

Robert Browning Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	132407
Local authority	Service Children's Education
Inspection number	387042
Inspection dates	26-28 June 2012
Lead inspector	Elisabeth Linley HMI

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

Type of school	First
School category	Ministry of Defence
Age range of pupils	3-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	287
Appropriate authority	Service Children's Education
Chair of SGC	Lt Col Jasper de Quincey Adams
Headteacher	Mr James Tague
Date of previous school inspection	17-18 June 2009
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Age group	3-9
Inspection date(s)	26-28 June 2012
Inspection number	354896



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Introduction

Inspection team

Elisabeth Linley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Daniel Towl

Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspectors observed teaching over approximately 11.5 hours; 13 teachers were seen and meetings were held with members of staff, senior leaders, governors and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, heard pupils read and looked at their books. They looked at school improvement planning and monitoring records, the school's data about pupils' attainment and progress, and safeguarding documentation. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection; they also considered 116 questionnaires that were returned by parents and carers, and those completed by pupils and members of staff.

Information about the school

Robert Browning School is a Service Children's Education (SCE) first school serving the children of the British Forces personnel living in and around the town of Paderborn in northern Germany. Approximately 60% of pupils have a parent or carer who has recently been or is still deployed overseas. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage; the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, or who speak English as an additional language, is low. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those at school action or who have a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The number of pupils joining or leaving school at different times of the school year is very high; in the current Year 4 class, over 50% of pupils have joined the school since Year 3.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is located on four sites. Children in the school's Foundation Stage 2 classes are based in the main school. Children who attend Foundation Stage 1 are accommodated in one of three settings: in Normandy nursery, opposite the school, and the Dempsey and Teddy Bears' settings which are located a short drive away from the main school.

The school holds a number of accreditations, including Healthy Schools Status and the Silver Arts Marks award. The school is also one of four pilot schools participating in the Children's University.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because some inconsistency in the quality of teaching remains and pupils' writing skills are not routinely developed across the curriculum.
- Pupils achieve well and build effectively on the outstanding progress made in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The high quality provision for children aged 3 to 5 years underpins the progress they make. The vast majority of parents and carers are very happy with their child's education; 100% of their questionnaires upheld the view that their children make good progress and feel safe in school. Inspectors confirmed they are correct and that their children's good achievement is supported by their good behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The school's provision to meet the needs of pupils who are disabled, have special educational needs, English as an additional language or who have joined the school at different times, is effective. Intervention strategies to aid learning are well focused and complemented by effective partnerships with parents, carers and others to aid the pupils' good achievement.
- Although pupils achieve well from their different starting points, their writing skills are not routinely developed across the curriculum. Teachers' marking does not routinely ensure that the skills pupils are focusing on in literacy, for example, are highlighted in other subjects. In addition, while most pupils know their immediate targets for improvement in literacy and mathematics, they are not clear what they are working towards in terms of their attainment.
- Performance is managed well. As a result, teaching is good overall, and some outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection. However, where satisfactory teaching remains, teachers do not consistently use assessment information to ensure that pupils are challenged to do their best in lessons. In addition, some pupils lack the confidence to apply their skills to more challenging tasks even though they have good ideas on how to do this.

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- The middle leaders have developed well since the last inspection and make a positive contribution to the senior leadership team. Benefitting from the strong leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the staff present an effective team that is well placed to continue the good improvement made.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By April 2013, improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - using information gathered from assessment procedures that is carefully targeted to ensure pupils are always challenged to do their best in lessons
 - ensuring that pupils' skills in writing are used and developed consistently across the curriculum so that improvements made are sustained, for example in spelling, and in the presentation of pupils' work
 - making sure that teachers' marking makes a difference to the improvement of pupils' writing skills in all subjects
 - ensuring that pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves in lessons and that they are clear about the progress they will make over time.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

When children join school at three years of age, their skills and abilities are generally below what might be expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Children make a very positive start to their time in school as they systematically develop their skills across the areas of learning. Children develop the confidence to make decisions by themselves about their learning; they take pride in their work and are keen to talk about what they are doing. As a result of the outstanding progress they make, most join Year 1 with skills that are above expectations for their age. A key factor in their progress is the consistency of high quality provision and teaching in the five Early Years Foundation Stage classes. However, the proportion of pupils who join and leave school at different times of their school life is significant. The school's assessment of pupils' attainment on entry is rigorous and interventions to aid learning are quickly implemented, for example, in the focused teaching of phonics (linking sounds and letters). The school's data show that such interventions are having a positive impact and there is no significant difference between the achievement of different groups of pupils. As a result, pupils achieve well, regardless of their different abilities or special educational needs.

Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average by the end of Year 2 and above age-related expectations in reading and mathematics when they leave school at the end of Year 4. However, given the high mobility of pupils joining and leaving school in Key Stage 2, pupils' skills in writing are not as well developed and their attainment is in line with expectations for their age. The school is taking

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steps to enthuse all writers through the introduction of a 'creative curriculum'. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson, when pupils were inspired to write mystery stories by the way in which the teacher introduced the lesson. However, pupils' writing skills are not systematically developed across the curriculum and improvements made in literacy, for example in spelling, are not consistently sustained in other subjects.

