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Mr C Holder
Executive Headteacher
Norton Free Church of England Primary School
Matthews Lane
Sheffield
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Dear Mr Holder

Short inspection of Norton Free Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 November 2015 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Your strong leadership has helped staff to weather unexpected changes in senior leadership arrangements without adverse impact on the school's effectiveness. Good teaching is continuing to ensure that pupils achieve well and standards continue to rise. Strong progress is evident in all year groups across a range of subjects. Teachers and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. Many parents are delighted about the impact leaders and teachers have on their children's learning and development. This includes the parents of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged.

Staff morale is high and teachers feel able to develop new ideas and ways of working to further improve the progress all pupils make. Subject leaders are carefully tracking the progress of different pupils and providing extra help if any show signs of falling behind.

Pupils behave well and show respect to adults and one another. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. They listen to their teachers and respond quickly to any requests or instructions. This means the pace of learning is brisk. Breaktimes are lively because the vast majority of pupils are skipping, playing football or using the other games and equipment provided. This is helping to keep them healthy and allowing them to develop into young people who can engage cooperatively with others and manage their own behaviour well. The sports ambassadors are an asset

to the school. By supporting younger pupils at breaktimes and organising charity sports events, like the recent 'Race for Life', they are learning social skills which prepare them well for the future.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders make sure all staff training is up to date and systems are in place for staff to use if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare. You ensure that all leaders, who take responsibility for the school on particular days, have the right training to respond swiftly to any concerns raised. Leaders know each pupil really well and use this knowledge to work with families and other agencies to good effect. Pupils say they feel safe and the vast majority of parents agree. A very small number of parents raised a concern about how incidents of bullying are managed. I looked at the school's records, responses to parents, and talked with and observed pupils in lessons and play. The evidence indicates that the school acts appropriately to support pupils who may be bullied and that incidents of this nature are very low.

Inspection findings

- Under your leadership the senior staff have established, and effectively use, systems to regularly check all aspects of the school's work. As a result, you understand the school well and act very quickly if any aspect of the school's work is starting to slip below the good standard expected. Following improved results for Year 2 and 6 pupils in 2015, you have increased the focus on the small number of disadvantaged pupils who did not achieve as well as other pupils. Evidence in classrooms and pupils' books indicate that the action teachers are taking is having a positive impact.
- The governing body has strengthened over the last 12 months. Governors have proved that they can act incisively when needed. They undertake 'lessons learned' reviews so that they are better prepared to identify any issues more quickly if the need arises in the future. They are driving the review of policies in a systematic and considered way, taking into account the particular needs of the school. However, some policy information on the school's website is out of date. Similarly, some aspects of the school's development plan are not precise enough for governors to easily check the impact of some actions taken to further improve the school's effectiveness.
- Teaching, learning and assessment continue to improve. Leaders make frequent and varied checks on all aspects of teaching. This means that they can advise and guide staff when needed to ensure that the best possible strategies are used to support all pupils. This vigilance led to the improved outcomes in 2015 and is continuing to raise achievement.

- Teachers use a wide range of approaches to ensure that pupils develop good learning habits. This is resulting in all pupils, from different starting points, making strong progress across a range of subjects. Teachers' good subject knowledge in mathematics means that pupils confidently use and apply mathematical skills to solve problems and check their work. Equally, in English the consistent use of the appropriate grammatical terms means that pupils' writing develops at a good pace. The very wide range of approaches supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is impressive. These include accurate signing to enhance pupils' understanding and the use of 'hands on' practical activities alongside more-able pupils working on more challenging tasks.
- The pupils' personal development and welfare is a significant strength of the school. The level of respect shown to all, their keenness to learn and development of social and moral purpose are apparent throughout the school day. Opportunities to develop good physical skills over a range of sports, through competition, promote the pupils' enjoyment and self-esteem. The gymnasts observed were extremely skilled because of their commitment to regular early-morning practices.
- Attendance is above average and the governing body has set a very challenging target of 98% for this year. This demonstrates governors' high aspirations and expectations of what the school can achieve. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and described a range of activities that help them develop personal safety skills, including e-safety.
- Pupil's current progress is strong and you and your staff place much emphasis on ensuring that all pupils do as well as they can. Teachers ensure that pupils are ready for the next stage of their education by having a good level of knowledge and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics and other subjects, for example French.
- Strong links with the local secondary school means that Year 6 pupils, on the whole, are looking forward to moving on at the end of the year. Parents spoke highly of the work teachers do to make sure that children joining the early years provision settle quickly and make a good start to their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- school policies, including those for safeguarding and complaints, are updated on the website, and parents are informed of any changes
- school development plans are more precise about what success will look like so that governors can quickly check staff have achieved what was intended.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Sheffield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely
Susan Hayter

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with senior leaders and subject leaders and representatives of the governing body. I had telephone conversations with a representative for the local authority and the school's human resources provider. I visited every class and stayed longer in two classes, jointly with the executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher. I reviewed work in pupils' books and on display.

I spoke with pupils at breaktime and during lessons. I considered the 36 responses on Parent View and 23 free text responses. I spoke with parents as they arrived with their children in the morning and held one telephone conversation with a parent.

I reviewed the school's surveys of pupils and staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's newly introduced online survey for pupils or staff.

I reviewed a range of documents provided by the school, including minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour.