

# Torbay School

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134126
<b>Local Authority</b>	Torbay
<b>Inspection number</b>	322917
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Kell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	52
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jean Willder
<b>Headteacher</b>	Glenn Wilce
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	170B Torquay Road Paignton TQ3 2AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01803 665522
<b>Fax number</b>	01803 521915

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<b>Age group</b>	9–16
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 March 2008
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to Ofsted notification

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is the first time that the school has been inspected since it opened in September 2003. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational need for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The overwhelming majority of pupils are boys and virtually all of them have a White British background. Approximately half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and a small number are in public care. There have been many staffing changes since the school opened. These have included significant changes in the school leadership team. There have been three headteachers, in either a permanent or an acting capacity, and other senior posts have been held on a temporary basis. The leadership team is now stable, although the substantive headteacher has been in post for only a year and the deputy headteacher for just a term.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Torbay School provides a satisfactory quality of education. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their work and in their personal development. The needs of the very small number of girls are met appropriately. The school enjoys the unanimous support of parents. The simple comment: 'I have nothing but praise for the school' sums up their views.

When the school opened, it was required to admit a large number of secondary aged pupils with particularly challenging behaviour before the staff and school were fully ready to cope with them. This presented many difficulties and the situation was made worse by frequent staff changes, many just a few months after opening, and subsequent changes in the leadership team. The delay in establishing a stable leadership team had an adverse effect on the pace at which the school was able to launch itself as a new school with a clear vision and set of values. Consequently, it took some time before the staff were in a position to take a firm grip on managing pupils' behaviour effectively and to have established a focused approach on improving their attendance and attitudes. Leaders have done a good job in this respect and the situation has stabilised. Attendance is satisfactory and behaviour is now good and this has contributed to improving staff morale and so staff absence has declined. There is a satisfactory capacity for leaders to make further improvement.

The time devoted to establishing an orderly school was time well spent, but it meant that other dimensions of leadership and management were not addressed so effectively. For instance, despite leaders collecting information about different features of the school's work, such as the quality of teaching and learning, the information is not scrutinised and well used to direct future improvement. For instance, although teaching and learning are satisfactory across the school there is inconsistency because the best practice is not disseminated. Features requiring improvement are not being targeted through school development opportunities. The same applies to assessment data. This information is used to allocate National Curriculum levels to each pupil in each subject, but these are not always accurate. Therefore, judgements about the extent of pupils' learning against their targets are not always reliable, although pupils achieve satisfactorily in meeting their individual targets overall. This limits leaders' ability to use the data as a means of evaluating pupils' progress in a measurable way. As a result, they do not always make secure judgements about pupils' achievements. Pupils receive a satisfactory quality of learning activities and opportunities although the curriculum has some strong features. The personal, social and health education programme contributes well to pupils' well-being. The use of visits, including a residential experience, supports class-based learning. However, the school has not been wholly successful in developing partnerships with local mainstream schools and colleges. This reduces its ability to provide pupils with opportunities to follow courses, subjects or other interests that are not available in Torbay School. More productive links with colleagues from other agencies, such as social services and the youth offending team, contribute to the satisfactory level of care, guidance and support that pupils receive.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a clear set of principles and procedures to measure pupils' progress over time and to evaluate their achievements.
- Use the information gathered through routine monitoring more effectively by evaluating it robustly and using the outcomes to direct and focus school improvement.

- Set accurate individual targets for pupils by ensuring that assessment information is scrutinised so that the National Curriculum levels accurately reflect pupils' achievements.
- Develop links with local schools that will enable pupils to pursue subjects or out-of-school activities that are of particular interest to them.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are significantly below those expected of pupils of similar age because pupils have a history of disrupted education through exclusion and/or erratic attendance. All pupils, including girls and pupils in public care, achieve satisfactorily. Historically, some of the accredited courses were not sufficiently challenging, the curriculum was not planned in a way that addressed fully the needs of all pupils and there was not sufficient focus on work-related learning in Years 10 and 11. These factors were a cause of pupils' dissatisfaction, and subsequent disruptive behaviour, and this limited their progress. The position now looks more promising. Pupils' improved attitudes, behaviour and attendance now enable them to learn more effectively, and hence make quicker progress.

The leadership team has responded to the shortcomings in the curriculum. It is now planned much more creatively and in way that accelerates the rate at which pupils make progress by making learning more enjoyable and meaningful. There has not yet been sufficient time for all of these changes to have had an impact, but the early signs are encouraging. For example, some pupils are predicted to get B and C grades in GCSEs such as art and food technology. Features such as targeted individual support in literacy and numeracy for lower achieving pupils also contribute to these pupils' satisfactory rate of progress. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in meeting their individual learning targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's reward system for improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour is effective, but it allows pupils who have behaved well to go off-site during break times and some use this opportunity to smoke. Otherwise, they develop a satisfactory understanding of a safe and healthy lifestyle. They enjoy physical education and know about healthy eating. Pupils' enjoyment of school is satisfactory and there is clear evidence that they become more mature as they move through the school. For instance, an increasing number of pupils earn the right to travel to school independently on public transport. They make good progress in their social and moral development. There are good social interactions in the whole-school meetings at the start of each day and lunchtimes. Pupils learn about some features of modern multicultural Britain but planned opportunities to develop pupils' appreciation of other cultures and beliefs are sometimes missed. Pupils have a strong voice, which they use to good effect. For instance, they have been involved in interviewing staff and in obtaining new sports equipment. They make a positive contribution to the wider community, for example through their involvement in a forestry commission project to build and install dormouse boxes in a local wood. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for leaving school and all leavers last year went to college or into employment. They develop the personal skills that employers appreciate, such as working

