



Robert Browning Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100809
LEA Southwark LEA
Inspection number 283034
Inspection dates 22 November 2005 to 23 November 2005
Reporting inspector Cathie Munt HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	King and Queen Street
School category	Community		Walworth
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		London SE17 1DQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02077083456
Number on roll	326	Fax number	02077039830
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Kate Gordon
Date of previous inspection	3 February 2003	Headteacher	Karen McBride

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Robert Browning is a large primary school in a culturally diverse area of Southwark. Attainment on entry is very low and there is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Over half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Nineteen languages other than English are spoken and about a quarter of the pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Ninety per cent of the pupils live in social housing. A large number of pupils join and leave the school each year. When the school was inspected in February 2003 it was judged to require special measures. The headteacher, who took up post in September 2005, is the ninth in ten years. The post of deputy headteacher is vacant.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Inspectors agree with the member of staff who said, andquot;We're not jumping through hoops now, we know where we are goingandquot;. Under the effective leadership of the headteacher everyone is aware of what needs to be done to improve standards. Secure foundations are being laid to take children's learning forward more effectively. This improving school is providing a satisfactory level of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and are good in those classes where challenging work is helping the pupils to catch up rapidly. In the nursery, the pupils make a good start to their education. The Foundation Stage is led and managed most ably. Throughout the school, pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. There is a significant improvement in the pupils' attendance. The school recognises that standards are too low, particularly in Key Stage 2, that there is room for improvement in the teaching of writing, in the setting and assessment of targets and in the creativity and relevance of some of the curriculum. The school's judgement, that overall effectiveness is inadequate, was accurate at the end the summer term when the self evaluation form was prepared. However, substantial improvements made this term have over turned this judgement. The leadership and management of the school have strengthened significantly. The headteacher's good leadership is welcomed by the school community, not least by the core of long serving and committed staff, governors and local authority personnel who have provided continuity through difficult times. Inspectors judge that overall effectiveness is satisfactory, that the school has a good capacity to improve and that it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

* Continue to improve standards.* Make fuller use of assessment data to set precise targets for individual pupils.* Increase the opportunities for pupils to develop ideas through discussion before being asked to write.* Continue to build on the good practice in the Foundation Stage so that learning throughout the school is more creative and meaningful for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with very low levels of attainment. They receive a fine start to their education enabling them to make good progress. In Key Stage 1, an increasing amount of the pupils' work is close to the expected level. A substantial proportion of pupils achieved the appropriate levels for their age in the 2005 national tests at the end of Year 2. However, too few pupils gained the higher levels. Standards in lessons were satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2 and examples of work at higher levels were evident in Year 6 English and science books. Results in the 2005 national tests were lower than in schools nationally, particularly in mathematics. The school

has identified the key priorities to improve pupils' achievement this year. Standards in lessons are rising because of better planning, clearer explanations and higher expectations of what pupils can do. Pupils achieve best when activities are relevant, have a clear purpose and are fun. All groups achieve suitably in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress because of the challenging targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They understand the purpose of rules and create a positive atmosphere through their good behaviour and attitudes. The school has worked hard to promote attendance and punctuality which are now satisfactory. Playground behaviour is good. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that adults deal with any incidents effectively. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with some good features. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their appreciation of different cultures through music, art and religious education. They develop a good level of social and moral awareness in assemblies and during 'circle time'. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe and of how to keep healthy through exercise and healthy eating. They enjoy taking responsibility and are proud of the school council's contribution to the school garden. They cooperate well and enjoy discussion and sharing ideas. The school recognises the importance of developing teamwork. This provides pupils with essential skills needed for their future economic well-being. They have a good awareness of others' needs and have raised money for various charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage teaching and learning are good. Teaching in the nursery is consistently imaginative and challenging and makes learning exciting and enjoyable. The quality of teaching and learning elsewhere is satisfactory overall. At its best, work is matched to pupils' needs and teachers explain tasks clearly. Pupils' attention is captured through imaginative approaches that take into consideration how they learn best. For example, when given sufficient time to discuss their ideas first, Year 6 pupils provided interesting and entertaining insights into the spider's thoughts on Miss Muffett, using well-constructed prose. Where teaching is less effective, lessons lack pace and do not engage pupils actively in learning, moving too quickly from the teachers' explanations to the pupils' recording. Overall, assessment procedures are satisfactory. Information is used effectively to plan for the needs of different groups of pupils. Pupils with additional needs are well supported. The quality of marking varies across the school and sometimes leaves pupils unclear about what they need to do to improve. The learning of some pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, has been affected by the past instability in the leadership of the school. Tracking and target

setting is enabling teachers to monitor pupils' progress more closely. Although this is at an early stage of development, it is helping to raise standards by accelerating progress and enabling pupils to catch up. However, there are inconsistencies in the use of assessment to set very precise, individual targets for all pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with good features in the Foundation Stage where a creative curriculum is helping pupils to make connections in their learning. This good practice is not shared throughout the school. Pupils are enthusiastic about extra-curricular activities and their participation is helping them to become confident and well-rounded learners. The school reviews the curriculum regularly to ensure that it is responsive to pupils' needs. It is developing appropriate links with the local community that give the pupils a sense of their place within it.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with some good features. The school is very committed to the pupils' health, safety and welfare. Risk assessment is firmly in place and child protection procedures are robust and kept under review. Good relationships contribute significantly to the pupils' enjoyment of school. They feel listened to and trust the staff. The school assesses pupils' personal needs accurately. Appropriate support is given to all learners because the school liaises effectively with parents and external agencies. Although pupils are helped to understand how well they are doing, some targets are not sufficiently challenging or sharp.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management have improved and are satisfactory overall. The new headteacher has tackled issues for improvement with energy, boldness and a strong belief that the school will be a better place. Her leadership is good. She sets a fine example and has gained the respect and commitment of the school community. Positive leadership is creating a happy school where teachers and support staff are focused on raising standards and providing quality care, guidance and support. The monitoring of teaching and learning is becoming an established routine. There is a better understanding of what makes a good lesson. Clear feedback enables staff to hone their practice. The tracking of pupils' progress is helping learners to improve. Subject leadership is improving but needs to be strengthened further. Leaders at this level understand that they have an important contribution to make. They report that morale across the school is buoyant and that there has been a "whole attitude change for the better". Suitable training is planned to support them with their work. The governing body is effective in evaluating and directing the work of the school. Governors are very committed to the success of the school. They understand what

they must do to make the leadership of the school accountable. In a short time, the new headteacher has established good team relationships, evaluated the school accurately and set clear priorities for further improvement. The school's capacity to improve is good. In the last half term, the pace of improvement has been rapid and inspectors agree with the school's judgement that improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school when we inspected it. Thank you for the friendly way in which you welcomed us. Talking with you gave us a clear idea about what is helping you to learn and what needs to be done to improve things even more.

We think your school is getting better quickly. Here are some of the things that we liked: * Your new headteacher is changing things for the better. She believes in you and knows how to help you to do your best. * You enjoy the time you spend in school. * You are willing to learn in lessons and you work together happily. * There has been a big improvement in your attendance. * You feel safe in school and know what to do if you have a problem. * Children in the nursery and reception classes have fun and make good progress.

To be sure that your school continues to improve, we have asked the adults to: * Continue to help you to do better work in class. * Give you more time to talk about your ideas before you write. * Set targets that will really help you do better work. * Plan activities that show you how learning fits together to help you do well throughout your lives. We hope that you continue to enjoy your schooling and we wish you well for the future.