

Inspection of Noremarsch Junior School

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

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 July 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Hilary MacMeekin. This school is part of Ascend Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jane Coley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nicholas Adams-Nel.

What is it like to attend this school?

The strong shared vision of ambition, belonging and compassion underpins the culture at Noremarsh Junior School. Caring staff know pupils well. Pupils have the confidence to speak to a trusted adult about their worries. They feel safe in school and are taught how to keep themselves safe outside of school. For example, pupils learn to cycle and scoot safely, and almost all learn to swim by the end of Year 6.

The school aims for all pupils to achieve their full potential, academically and personally. Pupils conduct themselves well in class and around school. They learn and play well together. The curriculum is engaging, and in lessons pupils are highly focused. The school's emphasis on oracy ensures pupils listen attentively and build on each other's ideas. Over time, pupils generally achieve well and are prepared for secondary school by the time they leave.

Pupils learn important life skills, such as problem-solving, leadership and teamwork. They apply these to their roles as school councillors and sports leaders. School ambassadors are proud of the school and they enjoy showing visitors around. During 'Futures Festival' week, pupils learn about different careers. Talks from midwives, engineers, beauticians and project managers help to raise pupils' aspirations.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, the school has been through a period of rapid change. The expansion of the trust's leadership team has resulted in a clear focus on school improvement. Staff have been well supported by school and trust leaders to manage these many changes. They appreciate the attention paid to their workload and well-being during this time.

There have been significant improvements to the curriculum. The essential knowledge and vocabulary for each subject is clearly identified and sequenced. Teachers know precisely what to teach and when to teach it. This helps pupils acquire the knowledge they need at each stage.

Staff have access to a wide-ranging professional development programme. Teachers acknowledge how this improves their practice, along with pupils' outcomes. For example, a new approach to teaching mathematics means many pupils have a secure grasp of mathematical facts. Teachers use the school's agreed approaches, when introducing new knowledge. They explain concepts clearly and model learning for pupils. Teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning. This tells them what pupils have learned. However, occasionally, teachers do not use this information to deepen pupils' understanding. This hinders some pupils' progress.

The school fosters a strong reading culture. Pupils read a diverse range of stories, poetry and non-fiction texts. Staff match books to pupils' reading levels and interests carefully. This ensures all pupils can access and enjoy what they read. Knowledgeable staff provide one-to-one reading practise and small-group support to ensure those pupils who

are behind catch up. This enables all pupils to read and discuss the same texts. The focus on oracy and reading has helped to improve pupils' writing. Many pupils use creative ideas and vocabulary to good effect. However, some do not apply their knowledge of grammar and punctuation in some subjects because it is not taught well enough. This means that some misconceptions persist.

The school caters effectively for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff skilfully identify pupils' needs. They then make adaptations to their teaching, so that these pupils can work alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND are well supported as they progress through the curriculum.

Pupils strive to achieve the high standards staff set for their behaviour and conduct. Pupils love to learn. They discuss their work enthusiastically and cooperate well during group activities. Pupils take care with the presentation of their work.

The school enriches the curriculum through trips and visitors. For example, a visit to a Roman villa helped pupils to understand how people lived in the past. The personal, social and health education programme prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of different types of families. They understand the importance of equality and treating everyone with respect.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The way basic writing skills, such as punctuation and grammar, are taught is not as effective as it could be. This means that some pupils do not apply appropriate grammar and punctuation in their written work in some subjects. The school should ensure that teachers support all pupils in developing a secure understanding of grammar and punctuation.
- At times, teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough to deepen pupils' learning. Consequently, some pupils are not supported to achieve as much as they could. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment effectively, so pupils learn well across the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	146421
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10378970
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nicholas Adams-Nel
CEO of the trust	Jane Coley
Headteacher	Hilary MacMeekin
Website	www.noremarsh.wilts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 February 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Ascend Learning Trust, which it joined in October 2018.
- Since the previous inspection, the chair of the trust and the CEO have been appointed.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing body and trust leaders, including the trust CEO.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, school leaders, staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors checked the school's policies and records, including those related to behaviour, attendance and pupils' wider development. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and spoke with them about behaviour, bullying and other aspects of school life.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes from trust and governing board meetings as well as the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Faye Heming, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ken Buxton

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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