

Roby Park Primary School

Easton Road, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside L36 4NY

Inspection dates

22–23 May 2019

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

- Leaders have secured improvements in many aspects of the school since the last inspection. The quality of education provided is now good.
- The new headteacher is highly ambitious for the school. A culture of high expectations exists and staff morale is high.
- Rates of progress have been strengthened. Pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders regularly review the quality of teaching and devise effective strategies to strengthen it.
- Teachers use good subject knowledge and questioning to develop pupils' understanding. However, at times, the most able pupils are not challenged as well as they could be.
- Early reading skills are developed effectively. A relentless focus on reading across the school continues to develop pupils' vocabulary.
- Leaders are developing an accurate picture of progress in the wider curriculum.
- Governors have improved the way they work. They have increased their understanding of the school's strengths and are clear about what needs to be done to achieve further.
- Roby Park is a happy, inclusive school. Pupils behave well. They feel safe and well cared for.
- Leaders have had a positive impact on the English and mathematics curriculums. The leadership of other subjects continues to develop.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need to succeed.
- Early years provision is highly nurturing. Teachers plan interesting activities to ensure that children make a good start to school life.
- Pupils write confidently for a range of different purposes. However, they sometimes lack the stamina to write at length.
- Pupils' independent skills are sometimes not well developed.
- Teachers sometimes do not demand neat work that is free of careless spellings and punctuation.
- Attendance is improving. However, a few pupils still do not attend school regularly.
- Adults are vigilant in ensuring the welfare of pupils. A strong safeguarding culture is evident.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the improvements in teaching, learning and assessment to raise achievement still further by ensuring that:
 - teachers insist on the highest standard of presentation and handwriting and make sure that pupils use accurate spelling and punctuation when they write
 - pupils have the opportunity to develop the stamina to write at length
 - teachers continue to foster pupils' self-confidence and ability to work independently
 - pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are consistently provided with work that is sufficiently challenging and deepens their learning, including in the wider curriculum.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders continue to develop an accurate overview of pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - the skills of subject leaders are further developed to enable them to fully contribute to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas of responsibility.
- Further improve the attendance of pupils, particularly those who do not attend regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Despite the turbulence in staffing, including to the senior leadership of the school, leaders have successfully tackled the areas that needed improvement at the time of the previous inspection. Roby Park is now a good school.
- The new headteacher, who is ably supported by the acting assistant headteacher, has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Senior leaders are taking effective action to make sure that the school continues to improve.
- Senior leaders regularly and accurately check the quality of teaching. They provide feedback that helps teachers to improve their practice. Where teaching has not been effective in the past, leaders have provided support that has ensured improvement.
- Leaders have established effective systems to assess pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This gives them an accurate view of pupils' achievement, which they use effectively to plan improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. However, similar systems to check how well pupils are doing in other subjects are not fully embedded.
- Subject leaders, some of whom are new to their posts, are highly committed to bringing about improvements in their areas of responsibility. They value the support provided by senior leaders, as well as that sourced through links with other schools, to develop their leadership skills. However, the skills of some subject leaders are not sufficiently developed to enable them to contribute fully to improving the quality of teaching.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is strong. Additional funding is used effectively. Pupils' learning and emotional needs are identified quickly and teaching is tailored to meet individual needs. Training for support staff, particularly in developing pupils' basic English and mathematics skills, has increased the impact of their work on pupils' learning. Staff know pupils well. They know the difficulties pupils face in learning and work with a wide range of external agencies to overcome these barriers.
- A clear focus on caring for pupils' emotional and mental health needs is evident. All staff in the school, whatever their role, have received training on the way they can contribute positively to this important aspect of a child's development.
- The curriculum is varied and holds the interests of pupils well. It is enriched by a range of visits and visitors to the school. Leaders bring in specialist teachers so that pupils benefit from rich learning opportunities taught by experts in some areas of the curriculum. For example, a Spanish speaker works with the school to help pupils learn a modern foreign language and about life in another European country. Further work to improve the curriculum is ongoing to deepen pupils' learning in subjects, including those in the wide curriculum. Leaders have taken the views of pupils into account as they ensure that the curriculum fully reflects the needs of the school and its local community.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural education is woven into school life at every opportunity. The wider curriculum and regular assemblies focus on discussing big

issues in the real world. This enhances pupils' understanding of current topics and prepares them well for life as citizens in modern Britain.

