

Torpoint Community College

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 112041 |
| Local Authority | Cornwall |
| Inspection number | 357031 |
| Inspection dates | 30–31 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Sue Frater HMI |

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

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Comprehensive |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 855 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 155 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Morton |
| Headteacher | Andrea Hazeldine |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 December 2007 |
| School address | Trevol Road Cornwall PL11 2NH |
| Telephone number | 01752 812511 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 42 lessons taught by 40 teachers and held meetings with parents and carers, groups of students, staff, governors and a representative from the local authority. They observed the college's work, and looked at documentation including the college's monitoring and evaluation of lessons and students' progress towards their targets, its monitoring of attendance and behaviour, safeguarding procedures and college improvement planning. In addition, they looked at questionnaires completed by staff, students and 210 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The learning and progress of all students, particularly in mathematics, to determine whether teaching, especially teachers' use of targets and assessment, is sufficiently challenging and whether learning and progress are improving securely and quickly.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the college, to ascertain whether it is a barrier to attainment.
- Leadership and management of teaching and learning, to determine whether it is rigorous enough to accelerate progress and raise attainment.

Information about the school

A falling roll has resulted in the college being slightly smaller than most secondary schools. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to that found in most schools. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is low and the number speaking English as an additional language is smaller than that found in most schools. An average number of students have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and an above-average proportion has a statement of special educational needs. The needs relate mainly to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties. The few physically disabled students who rely on wheelchairs are able to access the college. The proportion of students who leave before the end of Year 11 or join the college at times other than the start of Year 7, is above average. The college's specialist status in English and humanities was re-designated in 2008. The college has attained accreditation including Healthy Schools status, Fairtrade, International Schools and Arts Mark silver awards.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Torpoint Community College is satisfactory and improving. While standards of attainment are low, particularly in mathematics, there is secure evidence to demonstrate that the achievement of current students is improving and satisfactory overall. This is because students' learning and progress in lessons are now satisfactory, and accelerating. Specialist provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to progress at the same rate as their peers. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving securely. The use of more challenging targets is raising expectations of students' achievement, but targets are not used consistently to match all lessons to the range of students' abilities or to engage students in evaluating their progress. In good and outstanding lessons, students enjoy developing independent learning skills such as investigating, discussing, role playing and evaluating. The application of such skills enables them to work and learn at a good pace. Less successful lessons tend to be teacher directed, with few opportunities to apply independent skills, and this slows the pace of learning. In a few lessons that do not engage them, some students become involved in low-level disruption. There are clear procedures for managing behaviour, but they are not applied consistently. Consequently, behaviour overall is satisfactory rather than good.

Most students adopt safe and healthy lifestyles. They contribute well to the college and wider community, for example in environmental projects. They develop satisfactory skills for the workplace, especially skills in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT). Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and enhanced by extensive extra-curricular activities, including in performing arts. The curriculum is good because it provides a broad range of academic and vocational courses to meet students' needs. Good procedures for safeguarding, care, guidance and support are effective in keeping students safe and improving attendance. A parent wrote, 'The college gets my top marks for putting child safety and welfare at the centre of what they do.'

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has been successful in addressing staffing issues relating to the falling roll and underperformance in teaching. She is increasing the college's capacity to sustain improvements appropriately by developing the roles of senior and middle leaders. Together with all leaders and managers, the headteacher is leading suitable improvements across the college's work. A key factor in the evident improvements is the implementation of procedures for holding staff to account for students' progress. Teachers acknowledge the need for rapid improvement in students' achievement. However, they say they would appreciate a more balanced approach to improving teaching and learning, with challenge and support in equal measures. Self-evaluation as a whole is satisfactory, but while all areas of the college's work are monitored appropriately, they are not all evaluated sufficiently rigorously to provide consistently clear and systematic direction for further improvement.

