing of children and staff is given high priority. A clear ethic of teamwork and support for each other has created a strong, unified workforce who support each other through challenges and difficult times. At Alice Ingham, the children and staff know and love Jesus and try to follow his teachings in their respect and positive attitudes shown towards each other. An atmosphere of trust has been created which underpins the rapid development taking place.

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS GOOD

In recent years Religious Education at Alice Ingham school has not been given the priority it should have. However, under the direction of the new executive headteacher, head of school and senior leaders, this is now being addressed. As Christ spoke to St Francis and instructed him to “rebuild my church”, this is truly the transformation that is taking place at Alice Ingham. Religious Education is the core of the curriculum and is taught not only through specific dedicated Religious

Education lessons but is also disseminated through opportunities in other curriculum areas. 10% of curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education using the “Come and See” programme. The teaching of Religious Education is well planned and structured. Inspectors observed good teaching taking place across the school with some outstanding elements included. Children lower down the school are taught well and are given many opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. They are able to answer questions knowledgeably and are able to relate their growing knowledge to previous lessons. Older children talk about how they enjoy their Religious Education lessons and are very focused and on task throughout their lessons. At this stage they still have gaps in their understanding because of the previous lack of high quality teaching in Religious Education and although they try very hard to engage with the teaching they lack the Religious literacy to be able to answer questions fully and this is reflected in their written work. The inspectors have no doubt that this will be addressed as children progress through the school and are stretched by the challenge of high expectations and progress towards achieving good levels of attainment. The school has come a considerably long way in the last two years and it is a credit to the current leaders and staff that so much has been achieved in Religious Education in such a short period of time. The use of “Big Questions” is helping older children to think in a challenging and thought-provoking way about many issues that are raised in today's society. The Hope in the Future message has come to life at Alice Ingham school and is the inspiration through which children, staff and families are being led on a journey to find the role they can play in “Building the kingdom.”

THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS GOOD

In the past two years daily worship and prayer have become a strong focal point at Alice Ingham. The Welcome service that children and families attend on their first day of school gives a clear message that Gospel values underpin everything at Alice Ingham School. Staff have been supported in their delivery of Acts of Collective Worship through continuing professional development opportunities. Class Masses and whole school Masses are celebrated regularly in church providing additional opportunities for the parish, church and community to come together. Prayer tables and focal points are evident in each classroom in the school. Similarly, Scripture quotes and prayer areas support children in developing their relationship with God. Children confidently recite familiar known prayers but are also becoming more confident in writing and sharing their own prayers with each other. This practice has quickly become embedded in school life and staff and children participate in creative ways of prayer and worship e.g. dance and painting prayers. From an early age, children are exposed to high quality prayer and worship experiences, where they participate in both silent and vocal prayer. Meditation is offered to children at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The GIFT team meet with their dedicated leader each week; they discuss the Gospel reading for the following week and write prayers for the Monday prayer and worship assembly taken by the head of school. This type of assembly was witnessed by the inspection team and it proved to be a very uplifting experience. The GIFT team played an active part in talking about their visit to the Priory, where the Bishop presented each GIFT team from across the Diocese with the San Damiano cross. As part of the assembly the cross was then passed on to the new GIFT team for the coming academic year. Senior leaders have been relentless in driving forward the Mission of the Church ensuring that during their time at school staff, pupils and parents are given numerous opportunities to deepen and strengthen their relationship with God. The commitment of leaders and governors to ensure that high quality resources are provided to enhance prayer and worship has resulted in the creation of dedicated spaces and appropriate, age-related resources being used effectively to speak to and listen to God's calling. It is a credit to leaders at all levels that so much positive work in prayer and worship has been established in such a short period of time. A recognition has to be made also to the work carried out between staff and pupils at St Patrick's and Alice Ingham schools that has helped support the good work now taking place.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- **To continue to develop opportunities to strengthen links between parish, school and community**
- **To ensure a consistency of high expectations are delivered across the school with particular regard to the quality and quantity of Religious Education written work**
- **To continue to have high aspirations for pupil's future attainment and progress**