

Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119512
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	379823
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	K Fox
Headteacher	K Downham
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 10 lessons taught by six teachers and two support staff. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. Inspectors scrutinised the views of staff and pupils and analysed 25 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether all groups of pupils and, in particular the more able, achieve their full potential in English and mathematics.
- How effectively teachers and managers use planning and assessment information to track and accelerate pupils' progress.
- Whether the Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength of the school.
- The impact of leaders and managers, including the governing body, to improve learning since the last inspection.

Information about the school

This school is smaller in size than others of its type. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. Mobility in and out of the school is higher than that found in most schools nationally. The majority of pupils are White British and few are from minority ethnic groups. A few, but an increasing proportion, of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The school has gained Healthy School status and Eco silver and bronze awards.

The school runs a breakfast club which was included in this inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Key to its success is the outstanding care, guidance and support it provides for all pupils and, in particular, for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The school monitors pupils' circumstances and their individual rates of progress extremely carefully in order to tackle and address any barriers to learning they may have. The school has effective engagement with parents and carers. This contributes successfully to pupils' good behaviour and above average attendance.

Children begin school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally low for their age. As a result of good quality teaching, successful intervention groups and personalised learning plans, pupils' achievement is good and attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average by the time they leave in Year 6. All make good progress, including the high proportion of pupils joining the school within Key Stages 1 and 2 and a few pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English.

Effective teaching is supported by the successful use of assessment information to ensure lessons are sufficiently challenging, particularly for more able pupils. Pupils' learning is enriched well within the exciting curriculum, which provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and well-being. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and extend their speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills within the other subjects they study. Pupils are eager to say they feel extremely safe in school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is evident as they work and play harmoniously together learning well about other religions and cultures from the first-hand experiences of pupils attending the school.

Effective leadership, with the full commitment of staff and members of the governing body, has successfully embedded a clear vision for school improvement. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and has successfully consolidated pupils' good achievement and improved attendance since the last inspection. The governing body provides good support and challenge and their vigilance ensures that the safeguarding of pupils is outstanding. The effective drive for further development shared by all, coupled with

the rigorous checks on pupils' outcomes and the quality of provision, confirm the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate progress by providing further opportunities for them to practise and extend their speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects of the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning which are reflected in their above average attendance and their eagerness to learn. They are keen to answer questions and to have 'a go' at trying things out, particularly when lessons are practical and involve them in applying previously learnt skills. This was evident in the outstanding lessons observed during the inspection. For instance, pupils learnt at a fast rate when they were challenged to work with each other to estimate, discuss and measure ingredients needed to make buns in a mathematics lesson. However, this high level of application of literacy and numeracy skills is not evident in all lessons. Nevertheless, the overall pace of learning in lessons and throughout the school is good, and enables pupils to reach the level expected for their age by the time they leave. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable make good progress. Their work with specialist support staff and teaching assistants in small learning groups develops their self-esteem very effectively and has a positive impact on their learning.

Pupils' achievement is good; they enjoy school and say it is a happy place where 'teachers really help you'. They say they feel extremely safe and that incidents of bullying are rare. Behaviour is good. Pupils are very proud of their school and take on a good range of responsibilities, such as school councillors, eco officers or Year 6 'gardeners' supporting the 'seeds', in the Reception class. The young entrepreneur competition, which involves pupils using a budget to design items to sell, contacting businesses for support and arranging for the manufacture and marketing of the goods, contributes well to the pupils' good preparation for the future.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live a healthy and ecological lifestyle. They talk knowledgeably about the dangers of drugs and smoking and are adept at making sensible choices about food at lunchtime. The newly installed solar panels and their monitoring display make pupils more aware of the importance of renewable energy and encourage them to save power where possible. Meaningful assemblies accelerate pupils' spiritual experiences and understanding well. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and are thoughtful towards one another. They respect people from different backgrounds and are genuinely interested in finding out about their beliefs and cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils respond well to the effective teaching. Teachers make good use of assessment and class-management systems to ensure pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Consequently, they behave well and enjoy their learning. In the best lessons, practical and challenging activities provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss and share their ideas and ensure all pupils, particularly the more able, make good progress. However, in the lessons that are good rather than outstanding, teachers spend too long explaining activities and the pace of learning slows. Furthermore, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills within other subjects they study. Learning assistants are deployed effectively. They skilfully support pupils who have English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum is good. It is beginning to be taught through topics and themed weeks so that links are made between subjects. Art, drama and an opportunity to learn Spanish are good features of curricular entitlement. Sports, music and drama are given a high profile both within and outside the school day. A good range of visitors and visits, for instance, a visit to Blackburn Museum by Year 3 pupils to learn about their locality, contributes to their confidence and knowledge of British culture and traditions.

