



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Inspection report**  
**Longwood Infant School**

**Derbyshire Education Authority**

Dates of inspection: 12-13 May 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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## **Basic information about the school**

Name of school:	Longwood Infant School
Type of school:	Infant
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Headteacher:	Ms E Nesbitt
Address of school:	Wharf Road Pinxton Nottinghamshire NG16 6PA
Telephone:	01773 810329
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr J Smith
Local education authority area:	Derbyshire
Unique reference number:	112609
Name of reporting inspector:	Mrs K M Gisborne HMI
Dates of inspection:	12-13 May 2004

## Introduction

1. Longwood Infant School is a small school that is situated in the former mining village of Pinxton in Derbyshire. After a significant rise in 2001, the proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal has fallen over the past two years; in 2003 one quarter of the pupils were known to be eligible for free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. There are 41 pupils on roll and they are taught in a mixed reception and Year 1 class and a Year 2 class. Almost all the pupils in the school are from white, English-speaking backgrounds. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well above the national figure but no pupils have a formal Statement of Special Educational Need. There is considerable variation from year to year in the pupils' levels of attainment when they enter the reception class, but the standards on entry are generally rising. Following the school's inspection in May 2002 the school experienced significant staffing difficulties and there have been many changes in the teaching staff since that time.
2. The school was inspected in May 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.
3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of May 2002. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on five occasions to monitor the progress being made.
4. In May 2004 two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of May 2002.

## Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils:
    - the school's results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, when set against those of 2001, showed a good improvement in the percentages of pupils achieving Level 2, the basic standard expected for pupils of this age, in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 improved significantly;
    - the percentages of pupils who achieved Level 2 or higher in the 2003 national tests were in line with national figures in reading and above national figures in writing and mathematics. The proportion achieving Level 3 in reading and mathematics was in line with national figures; in writing it was well above. The school's results were generally well above those of similar schools at all levels;
    - pupils enter the reception class with levels of attainment that are generally below average, although they fluctuate considerably from year to year. They
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make good progress in all the areas of learning. The majority are on course to achieve the standards that are expected for their age by the end of the Foundation Stage, although their speaking skills are at a lower level;

- evidence from lessons and from pupils' work shows attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 to be in line with that expected nationally in reading and writing and close to this level in mathematics. A significant group of pupils are on course to achieve the higher levels. The pupils in Year 1 are achieving the results of which they are capable, but standards in this year group are generally low;
- pupils' speaking skills are improving, but many have limited vocabulary and find it hard to articulate their ideas;
- standards in science are good throughout the school; this is the result of improvements in planning, organisation and teaching. Scientific enquiry is promoted and scientific knowledge is taught well;
- the pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are variable and overall remain below national expectations. There has been too little monitoring of pupils' skills in this subject and, as a result, the school does not have sufficient information on which to base its planning or from which effectively to monitor and evaluate the pupils' progress;
- there is generally good progress in literacy, numeracy and science lessons, where teachers build well on the pupils' prior knowledge and skills;
- there has been a significant improvement in the pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work during the time the school has been subject to special measures. In a high proportion of lessons pupils demonstrated good and on occasions very good attitudes to their work;
- the staff have created a very good environment for learning, and resources and their organisation are much improved. Displays and objects of interest motivate pupils to learn. The celebration of achievement has succeeded in giving the pupils a sense of pride in their school and a desire to improve;
- the provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent. There is good provision for spiritual development, particularly within whole-school assemblies. Cultural development is satisfactory, although pupils have too few opportunities to consider the diversity within society;
- overall the quality of teaching is good. Of the 13 lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory or better in 12 lessons; it was good in six and very good in three. Support assistants are making a valuable contribution to pupils' learning;
- the Foundation Stage curriculum is suitably based on national guidance for pupils of this age and closely linked to the abilities and levels of maturity of the pupils. In Key Stage 1 appropriate emphasis has been given to developing the core subjects, and the curriculum is matched well to the pupils' needs. The

school recognises the need to review its curriculum provision for the foundation subjects;

