

Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

Holmbrook Close, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 3UG

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Leadership and management requires improvement because the good quality of teaching and learning has not been maintained since the previous inspection.
- Targets set in plans for improving the school's effectiveness are not yet closely linked to pupils' progress or measurable enough to enable leaders to check if actions taken are having a positive impact.
- Staff have not had enough opportunities to observe outstanding practice in other settings.
- Governors have not consistently held leaders to account for standards at the school.
- Some pupils need regular prompts from adults to remind them to get on with their work, especially when activities do not challenge them effectively. This means that overall, pupils' behaviour requires improvement.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Teachers do not always set pupils tasks that build upon what they already know and can do quickly enough. Neither do planned activities always challenge pupils, especially the most able, at the correct level to help them learn as much as possible.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to practise and develop their skills in English and mathematics across other subjects.
- Too few pupils make more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The outdoor area used by the Reception class children is not well resourced or stimulating enough to support their development in all areas of learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is highly ambitious for every pupil in the school. She is well supported by the acting deputy headteacher and together they have introduced strategies to improve standards.
- The headteacher and governors have taken effective action to eradicate inadequate teaching.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are well cared for by adults. They get on well together around school and on the playground.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teaching assistants provide a good level of support for pupils with additional learning needs, enabling them to make good progress.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work effectively supports pupils to move forward with their learning.
- Teaching and assessment in the early years is now improved.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes taught by teachers and in activities taken by teaching assistants. A learning walk around the school also took place.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and observed and spoke with pupils during lessons, play times and at lunchtime. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with parents, staff, senior leaders and managers and members of the governing body. A representative from the local authority spoke to an inspector on the telephone.
- A range of documents were considered by inspectors, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors took account of a summary of the responses to a parental questionnaire recently distributed by the school. However, there were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to consider.
- Inspectors also took account of 16 responses to the inspection staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium, is well-above average. The pupil premium is funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above the national level.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is similar to that found nationally and there are a few pupils at the very early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- Full-time places are provided for children in the Reception classes.
- The deputy headteacher was promoted to headship in September 2014 and there is currently an acting deputy headteacher in post. One teacher joined the staff team at the start of this academic year though four teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection.
- A breakfast club is provided for pupils at the school.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so more pupils behave well, make good or better progress and secure the highest levels of attainment by making sure that teachers always:
 - check pupils' understanding early in the lesson so that they can move on to tasks that build on what they know and can do as quickly as possible
 - provide work that is at the correct level of challenge, particularly the most able
 - have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils produce
 - provide opportunities for pupils to practise reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Improve the resources in the outdoor area used by Reception class children so that they can continue to develop their skills and knowledge in all areas of learning throughout the day.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management including governance by:
 - making sure that targets set in the school development plan are measurable and closely linked to pupils' progress
 - providing increased opportunities for staff to observe outstanding practice in other schools
 - building the skills of the governing body so that they are fully equipped to hold school leaders more closely to account for standards at the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The new headteacher is well supported by the acting deputy headteacher. Together they have quickly and successfully embedded a new school culture whereby staff work together to achieve the best outcomes for all pupils. In the short amount of time since their appointment, they have ensured the school is now improving after a period of decline following the previous inspection. However, the rate of improvement has not been rapid enough to raise the quality of teaching or pupils' achievement to consistently good.
- School leaders have an accurate view of how effective the school is and what needs to be done to improve standards. However, targets set in the school improvement plan are not easily measurable or closely linked to the achievement of pupils. Consequently, they are not fully effective in enabling school leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions and thus improve things more quickly.
- The quality of learning and teaching is now rigorously checked by school leaders including middle leaders. The school's processes for managing teachers' performance are thorough and have been effective in eradicating inadequate teaching. Teachers' targets are linked to pupils' progress and staff are provided with training to improve their skills. However, there are too few opportunities for staff to observe outstanding practice in other schools.
- The newly introduced topic-themed curriculum is beginning to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they learn in English and mathematics lessons to their learning in other subjects. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given good attention, which helps to foster good relations across the school. For example, pupils learn to respect and appreciate different cultures and faiths, treat each other with respect and appreciate different opinions. The active school council models democracy well and pupils are fully involved in organising fundraising events. This helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- The pupil premium funding is wisely spent and the progress of disadvantaged pupils improves as they move up through the school. Good support is provided for pupils who are disabled, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This reflects the school's commitment to tackling any discrimination and providing equal opportunities to succeed for all pupils.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively. Pupils have access to an increased range of sporting activities and staff have received training to increase their confidence in teaching different aspects of physical education.
- The local authority and the diocese have been more involved with the school since the headteacher took up her post. The local authority has brokered support from local schools that school leaders feel is effective. Funding has also been provided to purchase new books.
- School leaders, including governors, make sure that staff and pupils are kept safe and statutory requirements including safeguarding are well met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is currently in the process of restructuring and new governors have recently been appointed. Governors are committed to and highly supportive of the school. As a group they are not yet highly skilled in analysing information about pupils' progress, though they are prepared to learn. In the past they have relied too heavily upon reports from the headteacher to help them to know about standards in the school, including about the quality of teaching. This has prevented them from challenging school leaders effectively. However, they are keen to develop their effectiveness and have already begun to audit their skills and expertise so that they can appoint other new governors to fill any skills gaps. Governors know teachers' pay awards must be closely linked to how effective they are and have been highly supportive of the new headteacher in swiftly tackling underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There has been a substantial reduction in the number of behaviour incidents recorded at the school and pupils and staff confirm that behaviour is improving. However, when tasks are not set at the correct level of challenge some pupils become distracted and behaviour has to be closely checked by adults.
- Pupils say that they get on well together, enjoy school and feel that it is definitely more fun than it used to be, they also value the increased opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school. For example, Year 6 pupils pair up with Reception children to help younger friends get used to school. Prefects are very

