



# Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Roman Catholic Primary School, Blackburn

## Inspection Report

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Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 119512  
**Local Authority** Blackburn with Darwen  
**Inspection number** 291444  
**Inspection dates** 12–13 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Lynne Read

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Holmbrook Close
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Blackburn, Lancashire
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		BB2 3UG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 59420
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	156	<b>Fax number</b>	01254 59420
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Father Edmund Willoughby
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kathleen Downham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves the parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in Blackburn and is included in the local 'Excellence in Cities' project. A number of pupils have recently been integrated from a nearby school that closed. High proportions of pupils than usual leave or enter the school part way through their education. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is much higher than average. When they enter the Reception class, children's development is well below that usually seen. There is a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Primary is a good school and provides good value for money. Children enter the school with levels of skill which are much lower than usually seen and are given a good start to their education in the Reception class. Teaching is good, consequently standards are rising. In July 2006, pupils left Year 6 with results which are similar to those seen in most schools, but with fewer pupils attaining the higher level 5. Achievement is good, but could be better in some classes in Years 1 to 5 where more challenge is needed for a few pupils capable of higher attainment. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who come to school with gaps in their previous learning do very well. Many attain average standards by the time they leave. This aspect of the school's work is a major strength.

Personal development, including behaviour, is good. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community by taking on a range of jobs; for example, older pupils support Reception children through a 'buddy' system. Such experience of responsibility prepares pupils well for life in the wider world.

The curriculum is good and is enhanced by varied opportunities for pupils to visit places and enjoy out-of-school clubs. Links between subjects are effective and provide good opportunities for pupils to improve their skills, particularly in writing. Lessons include a good emphasis on personal and health education and, as a result, pupils are able to make informed choices about their lifestyles. Interesting lessons include a good amount of practical and collaborative work. Pupils are well motivated and enjoy their learning. Good links with families, other schools and outside agencies contribute a great deal to pupils' learning and well-being. Parents express a good level of confidence in the school.

The headteacher provides good leadership and works very hard to eliminate factors that may affect pupils' progress. Both staff and governors pay good attention to safeguarding pupils. Policies are detailed and consistently followed by staff. Good management systems check on provision and standards. However, there is not enough emphasis on checking that the targets set for pupils capable of higher attainment are translated into challenging activities.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure consistent challenge in lessons for pupils capable of higher attainment.
- Effectively monitor the teaching and learning of higher attaining pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children's prior learning and experiences are generally much lower than usual when they enter the Reception class. They make good progress so that, by the end of the Reception year, attainment has improved well, but remains below expectations for this age group.

In the 2005 tests, standards were below the national average by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Progress overall was satisfactory. School data show that in 2006 standards improved. For example, by the end of Key Stage 2, a larger percentage of pupils attained the expected Level 4, although fewer than in most schools attained the higher Level 5.

Currently, pupils' progress in lessons is good overall, but there are some differences between subjects and year groups. Progress in mathematics is especially good and is helped by teaching the Year 6 pupils in two groups, according to ability. Pupils make very good progress in reading and, following a successful plan of action, the work of the current junior pupils shows improved progress in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who come from a low starting point, and those who transfer from other schools, make good progress. This is because special teaching programmes are designed to meet their needs. The oldest pupils in school do especially well because their work is consistently challenging, promoting rapid progress for all. A few more able pupils are not always fully challenged in Years 1 to 5 and, as a result, do not always do as well as they could. In the 2005 national tests, boys significantly out performed girls. Inspection evidence supports the school's view that this was exceptional and is not now the case.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They take responsibility for their own conduct through the setting of class rules, resulting in a happy, purposeful learning atmosphere. They are well behaved, listen attentively and show interest in their work. The school provides good support for incoming pupils to help them integrate into the ethos and high expectations of Our Lady's, and most do so successfully. When some pupils still find good behaviour difficult and exclusions are needed, staff work closely with pupils and their families to ensure quick and successful re-integration into school. Attendance figures are improved and are broadly average.