- the school's assessment procedures are good. They have been well thought out, carefully structured and are appropriate to the needs of this small school. Teachers are making good use of the data they have available to identify target groups and match work to the pupils' levels of ability;
- the school has established good relationships with its parents, the community and neighbouring schools and nurseries. Local schools are working well together to improve the education of pupils who are particularly able. Every effort is made to ensure that parents take an active part in their children's education;
- the headteacher is providing good leadership for the school. She is supported well by two committed and knowledgeable teachers and by a team of support assistants who have benefited greatly from the training they have received and the opportunities they have been given to develop their roles. There is a strong team spirit in the school;
- the headteacher has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas that require improvement and there is a well thought out and detailed process for agreeing a school improvement plan. The plan itself is yet to be devised;
- the governing body is increasingly well informed about the performance of the school. Governors have an improving knowledge of the curriculum and are providing strong support for the school's work in ICT. The governing body has developed a sound range of strategies for monitoring the school's progress and is implementing them effectively;
- the local education authority (LEA) is providing good support for the school. When the school has faced staffing and financial difficulties, speedy action has helped the headteacher to maintain and ultimately improve the provision for the pupils. The link adviser's support has been of high quality.

## **Key issues**

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- establish a new school improvement plan and ensure its rigorous implementation;
  - raise standards in ICT;
  - review provision for the foundation subjects;
  - continue to improve the pupils' speaking skills.
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## Inspection findings

### Standards achieved by the pupils

7. The school's results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, when set against those of 2001, showed a good improvement in the percentages of pupils achieving Level 2, the basic standard expected for pupils of this age. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 has improved significantly; for example in 2001 no pupils achieved this level in reading and writing and in 2003 there was a 26 per cent success rate. In mathematics the proportion rose from ten to 30 per cent.

8. The percentages of pupils who achieved Level 2 or higher in the 2003 national tests were in line with national figures in reading and above national figures in writing and mathematics. The proportion achieving Level 3 in reading and mathematics was in line with national figures, in writing it was well above. This school's results were generally well above those of similar school at all levels.

9. Pupils enter the reception class with levels of attainment that are generally below average, although attainment fluctuates considerably from year to year. They settle well and enjoy and learn from the wide range of experiences and the stimulating environment that are provided for them. The teachers and the support assistants work well together and the settled atmosphere and well-established routines support learning. The pupils have good attitudes to their work, and at all ability levels they make good progress and achieve the standards of which they are capable. The majority of pupils are on course to achieve the levels expected for their age by the end of the Foundation Stage, although their speaking skills are at a lower level.

10. The number of pupils in Year 1 is very small. The pupils are achieving the standards of which they are capable but these are generally low, despite intensive and well-focused support.

11. The speaking and listening skills of the pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have improved. Their listening skills are generally appropriate for their age but, despite the good focus that the school has given to this area, the pupils' speech is not as good as it should be. Most pupils have the confidence to express their thoughts but do not have the vocabulary they need to make their ideas clear. Many speak in short sentences or phrases and find it hard to extend their responses. However, the pupils' speaking skills are improving in all year groups as a result of well-focused teaching and the good use of incidental opportunities for language development.

12. The standards that the pupils achieve in their reading are appropriate for their age, with a small but significant group reaching a higher level. Many pupils use their knowledge of punctuation to help them read with expression and have a range of strategies to decode words that are unfamiliar to them. They are interested in the books they read and talk about their favourite books and authors. The more able can discuss the style of book they prefer and give reasons why a particular book is a favourite. The school has made great efforts to introduce pupils to a good range of books and authors and many pupils talk animatedly about the recent focus on Beatrix Potter.

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13. There is a wide variation in the standards that pupils achieve in their writing at the end of Key Stage 1, although standards overall are similar to those expected of seven-year-olds nationally. All pupils have had experience of writing for a variety of purposes, and they understand the different styles that are needed when writing poetry, factual accounts or imaginative stories. A significant group of pupils achieve good standards and are beginning to adapt their work to make it more relevant to their audience. These pupils add interest to their work through well-chosen vocabulary and interesting comparisons; for example, describing snow as “soft as a rabbit’s tail” and writing of how “hot drops of sweat trickled down the back of his neck as the sun shone on his head”. They extend their sentences, punctuate their work appropriately and use dialogue to enliven their writing. Standards of spelling and handwriting are sound and those who find spelling hard use their phonic skills to produce recognisable, but not always accurate, spellings.

