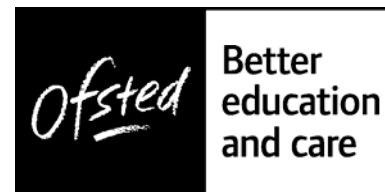


Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

**Direct Tel** 020 7421 6594  
**Direct Fax** 020 7421 6855

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



3 May 2005

Mrs P White  
Interim Headteacher  
Robert Browning Primary School  
King and Queen Street  
Walworth  
London  
SE17 1DQ

Dear Mrs White

### **Implementation of Robert Browning Primary School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Mrs C Munt HMI and Mrs A Murrell, Additional Inspector, to your school on 20 and 21 April 2005 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the sixth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school has made reasonable progress since the last monitoring inspection and reasonable progress overall since being subject to special measures.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Education for CEA and the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning for Southwark. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF ROBERT BROWNING PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the sixth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

The acting headteacher continues in post this term. The substantive headteacher takes up her post in September. In this transition period it is vital to maintain the pace of improvement. Planning for next term needs to ensure that the rate of progress is not compromised by the changes in management. It is important that the new headteacher is involved in this process.

During the visit 18 lessons or parts of lessons and two registration sessions were inspected. Meetings were held with the seconded and substantive headteachers, the assistant headteachers, the core subject co-ordinators, the chair and vice-chair of governors and a representative from the LEA. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the seconded and substantive headteachers, the assistant headteachers, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and a representative from the LEA.

In the Foundation Stage improvements in planning and teaching have raised the standard of the pupils' speaking and listening skills, their mathematics' work and their social skills. In all of these areas the pupils were working at the expected levels for their age. Standards remain below average in both key stages although pupils are making considerable progress in some classes in Key Stage 2. The improvements in the pupils' skills and knowledge are most noticeable in the core subjects and there has also been a significant improvement in the standard of artwork. Several displays of pupils' poetry show that when stimulated and challenged, considerable numbers of pupils are capable of producing well crafted pieces of imaginative and interesting writing. However, in too many of the lessons where standards were judged to be below average the pupils made limited headway in their learning because the same work was given to all of them, regardless of the wide range of ages and abilities. In several of these lessons the tasks provided did not match those in the teacher's planning.

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 15 of the 18 lessons and in seven of these the teaching was good or very good. Good and very good teaching was seen in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. Improvements in teaching noted on the last visit have not been built on systematically so the quality of teaching overall remains the same as it was in January. This means that the amount of good and very good teaching is insufficient to raise standards rapidly enough across the school. In the less well taught lessons, planning was weak and the tasks and activities did not support the learning intentions adequately. Occasionally, the teaching was not as effective as previously because teachers were unsure of the subject matter. It is not clear what criteria have been used when

monitoring teaching within the school. Feedback forms do not mention the impact of the teaching on the pupils' attainment and progress making it difficult to judge accurately how effective a lesson has been. Consequently, teachers do not have a clear enough understanding of their strengths and weaknesses or how to improve their performance. However, monitoring of the work of teaching assistants has identified where further support and training was required, with a consequent improvement in their practice.

The progress that the pupils made in their learning reflected the quality of the teaching. In 15 of the 18 lessons their progress was at least satisfactory. In seven of these lessons the pupils made good progress in their learning. As with the quality of teaching, this represents no improvement since January. Where the pupils made accelerated gains in their learning, teaching excited and enthused them and challenging tasks encouraged them to think independently.

More frequent testing is being used to assess the pupils' learning and to track their progress in the core subjects. The analysis of the results of these assessments is beginning to inform the focus of teaching, particularly in support groups, in order to address gaps in the pupils' learning. However, assessment is not consistently used to inform lesson planning for the wide range of learning needs within classes. Sometimes the planning clearly identified levels of work for different groups, for example pupils whose first language is not English, but this was not then implemented during the lesson; too often there was no differentiation in the teaching or in the tasks given to the pupils.