Relationships and the quality of care for pupils' personal well-being are outstanding. All staff work very effectively to provide excellent support for pupils whose circumstances make them extremely vulnerable. High-quality care plans, very thorough pastoral care and support for these pupils are remarkable and enable them to overcome barriers to their learning. Newcomers to the school are welcomed.

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

Support staff provide excellent guidance, including the use of pupils' home language, as and when needed. Transitional arrangements to high school are carefully planned through good partnerships and networking with local schools. The school has successfully improved attendance, through the introduction of a raft of incentives to reward those pupils whose attendance is at least average and improving. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are unanimous in saying that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. They praise for instance, the opportunity for their children to attend the breakfast and after-school clubs. 'We are thrilled with the nurturing and caring ethos' is a comment typical of those received.

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?

Effective teamwork and dedication from all staff provide the school with clear direction and an unstinting ambition to improve. Accurate evaluation leads to effective strategic planning with a shared focus on raising achievement. Subject and senior leaders' thorough checking of pupils' progress leads to appropriate amendments in provision. Teachers are accountable for the progress pupils make and efforts have been focused on raising achievement. Close attention is paid to ensure provision meets pupils' needs. Racism or harassment of any form is not tolerated. The ethos of 'everyone is valued', is firmly established in the school, and promotes good equality for all.

Links with parents and carers are good. The school grasps every opportunity, through regular information meetings, to gauge and respond to their views. The effective governing body is supportive of all the school does and continually challenges school improvement. Outstanding safeguarding procedures are central to the schools' work. Highly effective systems and regular training contribute very effectively to pupils feeling extremely safe and enjoying school. Partnerships that attend to pupils' pastoral needs are outstanding. Those focusing on extending their academic development are good, as reflected in pupils' good progress.

The promotion of community cohesion is good. Careful planning ensures the focus the school gives within the local community to develop pupils' understanding of differences is good. Furthermore, pupils have wide experience and knowledge of cultural and religious differences at national and global levels. The school is beginning to measure the impact these have on pupils' attitudes.

These are the grades for the 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	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children begin school with skills that are low compared to those expected at this age and, particularly low, in their social and their speaking and listening skills. Children enjoy coming to school. They learn and play well together, for example, when happily taking on other roles in the home area, in the outdoor writing tent or when learning their letters and sounds. Such activities are beneficial in extending children's social and communication skills. Children access a good balance of activities they have chosen for themselves and those that are directed by adults. An extensive range of opportunities is provided, both indoors and outdoors, which successfully develop children's physical and creative skills. Planning and activities are based around extending children's interests and this promotes effective learning. Their enjoyment is reflected in the joy on their faces as they choose to investigate and play in the well-planned outdoor spaces or undertake a good range of indoor play opportunities. As a result, they learn to solve problems, to take turns and help each other.

Leadership is good. Relationships with home are firmly established before the children start and ensure that they settle quickly. These continue to be fostered through, for example, daily contact with parents and carers. Adults use observations effectively to track children's progress and also identify areas to improve. Learning and development are good and, by the time they move to Year 1, the skills of most children, especially in speaking, listening and social skills, although below those expected, represent good progress.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About 20% of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. All of these expressed their full support for the work of the school. They value highly the welcoming, caring atmosphere that adults generate. Inspection evidence supports their positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn 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 inspector received 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 130 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	84	4	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	88	2	8	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	68	8	32	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	76	6	24	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	84	3	12	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	84	3	12	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	72	7	28	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)	19	76	5	20	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	76	5	20	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	72	7	28	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	52	12	48	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	80	5	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	92	2	8	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



17 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn, Blackburn, BB2 3UG

I would like to thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We especially enjoyed chatting to you in school and on the playground. I was very impressed with the quality and confidence with which pupils shared with me the adverts they had composed. I hope you were able to video them and share them with your parents and carers.

You go to a good school. These are some of the best things about it. Reception children have lots of fun and enjoy learning through play. The senior leaders and members of the governing body are good leaders and managers and all adults take outstanding care of you. You told us that you feel very safe and you have a good knowledge of how to lead a healthy and ecological life. You really enjoy having responsibilities such as being 'gardeners' for the 'seeds' in Reception. Your behaviour is good and you make good progress in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6.

To make the school even better and to help you to attain even higher, I have asked the school to look for more ways for you to practise and extend your speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects of the curriculum.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and to do your best to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Henderson
Lead Inspector

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