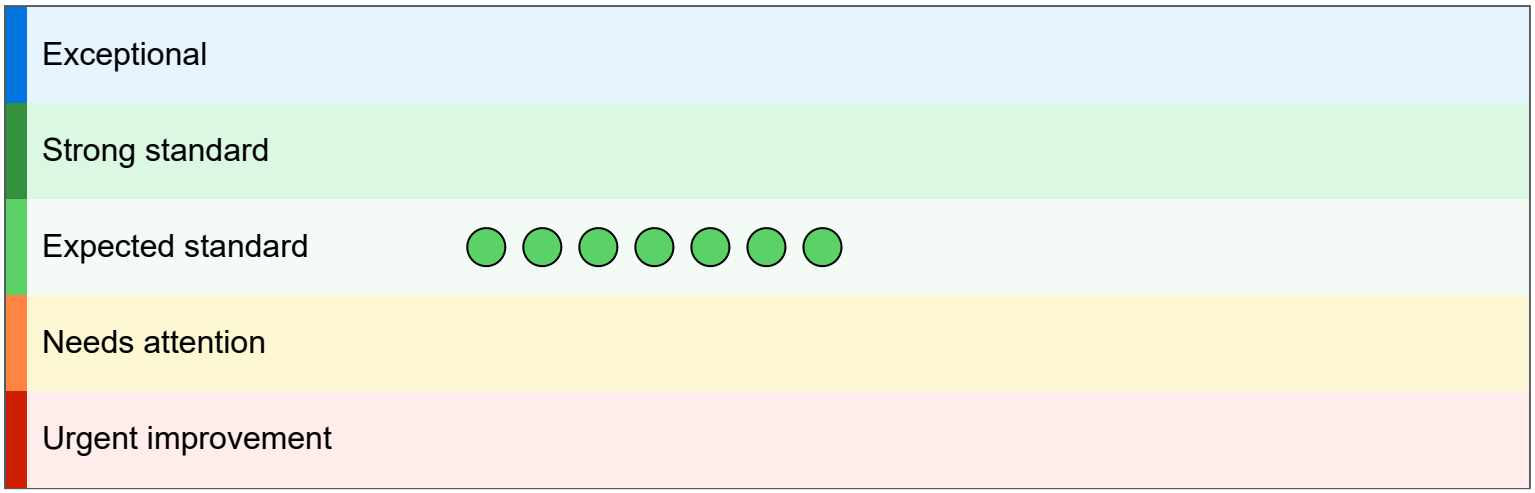
Netley Marsh Church of England Infant School

Address: Ringwood Road, Woodlands, Southampton, Hampshire, SO40 7GY

Unique reference number (URN): 116302

Inspection report: 6 October 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Children get off to a secure start at this school. In Reception, they quickly become confident to learn and explore independently, choosing the materials and equipment they need. Overall, pupils progress through the curriculum securely.

In the early years and key stage 1, pupils mostly secure the necessary accuracy and fluency in reading, spelling, handwriting and number facts. Pupils' achievement in phonics is typically in line with their peers nationally. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make suitable progress against their starting points thanks to the support they receive. Overall, most pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Across the curriculum, pupils progress well overall. In discussions, pupils generally recall their knowledge well. Pupils' work demonstrates the progress they make. In some cases, however, pupils have gaps in foundational knowledge and skills, such as handwriting and punctuation. These restrict their ability to produce high-quality work.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Regular attendance is a high priority for leaders. Pupils' attendance is typically in line with national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They promote its importance often, helping parents and carers to understand the impact absence can have on pupils' chances of social and academic success. Leaders build effective relationships with families, helping them overcome barriers to attendance. Staff welcome pupils as they come into school. This allows them to identify any concerns early and ensures a smooth transition into school at the start of the day.

