

Upholland Roby Mill CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane, Mill Lane, Up Holland, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 0QR

Inspection dates 3–4 June 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. It is not good because

- The school's performance has declined since the previous inspection. Leaders and governors have not tackled some weaknesses in teaching effectively enough. As a result, standards slipped recently and pupils are not making the good progress of which they are capable.
- Until recently, the tracking of pupils' progress has not been sharp enough. Consequently, their progress has slowed and they have not achieved as well as they should.
- Significant changes in leadership and teaching and staff absences have hampered pupils' progress.
- Middle leadership roles are not fully established and this has slowed improvements in mathematics and English across the school.
- There were some shortcomings in the school's paperwork relating to safeguarding but these have been put right,
- The governing body has not held school leaders to account rigorously enough since the previous inspection.
- The early years provision requires improvement. Children in the early years do not make good progress. Outdoor activities are limited and children do not have enough opportunities to practise their early writing and number skills.
- Teachers' sometimes low expectations, some weak subject knowledge and frequent changes in staffing have led to progress that is not good over time.
- Work in lessons is not always closely matched to pupils' individual abilities or their age. In some mixed-year groups work is too easy for the older pupils.
- When pupils are not clear about what is expected from them in lessons, they become restless and unproductive.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is now improving. The associate headteacher, governors and the local authority have clearly and accurately identified school weaknesses. Actions to improve teaching are making a difference in accelerating pupils' progress.
- As a result, standards are rising in English and mathematics, particularly at the end of Year 6.
- Parents, pupils and the staff have confidence in the current school leadership and its ability to improve the school's performance.
- Pupils are charming; they are polite, welcoming and well-behaved around school. They feel safe and secure.
- The expectations and ambition of the associate headteacher are shared by staff, who are united in their aim of rapid improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector and the associate headteacher visited lessons across the school. They looked at pupils' books in order to evaluate their learning over time.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their work and listened to pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 read. She observed pupils arriving at school and during break and at lunchtimes.
- The inspector held meetings with the associate headteacher and three members of the governing body. Meetings took place with two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed the 13 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and gathered views in conversations with parents. The six completed staff questionnaires were also taken into account.
- The inspector looked at the school's work and a range of documents. These included the school's view of its effectiveness, plans for improvement, records of pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and systems for safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Upholland Roby Mill is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children in the Reception class attend school full-time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium varies from year to year but is generally well below the national average. This additional government funding supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There has been a considerable turnover of staff in the last year and significant staff absence. The headteacher has been absent through ill-health since last October. Currently, the school is led by an associate headteacher and some classes are taught by temporary staff.
- The numbers of pupils on roll have declined over time. Four additional pupils have joined the school this term.
- The governing body includes a number of new members.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school, including the early years, so that it is at least good, in order to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics and improve pupils' progress to be good or better by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve, including the most able, disadvantaged and those who are disabled or with special educational needs
 - increasing staff's subject knowledge in English and mathematics and planning work, especially in lower Key Stage 2, that is closely matched to the abilities, ages and interests of individual pupils
 - improving the quality of marking so that pupils are guided to improve their work
 - ensuring that work planned takes account of any previous misunderstandings pupils have had and provides appropriate further challenge
 - ensuring that pupils know and understand what is expected from them in lessons so that they can get on with their work productively
 - improving the range of activities outdoors for early years to provide further opportunities for children to practise their writing and number skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - ensuring effective subject leadership in English and mathematics
 - providing training and support to extend teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in English and mathematics
 - using the more rigorous systems now in place to check on pupils' progress regularly so that slow progress can be identified and tackled swiftly
 - increasing the knowledge and effectiveness of the governing body, especially in the use of the pupil premium and in providing effective challenge and support to the school leadership.