14. The standards that the Year 2 pupils are achieving in mathematics are just below those that are expected for their age. Most pupils recognise numbers to 1000, but only the more able have an understanding of the value of individual digits. The majority count in twos, fives and tens and they quickly recall numbers that make ten, but many do not use these strategies when faced with addition calculations and they resort to counting on. This inability to apply what they know, and to see patterns in numbers, is holding back learning. There are a group of more able pupils who have a good range of strategies for solving addition sums. They use their knowledge of the five times table to help them add 35 and 5, round up to the nearest number when adding 49 and 7, and apply their knowledge of tens and units when adding 27 and 17. The pupils’ mathematical vocabulary is not secure and many find it hard to apply their calculation strategies to problems that are phrased in words.

15. Standards in science have improved and are good across the school. This is the result of improvements in planning, organisation and teaching. The pupils enjoy their science lessons and are eager to talk about what they have learned. They explain what they know about life and living processes, talk about how they can classify types of materials by texture, and describe the investigations they have carried out to see how materials change from one state to another. The teaching of science is good, with appropriate emphasis given to knowledge, hypothesis and investigation. Scientific enquiry is introduced in the Foundation Stage and, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to make predictions, collect evidence and ensure that their experiments are fair tests by controlling variables.

16. Pupils’ skills in ICT are variable, but overall remain below national expectations. There have been improvements in the resources available to the school, but there are too few computers for pupils to practise regularly the skills they have been taught. Teachers, support staff and governors are working well together to improve the standards in this subject, but there has been no monitoring of pupils’ skills in ICT and therefore the school does not have sufficient information on which to base its planning or from which effectively to monitor and evaluate pupils’ progress. Standards in the foundation subjects are broadly satisfactory.

17. The school has implemented a range of good strategies to improve the pace of learning in Year 1, but despite this the pupils’ progress has been slow. In Year 2 the quality of pupils’ learning is good in literacy and numeracy lessons; in targeted groups taught by the headteacher and support staff it is good and on occasions very good. The progress pupils make in the foundation subjects is too slow.

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### **The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

18. There has been a significant improvement in the pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work during the time that the school has been subject to special measures. In a high proportion of the lessons, the pupils demonstrated good attitudes to their work; in almost one quarter of the lessons their attitudes to their learning were very good. In lessons pupils were attentive and keen to learn. They were confident when asked to share their ideas and eager to demonstrate their new-found knowledge and skills. The pupils responded well to the established routines, which are a strong feature of the schools' organisation, and showed the adults in the school much respect. In assemblies and on the playground they behaved well and were aware of the needs of others.

19. The school has established a safe and caring environment for its pupils. Staff know all the pupils by name and this supports the good relationships which are evident at all levels. At break and lunchtimes the pupils are encouraged to be active, and a wide range of activities is available to them. A rota of older pupils has been arranged so that there is always someone to talk to on the 'quiet bench'. The staff have created a very good environment for learning within the school, and resources and their organisation are much improved. Displays and objects of interest motivate pupils to learn. The celebration of success has given the pupils a sense of pride in their school and a desire to improve.

20. The school's attendance figures have risen. Overall attendance in 2002-2003 was 92.3 per cent. The figure for the last full term was 94.6 per cent, which is slightly above the national average. The levels of unauthorised absence have fallen considerably. The school has good procedures for monitoring the attendance of its pupils and following up unexplained absences. Display is used well to reinforce the importance of good attendance.

21. The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is excellent. The pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong that is developed through the staff's consistent approach to managing behaviour. Staff lead by example and the pupils observe the courteous and pleasant relationships between staff and strive to emulate them. Any pupil who behaves inappropriately is dealt with calmly and with great sensitivity and the pupils respond very well. In an assembly the pupils were taught the benefits of working together and this was reinforced in lessons later in the day. Healthy living is promoted by the provision of fruit as the morning snack and more pupils are now bringing healthy alternatives for lunches as a consequence.

22. Provision for spiritual development is good. Assemblies begin and end with suitable music accompanied by relaxation exercises led by one of the pupils. This provides a calm atmosphere in which the pupils are encouraged to think about an appropriate theme. Regular visitors provide faith assemblies and there is usually an opportunity for quiet reflection. The school prayer, which asks God to look after the people within the school community, was written by the pupils and reflects their views of the school. Following recent bereavements the pupils planted flowers for remembrance in the playground. These continue to provide comfort for the bereaved and the pupils are proud of this flower bed and readily explain its significance.