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Consequently, performance in some subjects, such as English and the performing arts, is improving more rapidly than in others, for example mathematics. However, given the systems that have been established and the evident improvements, the college has satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, particularly in mathematics, by improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that the very large majority is good by:
 - ensuring all teachers use challenging targets to match lessons to the range of students' abilities and to engage students in evaluating their progress
 - sharing and embedding the features of good and outstanding lessons across the college, especially in developing students' independent learning skills such as investigating, problem solving, discussing, role playing and evaluating
 - adopting a consistent approach to behaviour management.
- Ensure all leaders and managers evaluate accurately and rigorously the impact of actions taken to provide consistently clear and systematic direction for further improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students' learning and progress throughout the college are satisfactory overall. They are good in an increasing number of lessons, particularly in English and the performing arts, as confirmed by the Arts Mark silver award. However, there remains some variability across and within subjects where lessons are not matched consistently to the range of students' abilities. This includes students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although they achieve as well as their peers when given specialist support. Students say they enjoy and make most progress in lessons that challenge them to exceed their end of year targets and cite English and drama as examples. In these lessons they know their individual target levels and what they need to do to reach them. They engage in evaluating their own progress and this motivates them to improve their skills, for example in writing or role play. In some lessons, such as in mathematics, they are given insufficient opportunities to apply and improve their skills independently. Attainment in mathematics has been low for the past three years. However, recent improvements in the leadership and management of mathematics are bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, which, while still variable, are now satisfactory overall. Above average attainment in English has compensated for low attainment in mathematics, and GCSE results at five or more A*-C grades including English and mathematics have been broadly average over the past three years. The overall GCSE results declined in 2010 to significantly below average. Students' achievement was inadequate. The college's monitoring of the progress of current students demonstrates achievement is improving and is satisfactory.

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Students say they feel safe and that any incidents of bullying are addressed promptly. Behaviour is satisfactory. While inspectors saw good behaviour around the college and in most lessons, there were incidents of low-level disruption in a few lessons that did not engage all students. Students have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, as confirmed by the 'Healthy Schools' award. While a majority enjoy the many opportunities to participate in sport, they do not always opt for the healthy food options available at lunchtimes. Students make a good contribution to the school and community, for example as student leaders helping to supervise others at breaks. Although students develop strong workplace skills such as teamwork, literacy and ICT, numeracy skills are less well developed and so, overall, this aspect is satisfactory. Students' attendance has improved and is above average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students reflect on ultimate questions and other faiths, discuss moral issues, as confirmed by the 'Fairtrade award', work well together, and take part in social and cultural events such as drama productions. Through the International Schools award, students develop understanding of other cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 4 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. While it is improving and is now good in a majority of lessons, in a minority of lessons it is not yet consistently good enough to secure good progress. Good and outstanding lessons are characterised by a focus on the

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learning of all students throughout the lesson, and engaging them in assessing their progress regularly. Outstanding lessons ensure students' progress is rapid, by matching learning objectives and tasks to the specific needs of all students, as identified by their challenging targets. In a minority of lessons where teaching is satisfactory, activities are pitched at the right broad level but all students carry out the same tasks at the same pace. Less-able students commented that they sometimes found it hard to understand these lessons, and more-able students were seen to be bored by the slow pace. These lessons tend to be teacher directed, with limited opportunities for the students to work collaboratively and to develop independent learning skills such as investigating and evaluating. This sometimes leads to low-level disruption.

The curriculum is good in that it is well tailored to meet the needs of all students. It includes a 'learning to learn' skills programme in Year 7, early entry to examination in Year 9, and a wide range of academic and vocational courses from Year 10, including the ASDAN qualification. The curriculum is enhanced by an extensive range of partnerships with other schools, for example in providing eight diploma lines, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The introduction of BTEC courses is raising achievement in science, music and physical education. While the specialist subject of English is leading on improvements in the curriculum, the contribution of geography and history is limited.

Good procedures for care, guidance and support result in the engagement in learning of students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The good procedures also ensure students select appropriate courses for further and higher education and employment and that their attendance improves. Specialist support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to access the full curriculum and to achieve as well as their peers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory and promote satisfactory and improving outcomes. The headteacher, senior and middle leaders have established suitable systems for improving students' achievement. They include monitoring lessons, students' workbooks, and students' progress towards more challenging targets. Underachievement is identified and is being addressed by appropriate intervention strategies. Self-evaluation identifies relevant priorities for improvement, such as the quality of teaching and learning. However, improvement planning does not provide a systematic approach to addressing priorities and driving improvement. Consequently, the development of teaching and learning is not fully consistent.

