

Great Torrington Bluecoat Church of England Primary School

Borough Road, Torrington, EX38 7NU

Inspection dates 15–16 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The early years provision is outstanding because there is excellent leadership which constantly reviews practice to develop new ways to engage the children and raise standards still further.
- The headteacher leads the school well by providing a strong vision for further development. She is ably supported by other key staff.
- The school makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by ensuring that they are all very well cared for and have many opportunities to participate in a variety of activities.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is outstanding and they have a very strong desire to learn.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe within the school and when using electronic devices.
- The dynamic and creative curriculum provides an effective basis for pupils to learn new skills.
- The strong partnership between the governing body and the staff has ensured the rapid improvement of standards.
- The school's attractive environment supports the pupils' enthusiasm for the school and their learning.
- The school, by willingly sharing its expertise and leadership skills, plays an important role in the wider educational community.
- The parents are overwhelmingly supportive and say that the school has gone from strength to strength.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not always consistently and sufficiently challenged in their work activities. Some, including the most able, are sometimes given tasks that are too easy for them. This means that pupils do not always reach their full potential.
- Expectations concerning the neatness and accuracy of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are not yet consistently high enough. Pupils therefore do not always work as hard as they might.
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation errors in pupils' work are not always addressed. As a result, pupils continue to make mistakes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 23 lessons and were accompanied by members of the senior staff to a number of these observations. The inspectors also observed a number of small-group activities, led by support staff.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, other staff, pupils and governors.
- Telephone conversations were held with a representative of the local authority and a national leader of education (NLE) who works in partnership with the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils of different ages read.
- Inspectors looked at documents about past and current pupils' progress. They also examined documents relating to behaviour, safeguarding, and the school's own self-evaluation and improvement summary document.
- Inspectors analysed work in pupils' books and in displays around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 119 parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View online questionnaire and 23 additional paper responses from parents. One parent sent a letter which was taken into account. Inspectors also took into account the responses to the school's latest parent questionnaire and a number of parents were met informally at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the 38 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

David Nebesnuick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lucy Maughan

Additional Inspector

Judith Long

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than normal time is well below average.
- The school has a nursery unit, managed by the governing body, on the school site. It is included in the inspection. Children attend the Nursery part time. Children in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The school is a result of the amalgamation of the Bluecoat C of E Infant and Nursery School and Great Torrington Junior School in September 2013.
- The headteacher was previously the head of the infant school.
- A new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2014.
- There is a children's centre on the school site. This was not part of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching to outstanding to raise pupils' achievement by:
 - consistently providing all pupils, including the most able, with sufficient challenge in their work activities so that they always make the best progress possible
 - raising expectations about the neatness and accuracy of pupils' handwriting, and the presentation of their work, especially in topic work
 - ensuring that all spelling, punctuation and grammar errors are fully addressed so that pupils' written work is always of a high standard.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads this school with a strong and clear vision and philosophy based on putting the pupils' interest at the centre of all developments. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the other senior staff. The headteacher is systematically disseminating the excellent practice of the early years provision throughout the whole school to raise standards further.
- All members of staff feel highly valued and leaders work hard to ensure that all staff are fully involved in the introduction of major new initiatives.
- Leaders at all levels, including middle leaders, demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and work effectively together. They check school performance rigorously to sustain an excellent capacity to improve. Parents, pupils and staff consulted during the inspection recognise the good quality of teaching and pupils' progress typically seen throughout the school.
- Leaders and governors understand that high quality teaching is necessary to secure high levels of achievement. They monitor and challenge the performance of teachers well to ensure that there is a good match between how well teachers are paid and how well pupils achieve. Consequently, teaching is now at least good with much that is outstanding.
- Teachers' professional development needs are highlighted through performance management. This is carefully used to ensure that the individual and school improvement needs are met and that there is a positive impact on the outcomes for pupils.
- The recently introduced comprehensive system for tracking pupils' attainment and progress ensures that pupils are helped to do their best and that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds. There is no discrimination against any group or individual and all therefore achieve well. This is a very inclusive school that takes in and supports well the very wide range of pupils that wish to join it.
- Pupils' personal development is strong because they respond so positively to the school's values of respect and tolerance of each other's differences and the environment. Much of this is the result of the outstanding provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Individual reflection is strongly promoted, in particular through the highly effective assemblies and through the new prayer spaces.
- The curriculum has been radically overhauled and strengthened through its adoption of 12 new topic themes. The current topic, 'The World on our Doorstep', enables an exploration of different cultures across the world and makes a strong contribution in preparing the pupils for living in modern Britain and the wider world. A wide range of visits and additional events, such as the recent Year 4 residential trip to Cornwall, the planned visit to the television studio in Bristol and the presentation by Year 3 of a Greek play, enhance the pupils' experience still further.
- The school welcomes all parents and carers into the life of the school in many different ways. It is an open school and it knows its families well. As a result, the parents are overwhelmingly supportive and say that the school has gone from strength to strength since the amalgamation.
- The school plays a very important role in the wider North Devon school community. It willingly shares its excellent early years practice with other schools and settings through the Early Years Teaching Centre and the expertise of the headteacher, Early Years Foundation Stage and the Teacher Centre leaders.
- Leaders, including governors, robustly manage all statutory requirements relating to safeguarding, so that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The additional pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional small intervention groups to support pupils' learning. It has had a positive impact on closing the gap with other pupils.
- The additional funding for physical education and sport is used well. It is used primarily to increase staff expertise in dance, gymnastics and athletics. It is also used to train Year 6 sports leaders and to support games competitions with other schools.
- The local authority gives light-touch support to this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has developed a strong and effective partnership with the senior staff. Together, they are determined to help the pupils to thrive and to achieve the highest levels of achievement.
 - The governing body has the necessary skills and experience to hold the school to account. It sets a good balance between support and challenge. Minutes of meetings show how well governors know the school. The governors question senior leaders closely and carefully consider detailed reports from them. By these means, governors understand how well pupils achieve. They use data on pupil performance effectively to challenge leaders to raise standards across the school.

