



Norton Free Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107106
LEA Sheffield
Inspection number 277707
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs June Sharpe CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Matthews Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Norton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Sheffield, South Yorkshire S8 8JS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0114 2745873
Number on roll	215	Fax number	01142359060
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Ian Auckland
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2000	Headteacher	Mr R Barron

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized Church of England Voluntary Controlled school is about four miles south of Sheffield. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school rarely takes pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is below average, and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Half the pupils come from beyond the immediate locality. With reorganisation, there are new premises and the school now draws pupils from a wider range of social backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection and gives satisfactory value for money. The school's view of itself as a good school is incorrect. This is because it is based on an incomplete picture of performance in national tests and of pupils' progress over time. Staff have not looked closely at the most recent national data and explained convincingly why the data is inconsistent with their own evaluations.

Pupils enjoy coming to this friendly and caring school, and their personal development and attendance are good. Parents and carers hold the school in high regard, and good consultation gives everyone their say. The school has overcome many difficulties created by reorganisation of local schools. The high-quality new premises are a significant improvement. Getting successfully to this point, however, has taken its toll, as shown by a decline in Year 6 national test results since 2003, especially in science. Standards and achievement, including standards and quality in the Foundation Stage, are satisfactory, reflecting the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning, and satisfactory leadership and management. Governance is good, however, and as a result of the school's efforts, standards have improved in mathematics. Standards in science remain a weakness, and the more capable pupils could sometimes do better in most subjects if teachers expected more of them. Better teaching and learning, along with more effective deployment of teaching assistants, would help to drive standards back up to where the school would like them to be. The school has satisfactory capacity to achieve this and to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning, particularly in science and for the more capable pupils in all subjects.
- Make better use of national and school data to evaluate the effectiveness of the school accurately.
- Deploy teaching assistants more effectively to help pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress and the standard of their work is average. Since 2003, the attainment of pupils starting school has declined, and it is now broadly average. Year 2 assessments in reading, writing and mathematics have improved since 2003, especially in mathematics, although they remain average. The falling trend of Year 6 test results in English, mathematics and, particularly in science, highlights a slowing down of progress between Years 2 and 6, particularly in the case of boys. Standards in the 2005 tests were average and, although the school anticipates good improvement this year in mathematics, this is not the case in English and science. The school met its targets in 2005, and pupils in Year 6 are on track to meet the 2006 targets. The targets,

however, are not very challenging in relation to the more capable pupils. Progress for the potentially higher attaining pupils throughout the school is sometimes limited because their work does not allow them to build on what they can already do. Attention to improving pupils' ability to solve problems in mathematics has paid dividends, and standards are improving. There are fewer signs of improvement in writing and investigative work in science, and the impact of the school's recent focus on these areas has not yet fed through into results.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is an area where the school's evaluation of itself is correct. Pupils' personal development is good. Attendance is above average and most pupils are keen to learn. They become animated when encouraged to talk and to use their initiative. Pupils respond well to responsibility. The school council is highly influential and gets things done, for example, deciding how best to use the school grounds. This sense of responsibility extends to the wider community, especially the church, with pupils raising funds. Underpinned by the Christian ethos, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Reflective assemblies add much to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils' knowledge of lifestyles and customs in multicultural Britain, however, is superficial. Close attention to learning to play and work alongside one another is paying dividends; relationships are good. Children in the Foundation Stage work together happily, and older pupils readily help younger ones at playtimes. Pupils say that there is little or no bullying, and they are motivated by the numerous ways in which good behaviour is rewarded. The 'worth a mention' accolades, for example, are highly prized. Pupils know a good deal about healthy living and the importance of exercise. Many avoid unhealthy snacks at playtimes. Pupils' achievement in basic literacy and numeracy skills contributes soundly to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A satisfactory quality of teaching and learning enables pupils to make steady progress. Positive and hardworking teachers are open to new ideas, such as using technological equipment to help pupils to understand their work better. They prepare well for lessons, are clear about what they want the class to learn, and explain things carefully. They usually manage behaviour well, so that lesson time is not wasted dealing with problems. In some lessons, however, the pace of pupils' learning slows down because teachers spend too much time talking and questioning pupils, leaving little time for them to enjoy practising their skills. Learning then suffers because some pupils lose interest and become restless. Pupils show how well they can learn, however, when they are keenly interested in what they have to do. The good progress of Year 1 pupils in a science lesson, for example, was the result of enjoying many different, exciting practical activities. Teachers regularly assess pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum. They

