

Norton Free CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107106
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	377535
Inspection dates	10–11 January 2012
Lead inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Auckland
Headteacher	Helena Button
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2009
School address	Matthews Lane Sheffield S8 8JS
Telephone number	0114 2745873
Fax number	0114 2359060
Email address	enquiries@nortonfree.sheffield.sch.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Kathryn Dodd
Julie Harrison

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 13 lessons involving eight teachers and support staff. The inspectors held discussions with staff, groups of pupils, with members of the governing body and with parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed documentation, including a review of improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and a sample of pupils' work. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspectors analysed 111 questionnaires returned by parents and carers. 100 questionnaires from pupils and 16 from staff were also reviewed.

Information about the school

Almost all of the pupils at this average sized school are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Although the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, the proportion supported by a statement of special educational needs is below average. Current government floor standards are met. The school has been accredited with the Quality Mark for Basic Skills and it has achieved Healthy School status. The headteacher has been in post since September 2009. There is a separate after school provision on site, which is privately managed and was not inspected as part of this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It has improved at a good rate since the previous inspection, when its overall effectiveness was judged as satisfactory. This reflects good leadership and management. The rigorous and concerted action taken by the school has been effective and ensured the quality of teaching and the curriculum is good. Good partnerships with parents and carers are fostered. Questionnaires returned by a high proportion of parents and carers show that most would recommend the school to another parent or carer.

- Achievement is good. Pupils of all ages, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, make good progress. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average in English, although it is broadly average in mathematics. Initiatives aimed at raising attainment in mathematics are underway. Pupils' progress is accelerating. By the end of Year 2 attainment in mathematics is now above average. Although the majority of pupils now make good progress, it is still not as good as in English.

- The quality of teaching over time is good. Teachers make good use of outcomes from assessments to plan and provide tasks, tailor their questions and use support staff to ensure the varying needs of pupils are met. In reading and writing, pupils have good opportunities to use and apply their skills across a range of subjects and are clear about how to reach their challenging learning targets. These practices are not yet fully embedded in mathematics and occasionally opportunities to challenge the more-able pupils are overlooked.

- Behaviour is good. Pupils say that it has improved. Pupils respond well to the strategies to managing pupil behaviour, which are consistently well applied by all staff. Pupils are considerate, polite and respectful to adults and to one another.

- Leaders ensure pupils' skills and abilities are assessed regularly and accurately. They use this information effectively to pinpoint improvement priorities, such as mathematics. The system used to track this information does not always enable

leaders to easily identify differences in performance between all groups of pupils, such as the more able. New subject leaders know that their next steps are to increase their involvement in reviewing this information.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress to a consistently good rate in mathematics, by:
 - making sure assessment information is used consistently well to provide activities that challenge pupils of all abilities, especially the more able
 - making sure that pupils are clear about the steps they need to take to attain their learning targets
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills and to apply them through solving problems.
- Further improve the effectiveness with which pupil progress information is reviewed by:
 - extending the systems to track pupils' performance in order to pinpoint differences in the performance of different groups
 - developing the roles of new subject leaders in reviewing the information.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good. Pupils, including those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. This view is endorsed by the very large majority of parents and carers in questionnaires. In lessons, pupils behave well, are keen to learn and most respond very enthusiastically to teachers' questions. Pupils enjoy their work, especially when discussing their learning together, such as in pairs or undertaking practical activities where they work collaboratively. Pupils' concentration occasionally drifts as they work independently when activities provided are insufficiently challenging. Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs are well supported in lessons, learning effectively alongside their peers. A good range of additional support programmes beyond the classroom further contributes to their good achievement.

Learning gets off to a successful start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where children make good progress from their starting points which are typically below that expected for their age. Very warm and caring relationships between adults and children, along with the bright, lively, well organised and resourced learning environment, ensure that children quickly find out that learning is enjoyable and exciting. In recent years pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 has been rising and is now above average. A well established, systematic programme to teach pupils to read is in place. Attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 is also above average. This represents good progress from pupils' previous broadly average starting points. Older pupils develop a real passion for reading books. This, along with good opportunities to practise their skills during topic work or homework for example, contributes to their good achievement. In mathematics, both by the end of

Year 2 and Year 6, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment falls behind the proportion in reading and writing. A higher proportion of pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach the higher Level 5 in 2012. This demonstrates that recent initiatives aimed at boosting achievement in mathematics are already paying dividends and, as a result, the gap between English and mathematics is now closing.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good. Almost all parents and carers agree. Teachers' enthusiasm and very positive relationships, coupled with effective management of pupils' behaviour and use of interactive whiteboards all make a strong contribution to pupils' good progress. Teachers assess their pupil's progress regularly and accurately. They use this information effectively to plan activities that are matched well to pupils' varying needs. The use of support staff contributes well to pupils' good progress, especially those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consistently good quality marking in pupils' literacy books ensures they are clear about the next steps they need to take to attain their learning targets. These effective techniques are not yet consistently used in mathematics. Opportunities for moving learning forward at a fast pace in mathematics are sometimes overlooked. In a minority of lessons, activities do not always challenge the more-able pupils. In the best lessons, like those seen in Year 6, very direct, fast paced, skilful and challenging questioning deepens pupils' understanding. Similarly, practical and engaging activities keep pupils continually motivated. Ongoing encouragement from their teacher to strive for very challenging learning targets also contributes to their accelerated progress.