- The governing body has strong systems in place to ensure that additional funding is used effectively, such as the school's plans for deploying the pupil premium funding.
- The governing body oversees the school's performance management processes with care, diligence and expertise, ensuring that only good or better teachers are rewarded with higher salaries.
- The governing body has played an important role in bringing the two former schools together into a successful primary school which has a strong shared vision for further developments.
- The governing body has ensured that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school, during assemblies and in the playground during break and lunchtimes is exemplary.
- Pupils work very well together in lessons and they are keen to help one another in their groups. Pupils respond particularly well when questioned or prompted directly by adults.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. They have highly positive attitudes which mean that they listen carefully to their teachers and to each other.
- The school is an exceptionally caring and cohesive community where pupils' needs are paramount. All pupils and staff are valued and made to feel special, and high quality relationships are fostered. Equal opportunities and tackling discrimination are at the heart of the school's work and are promoted well.
- The school has an exceptionally rich learning environment and this stimulates the pupils' desire to learn. As a result, they carefully respect everything around them, including the huge range of pupils' work that is on display throughout the school.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection reported that bullying, including emotional and cyber-bullying, does not take place at the school. Most parents agree and say that behaviour is very well managed.
- Year 6 pupils trained as sports leaders are particularly caring in supporting younger children in a range of activities.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now above average, showing their increased enjoyment of school. Parents and carers told the inspectors how much their children enjoy coming to school; pupils spoke of how much they feel valued and of the pride in their school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using modern electronic techniques and appreciate developing life skills such as marine safety. They are confident that, if they have any worries or concerns, the adults in the school will always help them.
- The school site is secure and visitors are carefully vetted before they are given access to the school. All visitors are photographed for added security.
- During the inspection, pupils talked about the internet blocking measures that the school follows and referred to recent assemblies that looked at internet safety. The pupils spoke about the talks given by outside experts which covered the positive and negative aspects of using the internet. These talks not only help the pupils to feel safe but also prepare them very well for any dangers that they may face in the future.
- Parents feel that the school provides an exceptionally caring and supportive environment for their children and that, as a result, their children are well looked after and are safe in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' good progress across the school reflects the good quality of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics. Most parents who completed the online questionnaire agreed that their children are well taught and make good progress.
- Teaching is typically good with some outstanding practice, particularly in the early year's provision.

