

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

School Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Blackburn

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Head teacher: Mrs. Kathleen Downham  
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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Salford  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education  
Act 2005

Date of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012

**Date of previous inspection:**

October 2006

Reporting Inspector: Mr. A. J. Sowerby

## **Information about the school**

Our Lady of Perpetual Succour is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Salford situated in the Higher Croft ward of Blackburn which is the fourth poorest borough in the country in terms of multiple deprivation. It serves the parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and the church is adjacent to the school. The majority of children who attend the school live within the parish. They come from a range of socio economically deprived backgrounds. Many live in rented council properties. The age range of learners is 4 to 11. The indicative admission number is 30 and there are currently 137 on roll of which 50% are baptised Catholics. The majority of the pupils who attend the school are of white British backgrounds though there is an increasing number of children from other cultures. Currently 10.3% of the children are from backgrounds for which English is not their first language. The school currently has 8 full time and one part time member of the teaching staff. 42% of the children have been identified as having special educational needs or which 7 have a statement of need. Three hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or its equivalent whilst one is studying for the certificate.

## **1. PROVISION**

### **How effective the provision is for Catholic Education                      Grade 1**

Our Lady of Perpetual Succour is a warm, welcoming school in which everyone is included. The prayer life of the school plays a key role in developing the spiritual lives of the pupils and staff. All acts of collective worship reflect an understanding of the church's mission and the liturgical life of the church. The collective worship embraces governors, parents and the local community on a regular basis. It is clear that the children are used to leading prayers throughout the school day and are confident to share aloud spontaneous prayers with everyone present. All children pray with reverence and respect. Children also take an active part in the weekly mass held in the local parish church and other liturgical acts of worship in the wider community.

Good use is made of the school setting for a variety of outstanding acts of collective worship. In one such activity children were provided with the opportunity to reflect upon what it means to follow Jesus' command to use their hands for the good of each other and were provided with the opportunity to follow this guidance with a short prayer to say at home, whilst on another occasion all children were encouraged to follow the command of Jesus to forgive each other when things go wrong. In all such activities there existed a real sense of prayer and worship.

The school provides regular opportunities for all staff to enhance their own spiritual formation as Catholic teachers. This is done through attendance at in service training courses such as the Catholic Leadership programme or those organised as through the Blackburn with Darwen Catholic Cluster of schools.

The school is also acutely aware of the needs of its non Catholic children and provides outstanding opportunities for them to be included in all aspects of collective worship. Therefore there is very good provision made for their spiritual development.

The requirements of the Bishops' Conference in respect of 10% of the teaching time being devoted to Religious Education are fully met. The curriculum contributes to the pupils' excellent spiritual and moral development. Curriculum provision and other activities are relevant to the pupils' needs. The school has introduced the new curriculum required by the local diocese and is working hard to ensure they make the most of all learning opportunities. The school learning environment is attractive and stimulating for the children. It is clear from the standard of the displays that Catholicism is pivotal to the children's learning and that their work is valued. Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas and concerns and are confident that they will be heard. For example when the children were asked what influence they had on making improvements to the school they were keen to explain how they had raised money through fund raising days which had been used to purchase additional equipment and resources in school. They were in particular delighted to have been involved in the fund raising for the new interactive whiteboard in the school hall.

In the lessons observed, the teachers provided a rich and stimulating range of experiences and activities with which to engage the pupils. Other adults are used very effectively and they support the children very well. Technology is also used to optimize learning. The pupils are motivated, sustain their concentration and enjoy their work. The quality of teaching overall is good but with one example of outstanding practice in Year 2 where the children were inspired to produce some outstanding work in an imaginative and creative way and which was linked well to the forthcoming celebration of the mass.

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership monitor the quality of teaching and learning and carry out regular scrutinies of work. The lesson plans are evaluated and these inform areas for further development. There are plans to develop assessment in line with the new curriculum and to continue with the detailed tracking of pupils' progress. This will continue to enable the school to monitor the achievements of all children in R.E.

