

Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133320
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	381493
Inspection dates	19–20 April 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Tolley

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Houghton
Headteacher	Paul Towey
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2006
School address	Clinton View Widnes WA8 8JN
Telephone number	0151 4246130
Fax number	0151 4206214
Email address	head.olpsprimary@halton.gov.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Tolley
Kathleen Harris

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 17 lessons, including joint observations with the headteacher, and saw nine teachers, including short visits to phonics (the sounds that letters make) lessons and guided reading sessions across the school, led by teachers and trained assistants. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, parents and carers and school staff, including senior and middle managers. The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work, observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan and the school's analysis of pupils' progress. They also analysed 99 parents' and carers' questionnaires and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school meets current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school holds a number of awards including Healthy School status, Active Mark, Silver Artsmark and Foundation Stage International Schools 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average and pupils' achievement from their starting points is good. It is not outstanding because there remain some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. In some lessons planning does not meet precisely the needs of groups of differing ability, particularly the more able, and accelerate their progress sufficiently. Pupils' attainment in reading is strong. Pupils enjoy reading and most read with fluency and understanding.
- Teaching is good. The school provides very effectively for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers plan lessons so that pupils are engaged by activities and use questioning effectively to extend their thinking. Assessment information is not always used precisely enough in lessons, so that on occasions some pupils find work too easy. Marking is regular but the good guidance pupils are given in English is not always mirrored in other subjects so that some pupils are unsure about how to improve their work.
- Behaviour is good. Attendance is above average. Pupils have very positive attitudes, are keen to take responsibility and are courteous and polite. They say that school is fun and that they feel safe.
- The school's work is monitored closely to provide clear direction. Since the last inspection, attainment has improved and action to address weaknesses has proved successful. Phonics are taught consistently and systematically and are having a positive impact upon pupils' reading and writing. However, in other areas of learning the transition between the Reception class and Year 1 is not so well planned. Opportunities are missed for children to learn effectively through play activities in the Reception class. Although subject leaders provide good advice and support, their role in leading and spreading best practice in teaching is not fully developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve all teaching to that of the best by:
 - ensuring teachers' planning is focused on the needs of individuals, particularly the more able
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and independently
 - improving the quality of marking in all subjects to the same standard as that in English
 - developing the role of subject leaders in leading and spreading best practice in their subject areas.

- Improve the achievement of the youngest children by:
 - ensuring the transition between Reception and Year 1 meets children's individual needs
 - improving planning to ensure Reception children learn effectively through play activities.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers have very positive views about the school and say that achievement is good. Many children join the school with developmental skills below those seen typically. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as planning is not detailed enough to accelerate their learning in child-initiated activities. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school in relation to their starting points. As a result of very well tailored intervention programmes and individual support for pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs, these pupils make swift progress and are able to participate fully in activities alongside their classmates. Although more-able pupils make good progress overall, their progress sometimes slows because they are not always given sufficient challenge to achieve their potential, especially in writing. Attainment has risen since the last inspection and over the last three years pupils have consistently exceeded the progress expected from their starting points.

By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average. By the end of Year 6 attainment in reading is high and in writing and mathematics it is above average. Most pupils read a variety of texts fluently and with understanding. They skim and scan for information and write successfully for a variety of purposes. As a result of the emphasis on speaking and collaborative working pupils are confident and articulate in expressing their ideas and explaining their views. Most pupils apply their mathematical skills confidently to solve problems.

In lessons learning is good and pupils participate enthusiastically in activities, especially when working with a partner or a small group to explore ideas and solve problems. In a Year 2 geography lesson, for instance, pupils displayed great interest and enthusiasm, working collaboratively to compare geographical features from

photographs and were engaged in a lively class discussion as a result of time spent exploring their ideas first with a partner.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers say that teaching is good. Teachers give clear demonstrations and explanations so that pupils rapidly understand new ideas. They make very good use of technology to engage pupils' interest. For instance, in a Year 5 science lesson pupils were enthralled by a video clip demonstrating the relative sizes of planets in the solar system and a leading astronomer's explanation of how gravity works. In a Year 2 English lesson, having watched a video clip of role plays acted out by other members of the class, pupils were keen to discuss how they had interpreted the feelings of different characters in a story. Teachers are skilful in their use of questioning to support and extend pupils' thinking both in whole class activities and when they monitor their progress during tasks. When pupils are asked to share their work and explain their thinking to others, this effectively develops their speaking and listening skills and promotes their respect for the views of others. Teaching provides ample opportunity for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the approach that teachers take with these areas of learning is very effective.