An external review of the schools' use of the pupil premium should be conducted in order to assess how this area of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Their actions have not resulted in consistently good quality teaching and good behaviour or in ensuring that pupils make consistently good progress. Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's performance. The associate headteacher is relentless in her ambitions for pupils and her high expectations are shared by staff. They are working quickly and effectively to improve pupils' performance and the quality of teaching. As a result, the decline in standards over time at the end of Year 2 and the dip in pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 in 2014 have been turned around.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. The school acted quickly and effectively on some safeguarding concerns during the inspection. Safeguarding arrangements are effective in keeping pupils safe. The pupils feel safe and their parents agree.
- Previous under-achievement of pupils is identified and acted upon because rigorous systems to check their performance are now in place. The adequate promotion of equal opportunities leads to pupils, including the disabled and those with special educational needs and the most able pupils, making expected progress overall.
- The leadership of teaching is clearly directed to its impact on pupils' progress. Slow progress in Key Stage 2 was quickly identified by the associate headteacher, who took on the teaching of Years 5 and 6. These pupils' progress is now good and they are back on track to reach their challenging targets. The new teacher for the Reception and Year 1 class provides work to match their different ages and abilities, especially in English, and their progress is now secure.
- Nevertheless, staff absence interrupted pupils' learning. The curriculum was not sufficiently well-planned to provide temporary staff with work that matched the wide range of ability and age of pupils, in Year 2 and Key Stage 2, who were taught as one class. The curriculum has been re-designed in the last few months specifically to take account of the needs and requirements of small classes covering a broad age and ability range.
- The arrangements to check teachers' performance have been strengthened and teachers are now held to account for the performance of pupils in their class. Much training and support for staff has prepared them better for maximising pupils' progress and improving their teaching. Subject knowledge, however, is variable. The basic skills in English and mathematics are not typically secure and this prevents some pupils from reaching higher levels in their work, especially in lower Key Stage 2.
- Middle leadership in the subjects of English and mathematics is limited by staff absence. Despite the strenuous efforts of the associate headteacher in taking on these roles, there are still some gaps in pupils' learning.
- Pupil premium funding to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils has been used to appoint additional support staff. Disadvantaged pupils make similar rates of progress as other pupils on the whole. Their rates of progress vary, as does the progress of other pupils, depending on the quality of teaching. Governors do not sufficiently analyse the impact of the pupil premium on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Therefore, they do not know whether gaps between these pupils' performance and that of other children in the school or across the country are narrowing or widening.
- The curriculum is broad but also closely focused on ensuring that pupils gain the knowledge, skills and understanding of basic skills in English and mathematics to prepare them well for their future. It is effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, social, cultural and emotional development and in fostering good relations. These are a cornerstone of the school's work and included in its mission statement. Pupils are well-behaved around school and very polite. Assemblies, such as the ones led by the vicar, focus on encouraging pupils' tolerance and respect for people from different backgrounds. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the curriculum includes teaching about bullying, e-safety and prejudice, for example. These help to prepare pupils adequately for life in modern Britain.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is managed appropriately to provide specialist coaching to improve pupils' physical education skills and their awareness and understanding of how to live healthily. For such a small school, the number of additional activities provided after school is remarkable and pupils enjoy taking part in, and sometimes winning, area sporting competitions.
- The local authority acted quickly and in a timely manner when identifying weaknesses in the school's performance before last summer. The local authority brokered the appointment of the associate headteacher as well as additional staff to support teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. These actions helped to arrest the under-achievement of pupils.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance requires improvement. However, it has recently been strengthened by the appointment of new, largely parent, governors.
- Governors acknowledge that they have not stringently held the school to account for its performance in the past. They were not knowledgeable enough about school effectiveness, including school performance data, to question dips in performance or the quality of teaching. They have taken part in much training to increase their knowledge and ability to govern effectively and new governors especially are committed to taking part in more training to improve their effectiveness. There is a strong commitment and readiness to move the school forward, based on knowing what is required to improve the school further.
- The governors are particularly focused on improving the quality of teaching and are taking appropriate steps to do so.
- They understand how pay and progression are linked to staff performance and have used this knowledge to eradicate some inadequate teaching and to support improvements for others. This has not been managed effectively enough, however, to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- They conscientiously and successfully promote pupils' spiritual development through reflective assemblies and a curriculum that promotes respect and value for people of different faiths and backgrounds.
- The governors manage the school finances adequately. They are familiar with how the pupil premium is spent but have not ensured that it is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In some lessons pupils do not concentrate when work is not closely matched to their abilities and interests. When lessons are well-planned to match individual pupils' abilities they work productively.
- Low expectations of pupils' work in some classes results in untidy, rushed presentation. Similarly, when marking is too vague and staff do not check pupils' understanding, the quality of pupils' work deteriorates. Where expectations are high however, the pupils produce carefully presented work of which they are proud.
- Pupils behave well around school and are very courteous and helpful. They are confident, articulate and keen conversationalists. Pupils, staff and parents feel that behaviour is much improved and managed well by the associate headteacher.
- Pupils enjoy being given additional responsibilities and take them seriously, for example when communicating their ideas to the staff and the associate head or when looking after each other. Pupils enjoy coming to school. The school's close work with their parents has improved attendance to above average. Pupils wear their uniform with pride. They appreciate the many after-school clubs they can take part in, ranging from music to sport.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard pupils, following action taken during the inspection to address some shortcomings in the school's paperwork relating to safeguarding.
- Parents' responses to the online questionnaire and their discussions with the inspector indicate that they believe their children are kept safe.
- More systematic arrangements to make pupils aware of different forms of bullying are in place. Pupils spoken to say that they know whom to turn to if they are troubled. They believe that bullying does not happen in their school. School records about behaviour and bullying back up their views. Pupils are taught about e-safety and learn how to keep themselves safe on the internet.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- As a result of some weaknesses in teaching over time, pupils have not achieved as well as they should. This slowed progress in Years 2 and 6 in 2014. School leaders and governors recognised these weaknesses in teaching and tackled them. Staff absence has been managed adequately through the

appointment of skilled and knowledgeable temporary staff. Teaching is improving and now ensures that pupils make at least expected progress.

