

# Lowdham CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122806
<b>Local Authority</b>	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	316367
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marina Gough

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	202
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tim Wendels
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ritchie Amies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Main Street Lowdham Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG14 7BE
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9663358
<b>Fax number</b>	0115 9664245

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	316367

---

© Crown copyright 2007

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

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is set in the village of Lowdham and most of the pupils come from the local area. The area is one of relative affluence and very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupils are mainly White British, and very few pupils have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties is lower than the national average. The children's attainment when they join the school in the Reception class spans the full ability range and is broadly average. Since the last inspection the school has achieved Investors in People status, and the bronze ECO award. Lowdham Primary is a national leading school for provision in information and communication technology, and is working in partnership with a local university on a writing research project.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school that is emerging with renewed confidence and spirit after a difficult period. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, and the school provides good value for money. The staff team has worked together extremely effectively over recent years, and has good capacity to continue with its planned targets for improvement.

Standards when children join the Reception class are broadly average. By the time pupils leave school at the age of 11, they are attaining standards that are well above the national average in mathematics, science and information and communication technology. In English, standards are also well above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2, but pupils' handwriting is sometimes untidy and letters are not properly formed. The pupils' progress as they move through the school is consistently good and pupils of all ages achieve well. The school makes good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties, enabling them to achieve their individual targets.

Teaching is much improved since the last inspection and is now good. This is largely because of improved monitoring by senior staff, and better and sharper assessment systems, which enable teachers to match work closely to the needs of different pupils. Strengths of teaching include the way in which teachers use interactive whiteboards to bring learning to life for the pupils, and their relentless use of open-ended questions to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils of all ages love coming to school and have excellent attitudes to work. They are keen and responsive in lessons and are helpful, kind and considerate. The school does much to ensure that the pupils are healthy, and there is a strong emphasis on pupils taking part in regular physical activities. Healthy eating is well promoted, and pupils receive a good deal of information about how they can keep themselves safe.

The school provides a good curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 that is broad, well balanced, and much enriched and enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The provision for information and communication technology is a particular strength, and the teaching of Spanish adds an exciting dimension for pupils in Year 3. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is stimulating and exciting, and there is a good balance of taught activities, and free and structured play. Pupils in Lowdham are well cared for. Their well-being, health and safety are the shared concern of staff and governors, and pupils know they can approach any adult if they have a problem.

The school is well led and managed by an experienced, reflective and highly respected headteacher. He enjoys the full support of a dynamic deputy headteacher who complements him extremely well. As a team, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have focused well over the last few years on bringing about improvement, and there are now robust systems in place for ensuring that the school runs smoothly and purposefully. The school improvement plan paints a good picture of short-term targets, but is less helpful in identifying longer term and strategic developments. This is an area which would be beneficial for governors to address given the imminent retirement of the long-standing headteacher. The school knows itself well, but is unduly modest about its achievements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' handwriting across the school.

- Extend the term of the current improvement plan so that it reflects the school's long term vision.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards when children join the Reception class are broadly average. Children make good progress during their first year in school and, by the time they transfer to Year 1, they are attaining beyond the early learning goals in most aspects of their learning. Their speaking and listening skills are particularly good.

Throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities, including the most and least able, make good progress and achieve well. Standards are well above the national average by the time pupils leave school at the age of 11, and basic skills of literacy and numeracy are very firmly embedded. Because of the imaginative teaching pupils receive, they are very creative in their approach to problem solving, and are confident about the investigative aspects of mathematics and science. Writing has been an ongoing area of development over the past year, and is now a real strength, especially at the end of Years 2 and 3, where the impact of the writing research project (TRAWL) is most evident. However, pupils do not always take enough care and pride in the presentation of their written work, which can sometimes be untidy. In all year groups, there is a very strong focus on the use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning, and pupils are attaining standards that are well above the level expected for their age.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils really love coming to school and so attendance is good. Behaviour is excellent and pupils show high levels of respect for others. In class, pupils are extremely responsive, and very keen and enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school council plays a very good role in raising issues for the school to address, and members know that their views are carefully considered and valued.

