

Roby Park Primary School

Easton Road, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside L36 4NY

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although improving, the rates of progress being made by the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are not swift enough to help pupils reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Many pupils carry a legacy of underachievement. Weaker teaching in the past has left many gaps in their skills and learning.
- Standards in writing are improving; however, outcomes in reading and mathematics are not as strong.
- The quality of teaching is not consistent and does not always match the learning needs of pupils.
- In early years, there are not enough opportunities provided for children to develop their enquiry skills.
- Although much has been done to reduce pupils' absence, attendance is still currently below the national average.
- Some subject leaders are having too little influence on the quality of teaching within the subjects they lead.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent changes, driven by strong senior leaders and governors, are turning the school round quickly. Leaders have the confidence and trust of staff, pupils and parents. Leaders have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve further.
- Pupils are a delight to meet. They are polite, courteous and confident. They are proud of their school.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning.
- The good teaching of phonics engages pupils and supports them in their enjoyment of reading.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged are now making rapid progress.
- Pupils' personal and spiritual development is strong. They understand how to stay safe online and in their local community.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that different groups of pupils make stronger gains in their learning, particularly in reading and mathematics, by:
 - tackling the gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge due to poor teaching in the past
 - raising the challenge for the most able and more able disadvantaged pupils so they are able to make more rapid progress
 - reviewing the effectiveness of intervention programmes more regularly to monitor the impact they have on pupils' learning and retaining only those programmes which work best
 - providing a variety of tasks in lessons that embed and deepen pupils' learning.
- Improve pupils' outcomes across a wide range of subjects by:
 - providing pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge, especially geography, history and science
 - ensuring that the improvements in writing are replicated in topic books
 - developing the skills of subject leaders so that they can monitor the progress being made in their subject areas and lead improvement.
- Accelerate progress and improve outcomes for children in early years by:
 - improving teachers' questioning to develop children's understanding, to deepen their learning and to promote their enquiry skills
 - having higher expectations in writing.
- Increase attendance by:
 - continuing to offer a wide range of incentives to parents and pupils and ensuring that they understand the importance of attending school
 - measuring the impact of regular meetings between the learning mentor, special educational needs coordinator and external agencies so that the shared intelligence improves the attendance of vulnerable children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and governors have an honest view of the school's strengths and know what still needs to be worked on. The school's self-evaluation document and improvement plan are detailed and accurately pinpoint the most important things to do next.
- The effectiveness of the school has improved rapidly since the beginning of this academic year. Teaching is improving, pupils are enjoying their learning and their achievement is rising rapidly across most of the school. The improvements initiated by leaders, staff and governors over the last year have secured the promise of future success.
- The headteacher has built a shared approach to teaching and assessment techniques across the school. In doing so, he has won the trust of teachers, pupils and parents alike.
- Staff have an appetite for change because the headteacher has skilfully brought everyone together as a united team to develop a common, shared vision for the school.
- A whole host of different training opportunities is refreshing teachers' performance and helping them to learn from each other and from good practice beyond the school. Examples of this are the work completed with the local teaching school on moderation of pupils' attainment and subject leadership.
- Effective systems to manage teachers' performance are raising expectations and ensuring that staff have the skills to teach well. As a result, staff have a clear focus for the monitoring activities which link to the school's priorities. This also applies to the teaching assistants, who feel that their contribution to school improvement is truly valued.
- Leaders are determined that pupils' academic success is matched by their social and emotional development. The systems to support pupils' wider needs have been overhauled and improved. Pupils feel empowered to resolve the smallest day-to-day issues between themselves.
- The effective use of the physical education and sport premium to expand what is offered has meant there is renewed interest and enjoyment of physical activity. An external sports coach from the local football club and another sports provider deliver a range of clubs during lunchtime and after school. Pupils enjoyed playing tennis in the afternoon sun, while another group loved learning the intricacies of fencing.
- Additional funding provided by the government to support disadvantaged pupils is used well to provide additional support and is making a tangible difference to the progress of most of these pupils. The leaders, supported by some of the governors, regularly review the impact of the extra support available to these pupils. As a consequence, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than previously. Large numbers of disadvantaged pupils account for over half of the school's population and

these pupils receive additional tuition from skilled teaching assistants. Leaders have employed more support staff so that the pupils' learning needs can be met.