Leaders have established clear expectations for behaviour. Staff regularly remind pupils of these expectations and help them to meet them. Leaders and staff quickly identify pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour or emotions. They provide focused support and teach strategies to help pupils manage these better. Pupils typically behave sensibly. They have a positive attitude to their learning, particularly when learning activities are well matched to their academic needs. Pupils get along really well with their classmates. They conduct themselves well around the school building and play happily during social times. Pupils are very rarely unkind to one another, and leaders are quick to deal with any isolated issues that may occur.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have established and implemented a broad and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum has an emphasis on securing pupils' foundational knowledge, in particular their communication skills, language development and vocabulary. While pupils are in mixed-age classes, teachers ensure that pupils get the age-appropriate curriculum, especially in mathematics and English. Recent work to redress the falling standards in phonics has been successful. Leaders are now focusing more on early writing skills, including handwriting and

punctuation. This is the right focus as some pupils are less accurate than they should be in their writing. For example, some make occasional errors in letter formation.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They deliver the curriculum in a logical sequence. However, sometimes teachers are not quite clear enough about the precise knowledge or skills that pupils need to learn or practise. This means that some lessons are not as effective as they could be.

Teachers use assessment carefully to identify any gaps in learning and provide support to pupils who need it. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who need additional help receive targeted support, including in phonics and language development.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders understand the importance of the early years in providing a secure foundation for children's future learning. They have developed a clear and ambitious early years curriculum that defines what children should know. Staff deliver the curriculum well. Leaders rightly prioritise early reading. Staff teach the school's phonics programme systematically, delivering it clearly and accurately. They ensure that children access the phonics programme successfully. As a result children build their phonics knowledge over time.

Staff use what they know about each child to provide extra help, particularly for those who need it most. When children face additional challenges to their learning and development, staff provide support that fits around each child. Staff use their very positive relationships with parents and carers to shape this support alongside them. Children rapidly settle into new routines, make friends and become ready to learn. By the time the children complete their Reception year, most are well prepared for Year 1.

Children feel safe, grow in confidence and learn to be independent during their time in Reception. This is because staff focus on children's personal, social and emotional development. Staff enable children to form positive and trusting relationships with the adults in Reception. Staff model speaking and listening well, introducing new vocabulary at appropriate times. This helps children to express themselves well when engaging with others.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders understand the needs of pupils well. They identify any barriers that pupils may have to their learning or wellbeing swiftly and accurately. Leaders put in place well-matched plans to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND). Leaders then maintain a suitable oversight of how well disadvantaged pupils, and those with SEND, are supported in their learning. For example, leaders conduct regular checks to ensure that expected adaptations for pupils are in place in the classroom. They use this information to refine in-class support and set suitable next steps for pupils' learning.

Leaders also make appropriate use of pupil premium funding to ensure that pupils' most significant barriers to learning are reduced. Leaders use this additional funding to support pupils in learning to read, as well as ensuring pupils can better access all academic and

pastoral opportunities. Parents and carers of pupils with SEND are well supported by leaders. Leaders work well with external specialists. This means pupils receive the right type of support.

Governors have ensured that an appropriate senior member of staff has been trained to support the school should any children in care join the school.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and its priorities for further improvement. Leaders have taken swift and effective action to address these priorities. In many areas of the school's work, the impact of leaders' actions are clearly evident. Leaders ensure that the decisions they make about the school's organisation are in pupils' best interests.

Governors understand their statutory duties, including financial management and safeguarding. They are knowledgeable and effective in their roles. They provide support and challenge for school leaders. Governors use a range of activities, such as discussions with subject leaders and visits to the school, to support them in their roles.

Staff are proud to work at the school and support the pupils and families in this small community. Staff receive appropriate and timely training and development opportunities. Staff across the federation support their colleagues at Netley Marsh appropriately.

Many parents and carers are delighted with the school and the care it provides. Over the past year, a small, but significant number of parents have been concerned by some significant changes at the school and how leaders have managed these. These views have been reflected in the Ofsted Parent View survey, including freetext comments, and in conversations that inspectors had with parents. Leaders and governors are very aware of these concerns and have endeavoured to provide parents with the information they need. They recognise that there is more to do to alleviate parents' concerns.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders place importance on the personal development and wellbeing programme for pupils. The school is keen to develop pupils' early spirituality. This includes regular opportunities for pupils to stop and contemplate their own needs and the needs of others. This is underpinned by the school values of love, respect and compassion.

Leaders have recently reinvigorated their personal, health and social education curriculum. They ensure that it reflects the school's context. The content of the curriculum is well ordered and meets the statutory duties to teach age-appropriate relationships and health education.