Pupils develop a sense of community and influence decision making through their elected school council. The recent purchase of new outside play equipment resulted from this process.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Strong links with the church and engaging assemblies support the development of spiritual and moral awareness well. Through their studies and good links with two other schools, pupils know about, and show good respect for, beliefs and cultures that are different from their own. They are well aware of the benefits of healthy diets and exercise and have a good awareness of how to stay safe.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching in the Reception class provides a good balance of short adult-led sessions with a choice of activities so children become independent learners. Throughout the school, teachers ensure that the aims of the lesson are clear. Good feedback is provided and pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing. Well-informed teaching assistants provide sensitive support for pupils who need extra help, enabling them to do well.

Teachers constantly assess pupils' work and use that information to plan the next lessons. For example, teaching in the class for the oldest pupils in school successfully stretches pupils of all abilities and talents. Throughout the school, when assessments indicate that pupils are not reaching the standards of which they are capable, special catch-up programmes are introduced. This works well, particularly for those pupils whose standards are below average and is an important factor underpinning pupils' good progress. In Years 1 to 5, however, the activities planned for the few more able pupils are not always challenging enough to enable them to reach the standards of which they are capable.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Subjects are effectively linked, providing extended opportunities for writing and computer work. As a result, standards are rising. An emphasis on practical work in Year 1 eases the transition from the Reception class and successfully supports those not yet ready to record work. The school is beginning to adjust the curriculum to take account of how pupils of different ability learn. This is one of the reasons why pupils enjoy lessons but the impact on standards, particularly for those pupils who are gifted or talented, is not yet evident.

Pupils' experiences are enriched well through a wide range of clubs, sporting activities, visitors, special events, and links with the church. Opportunities such as adventure holidays and trips abroad help to expand horizons further. For example, pupils are very proud of their success in representing the country in an international 'creative thinking' competition held in America.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The care provided for pupils is good. Staff know pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. The school has some inventive systems for rewarding good conduct, effort and success which underpin the good personal development of pupils. For example, the 'yellow jersey' awarded for good behaviour is highly prized by the pupils and is worn with great pride.

Pupils are safeguarded well because the school makes essential checks on staff and there are well established procedures for child protection, security and for eliminating possible risks.

In the main, the individual guidance and support provided for pupils is effective in helping them to make good progress. Teachers make helpful comments when marking pupils' work. This, together with the setting of useful targets for learning, means that pupils know what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides good leadership and is instrumental in maintaining the good relationships with families and the drive for high standards. Consequently, personal development remains good and standards are rising. Senior and subject managers carry out an annual cycle of checking and evaluating provision so that the school has a useful overview of its strengths and where there is a need for improvement. The issue regarding the more able pupils' achievement has been identified through this process. However, systems for monitoring teaching and learning do not pay enough attention to checking whether the targets developed for these pupils are always translated into challenging activities.

Management is very successful in seeking out additional funding from grants and sponsorship from businesses. As a result, pupils have extra resources and many visits are subsidised so all can take part. Governance is good and governors have a good overview of standards, achievement and provision.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

To the pupils of:

Our Lady of Perpetual Succour  
Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn  
Holmbrook Close  
Blackburn  
Lancashire  
BB2 3UG

14 September 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the warm welcome and for all the help you gave to my colleague and me when we came to visit your school. We would like to tell you what we found out.

Our Lady's is a very calm and friendly school. Your behaviour is good and you all get on well together. It was nice to see how well the youngest children were settling in and very pleasing to see how sensible and knowledgeable you oldest ones have become. You enjoy interesting lessons and a good variety of visits, and expert visitors help to make your learning fun. We saw, for example, how much you enjoy your music lessons. We think the trust you have in your teachers encourages you to try hard and helps you to make good progress.

Please thank your parents for sending us lots of replies to the questionnaire. Most of them are very pleased with the school and they especially like the good care that your teachers provide. Some of them thought that your views were not listened to so it might be a good idea to tell them about the school council and your suggestion box.

You are making good progress, especially in your English, mathematics and science work. Most of you are working at the standard seen in most schools and have done well. However, we think some of you could go on to higher things and have asked your teachers to help you do this. We think you will enjoy the challenge.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us know your views so clearly. Good luck for the future, keep smiling and continue to enjoy your lovely school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Read

(Lead inspector)