- Roby Park has a high percentage of pupils with complex special educational needs. These pupils are extremely well supported and are well integrated into mainstream classes. They make good progress in line with others nationally from similar starting points. Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is being spent wisely and securing good progress for them.
- The English and mathematics leaders are using effectively the expert guidance from local cluster groups and local authority advisers to implement further changes in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Other subject leaders are being encouraged to develop their roles. They are being given targeted training opportunities so that they can take more responsibility for pupils' progress in their subjects.
- Leaders use accurate plans to bring about changes in practice. These provide staff with a clear focus for monitoring activities which link to the school's priorities. Such activities support staff rather than overwhelm them. The precision of leaders' monitoring and assessment helps teachers to understand what they need to do better and to celebrate what they do well.
- The headteacher is not shy about providing additional support for teachers when they need it. He uses team teaching and coaching as a means to improve practice, which is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, although still focusing on core subjects as a key priority for the whole school.
- Leaders have invested heavily in improvements to the early years setting, which has been transformed. There is new spacious accommodation, both inside and out, offering a wide range of activities to appeal to boys and girls alike.

Governance of the school

- Governance is good because governors have reviewed their roles and responsibilities so they are now better placed to play a key role in setting the strategic direction of the school.
- The chair of governors provides an excellent role model for his colleagues and is passionate about the future success of the school.
- Governors have provided unwavering support to the headteacher over staffing issues. Difficult decisions have not been shirked. Their much-improved understanding of information about pupils' performance means that governors have refined their analysis of how additional government funding is being used to close gaps in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Governors have their sights set on the future.
- Governors ensure that their training is current and up to date. They actively seek out courses so that they are better able to ask challenging questions.
- Governors understand their statutory responsibilities, such as keeping the website up to date and their role in safeguarding and monitoring of attendance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Recent training means that staff know how to spot early signs that pupils may be at risk and they know how to act on any concerns. As a result, identification of vulnerable children is extremely rigorous. Good use is made of external services to support vulnerable children and their families. The 'Knee High Club' is an example of this, where staff and other professionals mingle with parents and children, offering support where necessary.
- The learning mentor and the special needs coordinator work in tandem to ensure that no stone is left unturned to get the best possible support for vulnerable children and their families. Their systems are thorough.
- Governors actively look at school records to see that all visitors have gone through appropriate safety checks.
- Risk assessments are constantly reviewed to ensure that pupils are safe at all times. Leaders recently requested all pupils to be collected from school when there was a potential risk in the local community.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In most classes, pupils are flourishing, but there are others where they do not make such good progress. This is linked to changes in staffing which have delayed the development of a consistent approach to teaching and learning. The overall quality of teaching is variable across years and subjects.
- Work in pupils' books and observation show that pupils' learning is not at its best when activities lack structure or fail to build on what pupils already know and can do. When lessons are not planned correctly to meet learning needs, pupils do not make the progress that they should.
- In most classes the teaching assistants are used to best effect. They provide strong support for pupils who have gaps in their learning and, as a result, pupils are starting to make more rapid progress, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Most teachers have forged productive and warm relationships with the pupils, who are eager to please.
- The strengthened emphasis on reading throughout the school is paying off in pupils' willingness to read. Leaders have invested heavily in a wide range of reading materials of different genres to appeal to all tastes. Pupils are now starting to seek out opportunities to sit down in the reading corner with a good book. Other adults, including governors, visit school regularly to listen to readers, and guided reading now forms an important part of the curriculum.
- Phonics teaching is strong and as a result, pupils' reading skills are improving.
- Parents feel happy with the way teachers communicate with them. Most parents attend three parents' evenings a year, when their children's progress is discussed