- There is a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching through effective monitoring and support, and a good programme of staff development is provided for all staff.
- There is a strong staff commitment to listen to and accept advice, and to work with senior leaders to secure further teaching improvement.
- Teachers and support staff encourage pupils to think carefully and to be bold in expressing their ideas. As a result, pupils confidently share and improve their ideas and learn successfully. Some excellent questioning was observed during the inspection and the pupils responded very well to this support.
- Support staff are skilled at working alongside teachers and supporting individuals and groups. Good teamwork is evident in many classes. The support staff are well trained and lead small-group activities for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and for the disadvantaged pupils, particularly in reading, numeracy and developing personal skills.
- Teachers use displays creatively to celebrate pupils' work, especially in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Pupils appreciate and are guided by these displays, which cover the walls of classrooms and corridors. These help the pupils to become motivated to achieve even more.
- The introduction of new curriculum materials has strengthened the teaching of literacy through developing a greater understanding of different cultures across the world. Pupils enjoy developing their understanding through themes, including geography, history, and design and technology.
- Lessons are mostly well planned, and the expectation that work should be matched to pupils' learning needs is well established. However, pupils, including the most able, do not always receive the appropriate level of challenge to ensure that they achieve their potential.
- The school is aware that expectations about the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work have not always been high enough, which leads to inconsistency. Whereas some pupils write neatly and produce well-presented work, others do not take sufficient care. This is particularly noticeable in the topic books.
- Similarly, too many pupils have spelling, punctuation and grammar errors in their work which are not systematically addressed by the teachers. These errors, in a small number of cases, have been uncorrected over a long period of time.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment when they start in Year 1 is broadly average. Currently, pupils are making good progress because of the increased monitoring of individual pupils.
- In 2014, attainment by the end of Year 6 was broadly average in mathematics and reading, and slightly above in writing. Standards in all areas are projected to rise this year. Year 6 pupils are given additional targeted support.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) has improved in Key Stage 1. In the last phonics check, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was below average. The current tracking data indicate that this will improve considerably this year. Pupils enjoy reading, and read widely and for pleasure.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well by support staff, and make good progress from their individual starting points.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in the school was below that of their peers nationally. Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were almost five terms behind in mathematics and reading, and three terms behind in writing. The gap is projected to close significantly in 2015 because of additional and carefully focused support. Within the school, disadvantaged pupils were four terms behind their peers in mathematics, and three terms behind in reading and writing. This year, they are projected to do as well as other pupils in reading and mathematics, and close the gap significantly in writing.
- Achievement in mathematics continues to improve as pupils develop and apply a wide range of skills to great effect. The revised curriculum, with its greater emphasis on investigation and calculation, has enabled progress in mathematics learning to accelerate.
- Pupils' progress in writing has developed throughout the school because they are given opportunities to write for a variety of different purposes. Teachers have high expectations of most pupils and plan interesting tasks to inspire and motivate them to write, such as the analysis of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the use of the different parts of a pansy plant. There are numerous examples of creative writing displayed throughout the school.

The early years provision**is outstanding**

- This provision is the outstanding strength of the school because of the excellent leadership that has created a vibrant and challenging learning area for the children.
- The school has a large Nursery unit that shares the outdoor play area with the three Reception classes. It operates in conjunction with these other classes. It provides a wide range of activities both inside and outside. During the inspection, these were very well used by the children. The adults give targeted support to individual children to ensure that they are getting the maximum learning from their experience.
- The children know the Nursery routines well; they indicate good personal responsibilities such as putting on their own boots and coats before going outside. The children show a very high level of enjoyment in all their activities.
- Approximately half of the children who join the Reception classes come from the school's Nursery. The others come from neighbouring settings. Children start in the Reception classes with language development skills that are generally well below the levels expected for their age.
- Staff are extremely caring and supportive, helping children to settle quickly. They make an excellent start because of the high quality of teaching and the very wide range of enjoyable and challenging activities planned for them. The outdoor learning is outstanding in its range of activities and equipment.
- All children, including those disabled and those who have special educational needs, make outstanding progress. The majority reach at least expected levels in all specific and prime areas. The majority exceed the age-related expectations in space, shape and measures, and also in their understanding the world. Achievement is mainly consistent across all areas.
- Teaching is outstanding because the staff have a very clear focus on well-planned activities that stimulate interest, enquiry and enjoyment. Children grow rapidly in confidence and make very rapid progress.
- Relationships are excellent and the children share equipment willingly, readily take turns and share their experiences with each other. Children use the equipment well, indicating a very good understanding of their own safety and that of other children. Their attitudes to their learning are outstanding.
- The individual child is at the centre of all the activities. The staff keep meticulous records of each child's progress and share this information on a very regular basis with the parents. This detailed tracking underpins the very rapid progress that each child makes.
- The leadership of the early years provision is outstanding because of the strength of the planning, the effective deployment of the staff and the shared vision of all staff to constantly review practice in order to engage children still further and to raise standards to even higher levels.
- The outstanding expertise of the early years provision is recognised throughout the North Devon area and beyond. All of the staff are very willing to share their skills and expertise with visitors and by outreach work to other primary schools.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113377
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	447792

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	501
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gillian Taylor
Headteacher	Angela Fleming
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 January 2011
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