- The school has taken decisive action to improve attendance. This is leading to more regular attendance and fewer absences. Parents and carers who keep their children away from school without good reason are challenged by leaders. A range of actions, including the issuing of penalty notices, are in place.
- The new headteacher ensures that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is deployed appropriately. This funding is used to ensure that teachers tackle any barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils may have. This well-focused approach is enabling this group of pupils to make stronger progress than that seen in the past.
- The school uses the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding effectively. Specialist sports coaches provide training to increase teachers' expertise in delivering high-quality PE lessons. At lunchtimes, coaches work with pupils of all ages to encourage active and healthy lifestyles and increase sporting skills. The variety of sports on offer to pupils is increasing and school records show greater participation rates in competitive sessions with other schools.
- Following the previous inspection, leaders worked closely with the local authority to identify appropriate support for the school. This support, combined with the sharing of the good practice within Roby Park, has proved effective in moving the school forward. Much of the training and support for staff is now provided by the new headteacher and staff team.
- Pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are supported extremely well. A wide range of well-established partnerships with external agencies contributes well to this work. In particular, the school is proud of its work in supporting those pupils in the care of the local authority.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors are very pleased with the school. Parents say teachers willingly listen to and act on any concerns they may have. They feel well informed about how well their children are doing. Parents particularly praised the pastoral care provided and they appreciate the way staff know each pupil as an individual.

Governance of the school

- Governors rigorously carry out their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding. They ensure that additional funding, such as that for disadvantaged pupils, is firmly targeted at removing the barriers to learning for this group of pupils.
- The new headteacher's reports are relevant and informative. Governors receive detailed information presented in a helpful way. This means that they are clear about the strengths of the school's performance and what needs to be done to improve further.
- The governing body regularly seeks the views of parents. Parents say that the school communicates well with them.
- Governors acted promptly to make interim arrangements following the resignation of the previous headteacher. The process of securing a new headteacher was dealt with promptly. Governors value the support provided by the local authority in these matters.

- Training provided for members of the governing body has improved governors' understanding of their roles and responsibilities and improved the way that they support and challenge school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong and effective safeguarding culture within the school. Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular training and updates on safeguarding and child protection procedures. Staff are highly vigilant for any signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. Staff, including those who are new to the school, know how to report their concerns and how to access support for pupils.
- The new headteacher has overhauled the record-keeping systems to ensure that records are well documented and kept up to date. Referrals are followed up promptly and staff record their actions systematically. Leaders are keen to support families at the earliest opportunity.
- The curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe, for example when they use the internet, and to manage any risks they may face, both in school and within the local community.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Improved teaching means that pupils achieve much better outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Teachers use good subject knowledge to plan engaging activities that capture pupils' interests. Many teachers use questioning skilfully to build on what pupils already know and address any misconceptions which arise. Teachers provide clear explanations to move learning on.
- Phonics teaching is a strength in early years and key stage 1. Teachers skilfully plan creative activities for groups of children that match their ability in learning phonics.
- Roby Park pupils are increasingly developing a love of reading following changes made to the teaching of this subject by senior leaders. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often, both in school and outside. The provision of high-quality texts supports the curriculum well and is beginning to enrich pupils' vocabulary. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors how much they appreciate the new books that have been provided for them. As a result of these initiatives, pupils are making stronger progress in reading across the school.
- Pupils' outcomes in mathematics, in particular, were not good enough at the time of the previous inspection. A new system for teaching mathematics is encouraging pupils to explain their reasoning as they solve problems. Teachers ensure that basic mathematics skills, such as place value and times table facts, are developed systematically.
- The teaching of writing is good and improving. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are now taught systematically and this is providing pupils with the basic skills they need to write effectively. Pupils are beginning to write at greater length, including in subjects

such as history and geography, to build up their stamina as writers. At times, teachers accept work that is untidy or contains careless spellings and punctuation, and some pupils are yet to develop a neat handwriting style.

- Teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting pupils' learning. They work closely with teachers to provide effective support for pupils who need to catch up with their peers and those with SEND. Pupils make good progress because of the timely support they receive.
- The atmosphere in classrooms and around school is calm and purposeful. The learning environment supports pupils' learning well. Classrooms, corridors and other spaces, such as those used for support work, are bright and well organised. Displays celebrate pupils' work. Teachers provide information around the classroom for pupils to refer to if they are 'stuck'. However, sometimes, pupils seek the help of adults too readily, rather than trying to think things through for themselves.
- Those pupils who sometimes experience difficulties grasping new work due to earlier weaknesses in teaching are helped to catch up because teachers accurately identify and address gaps in learning. Occasionally, teachers set work that is too easy for pupils, especially the most able, so that they do not receive enough challenge. This limits the progress made.
- The school expects pupils to complete the homework which is set regularly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles. They are helped to understand the benefits of making healthy food choices and the positive impact of exercise, particularly on their mental health. Many take the opportunity to work with the sports coaches at lunchtimes to improve their skills. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about the recent improvements to PE lessons and how much they were enjoying the new resources now available on the playgrounds.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. They told inspectors that bullying rarely happens but, if an issue does occur, they trust the adults to sort it out quickly. Pupils are confident that any type of discriminatory behaviour would not be tolerated.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsible roles such as school and eco-councillors. Leaders regularly seek the views of pupils when reviewing the curriculum and when checking on learning in lessons.
- Pupils' personal and emotional development is very well supported because adults know the pupils so well. As a result, staff identify and secure additional support for pupils, regularly drawing on the expertise of well-established external partnerships at an early stage. Pupils are provided with sex education appropriate for their age.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud to be part of the Roby Park family.
- Pupils are polite and show great respect for each other and the adults who care for them. This makes a strong contribution towards making this a happy, warm and welcoming school.
- Pupils say they feel safe and know that there is always an adult ready to listen to them. Pupils of different ages get on well together as they move around the corridors in a sensible way and play happily together on the well-equipped playground.
- Pupils think that behaviour is good around school and in class. School rules are clear and understood by all. Pupils think that adults apply sanctions and use the reward system fairly. The new 'gold' awards are highly sought after.
- The breakfast club gets the day off to a good start. Pupils chat and play happily together, while some take the opportunity to complete their homework. The after-school club, known by all as the 'Rainbow Club', provides similar safe and caring provision for those who attend.
- Pupils are keen to learn and they enjoy a challenge. However, some rely too much on adults at times, rather than trying to think things through for themselves.
- On occasion, a few pupils need help to manage their behaviour. This is done sensitively and in a caring and extremely professional manner. Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are recorded and leaders provide bespoke support for pupils, using outside agencies if necessary. A few recent exclusions have adhered closely to the school's protocols, and parents are kept fully informed and involved.
- Attendance has remained stubbornly below the national average for some time. Leaders continuously promote the importance of regular attendance to pupils and their parents. These actions are bearing fruit and pupils currently in the school are attending more regularly. The school has not shirked the difficult decisions taken to challenge the parents of pupils who do not attend school regularly. The local authority has supported the school in issuing a number of penalty notices, for example.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Due to the concerted efforts of leaders and staff, improved teaching means that pupils make better progress than at the time of the previous inspection. From starting points often below those typical for their age, pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment is improving steadily across the school. In 2018, standards in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 were in line with the national average. This represented an improvement from the low levels seen in previous years. Outcomes in mathematics also improved but remained lower than average. Pupils reached average standards at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The school's assessment information, work in pupils' books and inspection evidence show that current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils get off to a good start with their early reading. Over the past two years, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been at or above the national average. Almost all pupils reach the standard by the end of Year 2. Staff encourage pupils to develop a love of reading from a young age. Pupils read widely and with understanding across different subjects. Comprehension skills are improving. Pupils are becoming better at identifying inferences in texts.
- Changes to the way the school approaches mathematics teaching have led to improvements in progress for current pupils across the school. Work seen in pupils' books shows that basic mathematics skills are being developed systematically. Pupils are becoming increasingly proficient in developing their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Pupils frequently record the information they gather in science and other projects in graphs and charts.
- Since the previous inspection, attainment in writing has improved and, for most pupils, it is in line with what the school expects for their age. Recently introduced strategies include a successful focus on pupils' comprehension and inference skills and pupils are developing editing skills to improve their writing.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged or with SEND make good progress from their starting points. They receive good support for their needs and in addressing any barriers to learning they might have.
- Work in pupils' books and on display around the school illustrates that pupils make good gains in learning in a range of subjects beyond English and mathematics. However, at times, a lack of precise assessment information of subjects in the wider curriculum means that work is not matched well enough to what pupils know and can do. This prevents pupils, particularly the most able, from making even stronger progress.
- At times, the work provided for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, does ensure that they consistently make the progress they are capable of. This is because the work they are given is not always sufficiently challenging to deepen their understanding of the subjects being studied.