proud that they are able to show visitors around the school and school councillors feel that they do an excellent job in sharing pupils' opinions and ideas with staff.

- Pupils look smart in their uniforms and keep the school tidy. They were dismayed by the levels of rubbish around their school and wrote to the local council to enlist help in cleaning up the area. The Council responded, supported the litter picking campaign and highly commended the pupils' community spirit.
- Pupils know that when they behave well they can earn 'golden time'. They believe that this reward is very helpful because they are highly motivated to join in with the activities that take place during this session. For example, pupils make 'snappy snacks' which they can then enjoy with friends.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are particularly well informed about e-safety and feel safe in school because they know that the adults care for them well. Pupils and parents recognise the increased safety measures recently put into place. For example, they appreciate the new fencing around the school to tighten security.
- Pupils feel that there is always an adult to listen when they need to talk. They know what bullying is and could explain that it was different from falling out because bullying is ongoing. Pupils feel sure that bullying is rare in school, but that if it did take place an adult would be told and deal with it quickly and successfully.
- Attendance rates are improving and are now similar to average. The well-attended breakfast club provides a good start to the day and helps pupils to be on time for school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and there is some good teaching. However, teaching has not been good over time and it is still not consistently good enough to promote good achievement in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. The quality of teaching, therefore, requires improvement.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. The work set for the most able pupils does not always ensure that they achieve as well as they should. What is more, teachers do not always insist that pupils complete enough high-quality, well-presented work.
- Teachers question pupils skilfully and this helps them to check on pupils' level of understanding. However, they do not always use this information to adapt their teaching accordingly or to set some pupils off on more challenging tasks quickly so that they can learn as much as possible.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and develop the skills that they have learnt in English and mathematics across other subjects. As a result pupils do not consolidate these skills as well as they could do.
- Staff have attended training sessions to improve the quality of their assessment and teaching of reading and pupils have noticed that their reading skills are improving. For example, they spoke enthusiastically of recent opportunities to thoroughly discuss an author's unwritten message. Pupils report that this gives them a greater understanding of what they are reading.
- Teachers now provide 'wow' experiences to give pupils a real-life experience upon which to base their writing, such as writing about a visit to the seaside or to a museum. Alternatively, pupils are given a reason for writing. For example, pupils recently wrote persuasive letters to Blackburn Rovers Football Club requesting free tickets. Their writing was obviously fit for purpose as the team returned photographs of themselves reading pupils' letters together with free match tickets.
- Strategies such as providing more practical resources to help pupils develop their mathematical understanding have been put into place. Moreover, an online mathematics package, which supports pupils to develop mathematical skills at their own pace, is now available.
- The systems put into place by the new senior leadership team to improve the teaching and learning of reading, writing and mathematics are contributing toward pupils' increased enjoyment and engagement in their learning. However, they have not been in place long enough to have had a full impact on standards. School leaders recognise that there is still more to do.
- Pupils' books show that the quality of marking and feedback has improved. Comments ensure that pupils know how to improve their work. Moreover, teachers give pupils time to correct and edit their work so that they can learn from their mistakes.
- Teaching assistants usually make a positive contribution to pupils' learning especially when providing focused support for small groups or individual pupils. They are particularly effective when supporting disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils at the early stages of learning to speak

