

Upholland Roby Mill CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane, Mill Hill, Upholland, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 0QR

Inspection dates

11–12 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher leads the school with passion and a firm commitment to improving teaching and learning. She models skilful teaching, respect for others and teamwork. She makes sure these attributes are at the heart of the school. Links with other schools are firmly established and bring benefit to the training of staff and the learning of pupils at Upholland Roby Mill.
- Because of the skilful work of leaders, the school has improved well since the previous inspection. The overall quality of education provided is now good. Leaders' reviews of the work of staff are accurate and perceptive. Plans for the years ahead are well considered. Leaders recognise that their reviews of geography and history are less precise and extensive than for other subjects.
- Governors make good use of information about pupils' learning and their visits to the school to ask challenging questions of school leaders. They make sure the school is moving forward strongly. Governors link successfully with experts from outside the school to help the governing body get better in its work.
- The school prepares pupils successfully for their life in modern Britain, for example by making sure they learn to be responsible and compassionate. Pupils respect others who are different to themselves. They see their fellow pupils as a family. Nonetheless, pupils' understanding of the beliefs of people of other faiths is less well developed.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They praise the headteacher for making their lessons, extra activities and clubs more exciting. Teaching across classes is now consistently good. As a result, pupils are progressing well across subjects. The most able pupils now need to be given even more challenge so they will do better by the time they leave the school.
- The school's provision for three- and four-year-old children is led ably. Teaching is interesting and building children's confidence steadily. Children in the early years are becoming skilled communicators, mathematicians and readers. They behave sensibly, settle quickly into new routines and expectations and achieve well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen reviews of the teaching of geography and history so the current successes in teaching these subjects are sustained and developed for the long term.
- Increase pupils' knowledge of the faiths of different people and communities.
- Make sure teaching stretches the knowledge, understanding and skills of the most able pupils so they achieve even more highly across subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher leads the school with vision, skill and a wholehearted commitment to aiming for the best for pupils and their families. The headteacher gives clear reasons before making any changes in the school. She manages the continued improvement of the school with care and insight. The spiritual and moral aspects of the school are strong in assemblies, lessons and wider activities.
- Pupils and parents comment very positively on the impact of the new headteacher since the previous inspection. They identify very clearly the benefits they see in lessons and throughout the school's work, including the positive welcome all families are given.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has made careful use of support provided by the local authority to improve the school. This assistance has helped to improve the overall standard of education and the quality of leadership, finance and governance. Parents have supported the school with much fundraising. Leaders have also taken successful steps to link the school well with other local schools, for staff training and for mutual support. As a result of the many rapid improvements in the quality of education in the school, many more families are now applying for child places and the school is beginning to flourish once again.
- Governors, leaders and the local authority give the school finances much careful attention, making sure the school operates wisely within its allocated funding.
- The headteacher has made sure that the subjects taught, as well as the extra opportunities provided, give pupils a valuable range of new learning. This varies from Spanish to karate to breakfast and after-school clubs. Across subjects there are more opportunities for trips and residential experiences, much to the delight of pupils. The success of these initiatives is enhancing pupils' confidence and they want to spend even more time at school. Leaders keep the curriculum under close review and report about developments regularly to governors.
- Since the previous inspection, the new headteacher identified that the expenditure of PE/sport funding was not benefiting the school enough. Through careful planning, new arrangements have been set in place that are broadening pupils' skills, making PE and sport much more popular with pupils and developing staff expertise.
- The school website is currently being updated to include required information about the curriculum, PE/sport funding and governance. At present, this information only exists in paper form.
- Leaders have a realistic and accurate understanding of the strengths of the school as well as the priorities for further improvement. They have made sure that the school has improved steadily since the previous inspection and that the school has not tried to improve too much at once. Leaders recognise that it is important to now sharpen their reviews of geography and history to identify precisely those aspects of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding which should be improved.

