

Inspection of a good school: Torpoint Community College

Trevol Road, Torpoint, Cornwall PL11 2NH

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 July 2022

Outcome

Torpoint Community College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. The college motto of 'inspiring optimistic learners' is evident in how pupils approach school life. Pupils are happy and want to succeed. Students in the sixth form are passionate about their decision to continue their studies here. Behaviour around the school site is calm and most pupils show consistently positive attitudes to their learning.

Torpoint is an inclusive school. One pupil's comment, that captures the opinion of many, is 'You can be whoever you want to be here.' Many pupils describe the importance of the school recently hosting a regional lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender conference. Pupils treat others respectfully and bullying is rare. If incidents occur, leaders take swift and effective action.

Pupils benefit from rich experiences beyond the curriculum. For example, the school is proud to be a UCL Beacon School for Holocaust Education. There is also an annual fashion show that many staff and pupils participate in. Students in the sixth form benefit from visits to universities and mock interviews to prepare them for their next steps.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened the breadth of the curriculum for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils receive strong guidance and support about their next steps throughout their learning journey. Students who choose to stay on into the sixth form are well supported and progress well.

In most subjects, leaders have planned the key knowledge they want pupils to learn. They have also considered the order in which to teach units so that pupils can build knowledge successfully over time. In some subjects, teachers check carefully what pupils know through well-planned assessments. In other subjects, this is less effective so pupils develop misconceptions or have gaps in what they remember.

Pupils with SEND follow the same ambitious curriculum. Staff understand their needs well. Leaders have a secure understanding of how to support pupils at the early stages of reading. They give pupils the help they need to catch up quickly. There are a growing number of opportunities for all pupils to read within the school day. Leaders are reviewing the quality and breadth of these to ensure the maximum benefit for pupils.

Leaders are working to increase the proportion of pupils who choose subjects that make up the English baccalaureate. In particular, leaders are ambitious to grow the number of pupils studying a modern foreign language at GCSE. Early indications show that the popularity for this subject is increasing.

Low-level disruption to learning is not tolerated. If incidents do occur, staff and pupils are well supported by the school's behaviour system. This allows learning to continue without further interruption. Students in the sixth form are highly motivated and act as role models for younger pupils around the school.

Pupils benefit from a well-planned personal development programme. For example, Year 8 pupils complete a first-aid course. Leaders have carefully considered the best order to teach topics, which include online safety, drugs awareness, healthy relationships and knife crime. All pupils learn about different beliefs and cultures. There are a range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils, including netball, singing and construction club. However, only a minority of pupils currently choose to participate in these.

The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Year 10 pupils benefit from an employer encounter event to support them with considering their next step. Students in the sixth form feel well supported to write their personal statements for university applications and most achieve their desired destination.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. They say their well-being is considered when changes are made. Governors are passionate about the school. However, they do not currently have the necessary depth of understanding to challenge leaders sufficiently.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of vigilance around safeguarding. The regular safeguarding bulletin alerts staff and governors to important information. Staff receive regular and appropriate training. This includes training on harmful sexual behaviours. Leaders make changes to training to respond to the needs of pupils or the wider community.

Leaders form strong links with external agencies. This allows them to access timely help for pupils when required. They are tenacious in seeking the support that pupils need.

Staff form positive relationships with pupils. Pupils say they feel safe and have a trusted adult they can talk to.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Governors do not have a detailed enough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result, they do not provide enough challenge to leaders or hold them to account sufficiently. Governors should ensure their knowledge of the school is strengthened to enable them to be more strategic in their work with leaders.
- In some subjects, teaching does not check pupils' understanding carefully enough. As a result, some pupils are not able to build their knowledge successfully over time. Leaders should ensure that the use of assessment is consistently effective across all subjects.

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

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2012.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

Unique reference number	112041
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10227165
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	696
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Colin Parton
Headteacher	Jeremy Plumb
Website	www.torpoint.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2017 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and a group of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to

teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered 67 responses to the online survey Ofsted Parent View, including 57 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered 53 responses to the staff survey and 127 responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Collins

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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