

Inspection of a good school: Norton Free Church of England Primary School

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

Inspection dates:

25–26 February 2020

Outcome

Norton Free Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending Norton Free. One parent described it as 'a lovely little school with a great community vibe'. Pupils are very proud to be part of 'Team Norton'. Physical activity is at the heart of the school. Pupils compete in a range of sports teams. They learn how to win humbly and lose graciously. Pupils complete their daily mile each afternoon. They know that a healthy body helps them to learn better.

Staff have high expectations for every pupil. Pupils achieve well, especially in mathematics. The well-planned curriculum works well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children get off to a good start in Reception. Their reading, writing and mathematics skills are regularly better than most children nationally. Leaders have recently reviewed how phonics is taught. They are working to improve this further. At the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Parents and carers agree that behaviour is good. Pupils and almost all parents say that bullying is not an issue. When it occasionally happens, adults deal with it swiftly. Pupils are very polite and respectful. The school's six Christian values underpin everything. Pupils understand these values very well. They often raise money to help other people. They learn to be 'caring, confident and accomplishing'.

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

The inspiring headteacher has made sure that the curriculum is broad and rich. Subjects link together coherently. Leaders have mapped out what they expect pupils to learn in each half term. This learning takes place through exciting topics. These include 'Spectacular Space' and 'Castles and Knights'. Expectations become more demanding as pupils move through the school. Each subject has a 'knowledge organiser'. These include the key vocabulary that pupils will learn in each topic. They are available to parents.

Leaders are passionate about reading. It is a high priority in the school. In 2019, reading results across the school were above or well above the national average. However, the

school's phonics results fell sharply. Leaders quickly devised plans to improve the teaching of phonics. The local authority provided strong support with this. Leaders have purchased sets of books which match the sounds that pupils know. They have improved teaching in phonics. Leaders now identify quickly any pupils that are falling behind. However, this improvement work is not quite complete. It is still a key priority for the school. From Year 2 upwards, pupils study a book together in their reciprocal reading sessions. During the inspection, Year 4 pupils enjoyed 'The Better Brown Stories' by Allan Ahlberg. They explored the meaning of the more difficult vocabulary, such as 'apathetic' and 'superior'. They used a range of skills to answer searching questions about the text.

Mathematics is a real strength of the school. Pupils in all classes complete challenging work. They become very good at solving a wide range of problems. Work in each year builds well on what has gone before. Reception children learned about common 3D shapes, such as cubes, cuboids, cones and cylinders. Pupils in Year 2 recognised more complex 3D shapes, such as triangular prisms. They explained vertices, edges and faces accurately. Across the school, pupils achieve highly in mathematics.

The curriculum for other subjects is also strong. Leaders use a 'hook' to launch each topic. This enthuses and excites pupils about this new learning. In art, pupils build progressively on their skills. This is because teachers understand the subject well.

Pupils say that teachers always expect them to behave well in lessons. They behave well around the school. Pupils know that it is 'good to be green'. The curriculum works well for pupils with SEND. Most parents agree that staff support these pupils well to achieve their full potential.

The author Tom Palmer recently visited the school. This helped pupils to improve the structure of their writing. The visit of a Paralympian helped pupils to understand perseverance. Pupils have visited a butterfly centre and Matlock Bath. Year 5 pupils had just returned from a residential visit. They had hugely enjoyed sliding down the 'Mudder'! These visits bring the curriculum to life. They expand the pupils' life experiences.

Reception children learn well in a warm, nurturing environment. They start learning to read immediately. They enjoy learning to ride safely on the school's balance bikes. They get on well together and are well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils understand the school's values. They know about British values and can give examples of democracy in action in their school. They are confident that racism does not happen in their school. Pupils vote weekly for who should receive the kindness cup. Staff are happy in their work as valued members of a strong team. They agree that the school is a happy and friendly place in which to work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is extremely important to all staff in this school. The headteacher makes sure that all her staff stay up to date with their training. Staff know how to report

concerns and are vigilant about pupils' safety and welfare. The school keeps detailed safeguarding records. Leaders and governors check these regularly.

Staff teach pupils to keep themselves safe. They learn about road safety from outside organisations. Two Year 5 pupils are road safety officers. They organise presentations in assemblies. When using electronic devices, pupils understand the danger of too much screen time. They know they should not give away personal details online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not enough pupils achieved the standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2019. Too many were not well enough prepared for the demands of the curriculum in Year 2. Leaders, acting on their review of early reading, should ensure that any pupil that falls behind catches up quickly. They should make sure that more of the books that pupils read contain the sounds that they have been taught.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2012.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	10097545
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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dan Thaw
Headteacher	Hazel Bell
Website	www.nortonfree.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 November 2015

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in September 2016. The senior leadership team has been extended and now consists of the assistant headteacher, English leader and inclusion leader.
- There have been many changes to the governing body since the previous inspection.
- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England faith school. It is part of the Diocese of Sheffield. Its last section 48 denominational inspection was in November 2016, when it was judged as good.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, I met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and the two senior leaders. I also met with a group of six governors and the local authority school improvement adviser.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art and design. I spoke with senior leaders about the structure and planning of the curriculum. I met with the curriculum leader for each subject and visited a selection of lessons with them. I also scrutinised a range of pupils' books in each subject and met with a selection of these

pupils to discuss their learning. I listened to pupils reading and talked with them about the books they enjoy. I had discussions with the teachers of the classes that we visited.

- I checked the school's policies and records around safeguarding. I spoke with the designated safeguarding leader, governors, pupils, staff and parents to check on the school's culture of safeguarding.
- I observed pupils during their social times. I spoke with parents in the playground. I considered the 101 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, together with the 57 free-text comments, and the nine responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- I spoke with the inclusion leader to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. I considered how well leaders protect pupils from bullying and manage staff workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Heather Mensah, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020