



Torkington Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106081
Local Authority Stockport
Inspection number 287409
Inspection dates 25–26 October 2006
Reporting inspector Ann Sharpe

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Torkington Road
School category	Community		Hazel Grove, Stockport
Age range of pupils	3–11		Cheshire SK7 6NR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 4832188
Number on roll (school)	231	Fax number	0161 4832188
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Alan Hirst
		Headteacher	Mrs B Booth
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 25–26 October 2006	Inspection number 287409
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most of the pupils attending this average sized urban school are from White British family backgrounds. They come from privately owned homes in the locality, although a few are from outside the normal catchment area. Very few pupils claim free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. There had been a long period of staff stability prior to the appointment of a new headteacher in January 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Torkington Primary is a friendly, happy and caring school. In a fairly short time, the new headteacher has earned the respect and confidence of pupils, staff and parents. She has done this by involving everyone in planning the way forward and by enabling them to take on new responsibilities. As a result of this very strong leadership and staff teamwork the school is building on its previous good reputation and high standards.

Good quality provision and high standards in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) give children a successful start to their education. All pupils achieve well from their starting points because the quality of teaching and learning is good and because of the high standard of care that they receive. By the end of Year 6 standards are above average, but pupils throughout the school are not as good at writing as they are at reading and mathematics. It is a mark of the determination of the school, however, that efforts are now centred on improving pupils' skills, by giving them more opportunities to learn to plan and structure their writing. Part of this initiative includes ensuring that pupils are sufficiently interested and want to write. It is very early days yet, and the impact on standards in writing is not yet known.

A major reason for pupils' good achievement is the increased emphasis in the curriculum and in the whole life of the school upon their personal development and well-being. The school council is an outstanding example of how well pupils are prepared for their future economic well-being. They have a genuine 'voice' in running the school and have contributed to making important decisions, for example, planning the new library and devising healthier school meals. Good links with parents, other schools, the local authority and support agencies help pupils to benefit fully from their education.

The innovative leadership of the headteacher, along with staff and governors who are open to change, ensures that the school is going from strength to strength. A good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, clear plans for improving standards and careful checking of progress give the school good capacity to improve in the future. Policies, such as the teaching and learning policy, are fairly new, however, and not yet put into consistent practice in all classes. The headteacher's comment, 'We can be even better', reflects the high aspirations within this good and improving school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing across the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers follow the school's policy consistently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start the Nursery class their attainment is in line with national expectations, though often below expectations in writing. By the time they transfer to Year 1 standards are above average, with the exception of writing. Pupils make good progress as they move up through the school and standards are above average. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils because of the good quality help they receive. Although assessments of pupils in Year 2 in 2005 continued a declining trend since 2002, the 2006 assessments are much improved and indicate above average results. Enhanced systems for assessing pupils' progress have enabled the school to meet challenging targets for the 2006 national tests and set equally challenging targets for 2007.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good attitudes, behaviour and attendance are helping to ensure that pupils' future economic prospects are good. Parents, who commented, 'We feel extremely lucky to have a child who misses being at school at weekends', summed up pupils' enjoyment of school. Many pupils show their good understanding of healthy lifestyles by eating the very healthy range of foods available for school meals and playtimes. This is not always the case, however, because a few pupils still bring and eat less healthy snacks. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and who to approach for help when they need it. Members of the excellent school council relish opportunities to take part in community events, such as attending the School Council Forum in the Stockport Council Chambers. Consequently, by the time pupils are ready to transfer to secondary schools they are confident, mature and sensible learners.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers and support staff have responded enthusiastically to changes in the school's approach to teaching. As a result of greater focus on learning, pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their own progress. Teachers are well organised and communicate the purposes of lessons clearly to their pupils. They use new computerised whiteboards confidently and this helps to focus pupils' thinking and learning on the task in hand. Good relationships with pupils ensure that discipline is rarely a problem and that pupils have good attitudes to learning. Teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to think hard and to answer more fully. However, when they spend more time than necessary doing this with the whole class, some pupils, understandably, become restless. There are several good examples of the benefits to pupils of the new

policy for teaching and learning. Pupils show teachers how well they understand their work, for instance, using hand signals representing the strength of bridges. Currently, teachers do not apply all aspects of the policy consistently and this means that pupils do not always know what they need to do to reach their new learning targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In response to national guidance, the school has recently introduced a completely revised curriculum, designed to raise achievement by making lessons more interesting for pupils. The new curriculum is good, takes full account of the needs of pupils of all ages and meets requirements well. Pupils' work now links ideas from different subjects together in an enjoyable way. The curriculum is enriched well, for example, by extra-curricular activities. Pupils, staff and parents enjoyed taking part together in the 'Shake and Wake Up' sessions at the start of the day. The outdoor curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage has improved because Reception children now have direct access to the outdoors. Pupils currently have limited opportunities to learn and practise information and communication technology (ICT) skills, but everyone is eager to start working in the new computer suite when it is ready.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect is good. There are well-thought-out procedures for protecting and safeguarding pupils and health and safety has high priority in the school. Pupils say that rare incidences of bullying are sorted out immediately. They know how to stay safe, for example, when using the Internet. The school listens carefully to the views of pupils. When pupils explained why they would like a rumble strip in the playground, for example, staff went to great lengths to provide one. Good communication with parents helps pupils to feel secure and know that they are all equally important. Teachers often give pupils good day-to-day academic guidance in lessons, but the very new procedures for setting longer-term targets are not yet embedded.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's very good leadership inspires everyone to work together to improve the school. She values their contributions and, as a result, they are keen to get involved with making necessary changes and relationships are very good. Members of the 'Change Team', which includes representatives from all stakeholders, give very good support to bringing the new school vision to fruition. The deputy headteacher commented on the excitement of, 'steering the ship in a new direction'. Governors play an increasing part in checking how well the school is doing and parents appreciate new lines of communication with them. The updated premises and improved resources for ICT are the result of

management that is forward looking. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and is taking the right action to move things forward.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for talking to inspectors and for answering all our questions so thoughtfully. We enjoyed visiting your school and seeing your new library and outside areas. We see why you are so excited about starting to have more chances to work on newer computers in the computer suite.

You are right to think that your school is a good school. You all enjoy coming and your parents are very happy with the school. You behave well in lessons and around the school at other times. The adults all care about you and want you to do as well as you can. Teachers are working hard to help you to learn even more quickly. We were pleased to see so many of you eating healthy food at lunchtime and fruit at playtime. Your headteacher has helped everyone to work together to improve your school. The school council is an excellent way of helping you to learn how to get along well with other people and to play a part in changing things for the better.

Although you are good at reading and mathematics, your writing is not as good. Teachers know this and have started to find new ways to help you to improve. This is why you now have more chances to plan writing and write in different styles and other subjects. You will remember that inspectors kept asking you about your new learning targets and that you were unable to tell us much about them. This is because teachers have still to make sure that you know what the targets are and what else you have to do to get there. We have asked the school to make sure that your writing is as good as your reading and mathematics. We also want teachers to do everything that they have agreed to do, in order to improve your learning every day and in all lessons. We know that you will want to help by trying to reach your targets, including in writing.