The school is very active in ensuring that the pupils enjoy a healthy lifestyle. The daily 'wake and shake' session is stimulating for the pupils and staff, and livens everyone up at the start of the day. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons, and the wide range of sports clubs offered after school hours are very popular and well attended. Pupils are well informed about healthy eating and make healthy choices. They know about the dangers of drug abuse. The school makes good use of the input of visiting speakers to raise pupils' awareness of how to stay safe outside the school environment. Pupils are very well prepared for transfer to the next stage of their education, and for adult life, both in terms of their academic skills, and in terms of their confidence and social skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good, and during the inspection some outstanding teaching was seen. Throughout the school, teachers use open questions exceptionally well to probe the

children's thinking and to extend their knowledge. Teachers of all age groups have high but realistic expectations of what the pupils can achieve, and match activities well to the pupils' levels of ability and maturity. The pace of lessons is very good, and as a result pupils maintain very high levels of concentration and enthusiasm. Information and communication technology is used extremely well, both as a teaching and a learning tool. In the Reception class, the excellent use of drama and role play does much to enliven the children's learning and to develop their language and social skills.

Over the last few years, teachers have worked hard and successfully to improve assessment systems and procedures so that they provide useful information about what the pupils can do, and what the next steps are in their learning. From an early age pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own progress and identify how they can improve their work further.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum for the Reception children is good. Play activities are well structured so that the children's skills, knowledge and understanding are continuously developed. There is a very good balance between activities that are led by an adult and those that the children choose themselves.

In addition to the National Curriculum subjects in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the school also provides Spanish lessons, which are proving to be very popular. Very good emphasis is placed on music and physical education, and the school's provision for information and communication technology is outstanding. Whilst some good links are made between the different subjects, the school is looking at ways of extending these links so that pupils' learning has more meaning.

The school provides a very wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits that enrich and extend the pupils' learning and very successfully promotes their personal and social development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school has a very caring ethos and provides good levels of guidance and support for the pupils. Excellent relationships at all levels underpin the happy atmosphere that prevails throughout the school. Child protection and health and safety procedures are fully in place and the school meets the requirements for safeguarding children.

Pupils receive good guidance about how they can improve their work even further, especially in the upper part of Key Stage 2. Pupils' progress is very carefully tracked so that either temporary or more long-term, problems can be quickly identified and addressed. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is good, enabling this group of pupils to take a full part in all activities.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher, deputy and the senior leadership team provide strong and purposeful leadership for the staff and have created a positive climate where teachers readily welcome suggestions for improvement. Staff morale is high and there is a

strong sense of team spirit. Teachers and support staff respond very positively to challenge and enthusiastically take on board new ideas such as the TRAWL research project.

The school has improved well since the last inspection, and has made good progress in developing systems to enable staff to evaluate their own and others' performance. The school has accurately identified targets for school improvement over the next year, but is not as effective at articulating its long-term plans for development. Governors are very supportive and take a very good interest in the life and work of the school. They fulfil their statutory duties well.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

2 May 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Lowdham Primary School, Lowdham, NG14 7BU

I am writing to thank you for the lovely welcome you gave my colleague and me when we visited Lowdham a short time ago, and to let you know what we found out about your school. Your behaviour is excellent and I'm sure your teachers and headteacher are very proud of the way you consider others and try to be kind and helpful. In class you listen very well so that you are able to get on with your learning. Your teachers are doing a good job, and try their best to make lessons interesting. You know you can ask for help if you have a problem, and teachers do their best to give you the support you need.

By the time you leave school at the end of Year 6 you are attaining high standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. This is very pleasing. However, you could do even better with your handwriting which is at times untidy, spoiling the presentation of your work. The school provides you with many exciting activities during the day, and you told us how much you enjoy Spanish, music and physical education. You also have chance to take part in many different after school activities, and those of you who have just come back from the residential visit certainly had a great time!

Your headteacher and teachers do a good job in planning what they need to do over the next year to make the school even better. However, I have asked them to plan even further forward than this so that they have a clear picture of where the school will be in a few years time.

Best Wishes,

Marina Gough

Lead Inspector