

# Noremarsch Community Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126250
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328472
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry Elston

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	197
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Sheppard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andy Simpson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 September 2005
<b>School address</b>	Clarendon Drive Wootton Bassett Swindon SN4 8BT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 852250
<b>Fax number</b>	01793 849729

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Nearly all pupils attend Noremarsch Junior from housing close to the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average. The vast majority of these have moderate learning difficulties. Compared with most schools, few pupils come from minority ethnic groups, and none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Standards on entry to the school vary from year to year but are generally above the national average.

## 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 where pupils do well in all aspects of their development. They enjoy school, work hard and their standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. This represents good achievement. Standards have risen significantly over the last few years, particularly in mathematics, which has been the school's focus for improvement. In English, while pupils' reading skills are very well developed, there are weaknesses in boys' writing throughout the school. Boys often lack interest in writing tasks. They tend to be slower than girls to get down to work and, when they do, they make unnecessary mistakes. Pupils do well in science and say how much they enjoy the many opportunities to do exciting experiments.

The much improved standards are the result of good teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Teachers have clear rules for behaviour, and pupils respond well by listening carefully and respecting each other's views. Teachers use interesting methods and are skilled at using technology to illustrate their lessons and make learning fun. A highlight in many lessons is the quick-fire question and answer sessions that stimulate pupils' enthusiasm. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' work, but some of the tasks set for the youngest pupils are not sufficiently challenging and the more able ones in particular, lose interest.

Teachers have developed an interesting and good curriculum that provides a good balance between work on basic literacy and numeracy skills and that to develop pupils' artistic talents. The recently developed linking of subjects is going well, and helps to make topics more meaningful. For example, pupils' work on the First World War is an outstanding example of how a mix of literacy, design and technology, art and design, and history can be used to give pupils a thorough understanding of a complex subject. There are, however, too few visits and visitors to bring the curriculum to life and the school is right to have this as a priority for improvement. Overall, pupils' personal development is good. The well planned personal, social and health education curriculum ensures that their awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle is outstanding, and it helps them to become good citizens.

Parents value the good care, support and guidance provided for their children. As one said, 'Teachers have such a caring and compassionate nature.' Parents know their children are safe at school and appreciate the robust safeguarding procedures. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well and they grow in confidence as their skills improve. The school tracks pupils' progress rigorously and has good systems to identify any groups or individuals who are not doing as well as they could.

The good leadership and management are important reasons for the school's success. The headteacher's high expectations are made clear to both pupils and staff who respond well by always looking to improve their work. The headteacher is supported well by other leaders who make an important contribution to self-evaluation and the process of setting targets. The good governing body supports the school well and is not afraid to hold it to account. The school has done well since the last inspection and is well set to build on its successes.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more stimulating tasks to raise boys' standards in writing.
- Ensure that the teaching in Years 3 and 4 challenges the more able pupils.
- Provide more visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. Pupils love reading and their standards are consistently high. In writing, while standards are a little above average, the attainment of girls far exceeds that of boys throughout the school. Girls enjoy writing stories and poems but boys often lack interest in the task and the quality of their work suffers. In mathematics, pupils are quick to work out complex calculations and are good at checking their work for errors. Standards in science are consistently high because the teaching of scientific skills is good and pupils enjoy the many opportunities to do experiments. Progress through the school is good, although it is faster in Years 5 and 6 than lower down the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The school made the decision last year to include these pupils in all classroom activities, and this made a big difference in their attainment and self-esteem.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say how much they enjoy school because of the friends they make and the teachers who look after them so well. Attendance is good. They are eager to learn, have a clear sense of right and wrong and behave well. Pupils have an extensive awareness of how to stay safe and speak with great authority on the need to live healthily. They show their maturity as they explore topics such as relationships and bullying and are never afraid to ask questions to make things clearer. They develop a good awareness of their community, particularly by making improvements to their school through the school council, raising substantial funds for charities and providing tours for visitors. Pupils' good spiritual development shows in the way they think deeply about subjects and appreciate the hardships faced by some people. For example, when writing about the tragedies of the First World War, one pupil wrote sensitively about life and death in the trenches and the 'echoes of gunshots beyond the grave'. Pupils are well prepared for the future by developing good literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and managing budgets for school events.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Lessons are typically lively and fun with exciting resources and a wide range of teaching methods that keep pupils interested. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to discuss things with each other as 'talking partners' and this helps them benefit from each other's expertise. Teachers use their interactive whiteboards well to capture pupils' interest in topics. This was seen, for example, to good effect in lessons about volcanic eruptions and changes in the body during adolescence. There are many strengths in the teaching of scientific investigations, reading and number skills that account for pupils' good progress in these subjects. In writing, teachers teach the basic writing skills well, but not all generate enthusiasm for the task that makes pupils, particularly boys, want to write. For example, in one class, boys could hardly wait to get their pens out when asked to write about a naughty boy at a posh dinner party, but in another they showed little enthusiasm for describing a character from a story. Teachers' expectations are generally high, although not all the tasks set for the younger pupils ask enough of them,