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Improvements in the leadership team's evaluation of college improvement strategies have resulted in the governing body being better informed and more able to hold the college to account for its attainment. The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. The college makes good use of an extensive range of partnerships to support students' learning and well-being. It manages well the variable approach to support for students from two different local authorities. In monitoring the progress of students by gender, ethnicity and ability, and providing suitable intervention, the college is beginning to close the gaps in achievement. Thus, equal opportunity is being promoted and discrimination is being tackled satisfactorily. Safeguarding procedures are good and include good-quality training for all staff and governors. The college promotes community cohesion well. Students develop awareness and understanding of other people in a local, national and global context, including people of different socio-economic, ethnic and faith groups. Consequently, students from different backgrounds get on noticeably well with each other. Given students' outcomes, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 3 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Sixth form

Achievement in the sixth form is improving and is now good. In 2010, attainment was broadly average in A level examinations and above average in AS level examinations. The college's data on current students indicate that attainment is now above average at both AS and A level. Attendance is also above average. Students make a strong contribution to the life of the college and wider community by volunteering to lead activities such as working with younger students. Teaching is good and assessment is used effectively to promote students' good progress in most, but not yet all, lessons. Good information, advice and guidance ensure that students are prepared well for further study or employment. Leadership and management are good and focus effectively on improving

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outcomes. Strengths are developed and key areas of weakness addressed successfully. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good.

These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 2 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

More parents and carers than is typical responded to the questionnaire. Of these responses, a broadly average proportion agree that their children enjoy the college, that their children are safe, the college informs them of their children's progress and helps them to support learning, that teaching is good and their children are making enough progress. A lower proportion of responses than is usual agree that the college helps their children to be healthy, that it prepares them well for the future and meets their needs. A much lower proportion of responses than is found in most schools agree that the college deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors endorse the view that there is still some variability in students' behaviour, although the college is addressing this. While the college engages parents and carers in surveys and acts on their responses, for example in improving behaviour and homework, some parents and carers commented that their individual concerns are not always followed up by the college.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Torpoint Community College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 210 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 855 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 53 | 25 | 133 | 63 | 20 | 10 | 3 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 50 | 24 | 144 | 69 | 13 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 62 | 30 | 134 | 64 | 11 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 51 | 24 | 137 | 65 | 19 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 39 | 19 | 141 | 67 | 22 | 10 | 2 | 1 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 44 | 21 | 127 | 60 | 31 | 15 | 1 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 38 | 18 | 127 | 60 | 34 | 16 | 1 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 46 | 22 | 128 | 61 | 21 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 38 | 18 | 138 | 66 | 24 | 11 | 1 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 27 | 13 | 120 | 57 | 46 | 22 | 13 | 6 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 34 | 16 | 121 | 58 | 36 | 17 | 7 | 3 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 39 | 19 | 131 | 62 | 23 | 11 | 6 | 3 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 55 | 26 | 130 | 62 | 14 | 7 | 5 | 2 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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 | 59 | 35 | 3 | 3 |
| Primary schools | 9 | 44 | 39 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 13 | 36 | 41 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 39 | 43 | 3 |
| Special schools | 35 | 43 | 17 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 21 | 42 | 29 | 9 |
| All schools | 13 | 43 | 37 | 8 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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. |

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.



1 April 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Torpoint Community College, Torpoint PL11 2NH

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your college. The inspectors enjoyed seeing you at work, talking to some of you and reading the questionnaires that 139 of you completed. The following is what we found.

- Your college provides you with a satisfactory education.
- We have asked the college to improve GCSE results to bring them closer in line with most schools, particularly in mathematics.
- Your learning and progress in lessons are satisfactory because the quality of teaching is improving. Teaching is satisfactory and often good, and we have asked the college to ensure that it is more consistently good.
- You have more challenging targets. We have asked the college to ensure all teachers use them to match activities in lessons to your abilities and to engage you in assessing your progress.
- We have also said that teachers should share the features of good and outstanding lessons across the college, especially in developing your independent learning skills such as investigating, problem solving, discussing, role playing and evaluating. You told us you enjoy these activities.
- Your attendance is good.
- While we saw good behaviour, we have judged behaviour as satisfactory because some of you disrupt a few of your lessons. We have asked the college to adopt a consistent approach to behaviour management.
- The curriculum provides you with a good choice of courses.
- The college has good procedures to keep you safe and for your care, guidance and support.
- We have asked all leaders and managers to evaluate their work and to improve the quality of teaching and learning more systematically.
- The outcomes and provision in the sixth form are good.

You can help your college to improve further by ensuring you all behave well in lessons and by taking opportunities to develop independent learning skills. We wish you continuing success in your learning and progress.

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater

Her Majesty's Inspector

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