

Noremarsch Community Junior School

Clarendon Drive, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, Wiltshire SN4 8BT

Inspection dates

16–17 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluations are overly generous. This has led to some complacency and a decline in pupils' outcomes since the last inspection.
- Middle and senior leaders have lacked urgency in tackling key priorities. As a result, weaknesses persist, such as poor spelling, which hold some pupils back.
- Senior leaders do not always communicate effectively to address weaknesses. This has led to some frustration and slowed improvement in the school.
- Leaders' and teachers' assessments of pupils are too high. This means that gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are not always identified or tackled quickly enough.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Teachers do not always build well on pupils' prior skills and knowledge, which hinders their progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders, including governors, do not have a strong strategy for disadvantaged pupils or those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Consequently, too many pupils do not make good progress to do well and their attendance is lower than the rest.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils, including the most able, are too low. This particularly impedes pupils' skills in writing, including their spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting.
- The teaching of number and calculation is not consistently well planned to build well on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Teachers do not always enable pupils to use and apply their knowledge in mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff and pupils enjoy a positive relationship. This is a happy school where pupils feel looked after and respected.
- The majority of parents are supportive of the school and feel that staff cater well for their children's needs.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct are good. Pupils are keen to make a significant contribution to school life by accepting additional responsibilities.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. This enables pupils to make links between subjects and to learn in different contexts.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching so that pupils can reach the standards of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information effectively to build on pupils' prior skills, knowledge and understanding
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, including for the most able pupils
 - rapidly improving pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar and the quality of their handwriting
 - improving pupils' number and calculation skills and how these are used and applied in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including how governors hold leaders to account, by:
 - ensuring that middle and senior leaders communicate effectively so that key priorities are tackled robustly and urgently
 - implementing, reviewing and adapting high-quality strategies for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that the school's self-evaluation and assessment information is accurate and used to secure the necessary improvements.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have been too slow to act on key priorities and to overcome barriers that still hold pupils back. This has contributed to a decline in pupils' outcomes. However, leaders are aware of these issues and now have relevant plans to tackle them.
- Leaders' systems to check pupils' progress are weak. Although some processes are in place, such as 'pupil progress meetings', until recently they have not concentrated well enough on pupils' prior attainment. As a result, pupils who have fallen behind have not been identified early enough to receive the support they need.
- Leaders' assessments of pupils' attainment are often inflated and therefore inaccurate. Leaders regularly check and moderate pupils' work. However, they are not sufficiently rigorous in applying criteria. For example, poor spelling and handwriting are not given enough weight during writing assessments. As a result, leaders and teachers make assumptions and do not intervene swiftly enough for pupils.
- Leaders' evaluations are overly positive about the impact of their work. They complete checks of teaching and learning, including looking at work and talking with pupils. However, they do not look deeply at gaps in pupils' knowledge or consider progress sufficiently. This leads to some complacency and slows the pace of improvement in the school.
- On occasions, senior leaders have been too slow to challenge each other. Some poor communication in the senior management team has also led to a lack of action in tackling persistent weaknesses. This is causing some frustration for subject leaders. However, subject leaders know their subjects well and have the skills and competencies to drive improvement.
- Leaders who have responsibility for the strategies for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are not checking the impact of plans with sufficient rigour. As a result, some of these vulnerable pupils are not doing as well as they should. Therefore, the spending of the additional funding in either of these areas is not having a strong enough impact on pupils' outcomes and attendance.
- Leaders have not ensured that details of the current strategy for disadvantaged pupils and the pupil premium funding for 2017/18 (academic year) are available for parents to read on the school's website. In addition, the end of key stage 2 results for 2017 are not published on the school's website.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new approach for engaging with parents of disadvantaged pupils. This means that parents are becoming more involved in supporting pupils through a dialogue with school staff. However, the impact of this strategy has not yet been fully measured.
- Leaders hold others to account through appropriate processes, such as appraisal and performance reviews. Together with other formal monitoring, staff are challenged and supported to improve in line with agreed school priorities. Leaders ensure that a full programme of training is in place to meet staff needs, for example 'mathematics

mastery' courses in Year 4.