do not always use the information as well as they could to ensure that pupils' work is pitched correctly and that classroom assistants spend time with those who most need it. This sometimes restricts pupils' progress, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more capable pupils. It also means that pupils' knowledge of what they need to learn next is variable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A satisfactory curriculum gives suitable emphasis to English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), so that pupils are prepared for their next stage of education. Theme days, such as the 'art day', add variety and have resulted in some good quality work. Work across the subjects to make learning interesting and challenging, especially for the more capable pupils, however, is piecemeal. Work in the Foundation Stage allows pupils sufficient time for initiating their own learning, both indoors and outdoors. They do not get the most from their chosen activities, however, when there is no adult available to take their learning forward. Pupils go on a good range of visits to engage their interest, and many have taken part in a good range of extra-curricular activities. Although increased opportunities for learning to solve problems in mathematics have helped to raise standards, there is little firm evidence yet that improved provision for writing and for investigative work in science are having the desired effect.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

An ethos of care pervades the school and pupils say that they can talk to staff. They also say that the 'worry boxes' help those who are 'too scared to talk' to have their say. There are thorough procedures for ensuring pupils' care, including those for child protection. Systems for tracking how well pupils are doing, however, are too fragmented. They are sufficient to pinpoint pupils who need an extra boost to their learning and those who have particular gifts and talents. Extra help is often provided, but there are not enough checks made on how effective this is. Consequently, there are some shortcomings in the deployment of teaching assistants. A lack of clarity about how much progress pupils are making over time undermines the recent push in setting learning targets, which are not yet well known by pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Satisfactory leadership and management, along with knowledgeable and insightful governance, give the school satisfactory capacity to improve in the future. There is a good level of parental satisfaction, despite huge change. The school has come successfully through reorganisation, new premises and staffing difficulties. The new accommodation is a significant improvement. This has been at a cost, however, because it has deflected focus away from driving up standards. Performance in Year 6 national

tests has suffered, especially in science. The headteacher works hard to keep the school running smoothly, with good relationships and a growing sense of teamwork. Good consultation with stakeholders and commitment to listening and responding to the views of parents and children is a successful part of the work of the school. The headteacher is supported well by governors, the deputy headteacher and by subject leaders. They have identified the right priorities for improvement in the future, with some clear signs of an impact on raising standards. Standards in Year 5 and in mathematics have improved, for example, because the school has recognised problems and taken action to put them right. Although senior staff give time and attention to finding out how well initiatives are going, they have not correctly evaluated the school's overall performance and linked this to other areas, such as teaching and learning. This is mainly because they are still collating information about pupils' progress over time and because they have not interpreted the recent national test data robustly enough. Value for money is satisfactory.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful and for making us feel welcome in your school. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out about the interesting things that happen at your school.

What we liked most about your school

- Your school is a friendly and welcoming place and all the adults care about you.
- You enjoy coming to school and attend regularly.
- Your behaviour is good and everyone gets along well together.
- The school council involves everyone in deciding how you want to improve your school.
- Your mathematics work is getting better, especially solving problems.
- The school building and outside areas are very good places for you to work and play.
- The school governors are very interested in your school and work hard to make sure that you have everything you need.

What we have asked the school to do now

- Help you to improve your work in science, especially investigating.
- Leave more time in lessons for you to get on with your work instead of listening to instructions.
- Make sure that your work is never too easy or too hard, and that you have the right kind of help at the right time.
- Be more certain about how well you are doing and how good your school is.

We are sure that you will help your teachers to make your school even better.