

# Inspection of a good school: Norton Fitzwarren Church School

Blackdown View, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, Somerset TA2 6TB

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

## **Outcome**

Norton Fitzwarren Church School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

At Norton Fitzwarren Church School, staff and pupils live out the school's Christian ethos of 'One family together, we shine'. Warm relationships are evident. Pupils thrive. They enjoy school and feel safe. Parents agree.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning, from the pre-school to Year 6. Staff have high expectations of behaviour. Consequently, pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. They keenly participate in discussions about their work. Pupils respectfully listen to one another's views. They say bullying is rare. However, if it occurs, adults resolve it quickly.

Leaders have created a carefully considered personal development curriculum. They have planned when pupils experience key milestones. For example, older pupils develop their independence through a residential visit. Children in the early years learn about the local area through a visit to a hill fort.

Leaders plan a variety of clubs on offer to develop pupils' interests, such as choir, science and gymnastics. They run sessions designed to support pupils from military families. Leaders ensure there are no barriers to pupils' participation. As a result, many pupils attend these clubs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

The headteacher, ably supported by other senior leaders, has created a tight-knit staff. Relationships between staff, pupils, parents and the community are highly positive. Leaders have worked alongside teachers to create a strong middle leadership team.

Leaders have created an ambitious, broad curriculum, from early years to Year 6. They review the curriculum to ensure that it aligns with the necessary changes to the class structure each year. This means leaders know what pupils have learned and when.

Through regular checks, curriculum leaders know how well pupils learn. They accurately identify the strengths and next steps for their subjects. As a result, the curriculum has improved rapidly.

Following the pandemic, leaders have prioritised pupils' oracy. This lies at the heart of the curriculum. Its impact is strong. Teachers check that pupils understand and use key vocabulary. This allows pupils to explain their ideas articulately. For example, younger pupils talk confidently about the similarities and differences between historical explorers, such as Christopher Columbus and Ernest Shackleton.

In most subjects, pupils learn well. Teachers explain new ideas clearly. They question pupils to great effect to deepen their knowledge. Staff address any misconceptions straightaway. In mathematics, key stage 2 pupils solve problems with fractions and mixed numbers confidently. In Reception Year, children confidently explain problems involving the number 10. Children in the pre-school learn about the concept of number through a number-rich environment. However, while pupils can talk about their learning in lessons, in a few foundation subjects they do not recall their learning over the long term. This is because leaders have not designed the curriculum as effectively in these subjects so that it builds on what pupils have learned. Leaders recognise this.

Leaders have made reading central to the curriculum. Children learn to read straightaway in the early years. Leaders have trained all staff in how to teach early reading. This means they have strong subject knowledge. Staff quickly identify any gaps in learning. Pupils read books closely matched to the sounds they know. This allows them to become confident, fluent readers. Pupils who have fallen behind catch up and keep up swiftly. Teachers promote a love of books by sharing a range of texts and authors with pupils.

Leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is a strength. Leaders place an emphasis on early identification, starting in the early years. This ensures that pupils have their needs met quickly. Well-trained staff adapt the curriculum well, including for pupils with complex needs. Pupils learn the same broad and balanced curriculum as their peers.

Through the personal, social and health education curriculum, pupils learn about different types of families. They can suggest ways to keep healthy, both physically and mentally. Pupils take on meaningful leadership roles, such as in the school council. They wrote to the parish council to recommend play equipment in the local area. Pupils develop a strong sense of spirituality through the school's close links to the local church.

Staff morale is high. Teachers in the early stages of their career feel supported by leaders. As one member of staff explained, 'Leaders don't just look after the children, they look after us, too.' Governors and the trust know the school well. They make regular checks on aspects of the school's work. This allows them to challenge and support leaders effectively.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of vigilance. They ensure staff receive regular training. Leaders make checks on the effectiveness of this training. Staff record even the smallest concerns. Leaders escalate these to the local authority as necessary. They are tenacious in challenging outcomes if they feel they are not in the best interests of the pupil. Leaders work with vulnerable families to secure them the support they need. For example, they help those suffering financial hardship with food parcels.

Leaders make suitable checks on staff's suitability to work with children. Governors and the trust help to oversee these.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, the curriculum is not as well designed as it could be. Consequently, pupils do not recall their learning as well in these subjects. Leaders must ensure that all subject curriculums are designed to build on pupils' prior learning so that pupils know more and remember more.

## 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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged Norton Fitzwarren Church of England Voluntary Controlled Community School to be good in February 2014.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141162
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241597
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	324
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Nigel Daniel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kelly Birt
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.nortonfitzwarrenprimary.co.uk">www.nortonfitzwarrenprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post in 2020.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased significantly in recent years.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school provision.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. Its last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in 2017, when it received an outstanding judgement.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, groups of staff, groups of pupils, trust executive leaders, the chair of the trust and members of the local governing body.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. He met with the designated safeguarding lead to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and took into consideration responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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