- A process has recently been introduced for ensuring that prior attainment from key stage 1 is tracked and discussed with teachers. This is having an impact. Leaders are fully aware of the pupils who need additional support and intervention in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders are now deploying staff and directing resources appropriately to those who need it. This includes, for example, pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced to enable pupils to make strong links in their learning. For example, in Year 3, pupils went on a field trip to a canal, which provided a strong basis for writing and art work. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and adapting their skills to a range of situations.
- Leaders ensure that there is a strong complement of extra-curricular activities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of British values and how these have an impact on their daily lives. For example, pupils told an inspector, 'We listen to everyone's views.' Leaders encourage pupils to reason and debate and to consider opinions in a democratic way.
- Local authority officers provide support and challenge to the school as part of its commitment and offer to Wiltshire schools. This has included discussions with the 'challenge and support partner', who correctly identified aspects of the school's decline. School leaders and governors are engaging with this process and local authority officers.
- The additional funding for physical education and sport premium is spent effectively so that pupils benefit from a wide menu of sports, including extra-curricular activities.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not been effective in halting the decline of the school since the previous inspection. They admit to being 'surprised' by the most recent published results for 2017.
- Governors have an overly positive view of the school. They have sought external validation, for example through the local authority and peer-challenge reviews, but the most recent of these was in October 2016. At that time, the school received a favourable report. However, successive years of poor outcomes for pupils have not been explored deeply enough, so governors have not been able to offer well-directed challenge to the most pressing areas.
- Governors have been too accepting of some reasons provided for the weak performance of the previous years. However, they told an inspector, 'We're not satisfied (with pupils' outcomes)'. Governors have already started to take some action, such as introducing new approaches to support disadvantaged pupils and improve reading.
- Governors are active and enthusiastic in checking the impact of initiatives, for example through links to different subject areas. They ask questions of leaders, particularly through the 'Holding to Account' committee, and seek evidence to inform their views. However, governors' visits are not always sufficiently related to the school's strategies

and have lacked the precision necessary to drive improved outcomes for pupils.

- Governors are enrolled onto relevant training to support them in the discharge of their duties and to hold others to account. They have used some training well, for example in securing a strong culture of safeguarding.
- Governors consult and communicate effectively with parents. For example, they have responded to views raised through parental surveys. Governors have the trust and confidence of parents and staff alike.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all checks and vetting procedures are securely in place for staff and volunteers. When necessary, leaders take effective and timely action to refer concerns to external agencies. Leaders are tenacious and robust. This was shown recently, for example, in the way they checked and held other agencies and professional partners to account.
- Staff are diligent and proficient in keeping pupils safe. They are well trained and know what to do to protect them. Local authority officers describe school leaders as 'strong' and praise their work in ensuring that safeguarding matters are well managed.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding which places pupils at the heart of the school's work. Pupils know how to take responsibility for themselves and their actions, including in road safety and keeping safe online.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and have confidence in school staff. They know what bullying is and are sure this is not a problem at Noremarsch Junior. On the rare occasions when incidents occur, pupils say that these are dealt with effectively by staff.
- Leaders are effective in using school processes and systems to keep pupils safe. For example, appropriate risk assessments and management of the adjacent car park and adjoining public park mitigate risks effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not good enough and is inconsistent. Therefore, too many pupils do not make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers make assessments of the pupils that are often too generous. This means that teaching is not being planned from the right starting points.
- Teachers do not use assessment information effectively to build on pupils' prior skills, knowledge and understanding. They do not always plan high-quality sequences of work that enable pupils to deepen their understanding and take their learning forward in well-considered steps. As a result, some pupils experience gaps in their knowledge which are not identified or addressed swiftly enough.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils, including the most able. For example, poor spelling and handwriting often go unchallenged and, by the time pupils reach Year 6, these habits have become too firmly entrenched. However, new systems for checking pupils' prior attainment are focusing teachers on what every child

should be capable of by the time they leave the school.

- The teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar is weak. It lacks precision and a clear strategic approach across the whole school. Similarly, handwriting is not taught well enough. As a result, pupils develop bad habits and teaching does not always intervene well enough to improve them or address misconceptions.
- Leaders have rightly identified that pupils need to improve their using-and-applying skills in mathematics. This focus is starting to improve the quality of daily mathematics lessons. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils' number and calculation skills are developed appropriately. Consequently, some pupils find lessons either too hard or too easy and their progress stalls.
- Teachers use skilful strategies and techniques to involve pupils in their learning. They encourage pupils to work well with their peers to be effective learning buddies. In this way, pupils have a genuine stake and make decisions about their own learning.
- Teachers show an awareness of the national benchmarks in reading, writing and mathematics and are using this knowledge to start raising expectations. The Year 6 teachers, in particular, are well aware of standards and therefore accelerate pupils well towards the end of key stage benchmarks.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well to support some pupils with additional needs, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language. In the best examples, some pupils are receiving high-quality bespoke support which is enabling them to make good progress. However, this varies across classes and subjects.
- Some teachers are confident in checking pupils' understanding in lessons and then adapting the learning to meet their needs. For example, in an English lesson, the teacher spotted a common error and used a visualiser effectively in the classroom to illustrate this to the pupils. This strength enables pupils in these situations to learn well and make good progress.
- Teachers use homework to motivate pupils. For example, pupils in Year 6 were enthusiastic about investigating and producing their own work about rivers. This experience helps pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning as they prepare for secondary education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils do not always take enough pride in their work and are not consistently challenged when it falls short of teachers' expectations. As a result, pupils slip into poor learning behaviours and attitudes, which directly impede their progress.
- In lessons or passages of learning where teaching is weak, pupils do not show resilience or the attitude necessary to maintain concentration. At these times, pupils lose interest, which hampers their learning and enjoyment of lessons.