Governance of the school

- Governance was previously weak. This is no longer the case. Several new governors have been appointed and they actively visit the school to learn about its work. They attend and contribute well to committee and full governing body meetings. Governors review and debate information about pupils' progress carefully. They participate in training and meet regularly with the local authority to further develop their skills. Governors ask challenging questions of school leaders and keep a close check on the wide-ranging work of the school. Such is their commitment that many members of the governing body made time to meet with Her Majesty's Inspector during the inspection. This range of strengths shows that governance is now well placed to improve even further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff are well trained and up to date about child protection and the wider safeguarding of pupils. Links with other schools for training on safeguarding helps staff to learn with other professionals. Staff at Upholland Roby Mill have a clear understanding of safeguarding, such as the main types of risks to pupils, for example neglect. They also know how to record and report concerns they may have about the welfare of a child or the behaviour of an adult. When the school needs to link with other agencies to support pupils, it does so promptly. Messages about online safety are promoted clearly to parents and pupils. Older pupils know how to share information safely when using a mobile phone. The school child protection policy has been updated during 2016 and refers clearly to national and local guidance. Nonetheless, the headteacher is currently updating the policy further to make sure it contains even more detail about the school's approach to sexting and peer-on-peer abuse.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Checks by leaders, recent local authority reviews of the school and inspection evidence all indicate that the quality of teaching has improved and is now good over time. For example, the teaching of mathematics and English is now successful; staff are skilled at using questioning, modelling of thinking and clear language to help pupils think, to 'have a go' and to solve problems. Parents comment that they are pleased with the much improved quality of teaching their children are receiving and the impact this is having on their child's progress.
- A key strength of teaching across the school is the quality of teamwork among staff. Everyone is given a valued role in helping the school family at Upholland Roby Mill to grow and develop. This means the skills of student workers are valued as much as those of experienced staff.
- Pupils say they enjoy their learning across subjects and that school is fun. They say they benefit from the many opportunities to work in groups and to learn from one another. Feedback given to them about their work by staff is in line with school policy. Pupils say they value the comments they receive, saying this helps them to improve

their work.

- Lessons are planned carefully and this shows in the success of staff in adapting to pupils' needs within activities. Teachers also adapt their teaching well after reviewing lessons in preparation for the next session.
- Because staff and leaders take great care of the school, the classrooms are bright and attractive places to study and learn. Displays on the walls of rooms and corridors are well-presented, promote messages about the behaviours the school values and positively celebrate pupils' learning.
- Staff have an informed knowledge of pupils' attainment and progress and keep a close eye on pupils' improving abilities. They have a clear understanding of what to expect of pupils at different ages and use this knowledge to skilfully and ambitiously plan pupils' next steps.
- Homework is set in line with school policy – although some parents would like even more. The sharing of learning between home and school begins very clearly in Reception and continues well throughout the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Across school activities, pupils are developing as creative learners who try hard and want to persevere. Staff take many steps to teach pupils to be responsible. For example, pupils are regularly consulted about what should be improved in the school. Some pupils take the lead responsibility for organising, arranging and tidying away resources for use at playtimes.
- Pupils show confidence, positive attitudes to lessons and to school life in general. They have a good level of emotional well-being because they feel listened to and acknowledged. They are aware of what will help them to be a successful learner and a valued member of society.
- The school makes much effort to keep pupils safe. Pupils say they feel safe at school. Pupils are clear about what will keep them safe when walking or cycling on roads or when searching for information on the internet.
- Pupils understand values such as tolerance, respect, democracy and the rule of law. For example, they have a strong understanding of respect for elderly people and enjoy sharing their learning with older members of the village community. Pupils say if a pupil who uses a wheelchair were to join the school they would look at the ease of access for that pupil around the building. Pupils would also treat pupils from a minority ethnic group as being an equal member of their school family. Pupils have a strong understanding of their own faith and the main symbols of Christianity, such as the Cross. Nevertheless, their awareness of the beliefs of people of other faiths is less well developed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. For example, when moving around the premises, pupils show self-discipline. They are polite to visitors and welcoming to new pupils who join the school. Older pupils in key stage 2 are particularly mature in their behaviour towards the younger pupils from key stage 1. They are committed to living by the school value of friendship.
- Pupils are aware of what might constitute bullying. They say staff tackle such issues successfully. Those pupils who have previously attended school elsewhere say how positively their new friends behave at Upholland Roby Mill.
- Pupils look after their textbooks and school resources. Disruption in classrooms is rare and pupils arrive at lessons promptly.
- Attendance and persistent absence overall is broadly in line with the national averages. Where some pupils attend less well than others, leaders are working successfully with families to improve matters.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- As Upholland Roby Mill is such a small school, it is not possible to meaningfully compare the attainment and progress of pupils with published information about pupils nationally. However, school information and pupils' books across subjects show that pupils are now making good progress from their starting points.
- Where pupils have gaps in their learning because of previously weak teaching, staff are working successfully to help pupils catch up. For example, the much-strengthened work in helping pupils understand phonics is making sure that pupils in the school achieve well in their reading. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because there is careful attention to strengthen their individual skills and abilities.
- Pupils now leave the school ready for continuing their learning at secondary school. Improvements in the teaching of English and mathematics have meant that pupils now enjoy and progress well in these subjects. For example, the quality of pupils' story writing is now of a high standard. Pupils are also developing strong skills in communication, teamwork, organisation and problem-solving that they use across their learning.
- In science in key stage 1 and 2, pupils are increasingly learning to think for themselves and consider what choices to make in planning and carrying out investigations. Staff encourage pupils to evaluate experiments and draw their own conclusions. Pupils are trying more successfully to explain scientific principles in their work.
- In geography and history, pupils enjoy a range of valuable learning, including much focused on their school locality. Recently, through well-planned and exciting lessons and local visits, they have developed a detailed understanding of the characteristics of Upholland village and the founding of the school 140 years ago.
- Across the school, pupils enjoy books from the extensive choice available to them. They read widely and often and can talk about different authors and genres with