Teachers use assessment information effectively to place pupils in teaching groups and to plan pupils' next steps and, in the most effective lessons, they plan in detail for groups of differing ability within classes. However, on occasions, some pupils find work too easy; although the resources provided give good support for lower-attaining pupils they do not always provide the more-able pupils with the challenge they need to reach their potential. The teaching of phonics in the Reception class and Key Stage 1, for instance, is very well planned so that all pupils build effectively on previous learning. Although children's progress is tracked closely to plan next steps in adult-led activities, planning in the Reception class to promote children's learning through their play is less secure. Marking is regular but does not always give pupils sufficient guidance about how to improve their work in subjects other than English.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents, carers and pupils are confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with effectively and promptly. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils say lessons are fun and are enthusiastic about their learning and their reading. They enjoy school and attendance is above average. They have very good relationships with each other and are courteous and polite. Pupils display high levels of concentration and, when working in pairs or groups, organise themselves quickly and without fuss. Parents and carers are confident that their children are safe. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy and have a good understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed, both within and outside school. Pupils say they enjoy extra-curricular activities, including sport and music, and know the importance of a healthy diet. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take such as cyber bullying. Incidences of bullying are rare and parents, carers and pupils express confidence in the school's systems for dealing with such occurrences. Pupils are proud of their school and their achievements, for instance, as

playground helpers, school councillors and in the 'Eco Group' and they take responsibilities seriously.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, strongly supported by the Senior Leadership Team, provides very clear educational direction, based firmly on a rigorous analysis of pupils' progress, close monitoring and an accurate evaluation of the school's work. As a result, attainment has risen significantly since the last inspection and pupils' progress has accelerated so that almost all pupils make better than expected progress from their starting points. This improvement has been sustained over the last three years. Attendance rates have improved and differences in the performance of different groups have narrowed. This gives the school a strong capacity to improve further.

Members of the governing body play an active part in the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning processes and are fully involved in the day-to-day life of the school. Subject leaders are, as yet, at an early stage in helping to promote skills in their subjects across the wider curriculum and in driving improvement in teaching in their subjects. As a result, some inconsistencies in teaching remain. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements, policies are regularly reviewed by the governing body, and staff kept up to date with training. Issues from the previous inspection have been tackled successfully.

The curriculum ensures a balance of activities. Although in lessons there are some inconsistencies in matching work to ability, overall the curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Intervention and support programmes are regularly reviewed and adapted to meet changing needs. As a result, the promotion of equality of opportunity for success is good. Visitors and visits, including residential visits, as well as after-school clubs and opportunities to work with artists and writers, are all greatly valued by pupils and enrich the taught curriculum. Pupils also benefit from the school's links with a partner school in Ghana and specialist teaching in music, physical education and French. Pupils participate enthusiastically in enrichment activities such as sports and learning the violin. They learn to reflect and appreciate their own skills and the skills of others. Any suggestion of discrimination is firmly tackled. This reflective approach, together with collaborative work, is very successful in increasing pupils' confidence and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



23 April 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Catholic Primary School,
Widnes, WA8 8JN**

I would like to thank you on behalf of the inspectors for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed talking with you all and hearing your views as well as reading your questionnaires. Your school is a good one. Your behaviour is good and we were impressed by how courteous and polite you were. You do a lot to help improve the school, for instance, through your work as playground helpers and in the school council and the 'Eco Group'.

You make good progress and you reach higher standards than other pupils nationally. We did notice that some of you sometimes found tasks too easy, so we have asked the teachers to make sure you always get the right amount of challenge you need to make sure you can do your best. You work really well with a partner and in small groups to solve problems. We were impressed at how confident you were in exploring new ideas and explaining your own ideas clearly to others. We have asked the teachers to work together to make sure that all lessons are as good as the best. We found that although you get really good guidance about how to improve your work in English, this is not always the case in other subjects, so we have asked your teachers to put this right. You can all help by deciding how to improve your work yourselves. The younger pupils in the Reception class and Year 1 do really well in their reading and writing because of the way the teachers plan together. We have asked them to make sure the planning is as good in other areas of learning, especially when the children are learning through play.

The headteacher and staff are working to make your school even better. You can all help by continuing to work hard. I wish you every success for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Judith Tolley
Lead inspector

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