together, but in the past they have not gained vocational qualifications or acquired the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology as quickly as they could.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Although adequate overall, the quality of teaching and learning is variable across the school. Staff have appropriate subject knowledge and they generally manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Most teaching assistants make an important contribution to supporting pupils' learning and encouraging their personal development, but some fail to take the initiative by intervening when pupils experience difficulties, and this reduces the pace of learning. The school's own evaluation has identified the need to provide more guidance. On many occasions, both teachers and teaching assistants address pupils in an over-friendly way; the term 'mate' is used far too often. In some lessons, pupils learn very well because teachers have high expectations and provide challenging activities. At these times, pupils are engrossed in their work and learn rapidly. On a few occasions, time is not used well because lessons are uninspiring and so pupils are not motivated and their attitudes deteriorate. This occurs when planning is too vague and does not recognise pupils' targets by focusing precisely on what they are going to learn, based on what they achieved previously.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and so provides a breadth of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 5 to 9. The decision to have form teachers of Years 5 to 8 teaching English and mathematics to their own classes is a good innovation as it enhances pupils' learning. Leaders' radical overhaul of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is an important development. Accredited courses that did not present a sufficient level of challenge have been discarded. New and more appropriate courses and options have been introduced including a sports leadership award and a vocational qualification in basic skills. The Duke of Edinburgh Award has been established and work experience is better planned. Consequently, the curriculum is now much better suited to pupils' age and interests and so they are more motivated to succeed. Links with local colleges, as a means of extending vocational opportunities, are at a very early stage and the school has not exploited possibilities to meet the curriculum needs of individual pupils by seeking openings for them to pursue subjects or courses that are not available in Torbay School. This limitation also applies to enriching pupils' learning by enabling them to participate in out-of-school activities, such as sports clubs, that partner schools provide.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school has appropriate child protection and safeguarding procedures, although a relatively high number of restraints are recorded for some individual pupils. All pupils have members of staff whom they trust and can turn to and they generally feel safe in school. Specific activities and provision, such as separate sex education, ensure that the additional emotional and personal needs of the very small number of girls are met. Looked after children are well monitored and supported. The school works well with parents and maintains a close working relationship with

other agencies. The school has less effective procedures for supporting pupils' academic progress because of shortcomings in the assessment system. Teachers assess pupils in accordance with National Curriculum levels and use them to mark and level pupils' work. However, these levelling arrangements are not secure. Pupils' individual targets do not always represent an appropriate level of challenge based on their current achievements. Consequently, the school cannot determine precisely what additional support or interventions are needed to help pupils to achieve better. It cannot measure accurately how much progress pupils actually make.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school is now benefiting from a period of relative stability and the leadership has begun to focus more specifically on school improvement. There is emerging evidence that school leaders have audited aspects of the school's work and have taken action to bring about improvements, such as tracking the changes in pupils' behaviour as a result of the reward system. However, self-evaluation is not being undertaken systematically and so there is no well-established link between monitoring and shaping the direction of school improvement. This is because leaders do not always use the outcomes of their monitoring in the most effective way. They do not collate all the evidence in order to get a whole-school view, such as of the quality of teaching and learning, and then fully analyse it to enable them to drive forward change. Overall, resources are used satisfactorily but not all teaching assistants fulfil their roles effectively. The governing body provides satisfactory support and challenge but is under strength which prevents it from gathering first hand information about the school's work effectively.





## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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 for the welcome that you gave us when we visited your school, with a particular thanks to those who gave up their time to speak with us. Torbay is a satisfactory school. The staff take good care of you. You make satisfactory progress with your work and in the way that you develop as young people. Your attendance is acceptable, although some of you come to school too infrequently. Whilst at school, most of you behave well although sometimes a few of you cause too much fuss when asked to do things. You have a satisfactory understanding of how to remain safe and how to stay fit and healthy but it is disappointing to see that some of you take the opportunity to smoke when the school lets you go off site at break times. It was pleasing to see how interested you are to work with the school to make things better and it was good to see that the staff had listened to some of your suggestions.

Your school does an adequate job in getting you ready for leaving. You learn at a satisfactory rate and the new changes to your timetables give you opportunities to study different subjects. Some of these give you the particular skills that you need when looking for work or a college place. The people who run the school have ideas about how they can make things better and we have given them some ideas to help to get things moving. They are to:

- Check in detail that every one of you is doing as well as you possibly can.
- Make sure that they know exactly how well the school is doing and how they want it to develop in the future.
- Make sure that your learning targets challenge and motivate you to do better.
- Arrange for some of you to study particular subjects at local schools or to join the after school clubs that they offer.

You can help your school to improve by attending as often as you can and behaving well while you are there. It will help greatly if all of you always follow instructions without argument or fuss, as this will give more time for learning. Those of you who smoke during the school day should work with the smoking support group in the school and try to stop.

Thank you once again and we wish each of you the very best of luck in the future, especially those who are taking examinations this year and leaving school.

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of Torbay School, Paignton, TQ3 2AL**

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Mike Kell  
Lead inspector