An analysis of last term's test results, undertaken by the school's attached inspector, shows that the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who are likely to meet their targets is lower than last year. The results highlight a significant variation between pupils in single-age and mixed-age classes across the school. Across a two year age span the figures for pupils who were on track to reach their reading targets, for example, ranged from as little as seven per cent to 57 per cent; the proportion of pupils who made satisfactory progress in reading varied from 20 per cent to 92 per cent. There were also significant differences between attainment in literacy and mathematics, with figures for the latter much higher than for the former. This is a consequence of ineffective planning, particularly for the mixed-age classes.

The classrooms are much tidier and are organised more effectively than before for independent working. Attractive and interesting displays in classrooms and in public areas celebrate the pupils' work and act as effective reminders of what they have learned and of skills and concepts that they need to master. Timetables are more accurate than before but literacy and numeracy lessons take up all of the long morning session leaving everything else to be fitted into the afternoon. Staff might wish to discuss other organisational possibilities when planning the introduction of more creative activities for September.

The pupils were well behaved on both days even when they were excited by the theatrical production. In 17 of the 18 lessons the pupils' behaviour and attitudes

were at least satisfactory and in two thirds of the lessons their attitude to their work was good or very good. This improvement in the pupils' motivation and application is enabling them to build on and sustain the gains in their learning. The considerably improved level of attendance has been maintained over two terms.

The quality of leadership and management is not improving as consistently as it needs to. The headteacher has not developed a wide enough overview of the impact of improvement strategies throughout the school. Consequently, these have not been co-ordinated and managed as effectively as they should be, although, individually, the members of staff are working hard to eradicate weaknesses in their subject areas and to improve the quality of education. Despite the "suitable sense of urgency" noted on the last visit some important deadlines have been missed. For example, a report to governors on the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the pupils has been deferred twice. This means that governors have too little information about some of the more positive aspects of the pupil's progress this year. The most senior managers are inhibited in the execution of their work by the number of responsibilities that they shoulder, by ineffective daily guidance and by too few opportunities to develop their personal management skills.

The governors have been successful in appointing an experienced headteacher for September. The chair and the vice-chair have a perceptive view of the school's progress and are determined to use the budget effectively to raise standards. They have analysed the governing body's strengths and weaknesses accurately and are actively pursuing solutions to address the areas for development. The plans for supporting the school in this transition term are well considered.

The school's level of dependency on LEA support remains high and without the substantial support and guidance of the link adviser it would, undoubtedly, have achieved less than it has managed.

### **Action taken to address the key issues**

#### **Key Issue 1: raise standards and improve the progress made by pupils in subjects across the curriculum, but particularly in English, mathematics and science**

Standards are improving in the Foundation Stage. They remain low elsewhere. However, in several lessons the development of the pupils' speaking skills included a focus on the use of Standard English to help them to express themselves more effectively when writing. Overall, the pupils are making sound and sometimes good progress in their learning; therefore reasonable progress has been made in addressing this key issue.

## **Key Issue 2: provide equality of access to the full breadth of the curriculum for all pupils**

Access to the curriculum is improving and subjects are taught for an appropriate amount of time in all classes. The needs of those pupils whose first language is not English and of the pupils who have special educational needs are better recognised and provided for than before. However, the planning for teaching these pupils was not clearly stated in all planning. Even when it was stated it was not always implemented in the lesson. The continuing improvement in the pupils' behaviour and attitudes shows that good behaviour is becoming the norm. This allows classes to work without constant interruption. Overall, reasonable progress has been made in addressing the key issue.

## **Key Issue 3: ensure as a matter of urgency, that the leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are improved and that the many weaknesses identified are tackled without delay**

The teaching and support staff are increasingly clear about their roles and responsibilities. The governing body has secured the services of an experienced headteacher and is engaged in timely discussions about the schools' future management needs. The acting assistant headteachers continue to receive good support and guidance from the LEA. Reasonable progress has been made in addressing this key issue.