23. The school regularly welcomes visitors and their presentations encourage the pupils' cultural development. A local climber talked to the pupils and helped them to recreate a cave in the hall and another visitor talked to the pupils about fair trade across the world. The local

Member of Parliament joined parents and governors at a celebration assembly and then visited classrooms and answered questions from pupils in Year 2. Pupils have observed a building site to see the process of construction and they have visited a pottery and experienced manufacturing at first hand. These are good experiences, but there is little in the school to promote the cultural diversity of society. Opportunities for cultural development within the school are satisfactory.

### **The quality of education**

24. Overall the quality of teaching is good. In the 13 lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory or better in 12 lessons; it was good in six and very good in three. Teachers and support assistants work very well together and support assistants are making a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. In the sessions led by the assistants which were observed, the teaching was consistently good.

25. All teachers gave very appropriate emphasis to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. They used paired talk, oral group teaching and a good range of alternative strategies very effectively. There was much appropriate emphasis on developing vocabulary. Teachers treated their pupils with respect and encouraged them to have high expectations of themselves. They used a range of good resources and ensured that their focus was on the needs of the pupils. They knew their pupils well and motivated individuals by relating learning to their particular interests. Suitable cross-curricular links were made, but not at the expense of a specific learning objective. Teachers ensured that all the pupils were engaged in learning through the use of targeted questions.

26. Where the quality of teaching was good or very good, the teachers allowed their pupils to review their prior learning and encouraged them to use the knowledge and skills they had acquired to solve new problems. Learning began from the point the pupils had reached, and every effort was made to extend pupils' experiences and their general knowledge and to motivate them to take forward their own learning. Younger pupils in particular were provided with opportunities to learn using different senses. The teachers had high expectations and adapted their lessons so that all were challenged yet supported. Adults purposely modelled appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, which helped pupils to consider alternatives and think for themselves. Questioning was at a high level and teachers encouraged their pupils to improve and extend their responses.

27. In the one lesson where the teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher found it very difficult to motivate the pupils. The pitch of the work was too difficult for most pupils in the group, but too easy for others.

28. The Foundation Stage curriculum is suitably based on the national guidance for pupils of this age and is closely linked to the abilities and levels of maturity of the pupils. In Key Stage 1 appropriate emphasis has rightly been given to developing the core subjects and the school recognises the need to review its provision for the foundation subjects. Nonetheless, the curriculum in Key Stage 1 is generally well matched to the pupils' needs. The school's recent focus on developing speaking and listening skills has been appropriate. All adults in the school have been involved and there is a consistent approach to developing this area. Teachers are making good use of national materials and trialling and evaluating ideas. The decision to begin this development through focused teaching sessions was good and these sessions are working well.

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29. The school generally makes good provision for the pupils who have special educational needs. A recent policy for gifted and talented pupils includes a brief statement of intent and lays out the school's procedures for identifying and meeting the needs of particularly able pupils well. The policy is sound, but the school has not moved fast enough or far enough in meeting the needs of its current pupils.

30. The school has carried out a thorough audit of its assessment procedures for reading, writing and mathematics. This has resulted in clarity of purpose and an effective and cohesive assessment system. The school's assessment procedures are good. They have been well thought out, carefully structured and are appropriate to the needs of this small school. Teachers are making good use of the data available to them to identify target groups and ensure that work is closely matched to ability. The identification of pupils for targeted teaching and the high levels of teaching within these groups have made an important contribution to raising standards and the pupils' self-esteem. The grids that the school uses to track the pupils' progress and to monitor the effectiveness of intervention strategies are good.

31. The school has established good relationships with its parents, the community and neighbouring schools and nurseries. Local schools are working well together to improve the education of pupils who are particularly able. Every effort is made to ensure that parents take an active part in their children's education. They are warmly welcomed into the community room each morning and encouraged to borrow mathematics games and books. The views of parents are sought on issues such as the format for consultation evenings and they are kept well informed of events in the school through regular letters. The school is playing a more proactive role in the community, by encouraging local people to attend events in the school such as an exhibition of Pinxton china and the pupils' performances at Christmas and Easter.

