

# Inspection of a good school: Upholland Roby Mill Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

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

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Inspection date:

8 December 2021

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and their parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about belonging to this welcoming school community. Pupils get on well together and take good care of each other. They are happy to be in school and feel safe.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are fully involved in all aspects of school life. They make the most of the high-quality clubs on offer. They carry out positions of responsibility with pride, such as being part of the 'ethos group' or 'care club'.

Leaders and governors expect all pupils to achieve well. They also support pupils to develop as well-rounded individuals. All pupils, including those with SEND, read well and remember important aspects of their learning. However, they do not achieve as well as they should. This is because leaders have not finished developing the curriculum.

Pupils benefit from the calm atmosphere around the school. They appreciate having quiet time to pause and reflect. Pupils behave well in class and during playtimes. They contribute confidently during lessons, focusing on their learning.

Pupils are nurtured by staff who know them well. Pupils and their parents agree that although bullying is rare, staff deal with incidents well.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the time of the previous inspection, there have been significant periods of temporary leadership arrangements that have coincided with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite these challenges, leaders have made a promising start in redesigning the curriculum to better meet pupils' needs. Nevertheless, there are aspects of their plans that are incomplete. In subjects other than mathematics, English and science, teachers are not clear what their pupils need to know. At times, the subject content does not fully meet the ambition of the national curriculum. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, do not achieve as well as they should. In addition, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum reflects cultural diversity. Pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own is limited. This means that they are not fully prepared to live in modern Britain.

In contrast, leaders' curriculum plans for some subjects are well developed. This is because these plans set out clearly the key knowledge that pupils are expected to learn. The plans also identify the order in which new knowledge should be learned. Similarly, in Reception Year, leaders' plans make it clear how teachers should support children's development across all areas of learning.

Pupils are interested in their learning. They do not disturb each other in class. Pupils, including children in early years and pupils with SEND, describe with enthusiasm what they have learned. They make effective use of their secure reading, mathematical and scientific knowledge to access other areas of the curriculum. They apply knowledge well from these areas of the curriculum to support learning in other subjects. In early years, carefully crafted and well-organised learning ensures that children are well supported in readiness for the key stage 1 curriculum.

Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, read well. Teachers make sure that pupils begin to develop secure phonics knowledge, whether they begin at the school in Reception Year or join the school in other year groups. Usually, by the time pupils are in Year 2, they can work out how to read any word that they come across. This is because the school's effective phonics programme helps pupils to build up strong reading knowledge. The reading books that teachers provide help pupils to hone the fluency of their reading to become skilful readers. Pupils also enjoy the stories that teachers share with them.

Teachers know their pupils well. They make effective use of what they know their pupils can do, or struggle with, to plan their next step of learning. Leaders and other staff identify particular SEND that pupils may have. If any pupil develops gaps in their phonics or other knowledge, staff are skilled in helping them to catch up quickly.

Leaders have made sure that pupils' wider personal development has remained a strong focus throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders provide high-quality activities that pupils and their parents value. Pupils learn about the importance of keeping fit. They enjoy mindfulness activities. They benefit from the chance to work together as a team or

to develop positive relationships with older residents in care homes. Activities such as these help pupils to develop self-confidence.

Over recent months, governors have focused on maintaining the stability of leadership, rather than how well the curriculum is being developed. They do not provide enough challenge to leaders about how well the redesign of the curriculum is progressing. Some governors have not had recent training to help them do this. However, they have worked closely with staff and have provided support to help them manage their workload.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that physical education (PE) and geography may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors know how to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular updates and training to ensure that they are aware of the most recent safeguarding advice.

Staff are vigilant in looking out for potential safeguarding risks. They act quickly when pupils need additional support. Staff share important information with safeguarding leaders in a timely manner. This enables relevant personnel to be kept well informed about emerging concerns. Leaders liaise with other agencies to ensure that pupils get any help that they need.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they understand how to follow important safety rules when crossing roads or using the internet.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders' curriculum plans for the foundation subjects do not make it clear what leaders want pupils to learn each year. In addition to this, some aspects of these plans do not match the ambition of the national curriculum. This results in pupils, including those with SEND, not building up their knowledge as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum plans are ambitious and well planned and designed to enable pupils to acquire a rich body of knowledge.
- Governors do not sufficiently hold leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. As a result, leaders do not get the support and challenge that they need to improve the quality of education. Governors need to ensure that all members of the governing body are well trained and informed, so that they can hold leaders to account effectively.
- The curriculum lacks opportunity to support pupils in developing an awareness of cultures other than their own. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for living in modern Britain. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum

provides sufficient opportunity for pupils to learn about and appreciate a range of different cultures.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119496
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211163
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	15
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Carole McCourt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Grand
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.robymill.lancs.sch.uk">www.robymill.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 and 12 January 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been several changes to the leadership arrangements since the time of the previous inspection. The current headteacher took up post in September 2021. The current chair of governors was also appointed recently.
- Several pupils join the school at different times of the year.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. The school had its last section 48 inspection in February 2016.

## Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school, including the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors spoke with a group of governors,

including the chair of the governing body. They also spoke with representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Liverpool.

- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. This included: the school's central record of staff and visitors; staff training records; records of safeguarding; and samples of the records kept on individual pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and PE. They talked with the curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and samples of work from other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes, and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors considered the free-text responses from parents to find out their views of the school. They also spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. There were insufficient responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, to analyse.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Maria McGarry

Ofsted Inspector

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