Effective teaching of linking letters with the sounds they make ensures pupils make good progress in reading. Regular assessment is used effectively to organise pupils into groups of similar ability and to ensure daily activities closely reflect pupils' individual needs. In regular lessons for this, staff provide ongoing opportunities for pupils to hear, say, read and to write letters, sounds and words. Further opportunities for pupils to read with adults, together with the effective support provided to encourage parents and carers to hear their children read at home, contributes to pupils' good progress. Teachers provide a good range of activities enabling pupils to work in teams or talk about learning in pairs. This contributes effectively to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum provides effective support for pupils with social and emotional needs. The 'nurture group' for example, enables pupils to understand how to improve their relationships.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Almost all pupils, as indicated in returned pupil questionnaires, agree that behaviour is good. They acknowledge that over time, it has improved. This was confirmed by inspection observations. Analysis of school behavioural records indicates that incidents of poor behaviour have decreased and now are rare. Pupils say that lessons are seldom disrupted by inappropriate behaviour and, if this happens, staff deal with it effectively and quickly. Pupils are clear about expectations of their good behaviour and are keen to rise to this. This, along with the good provision for developing pupils'

understanding of 'respect', 'tolerance' and 'cooperation' through assemblies for example, contributes well to their moral development. Playground leaders enthusiastically organise games at break and lunchtimes, where pupils of all ages get on noticeably well together. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage behave well. This shows in their ability to listen respectfully to adults and one another. The very large majority of parents and carers also agree that there is a good standard of behaviour. Even so, a very small minority expressed that cases of bullying are not always dealt with effectively. Inspectors found arrangements to be appropriate and, as a result, incidents are now rare. Pupils say that when bullying occurs, it is dealt with very quickly. Pupils have confidence in approaching staff with any problems or concerns and are confident that they feel safe in school. Similarly, they talk knowledgeably about how to keep safe beyond school. They are keenly aware of matters relating to 'road safety' and 'stranger danger'. Pupils' attendance is consistently above average and reflects their enjoyment of school.

Leadership and management

This very caring, safe and supportive school, underpinned by strong Christian values, reflects the commitment of everyone to improving pupils' achievement. The headteacher provides a clear vision of where and how to improve achievement. Her accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness stems from a rigorous monitoring of the quality of provision. School leaders and managers monitor the quality of teaching and the curriculum robustly, using outcomes astutely to improve them. This has resulted in the quality of teaching and the curriculum being strengthened, which now are good. Consequently, pupils' progress has accelerated from a satisfactory to a good rate. Successful adaptations to the writing curriculum, such as providing more regular and exciting opportunities to write creatively and at length, in topic work or homework projects, are helping to raise attainment in writing even further. A concerted effort to promote equality of opportunities also helps to bring about improvement in achievement. This is why the gap between English and mathematics is starting to close. These successes demonstrate a good capacity to continue to improve. Although effective procedures are in place to accurately assess and to track the progress of individual pupils, this information is not yet used effectively to spot differences between some groups of pupils, such as the more-able pupils. The governing body offer effective support and provide ongoing challenge, particularly to ensure that that quality of teaching improves. They have a good understanding of how, where and why the school has improved and of the next improvements that are required. Safeguarding procedures, particularly the arrangements to ensure all staff are well trained and to ensure pupils know how to keep themselves safe, are good.

In their quest to improve pupils' achievement, leaders and the governing body forge effective partnerships with parents and carers and beyond school. Staff particularly value the opportunities that stem from such partnerships to extend their own professional development. This has contributed to the improved quality of teaching. Partnerships also help to extend and enrich the curriculum in key areas, such as literacy, sport and music. Links with other schools nearby and around the world, such as in Germany and Tanzania, contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result pupils show great sensitivity, tolerance and respect for diverse faiths and cultures and for those less fortunate than themselves. By seeking the views of parents and carers through the 'parents' forum'

and by consulting on improvement priorities, such as approaches to managing behaviour, parents and carers also make a good contribution to school improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Norton Free CE Primary School, Sheffield S8 8JS

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the team when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and finding out your views. You go to a good school. By Year 6, your attainment is above that expected for your age and you make good progress, particularly in reading and writing. We were particularly pleased to:

- see your good behaviour and hear about how you think it has improved
- find out you feel so safe in school and how much you know about keeping safe out of school
- hear pupils in Year 6 perform the song they composed about the weather and singing it in German
- find out that the quality of teaching in your school has improved and that it is now good.

We have asked that some improvements be made. These are to make sure that:

- your teachers help you make consistently good progress, particularly in mathematics
- adults with special responsibilities check even more carefully that you learn equally well in all your classes, particularly those of you who are capable of reaching the higher levels of attainment.

You can help by making sure that you tell your teacher if your work is too easy or hard and by always checking what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. Of course, you should make sure that you always try your best in everything you do.

I wish you all the very best for a bright and successful future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd
Lead inspector

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