

Inspection of Norton Free Church of England Primary School

Matthews Lane, Norton, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S8 8JS

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at Norton Free Church of England School, and enjoy school. Leaders create a caring and supportive environment where everyone is respected. There are excellent relationships between staff, pupils and families. Leaders ensure that all pupils have a strong sense of belonging to 'Team Norton'.

This is a highly inclusive school. Leaders ensure pupils understand the importance of being kind and considerate. Bullying is extremely rare. Pupils know that they can talk to staff about any worries that they may have. Pupils know that staff will listen carefully to what they have to say.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils, both academically and socially. Pupils live up to these expectations and focus well on their learning. This helps them to achieve well.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is exceptional. Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of experiences, such as learning animation skills in film club. Pupils develop leadership qualities through their involvement in the worship council, the school council and the eco-council. Pupils are extremely proud of these roles. They enjoy having a positive impact in the school and the local community. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep physically and mentally healthy. They know the importance of sharing any concerns they may have. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. The subject curriculums are constructed in a way that allows pupils to build logically on the skills and knowledge that they have learned in early years. However, some subjects do not have the same careful development and sequencing of important knowledge. This means that teachers do not always build effectively on pupils' prior learning.

During lessons, teachers make regular checks on pupils' understanding. They use these checks to identify where pupils are less secure in their knowledge. In some subjects, teachers use these checks to make changes to what they teach. This helps pupils to get the most out of each lesson. However, this practice is not always consistent across all subjects.

Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. They carefully adapt the curriculum when needed. Pupils with SEND study the same topics as their peers. Teachers break the learning down into smaller steps to help pupils develop their fluency and confidence. As a result, pupils with SEND learn important knowledge across a range of subjects.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and each other. Leaders, staff and pupils create a positive environment in which bullying is not tolerated. Pupils' behaviour is calm and orderly. Staff set a very strong example of the calm and thoughtful attitudes that they expect of their pupils. In early years, children's personal, social and emotional skills develop rapidly as they are taught to share, to politely wait their turn and to resolve disagreements. Pupils know what is right and what is wrong. They understand the school behaviour system and see the consequences in school to be fair and appropriate. The school has robust systems in place to promote regular attendance.

Reading is an ongoing priority. Leaders make sure the phonics programme is well structured. They make regular checks on what pupils know. Some pupils receive additional phonics teaching to make sure they do not fall behind their peers. The staff who provide this support are skilful and receive specific training. When pupils are learning to read, they are given reading books which match the sounds they have been taught. This helps them to read accurately and with growing confidence and fluency.

Support for pupils' emotional health and well-being is a strength of the school. Staff know their pupils extremely well. Leaders have developed a skilled and dedicated team who are highly effective in supporting the needs of pupils. All staff are trained to help pupils understand their emotions, behaviour and attitudes. Staff are adept at giving pupils the time to talk. As a result, pupils receive support when they need it most. This may be through daily check-ins or planned sessions such as 'sand play'. Strong relationships with pupils and families create the 'Norton magic' that promotes success for all.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of, and a deep respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values. Pupils enjoy sharing their knowledge of different faiths with each other. Pupils have the opportunity to visit different places of worship.

Those responsible for governance are extremely knowledgeable about the school. They use their experience well to challenge and support leaders. The workload and well-being of all staff are carefully considered by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a positive culture and awareness of safeguarding. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is a priority across the school. Concerns and referrals are dealt with in a timely manner. Safeguarding training is regular and impactful. Staff place emphasis on the importance of knowing their pupils well. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, they learn how to stay safe online by not sharing personal details.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. Although the majority of the curriculum is well embedded, some subjects do not match the quality of the more developed subject areas. As a result, pupils' knowledge in some subject areas is stronger than in others. Leaders should further develop the curriculum so that it is of a consistent quality across all subject areas.
- In some subjects, assessment systems are still in development. Not all subject leaders have a detailed understanding of what pupils know and remember. Leaders should further develop assessment practice so that it is consistent across all subject areas.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	107106
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10255609
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Daniel Thaw
Headteacher	Hazel Bell
Website	www.nortonfree.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the early years leaders. The leaders of reading, mathematics, history, physical education (PE) and science also met inspectors.
- Inspectors also met with the senior administrator and the mental health and well-being lead.
- A meeting was held with six members of the governing body, including the chair.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in: early reading and phonics, mathematics, PE, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety was evaluated on arrival at school, at breakfast club, in the dining room, at lunchtimes and at breaktimes.
- The designated safeguarding lead met inspectors to discuss recruitment and safeguarding records. Inspectors met single-sex pupil groups to discuss safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jane Clayton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andy Taylor

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