

Lowe's Wong Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122676
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327779
Inspection date	28 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	235
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Stead
Headteacher	Mrs Vanessa Platt
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Queen Street Southwell Nottinghamshire NG25 0AA
Telephone number	01636 812207
Fax number	01636 812207

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The factors contributing to the extremely high standards in literacy and numeracy by the end of Year 2.
- How well the school has improved curricular planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection and how well all children are challenged.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Lowe's Wong Infant is a larger than average school of its type. The vast majority of pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. These difficulties and needs lie mainly in the areas of language and communication. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Nursery and Reception classes. The headteacher is retiring in July 2009.

Before and after-school care for pupils is provided in partnership with a private company.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Lowe's Wong Infant is an outstanding school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an exceptionally good start. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make outstanding progress because of high quality teaching and an extremely well planned curriculum. By the end of Year 2, standards are exceptionally high. Excellent care, guidance and support, and a very positive school atmosphere, lead to outstanding personal development and well-being for pupils.

High quality leadership and management are central to the outstanding provision and the extremely positive outcomes for pupils. An experienced and inspirational headteacher provides exceptionally strong leadership and educational direction. She receives high quality support from the deputy headteacher and other key staff. Expectations are high and a very positive school climate has been created for pupils to learn and staff to work. Self-evaluation is outstanding; performance is systematically monitored and reviewed. As a result, the school has a very clear understanding of what it does well and takes successful action to bring about any needed improvements. The high standards and outstanding provision identified in the last inspection have been maintained and built upon. Further improvements have been made in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and to writing and mathematics. The school demonstrates an outstanding capacity to improve. Community cohesion is promoted extremely well as demonstrated by the school's very positive ethos and the successful partnerships with parents and other agencies. Different cultures and faiths are promoted very well through the curriculum. The school is successfully including and meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. Governors have a very clear view of the school's performance. They provide suitable challenge and excellent support.

Parents hold very positive views about the school and the vast majority are extremely pleased with the care and education provided for their children. The quality of teaching, the progress pupils make and the approachability of staff receive considerable praise. Typical comments from parents included: 'Teaching is excellent'; 'Very well run school, bringing out the best in children'; 'Especially pleased with our child's progress'; and 'Teachers are friendly, helpful and approachable'.

Standards by the end of Year 2 are exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who need additional help with their learning make outstanding progress because of the well-targeted support they receive. More-able pupils are challenged and extended and this is evident in the high proportions attaining the higher standards. Pupils are articulate and confident speakers because of the outstanding opportunities provided for discussion. The highly effective and focused teaching of letter sounds contributes well to pupils' high performance in reading. Pupils are given ample opportunities to write in a variety of styles and for different purposes. Drama and role-play activities are used imaginatively to develop pupils' confidence and provide inspiration for writing. All classes have creative role-play areas which are linked to the themes being studied. The school has been successful in selecting strategies and topics which inspire and motivate boys to read and write. Pupils have excellent opportunities to apply and develop writing skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 wrote interesting and imaginative stories about butterflies and they applied scientific knowledge by including the butterfly's life cycle. Pupils do extremely well in mathematics because of the high emphasis on practical and problem-solving approaches. Learning resources in mathematics are interesting and exciting.

Outstanding teaching contributes considerably to pupils' exceptional progress and the high standards attained. Teachers have high expectations of learning and behaviour. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and respond very well to their teachers' clear explanations and instructions. Questioning is used skilfully by teachers to challenge pupils' thinking and check their understanding. Lessons are extremely well planned and assessment is used very effectively by teachers to tailor activities and tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are challenged; their interest is maintained and they make outstanding progress. Pupils are highly productive and take care and pride in the presentation of their work. Clear success criteria or indicators are provided to guide pupils' learning and to help them to review their own progress. Teaching assistants are of high calibre and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those who need additional help with literacy and numeracy. Lessons and learning proceed at a brisk pace. The school is implementing new assessment methods through the Assessment of Pupils' Progress initiative. Teachers are involving pupils more in assessment and in planning the next steps of their learning. Leaders are keen to extend outstanding practice consistently throughout the school.

The curriculum promotes outstanding progress for pupils and makes an exceptionally good contribution to their personal development. There are good links between subjects, which add meaning and relevance to pupils' learning. For example, the science work on darkness and light is well linked to the literacy work on The Lighthouse Keeper stories. There are attractive displays of high quality artwork by the pupils. An excellent range of clubs, visits and visitors enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment. Personal, social and health education is promoted very well across the curriculum.

The school has highly effective procedures to safeguard pupils, and they say they feel safe and very well cared for. They know that there is always an adult they can turn to if they are upset or have a problem. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The pupils are friendly, polite and show considerable respect for others. They thoroughly enjoy school and this is shown by their enthusiastic participation in activities and their well above average attendance. Behaviour is often exemplary in lessons and around the school. The pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and show an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercising regularly. They make outstanding contributions to the school and wider community. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and have been involved in the appointment of the new headteacher for September 2009. They raise funds for a variety of national and global charities. The pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. By the time they leave, they possess outstanding literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, their personal and social skills are exceptionally well developed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the school with knowledge and skills above those expected for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage is very competently led and managed and there is strong teamwork among teachers and assistants. These factors contribute to the outstanding provision and the extremely positive outcomes for children.

Children settle quickly because of effective induction arrangements. They make exceptionally good gains in their personal and social development because of the excellent relationships established between adults and children and the very strong attention to welfare. Children thoroughly enjoy their learning and possess very positive attitudes. They are inspired, motivated and confident learners.

The planning of the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved considerably since the last inspection. Excellent use is made of indoor and outdoor learning areas. High quality teaching and a stimulating range of learning activities enable children to make outstanding progress in all the expected areas of learning. Communication, language and literacy and mathematical development are promoted extremely well. The planning and provision for children's different abilities is a clear strength and a key improvement since the last inspection. As a parent wrote, 'My child has settled in very well, is happy and challenged'.

Teachers and assistants provide a highly effective blend of structured activities led by adults and those that allow children to explore, be creative and work independently. Attractive and imaginative role-play successfully promotes children's creativity. Children's 'day and night' artwork on display in the style of Van Gogh is exceptional. There is a wide range of high quality outdoor apparatus and equipment to promote physical development. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are exceptionally well prepared for the transition into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the new and outstanding assessment practices throughout the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 April 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Lowe's Wong Infant School, Southwell, Nottinghamshire, NG25 0AA.

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found. Yours is an outstanding school and one you can be very proud of.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an excellent start.
- You thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is very good.
- Your school is a very friendly and pleasant place to learn in.
- You are making outstanding progress because of first-rate teaching.
- By Year 2, standards are exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You benefit from an excellent range of learning activities, including clubs, visits and visitors.
- The displays of your art work are fantastic.
- Behaviour is usually outstanding in lessons and around the school.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- Staff take excellent care of you and give you great support.
- You make really good contributions to the school and the wider community.
- Your headteacher leads the school extremely well. She receives very good support from other senior staff.

These is just one point that the school has been asked to look at to make it even better.

- Continue to develop the new ways teachers are exploring to check and build on your progress across school.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. Keep up the good work. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Derek Watts

Lead inspector