## **2. PUPILS**

### **How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups Grade 2**

Pupils are able to articulate the ethos of the school. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with both the parish and the community. The school's commitment to secure relationships is excellent. Pupils treat others with high levels of respect and know acutely that their behaviour always has consequences. The behaviour in school is exemplary. Pupils are very responsive to the needs of others both within the school, the local community and the wider world. They are able to articulate their beliefs with confidence and link references to the teachings of Jesus to the manner in which they conduct their own lives. This can be seen through the way that the Year 6 children care for the reception children via the Gardeners and

Seeds project. They are very aware of the needs of each others communities and can articulate clearly the difference and similarities between their separate cultures. This has provided the school with an inclusive culture which should be celebrated by all.

The school which is situated in one of the most socially deprived areas of the borough provides an outstanding level of care and support for the most vulnerable children. This was observed in the way that all staff supported the learning of those children who have special educational needs and require additional help. Great care was taken by staff to enable them to access the learning opportunities provided without them feeling isolated. The school uses nurture groups such as the “Shooting Stars” well to support such children. As a result the school promotes the inclusion of all pupils extremely well.

The children enjoy their lessons in religious education and are motivated and overall stimulated well to succeed. They are provided with a variety of activities in which to record their work in R.E. The quality of children’s written work is generally good but there is a need for the more able older children to write more extended pieces of work in R.E. Teachers mark the children’s work well and most provide the children with good suggestions on how to improve their learning. However this is not as consistent as it might be and is something the school needs to improve. The school’s assessment procedures are good. The school is well aware that further development is required of the new R.E. Scheme and for assessing children’s progress in this.

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

### **How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School**

**Grade 2**

Leadership and management are good at promoting the provision for the Catholic life of the school. It is clear that the staff’s own development is valued; the leadership team work hard to ensure that all staff grow in awareness and understanding of the Catholic life of the school whilst the co-ordinator for Religious Education is very well supported by all the staff. The school’s Catholic mission is central to the spiritual and moral development of the children. It is highly visible as you enter the school and children are aware of what it means. There are strong links between the school and the parish. The Chair of Governors and the governor for Religious Education visit the school regularly. They are aware of the work of the school and provide challenge and support for the Head Teacher and Leadership Team.

The level of monitoring for the provision of Religious Education is good. The school is very accurate in identifying areas for development. There is a clear plan for Religious Education which would be further enhanced if it included a clear indication of what the resource implications are. The Head Teacher and staff monitor and evaluate provision and outcomes in order to plan future improvements very well. The governing body works well with the school. Governors liaise very effectively with parents, pupils and staff and are well informed about users’ views of the school. This is via informal discussions and through the committee procedures. The relationship between the governors and the school is both strong and supportive.

The school is at the heart of the local community and there are strong links with other aspects of local life. There are also close links with other local community groups. For example the school has developed an excellent link with the local hospital enabling children from the school to sing for the patients at Christmas time and so take the message of the gospel out into the local community. The pupils are also involved in planning activities and devising means of fund raising for national and global charities such as Caritas and CAFOD. Thus, there is an active commitment to the care and compassion for others.

### **3. CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT** **Grade 2**

Our Lady's is a good school with several outstanding features particularly in the way it cares for children and in the provision for collective worship. The mission of the school is clearly understood by everyone involved in the school. The Head Teacher, staff and governors work very well together and share the school's vision for the future. There are systems in place for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The issue raised at the last inspection has been fully addressed. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are positive about their learning. They benefit from and contribute to the varied range of opportunities provided by the school to develop its Catholic character. Overall the school has identified accurately the areas for development. The school's development is likely to be sustained by the current leadership.

### **4. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS** **Grade 2**

#### **What the school needs to do to improve further**

#### **In order to improve the governors and staff need to:**

- **Continue to provide training for all staff in the new scheme for Religious Education and review the assessment of children's work in line with the new scheme of work.**
- **To ensure that the School's R. E. Development Plan contains a clear timescale and framework for completion including a clear indication of what the resource implications are.**