Early years provision

Good

- As a result of good teaching throughout the Nursery and Reception classes, children make strong progress from often low starting points. As a result, the proportion of children in the school who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception is in line with the national average. The proportion of children exceeding the expectation for their age continues to rise.
- Children learn well and play happily together in the busy, lively and highly engaging learning environment provided. All settle well and are clearly familiar with classroom routines. Children become increasingly independent as the adults help them develop socially and emotionally. Children listen carefully to adults and each other. They take

turns and share toys readily and chat happily to each other and the adults as they explore and take part in the activities provided.

- Accurate checks on how well children are doing help adults know children as individuals. Early reading, writing and mathematics skills are taught effectively in sessions led by adults. Older children use their understanding of phonics well to tackle unfamiliar words and they are keen to show adults how accurately they can count and order numbers.
- Teachers plan a range of imaginative activities which are adapted promptly to respond to the interests of children. Effective use is made of the indoor and outdoor space to develop learning in the different aspects of the early years curriculum.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. They are curious, interested learners. During the inspection, some showed impressive levels of concentration as they used the coordinates on a map to find the treasure buried by pirates.
- The team of teachers and teaching assistants all play their part in making sure that children are nurtured and kept safe. The new leader of the early years has built well on the work of her predecessor. The needs of children new to the setting are swiftly identified when they join the school. A close eye is kept on children's progress to ensure that any extra support is quickly provided for those whose progress maybe be slowing.
- Leaders are aware that the progress of children who are disadvantaged has not been as strong as that of other children in recent years. Steps taken this year have begun to ensure that the additional funding for this group is being used more effectively and the progress of this group is improving.
- Staff are trained in all aspects of safeguarding, and welfare arrangements are good.
- Parents say that their children are cared for well and are happy to come to school. Nevertheless, some children do not attend school regularly and absence rates are too high to enable children to develop the good attendance habits which will stand them in good stead during their school and employment careers.

School details

Unique reference number	104420
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10087799

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Heather Hadley
Headteacher	Kathryn Allen
Telephone number	0151 477 8340
Website	www.robyparkprimary.co.uk
Email address	robypark@knowsley.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 March 2017

Information about this school

- Roby Park Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of boys and girls varies across the school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school provides flexible nursery provision. Children attend the Nursery class part-time and full-time. Children attend the Reception class full-time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, at almost 60%, is high. It is more than double the national average. Almost all pupils in Year 6 in 2018 were disadvantaged.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is high.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a number of staffing changes. Several staff have joined and left the school and a number of staff, including members of the senior leadership team, have experienced long periods of absence. A new headteacher joined the staff in January 2019. In the previous term, the school

was led by two part-time interim headteachers. The special educational needs coordinator is currently acting as assistant headteacher.

- A number of governors have joined the governing body since the last inspection. The chair and vice-chair are new to their roles since the last inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has been supported by the headteacher of the outstanding Prestolee Primary School. The funding for this support is provided through the Department for Education's 'Pathway to Success' programme.
- The school has recently become part of the Prestolee School Centre Initial Teacher Training programme.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school. Most observations and reviews of pupils' work were undertaken jointly with either the headteacher or the acting assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors checked the safety of the school premises at different times of the school day. They observed arrangements for pupils' arrival at school.
- The inspectors talked with pupils informally as they played at breaktimes. They visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school. They met formally with three groups of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to them about it. They listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with the headteacher to consider her view of the school and the school's plan for improvement. They met with senior and subject leaders and spoke with other members of the school's staff.
- An inspector met with the chair of governors, the vice-chair of governors and two other members of the governing body.
- An inspector met with a representative of the local authority. She also met with the headteacher who is providing support for Roby Park.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They took account of 13 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and five comments provided to inspectors. Inspectors also took account of 128 responses to the pupil survey, 26 responses to the staff questionnaire and the school's most recent surveys of pupils' and parents' views.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' progress, the quality of teaching, school improvement plans and external reviews of the school. They reviewed the contents of the school's website and scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Joan Williamson

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