alongside targets for next steps. They feel that communication has improved since the arrival of the headteacher and find the regular use of text messaging helpful.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Roby Park is giving pupils the foundation to make sensible choices and reap the benefits of a healthy, safe and successful life. Teachers help pupils to become successful learners, both for now and in the future.
- Pupils are able to talk about solving minor day-to-day issues themselves, but they know whom to turn to for advice, should they need it.
- This is a school where staff, parents and pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. Pupils said that they feel safe and that they have a voice. When discussing the merits of a democracy, there was an interesting discussion about Theresa May's meeting with Donald Trump.
- The school counsellors take their roles very seriously. The team is well led and they are clear about what they would like to do to improve the school further.
- Pupils at Roby Park know the harm that unkind remarks about skin colour, sexuality, faith or learning difficulties can cause. Consequently, incidents of racist and homophobic language are rare. Pupils however, have little exposure to a variety of places of worship, such as synagogues or mosques, and they have a shallow insight into other cultures and religions.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are a delight to meet. They are polite, courteous and confident. Good behaviour at Roby Park is recognised and rewarded and respected by pupils.
- Parents spoken to and those who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, feel overwhelmingly that pupils are safe and behave well, and that incidents of bullying are very few and far between.
- The learning mentor works alongside leaders to improve attendance. Good attendance is widely celebrated and is high-profile at Roby Park. Pupils and parents are starting to accept responsibility for getting to school on time. One parent was running through the playground and could not stop to speak to an inspector in case her child was late for school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In each key stage, attainment and progress vary across years and subjects due to the variability in teaching. Overall progress therefore requires improvement. However, there is an improving picture.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. However, the more able pupils and more able disadvantaged pupils are not achieving their potential.
- The quality of work in English is inconsistent. When pupils write in their topic books, they tend to leave behind the higher standards of grammar, spelling, punctuation and presentation seen in their English writing books.
- The information about pupils' performance seen during the inspection showed that attainment in mathematics, reading and writing falls below national expectations for pupils' ages. However, there was also evidence to show that achievement is moving in the right direction, particularly in writing, and is strengthening over time.
- Leaders made writing the focus for the last school year. As a result, pupils' progress was better in this area. The focus is now on reading and mathematics, and once again progress is improving across both key stage 1 and 2.

Accurate analysis of school information shows that boys' achievement lags behind that of girls. This is because many of the boys are not just disadvantaged but also have special educational needs. Improved support through targeted daily interventions has ensured that this gap is narrowing.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The newly formed team in early years work together well. They are starting to analyse the children's progress and to plan the activities around that, but this is still embryonic. School leaders agree that more still needs to be done to ensure that the activities encourage the most able children, including the most able disadvantaged, to make more rapid progress.
- Early years staff are working hard to diminish the differences in achievement between boys and girls and are targeting the progress of disadvantaged children.
- Changes in provision, staffing and the appointment of a new leader are bringing about improvements in the early years. The leadership is developing well, and the early years department is becoming a feather in the Roby Park's cap.
- Although well over half the children who enter nursery are typical for their age, the targets set for children to achieve at the end of Reception are not ambitious enough.
- The new early years classroom offers a bright, airy environment in which children love to learn. However, there are not enough opportunities provided for children to develop their enquiry skills. An example was a colour-mixing activity, where the teacher told the children what would happen if they mixed colours together, rather than allowing them to predict what would happen and then to see if they were right.
- Communication with parents is good. Evidence of work completed during the day is uploaded online so that parents can see what their children have achieved. Parents are also invited to stay and play and there is good take-up of this offer. Parents also appreciate the improved communication through newsletters and text messages.

- Children respond well to the established systems and routines and grow in confidence and independence. Children are interested in what they are doing and always engaged in their learning.
- There are some lovely examples of independent writing, but expectations are too low. Work in books shows that some children are capable of writing short sentences, but this is not being developed rapidly enough for all. Expectations in phonics, however, are higher. One child for example, wrote the word 'blossom' successfully using her phonic skills.

School details

Unique reference number	104420
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10024393

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Hughes
Head teacher	Mr Steven Hatton
Telephone number	0151 477 8340
Website	www.robyparkprimary.co.uk
Email address	robypark@knowsley.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is smaller than the average primary.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is high. The school also has a significant proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged. This figure is increasing.
- The school was below the floor standards in 2014 and 2015 but met the floor standard in 2016. This school is a coasting school.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been a significant number of staffing changes, including changes to the leadership structure. A new headteacher took up post in September 2014. He is supported by an assistant headteacher, who also takes the lead for English and special educational needs across the school. There is a new early years leader who also takes a lead for mathematics across the school.

- Leaders also appointed three new teachers in the past academic year.
- There has been a new chair of governors since September 2014.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited each classroom to observe teaching and pupils' learning. Three of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at play. They met formally with three groups of pupils and heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff, middle leaders, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding. They took account of school information about pupils' outcomes and scrutinised pupils' books.
- Inspectors looked at a number of anonymised case studies, performance management reviews and a wide range of reviewed policies.
- Inspectors spoke informally to a small group of parents at the start of the school day. They also considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. This included 12 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Maggie Parker, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tina Cleugh	Ofsted Inspector
Saeeda Ishaq	Ofsted Inspector

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