- Effective teaching of Years 5 and 6 pupils has led to improved progress and higher standards. This is because it is sharply focused on exactly what is required to enable pupils to learn well. It demonstrates high expectations, work that is closely matched to their ability and a clear programme to extend their knowledge.
- This effective teaching is not replicated consistently in other parts of the school, where teaching is more variable. In Years 3 and 4, pupils do not gain enough knowledge to reach higher levels in their work. This is because work is not always challenging enough. In addition, work completed by pupils is not always marked thoroughly enough and pupils are not given the advice they need to improve it. There is no clear recognition of misunderstandings in pupils' work or of when pupils are ready to move further forward in their learning. This slows pupils' progress.
- Marking is generally accurate and guides pupils to improve. At its best, marking information is used to plan future work and to make up for any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. It is also used to set more difficult work to challenge pupils further, especially the most able pupils. However, when teachers' expectations are not high enough, work is too easy for pupils or they are left unclear as to what they need to do. They then lose interest and concentration.
- The quality of support for learning varies. At its best, it is based on knowledge of the lesson aims and includes skilfully directed support to both challenge and support pupils. It is less effective when pupils are not encouraged to think for themselves or to persevere.
- The teaching of literacy, including reading, enables pupils to make expected progress. It has not been good enough over time, especially in securing pupils' knowledge and accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. An effective school focus on extending teachers' literacy knowledge has led to improved progress and raised standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Inconsistent teaching and some lack of knowledge of basic skills in mathematics hampers pupils' attainment in mathematics. Mostly, teaching now routinely makes up for gaps in pupils' learning so that they can reach the higher levels in mathematics. However, literacy and numeracy skills are not practised and improved routinely in other subjects, such as science and history.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics fell in 2014 and were below average overall. This was largely because of a decline in attainment in mathematics. Pupils in this year group did not make the good progress of which they were capable in mathematics from their broadly average starting points. Currently, standards are much improved and are at least in line with the national figures in 2014.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated over the past few years. They were below average in 2013 and 2014. This means that pupils did not make good progress from their average starting points. Standards are now higher and at the level they were before the dip in 2014. Current progress in Key Stage 2 is variable. Good teaching in upper Key Stage 2 has made up for previous under-achievement to place pupils back on course to achieve their potential. Teaching is not strong enough for pupils in lower Key Stage 2 to secure good progress over time.
- The most able pupils now make more rapid progress in Years 5 and 6 and they are reaching above-average levels in their work. However, younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are not consistently reaching the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Due to the very small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school, meaningful comparisons between their attainment and progress and that of other pupils cannot be made.
- The achievement of pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs requires improvement. It varies according to the effectiveness of support and the quality of teaching. Pupils make faster progress when their needs are clearly identified and they are skilfully supported. It slows when work is too easy for them or work is not explained carefully enough.
- Pupils' achievement in reading requires improvement. The school provides a wide range of books that are much appreciated by pupils but this enthusiasm is not built on sufficiently to develop their comprehension skills well. Achievement in writing varies and overall requires improvement. It has been hampered over time by a lack of emphasis on teaching spelling, punctuation and grammar. This is beginning to improve so that these skills are now more assured. Achievement in mathematics requires improvement. Gaps in early basic skills, such as number bonds, have not been consistently dealt with, leading to problems when pupils attempt higher-level work. A key school focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching is leading to higher standards but these are not yet securely established across the school.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- When children start school in Reception their knowledge, understanding and skills are, typically, in line with their age. Overall, they make expected progress and are ready for learning in Year 1.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. It is improving, however, especially when children take part in well-planned activities in the classroom. The effective teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is based on good teacher knowledge of learning in the early years. Both Reception children and Year 1 practise sounding out letters with enthusiasm because of the teacher's clear and interesting delivery.
- Resources are limited outdoors and those that are available do not routinely challenge children to develop their curiosity and zest for learning. Outdoor activities are not sufficiently focused to enable children to practise their writing and number skills.
- Children quickly settle down in Reception because they are well-prepared for school through previous visits. Their parents are involved in preparing them for school life and say that their children enjoy coming to school.
- Staff form positive relationships with children and their parents. Children are looked after effectively and are supervised well.
- Children respond well to staff and begin to learn and take turns. However, behaviour requires improvement. When, occasionally, activities are not precisely matched to their individual abilities, the children lose interest and are less productive. Leadership of the early years requires improvement. The relatively new leader is knowledgeable and determined to improve the setting but it is too soon to see the impact of this leadership on children's achievement over time. New curriculum plans are in place to provide interesting, well-rounded opportunities for children to learn. These are much more precise in ensuring that key skills in language and communication and number are taught in most indoor and outdoor activities. Children's language and number skills are beginning to improve as a result.

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	119496
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	461708

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	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Pollock
Headteacher	Veronica Riordan
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2010
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