confidence. Parents do much to extend pupils' reading at home. In sessions at school, where pupils read in a group with a teacher, pupils are progressing well in their reading skills.

- The small number of most-able pupils in the key stage 1 and key stage 2 classes do not always achieve the higher standards of which they are capable. Leaders rightly recognise that more action is needed to make sure these pupils are set work that stretches their abilities.

Early years provision

Good

- Teaching for children in the early years is within the combined early years/key stage 1 class where there is a calm, attractive and well-resourced classroom. The quality of teaching is good and children achieve well. Children benefit from skilful teaching about phonics as well as about counting, solving problems and communicating with others.
- Being in the early years at the school means many opportunities to make friends with older children, to learn from them and to participate in a wide range of whole-school activities as a member of the school family.
- Staff work well together to support the youngest children in talk and play as well as investigating books, role play and construction activities. Much thought has been given by staff to planning for learning outdoors using a wide range of resources to promote children's creativity, language and thinking.
- Children are at ease with one another and settle well upon arrival at school each day. Relationships between staff and children are very positive and children are well-behaved.
- Parents are pleased with links between home and school and the way in which staff help children to settle when new to school.
- Provision for children in the early years at the school is led well and given much importance by leaders and governors.

School details

Unique reference number	119496
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10026855

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	18
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Pollock
Headteacher	Katy Brooks
Telephone number	01695 622 536
Website	www.robby-mill.lancsngfl.ac.uk
Email address	head@robymill.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 June 2015

Information about this school

- Upholland Roby Mill is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Five of the 18 pupils in the school had been on roll for less than one week at the time of the inspection. These pupils were from the combined early years/key stage 1 class and the key stage 2 class.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher, several staff and governors are new to the school and extra support for improvement has been given by Lancashire local authority.
- The school operates a breakfast club on two mornings and after-school provision on three evenings. The school started providing funded places for three-year-olds from January 2016.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.

- No pupils in the school are eligible for the government's pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Because there are so few pupils, the school is excluded from the requirement to meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about PE and sport premium funding, the curriculum or information about the governing body on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) observed teaching in each classroom on both days of the inspection, including one observation carried out jointly with the headteacher. HMI also visited the breakfast club and observed an assembly.
- HMI looked at a sample of pupils' work with the headteacher. He also heard some pupils read.
- HMI spoke with parents on both days of the inspection. There were no parent responses available through the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View.
- HMI spoke to pupils to gather their views of the school.
- HMI considered a range of information including: reviews of how well the school is doing; plans for the future; records of checks made of staff suitability to work with pupils; and the school's own reviews of the quality of teaching.
- HMI met with seven members of the governing body including the chair, a range of staff and two representatives from Lancashire local authority.
- The inspection was observed by an Ofsted inspector, who played no part in judgements made about the school.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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