particularly the more able groups. This explains why some lose interest during lessons and make less progress than they could.

Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support pupils who need extra help and this ensures they take a full part in lessons. Teachers make detailed assessments of pupils' progress and use them effectively to improve the quality of their work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is planned well with a good balance of academic work and activities designed to develop pupils' musical and artistic talents. The strong focus on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills means that they make good progress in these key areas and are well prepared for the future. The school has recently begun to link subjects together and the resulting work shows that pupils have gained a thorough understanding of topics such as The First World War and Ancient Greece. The very well planned personal, social and health education and citizenship programme plays an important part in helping pupils understand the need to live healthy lives. It also helps them appreciate the richness of the different cultures in the school and further afield. The school provides a wide range of popular activities at lunchtime and after school that enrich the curriculum, but there are too few visits and visitors to give pupils enough first hand experience of topics.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Many parents comment on how well the school cares for and supports their children. Adults are very good at helping those who are vulnerable or anxious, and this helps create an atmosphere where pupils feel safe and valued. The school provides very good support and guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their specific needs are identified at an early stage and the detailed programmes designed for them ensure they make good progress. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are rigorous and reviewed regularly. The school has good procedures for tracking and analysing pupils' progress. These enable the staff to provide effective support to groups or individuals who are falling behind. Teachers generally ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of their targets for improvement, but not all refer to them sufficiently. This means that some pupils forget, and keep making the same mistakes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher leads well, with high expectations of what the school could achieve and a clear vision for its future. He is supported well by other senior staff, although some are new to the post and have not had the necessary training to enable them to take the lead in school improvement. Nevertheless, self-evaluation is good and the school's track record shows its success in identifying weaknesses and introducing measures to rectify them. For example, when standards in mathematics fell in 2007, the school improved the curriculum planning and re-introduced mixed ability teaching. These moves proved very effective, and standards in mathematics are now one of the strengths of the school. The school has nurtured productive links with other schools and establishments that do much to enhance pupils' skills in areas such

as science and mathematics. The leaders promote community cohesion well by involving local people in many school events and providing opportunities for pupils to learn from others from a range of faiths and ethnic backgrounds. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable governors support the school well and are not afraid to hold it to account.

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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?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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 learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Noremarsh Community Junior School, Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 8BT.

Thank you for your valuable help in our recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed watching you work and play so enthusiastically! We were very impressed with the way you spoke so confidently to us. You are clearly very proud of your good school and you are right to be.

What we found out about your school:

- You make good progress and the standard of your work is higher than is found in most schools.
- You have a really good knowledge of how to keep safe and live healthy lives.
- You like your teachers and they do a good job. Many of you say how they make lessons fun so that you enjoy learning.
- You enjoy the activities planned for you and the wide range of clubs at lunchtime and after school for things like music and sport. You sing really well!
- You behave well and take very good care of each other.
- You enjoy taking responsibility, and the school council and Eco Warriors do a good job.
- Your school's leaders run the school well and know how to improve it further.
- All the adults take very good care of you and are always there if you need help.

What we would like the school to do now:

- Help boys do better in writing. Some of you find writing difficult and need to have more exciting things to write about. You can help, boys, by always trying to do your best work and not making unnecessary mistakes.
- Make sure that the work for the pupils in Years 3 and 4 makes you think harder, particularly for those of you that find things easy.
- Provide you with more visitors and visits to add extra interest to subjects.

Best wishes for the future! Yours sincerely Terry Elston Lead inspector