Leaders and staff care immensely about pupils' wellbeing. They have prioritised building a community where everyone belongs. Leaders have developed a positive culture of pastoral support which is driven by the needs of pupils. Specifically trained staff work with pupils in school to help them. Occasionally, some pupils need more and staff work collaboratively with other external services to provide this.

Leaders ensure that enrichment opportunities connect to the wider curriculum. This helps pupils' learning in curriculum subjects. For example, a pond-dipping trip enables pupils to develop their scientific understanding of habitats. Pupils describe trips, such as to local museums and to a working farm, with joy. Inspiring visits from a 'creature teacher' to develop wider understanding of the natural world, talks from librarians who inspire reading challenges and nurturing sessions from organisations that encourage pupils to ‘speak out to stay safe’, all help widen pupil’s knowledge about their local community and the wider world.

Pupils also learn about different faiths, cultures and communities. They understand the importance of treating others equally, respectfully and fairly. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of democracy and why this is important in society. This is mainly seen through the annually elected school council, where pupils vote for classmates to represent them on the council.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils arrive promptly each day ready to show the school's values of love, respect and compassion. They benefit from a nurturing environment where staff are committed to ensuring that every child feels safe, included and supported to achieve their best. As a result, the school is a welcoming and harmonious place where pupils feel that they belong. Pupils delight in the company of their friends. Whether playing in the playground or learning in class, they enjoy spending time together. Pupils know they have adults who care for them. They know there is always help available should they need it.

Leaders are passionate about supporting all pupils at the school to achieve well. In recent months, there has been a lot of change at this school. Pupils have adapted excellently to these changes. They are learning the school's curriculum well and, overall, pupils achieve well. Pupils progress through the curriculum in the mixed-age classes successfully, regardless of their starting points. Pupils who face additional barriers, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, learn successfully. They receive carefully tailored support to access learning alongside their peers.

Pupils behaviour and attitudes are consistently positive. Pupils typically conduct themselves calmly in class and around the school. Pupils work together collaboratively in lessons. They say bullying is not an issue in the school, and school records confirm this. Pupils’ enjoyment of their learning helps to ensure they attend school regularly. Children in the early years make a positive start to their education. They learn routines quickly, helping them feel secure and settled.

A wide range of clubs, visitors and visits enrich the curriculum offer. Pupils appreciate the extra activities they can do to develop their interests and talents, such as sports, music or Lego.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teaching and associated learning activities build, deepen and secure pupils' key knowledge with precision.
- Leaders should continue to strengthen the teaching of writing by embedding consistent approaches to handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar. They should ensuring that pupils secure these strong foundational skills from an early age and that weaknesses are addressed promptly as pupils move through the school.
- Leaders and governors should continue to engage further with parents and carers to ensure they feel fully informed and valued as part of school life.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Harriet Standeven.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection took place from 6 to 7 October 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty’s Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

At the time of the inspection, there were 51 pupils on roll.

Inspectors spoke with the interim executive headteacher and other senior leaders, members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Portsmouth during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The previous executive headteacher left at the end of the summer term 2025. Since then an interim executive headteacher has been in post. The current chair of governors was elected in July 2026.

This school is registered as having a Christian religious character. It is in the Diocese of Portsmouth. Its last section 48 inspection was in March 2022.

This school is part of the Oaks Learning Federation. This is a statutory hard federation of 3 infant schools: Netley Marsh CE Infant School, Copythorne CofE Infant School and St Michael and All Angels CE Infant School. This means that this school shares a senior leadership team and governing body with the 2 other schools.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Mary Flynn: Interim executive headteacher

Lead inspector:
Chris Parker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Chris Berry, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 6 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

66
Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 268

School capacity

86
Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

12.12%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.5%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.52%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 4.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

12.12%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2025/26 (1 term)	5.6%	5.1%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.6%	5.5%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2025/26 (1 term)	12.2%	14.4%	Close to average
2024/25 (3 term)	12.5%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.7%	14.6%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional 🔵

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard 🟢

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard 🟢

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention 🟠

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement 🔴

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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