



Torpoint Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111968
Local Authority Cornwall
Inspection number 289123
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Albion Road
School category	Community		Torpoint
Age range of pupils	3–7		PL11 2LU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 812245
Number on roll (school)	327	Fax number	01752 815623
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Barry Deacon
		Headteacher	Richard Mudge
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2001		

Age group 3–7	Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007	Inspection number 289123
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Torpoint Infant School is larger than most infant schools and serves an area of some deprivation. The school includes a funded nursery. There is also an independent nursery on site, which was not inspected. The school has fewer than average pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none at an early stage of learning English. The school has had an acting headteacher since September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Torpoint Infant School provides a satisfactory standard of education. Since the acting headteacher joined the school, changes and reforms have renewed the school's vigour and confidence and it is now poised to move forwards.

Pupils are happy at school and get on very well together with teachers and with other adults. The personal development of pupils is good. Parents are almost universal in their praise of the school. One wrote, 'Torpoint Infant School gave my daughter the best start I could have wished for.' Children start and finish their time at Torpoint with generally average standards. Their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and progress in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory, with a particularly effective focus on children's personal development in the Nursery. Fewer than expected pupils attain higher levels in Year 2 assessments, because teaching is sometimes not challenging enough and activities not sufficiently stimulating.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are often stimulating and engaging. However, until this year the school had limited assessment information, so had been unable to consistently identify where extra challenge or support for pupils were most required. Assessment procedures are now more comprehensive; information is more accessible and is being used with increasing effectiveness to inform planning. The curriculum is satisfactory but there are too few enrichment activities. The school cares for pupils' well-being thoroughly but does not give enough guidance on how pupils could make better academic progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a satisfactory understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses and the acting headteacher, with strong support from all staff, has started to improve the school further. He has prioritised his actions well but is aware that there had previously been too little consistent monitoring of provision and this had been a brake on taking the school forwards in recent years. Monitoring is now beginning to focus more effectively on the quality of teaching and learning. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory and, whilst some weaknesses in subject leadership remain, this and the impact of changes to leadership and management mean that capacity for improvement is also satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the monitoring of teaching and learning at all levels and use the information gathered to further inform strategies for improvement.
- Strengthen further the use of assessment to promote better learning and awareness of how to improve.
- Promote better achievement for more able pupils through better teaching and a more stimulating curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start in the Nursery with the expected level of skills. When they leave the Reception class, their standards are average but they are well prepared for their next stage of education because they achieve well in their personal and social development.

Pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 are average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve similarly because they receive effective support. Performance in reading and writing is slightly stronger than in mathematics. The school gets fewer than expected high grades in national tests, pointing to a lack of challenge for more able pupils. Girls make better progress than boys in relation to their starting points. The school recognises that limitations in its assessment procedures have been a barrier to better achievement and is starting to make improvements. This has not yet had a significant impact.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school life because they like their teachers, have many friends and find lessons interesting. Attendance has improved and is now average. Children in the Nursery are given particularly good opportunities to make choices and develop independence. Behaviour is good, allowing pupils to work quietly and concentrate on tasks. Pupils have excellent relationships with teachers and other adults, so they have someone to turn to if they have concerns. This makes them feel safe and secure, promoting their self-confidence. Pupils play well together, enjoying the excellent range of playground equipment and games. This develops their social skills and they really enjoy exercising in the happy, friendly atmosphere. There are occasional incidents of minor bullying, but these are dealt with very effectively and are not a significant concern for pupils or parents.

The comprehensive personal, social and health education programme gives pupils a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, a good diet and keeping fit. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is well promoted in circle time, assemblies and through the use of role play. Whilst pupils are involved in the wider community, there are limited opportunities to express their views or be involved in making decisions which affect their school. Pupils develop independence and cooperation well but their progress in basic skills is satisfactory so their preparation for economic well-being is satisfactory, overall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are typically lively and enjoyable, particularly in the Nursery. Pupils and staff work together harmoniously, sharing a love of learning, and are keen to do well. Behaviour is good and teachers manage any minor infringements with subtlety and kindness so that the good pace of learning is maintained. Teaching assistants are well deployed to provide assistance as required. Planning is satisfactory and lessons run smoothly. Pupils' work is regularly marked but comments, while encouraging, do not offer sufficient clear advice on how to improve.

There is now increasingly better use of assessment data to inform planning and to more effectively meet all learners' needs. Information from assessment is not yet fully used by teachers to help them plan and deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. In consequence, aspirations for pupils had sometimes been too low and the progress of individuals and groups had suffered because work was not always sufficiently challenging.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage, the stimulating activities and opportunities for independent learning in the Nursery enable children to make a very good start to school. However, in Reception classes the curriculum is limited by the accommodation because it is difficult for children to work and play outside. Throughout the school, provision for pupils' personal and social development is good and pupils are taught to become healthy and safe learners.

Although satisfactory, the range of learning opportunities for pupils is not sufficiently stimulating and links between subjects are not sufficiently strong. The school has rightly identified the need to review and update the curriculum to improve these features. Since the last inspection, provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and, as a result, pupils' standards are rising. The school has also improved opportunities for developing pupils' skills in mental mathematics and problem solving as recommended. Although there is a suitable programme of visits and visitors to the school, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to engage in activities and clubs during or outside the school day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with the support offered to their children and pupils agree. There are effective procedures to ensure that pupils are safe and secure at all times. Child protection procedures are good, as are measures to ensure Internet security. There is early identification and good support for pupils

with learning difficulties and the school has effective links with outside support agencies. Health and safety procedures and risk assessments are fully in place.

Targets for pupils, when they are set, tend to be imprecise and do too little to promote good learning. In consequence, pupils are often 'in the dark' about how they could improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher provides strong leadership. He has successfully nurtured the staff through a period of instability and created a strong sense of teamwork. As a result, morale has improved and teachers are keen to improve their skills and their school. Since his appointment, the school has started to develop an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and the resulting priorities for improving teaching and learning. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are improving and are now satisfactory but are not yet rigorous enough in checking fully that new initiatives are completely implemented and all inconsistencies are identified.

The acting headteacher takes much of the responsibility for strategic planning and the process does not yet involve teachers and governors sufficiently. This is owing, in part, to the absence of the deputy headteacher on secondment and the newness of the management team. Recently introduced curriculum teams are not yet fully effective. Managers are not yet sufficiently skilled and confident to fully embrace their leadership and management responsibilities.

Governance is satisfactory. The chair of governors is very involved in, and supportive of, the work of the school but the governing body has only recently become involved in monitoring how well key priorities are addressed.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 so much for being friendly and helpful to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We were pleased to hear how much you like your school and how well you get on with one another.

We think that the school is OK. We think you are well looked after and the school helps you to grow up as happy young people. Like all schools, there are some things that need to be made better.

The main ones are:

- Your school needs to know more about your progress so it can help you to learn better.
- Your school should check up more thoroughly on what it does.
- Your school needs to help more of you reach high standards by improving teaching and giving you more interesting activities.

You can help by continuing to work hard and getting on so well with your teachers. Once again, many thanks for being so pleasant and good luck for the future.

With all good wishes,