

CfBT Inspection Services T 0300 1231231  
Suite 22 [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
West Lancs Investment Centre [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

**Direct T** 01695 566934  
**Direct F** 01695 729320  
[gtunncliffe@cfbt.com](mailto:gtunncliffe@cfbt.com)  
[www.cfbt-inspections.com](http://www.cfbt-inspections.com)



26 May 2011

Ms S Dawson  
Headteacher  
Norton Primary School  
Berkshire Road  
Norton  
Stockton-on-Tees  
County Durham  
TS20 2RD

Dear Ms Dawson,

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Norton Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 25 May 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

Since the previous inspection, two governors have left and been replaced and a new vice chair of the governing body is due to be appointed.

As a result of the inspection on 20 January 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Standards and achievement are rising and pupils are making more rapid progress as they move through the school, some from low starting points. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly in line with local and national averages for mathematics and slightly lower in English. Girls are achieving more highly than boys which reflects the national picture. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is improving and level 5+ in English were above average in 2010. The school is taking effective action to improve attainment in mathematics. Inspection evidence confirms current school data that standards and achievement across the school are continuing to improve.

The proportion of good teaching has improved and teachers have higher expectations of pupils. There is a better match between pupils' work and their ability. Work caters more effectively for the wide ability range and the close to average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspection evidence confirms pupils are learning more independently and direction by teachers is better balanced. New work is explained more

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clearly and pupils are learning more quickly as a result. More opportunities are taken to develop literacy and numeracy through other subjects, for example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson on the Ancient Greeks.

The quality of leadership and management has been strengthened and the school's development is more sharply focused. The analysis and monitoring of performance has improved and the impact of action is regularly evaluated. An appropriate range of monitoring activities such as lesson observations, work scrutiny and discussion with pupils are better focused on achievement and progress. The purpose of monitoring is more clearly understood by managers at all levels.

Governors are more involved and have a greater awareness of strengths and areas for development. They have been involved in training to challenge the school more rigorously. The school improvement plan is regularly monitored and link governors have been appointed for aspects such as behaviour, literacy, and inclusion. The local authority has effectively helped to drive school improvement, for example, by providing the support of an advanced skills teacher in mathematics. Senior leaders work closely with the School Improvement Partner to achieve gains in the school's overall effectiveness and, as a result, the school is demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place 20 Jan 2010**

- Improve standards and achievement in all subjects by ensuring that teachers:
  - have high expectations of pupils of all abilities and set work that consistently meets their needs
  - strike a better balance between teacher-directed and independent learning
  - use every opportunity to develop literacy and numeracy through other subjects
  - explain new work clearly so that pupils can learn more quickly.
- Ensure that the school's development is more sharply focused through:
  - more rigorous and balanced evaluation, especially of teaching and learning
  - more effective involvement by the governing body.