English as an additional language.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress information held by the school, work in pupils' books and other inspection evidence confirm that progress is not good enough over time. Therefore, achievement requires improvement.
- For the past three years, end-of-key-stage test results show that standards at the end of Year 6 have been broadly below average. However, unusually in the 2014 national tests, the attainment of Year 6 pupils was significantly below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, most pupils made the progress expected of them but too few pupils did better than this in reading, writing and mathematics. However, assessment information and inspectors' observations show that the progress made by pupils currently in school is improving in reading, writing and mathematics. Although there is increasingly good progress being made, some unevenness between subjects and classes remains.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who meet the required standard in the national screening check on phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is similar to the national average. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly and pupils who spoke to an inspector reported that they enjoyed a range of opportunities to read in school.
- There are too few opportunities provided to boost the skills of the most able pupils. Tasks provided by teachers do not always challenge the most able pupils effectively or encourage them to think hard. Proportionally fewer pupils attain at the higher Levels 3 and 5 than do so nationally. The progress made by the most able pupils in school is not consistently good and requires improvement.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are well met. Any additional need is identified early; the school works well with other agencies when necessary and a good level of support is put into place.
- Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are also well supported to make good progress. For example, subject specific words that pupils may need to know are introduced before any new topic is started. In addition, bilingual teaching assistants ensure that pupils are able to fully understand the learning that is taking place.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils attained at approximately one term ahead of non-disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing, and two terms behind in mathematics. When compared to other pupils nationally disadvantaged pupils attained at two terms behind in reading, one year behind in writing and over one year behind in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not progress as well as other pupils nationally in reading, writing or mathematics. Usually gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils are being narrowed as they move up through the school. School leaders have introduced a range of strategies to close these gaps in attainment and progress more quickly but they have not been in place long enough to support sustained good progress for this group of pupils across the school.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children start Reception class with skills and knowledge below those typically found. The quality of teaching and leadership has not been good enough to make sure that children make good progress from their individual starting points and too few have been fully prepared to join Year 1.
- There have been valid concerns raised by the new senior leadership team regarding the accuracy of assessment in the early years. However, the new staff team are making sure that this is addressed. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that progress is now more rapid and a higher proportion of children are being well prepared for the learning that they will meet in Year 1.
- Staff are available to meet with parents at the start of each day and parents who spoke with an inspector are pleased with the communication between home and school. However, the staff team are aware that there could be more opportunities made available for parents to provide information about the developments that their children make at home. Staff know that this would help them to plan activities that build on children's current interests and achievements and are therefore developing ways to involve parents even more.
- The staff team works together well to provide activities that engage the children in their learning. However, the outdoor space is lacklustre and does not provide enough resources to develop children's skills and knowledge in all of the areas of learning. This means that children are not able to learn as well

outdoors as they do indoors.

- Though over time the quality of leadership and that of teaching requires improvement, the newly appointed early years leader, who is also the class teacher, has quickly introduced a range of improvements. For example, accurate assessment procedures and an increased emphasis on the development of children's communication, reading, writing and number skills. As a result children who are currently in the Reception class are supported to make good progress.
- Children mostly behave well, respond quickly to instructions and show kindness towards others. Staff make sure that children are well cared for and know how to take care of themselves and others. For example, during the inspection a police officer came in to school to reinforce the 'stranger danger' message to children. What is more, through their topic work children have learnt that babies should not be allowed to play with sharp scissors and should be taught not put everything in their mouth.

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	119512
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	456174

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	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr K Fox
Headteacher	Mrs M Staffa
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2011
Telephone number	01254 59420
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