Quality of teaching

The progress that children make in the Early years Foundation Stage is underpinned by high quality teaching and an exciting curriculum. The opportunities for children to make choices about what they will learn, complemented by adult-led activities, ensure that children develop into confident learners both indoors and out. In all settings children enjoyed purposeful activities, such as making pitta-bread sandwiches using salad grown in their own garden, being detectives looking for mini-beasts, and subtracting numbers. The teaching of phonics in the Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength and this practice is being introduced throughout school. In Year 1, for example, pupils are benefiting from a phonics' intervention programme that is seeing positive outcomes in terms of pupils' reading and writing. Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good overall and most lessons are characterised by a good pace and effective challenge so that all groups of learners make good progress. In a Year 2 class, for example, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was promoted well as pupils handled, with great respect, items of importance for those of the Jewish faith. All pupils were effectively involved in discussing the artefacts' significance. However, where satisfactory teaching was observed teachers had not used assessment information well enough to ensure that planned tasks were exactly right. As a result, for example, too much time was spent preparing for the task rather than on the learning itself. The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs reflects a similar picture of strengths and areas for development. However, the initial assessment of pupils' needs and abilities upon entry to school provides a clear picture of what is required to aid their achievement. The subsequent strategies that are planned to aid learning has ensured that they make the same good progress as their peers. Parents and carers are rightly positive about the overall good quality of teaching their children receive.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers confirmed, through their questionnaires, that pupils' behaviour is good. Inspection evidence supports this view. There have been no exclusions and pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and that most pupils behave well. This was exemplified in lessons and at play time when pupils socialised very well and enjoyed the opportunities they had, for example, to be 'playground volunteers'. Pupils are confident that there is no bullying at school, or cyber-bullying, and feel that if pupils fall out with one another this is dealt with well by the staff. Pupils are proud of their work and are pleased to share the skills they have, for example, to be on the school council. Through the curriculum, they also develop the skills required to reflect on the needs of others, and of different faiths, and they respond well to Bible stories and time for prayer in assemblies. Pupils feel

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that they are challenged effectively in their lessons, although they feel that sometimes work 'could be a bit harder'. However, on occasions pupils wait to be told what to do next rather than challenging themselves to apply their skills to a new problem even though they have the capability to do so. Pupils feel that marking helps them to improve their work; however, inspectors found that teachers' marking is not consistent across all subjects, for example, in the marking of spelling or in the presentation of pupils' work. Most pupils know their immediate targets for improvement, but they are unclear about what they are aiming for in the longer term. Pupils enjoy school; however, their attendance is affected by absence before and after periods of their parents and carers deployment abroad which has been significant during the current year. Absence from school for other reasons is minimal and taken very seriously by senior leaders who, working with other agencies and parents and carers, help to improve the attendance of the pupils concerned.

Leadership and management

Senior and middle leaders at all levels contribute well to the leadership and management of the school. Performance management is strongly focused on areas identified for improvement. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching is rigorous and supported by training as required, for example, in the teaching of phonics. Middle leaders, responsible for leading such improvements, are effective and are well supported by the headteacher and deputy headteacher; they in turn provide a strong lead for the staff team. The leadership and management of the school are commended by parents and carers and the vast majority value the way school works with them, for example, by providing mathematics workshops and inviting them to phonics' lessons. These positive relationships are similarly reflected in the way that school works with others, such as the Army Welfare Unit, to help support children's individual needs. The school takes seriously any issues that arise and no tolerance of any form of discrimination is accepted. Similarly, arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. The School Governance Committee (SGC) is committed to support the school and to provide advice. Governors appreciate the training they receive that aids their understanding of their roles and those with prior experience of governance, supported by the Chair, are proactive in suggesting ways to improve, for example, in formalising the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.

The tracking of pupils' progress is thorough and the analysis of assessment data underpins the early identification of intervention strategies which are quickly implemented. Consequently, any gaps in achievement between groups of pupils are closing. Similarly, the school assures equal access throughout its Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result of the school's consistent procedures, all children receive high quality provision, regardless of which setting they attend. A review of the curriculum has been an important development for the school. A themed approach has been adopted to engage pupils better in their learning, while promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils who graduated from the Children's university on the first day of the inspection spoke with pride of their achievements that included attending clubs, visiting places of interest and helping others in their own time. However, while the curriculum is more exiting,

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for example by engaging pupils through 'talk for writing', the school has not focused consistently on pupils' applying their writing skills across the different subjects.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Robert Browning Primary School, Sennelager BFPO 16

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when my colleague and I visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed the time we spent with you, being able to visit your lessons and to talk to you about why you enjoy your time at school. You are proud of your school and rightly so as it provides you with a good quality of education.

Your parents and carers told us through their questionnaires that you make good progress in school and that you feel safe. We agree with them and found that you achieve well no matter what your own individual needs are or whether you joined school at a different time to your friends. We also found that the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, no matter which setting they attend, get off to a very good start at school; children have lots of exciting things to do and make very good progress indeed. Pupils elsewhere in school told us that they enjoyed their learning too. You mentioned the themed topics that you were doing and that you enjoyed the clubs you attend and your residential visits; you were rightly very proud of your achievements in the Children's University. We could see that good teaching, your positive attitudes and good behaviour are making a difference to your time in school.

Your headteacher and deputy headteacher lead your school well and all the staff want the very best for you. To help your school improve we have asked them to do the following things.

- To make sure that your teachers plan lessons so that you are always challenged to do your best; you can help too by challenging yourselves in lessons, maybe by trying one of your own harder problems in mathematics for example, when you are waiting to hear what to do next from the teacher.
- To help you develop your writing skills in subjects other than literacy and to make sure that your teachers' marking reminds you how to improve your writing in all your subjects; you can help by remembering to keep your work well presented at all times.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Elisabeth Linley
Her Majesty's Inspector

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