### **Leadership and management**

32. The headteacher is providing good leadership for the school. During the period that the school has been subject to special measures she has used the information available to her well to identify areas for improvement. She has produced detailed short-term plans and procedures which, when put into practice, have moved the school forward. Following the school's inspection in May 2002 the school experienced significant staffing difficulties and there have been many changes in the teaching staff since that time. On all occasions the headteacher has put the needs of the pupils first and, when the school has been unable to recruit staff of good quality, she has sensibly made the decision to teach classes herself. She is supported well by two committed and knowledgeable teachers and by a team of support assistants who have benefited greatly from the training they have received and the opportunities they have been given to develop their roles. There is a strong team spirit in the school.

33. Responsibilities for the core subjects have been distributed equitably. Subject co-ordinators have received training in their roles and are taking the lead in developing their subjects. Currently the three teachers in the school are sharing their expertise in the foundation subjects and are supporting each other as appropriate. The school has a suitable timescale for the development of these areas and it is intended that responsibilities for leading individual subjects will be apportioned as the subjects become the focus for development. In the case of this small school, this is sensible practice. The headteacher is providing a good model for subject development in her leadership of science.

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34. The headteacher has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas that require improvement and there is a well thought out and detailed process for devising a school improvement plan. This suitably includes an overview of developments over a three-year period, and a more detailed annual plan. The school's intention is that subject leaders' termly plans will provide a well-judged agenda for shorter-term developments. This focus on termly planning and review should continue the good process that the school has established; reviews have led to well-informed decisions on future actions.

35. The governing body is increasingly well informed about the performance of the school. A good working structure of committees has been established and there is appropriate feedback to the full governing body. Governors have an improving knowledge of the curriculum and are providing strong support for the school's work in ICT. They have improved their knowledge and understanding of their role through training, through information provided by the LEA and through professional conversations with the staff of the school. The governing body has developed a sound range of strategies for monitoring the school's progress and is implementing them effectively. The chair of governors attends weekly management meetings and is part of the development process; this is giving him further insights into why decisions have been taken. The role of the governing body has improved considerably.

36. The LEA is providing good support for this school. Speedy action, when the school has faced staffing and financial difficulties, has helped the headteacher to maintain and ultimately improve the provision for the pupils. The link adviser's support has been of high quality. She has personally provided much of the help and training that the school has needed and has built up a very good knowledge of the school and its staff. She is highly regarded by the staff and governors.

### **Implementation of the action plan**

37. The inspection report of 2002 required the school to address four key issues. These principally related to: raising standards of attainment in English and mathematics and in particular increasing the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels; improving the overall quality of the teaching; improving the curricular organisation; and developing the leadership and management of the school. Overall, reasonable progress has been made and most of the tasks in the school's action plan have been completed. The school has appropriately worked to shorter-term action plans and currently has a clear view of priorities for improvement in the long and short term.

38. There has been a good improvement in the standards that the pupils have achieved in English and mathematics. The school's results in national tests have shown an upward trend since the school became subject to special measures. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels has increased significantly.

39. Improvements in the quality of teaching were slower to materialise. Despite changes in staffing following the inspection, there remained too much unsatisfactory teaching in the school and temporary teachers were unable to manage pupils' behaviour and teach to a satisfactory standard. The headteacher stabilised this situation by taking charge of a class where control had become the major issue. The interim secondment of an experienced

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teacher from another school improved the overall teaching, and recent appointments have ensured that teaching is now at least satisfactory and in many lessons good.

40. The curriculum for literacy and numeracy follows national guidance and is matched well to the needs of pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. There has been an appropriate focus on speaking and listening and the guided reading aspects of English. Work on the review and development of the science curriculum has improved the provision for this subject. The development of ICT is supported by a sound action plan, but the school has yet to ensure that the curriculum that is taught matches the ability levels of the pupils. The school has prioritised curriculum development appropriately and is aware of the need to review its provision for the foundation subjects.

41. The leadership and management of the school are much improved at all levels. The headteacher is leading the school well and is being effectively supported by a well-trained team. The governors have grown in stature and have made good progress in developing the skills they require to hold the school to account. The LEA is providing good support for the school, in both an inspectorial and advisory capacity.

## **Appendix – Information about the inspection**

Longwood Infant School was inspected in May 2002 by two HMI under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same act. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in November 2002, in February, June and October 2003, and in January 2004, to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of May 2002.

In May 2004 two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, and was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Thirteen lessons or parts of lessons, two assemblies and three registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, all staff, the chair of governors and a representative of the LEA. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of May 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

**Notes**