- The weak outcomes and progress of key groups, including disadvantaged pupils and some who have SEN and/or disabilities, mean that pupils are not consistently well prepared for the next stage in their learning. This means that, for some, their transition and start into secondary school is made more difficult.
- Pupils are happy in school and keen to make contributions in a variety of ways. For example, they organised a recent charity event in which they arranged the stalls and displayed good entrepreneurial skills.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and considerate. They look after each other well during play and in lessons and are proud to be part of the school.
- Pupils behave themselves well and are keen to make contributions to the school and local community. For example, school councillors take an active role in deciding how to raise money for charity, as well as spending funds in the school. In this way, pupils feel valued and freely give of their time to help others.
- Pupils enjoy the range of activities provided by staff. For example, they speak enthusiastically about science weeks and cross-curricular topics. These opportunities ensure that pupils enjoy attending school and maintain their happiness and enjoyment of learning.
- Overall, pupils' attendance is similar to the national average. However, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities have higher absence rates which do not compare well (even when allowing for particular cases and circumstances). However, leaders are aware of this and are being proactive in working with parents and other agencies to improve the attendance of these pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils have declined since the previous inspection. In comparison with their peers, pupils at Noremarsh make less progress in reading, writing and mathematics during their time at the school.
- Pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar are weak throughout the school. They lack confidence in being able to construct writing with technical accuracy. Furthermore, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length to practise and rehearse their skills.
- Pupils' handwriting is not good enough. Pupils do not consistently have the skills and confidence to present their written work fluently and to the highest standards.
- Pupils are not supported to develop their sense of number and calculation well enough. This means that they sometimes struggle to make links in solving problems or applying number-related facts. A recent drive is now enabling pupils to ask a range of mathematical questions and to look differently at a problem to be able to solve it.
- Pupils' reading skills are not consistently strong. Some pupils read with expression and joy, clearly benefiting from recent challenges and effective home support. Other pupils

lack confidence, especially in recognising and reading unfamiliar words when they have poor phonics knowledge. Volunteers are helpful in supporting pupils with their reading.

- Disadvantaged pupils are not making enough good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In particular, disadvantaged pupils who also have SEN and/or disabilities are at additional risk of significant underachievement. Furthermore, the most able disadvantaged pupils are not always stretched to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not consistently make good progress. Although some individuals are well supported to make good progress, for example in Year 6, this support is often too variable across the school and in different subjects. The impact of pupils' individual plans is inconsistent because some have only recently been reviewed or updated.
- Work in books shows that pupils are transferring skills across the curriculum. For example, there is evidence of writing skills acquired in science or history being used in other contexts.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported to make comparatively strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Tailored plans and individual provision help them catch up quickly.

School details

Unique reference number	126250
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10033294

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ellen Woollaston-Cooper
Headteacher	Andy Simpson
Telephone number	01793 852250
Website	www.noremarsh.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@noremarsh.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its most recent published examination and test results (2017) and for a current statement about the strategy for disadvantaged pupils on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has strong ties to Wootton Bassett Infants' School, which is the school's main feeder school.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school day, including the range of subjects and afternoon provision.
- Meetings were held with the range of leaders to evaluate their work. They included: the headteacher; representatives of the governing body; other leaders such as the SEN coordinator and pupil premium leader, and the mathematics and English subject leaders. There was also a telephone conversation with the local authority representative.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation, including any governor visits and minutes, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation, anonymised performance management records and the school development plan.
- Documentation, including the school's single central record and records for child protection training, was scrutinised with school leaders and staff.
- Inspectors examined pupils' books to evaluate the quality of work and check the accuracy of assessment information, including for disadvantaged pupils. They also spoke with pupils to check their understanding of what is seen in workbooks.
- Inspectors spoke to children during various activities and heard a sample of pupils from Years 5 and 6 read.
- Inspectors observed breaktimes and met with pupils during meetings, walks and agreed 'tours' of the school.
- The 24 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. The lead inspector also considered comments provided by other means, including inspectors' discussions with parents. Furthermore, the inspection took account of the 25 responses to the staff surveys and the school's own survey from October 2017.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Adam Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Hanrahan	Ofsted Inspector

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