

Torre Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113475
Local Authority	Torbay
Inspection number	325824
Inspection dates	26–27 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	230
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	56
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacqui Rust-Ashford
Headteacher	Nicola Bridgewater
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Barton Road Torquay TQ1 4DN
Telephone number	01803 324007

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	26–27 November 2008
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Fax number

01803 322171

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspector's and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size school, whose name represents the Devonian term for hill, gives priority to children of communicant members of the Anglican Church. It serves a socially diverse area, which is not reflective of the lower than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have moderate learning difficulties is below average, but this does not reflect the weak standards of language and social development on entry into school. There is one class in each year group. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of the Reception class in the main school and the Nursery, based in a separate building next to the main school site. Torre has achieved the Quality Mark and Healthy Schools awards. Many of the families who attend Torre are involved in the local tourist industry and are required to take their own holidays out of the peak season. This has a negative impact on the school's attendance figures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school provides an outstanding quality of education. One of its most striking features is the exceptional all-round achievement every pupil makes. From a starting point that is below age-related expectations, these very young explorers reach the summit of Torre as extremely well-balanced young people, who are extremely well prepared for their future lives. Most parents agree that their children attend an excellent school. One parent explained, 'The school is brilliant and I would recommend it to anyone.'

Outstanding provision in both the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that the youngest children move off from base camp at an extremely speedy rate. Throughout the school, inspirational teaching enthuses the pupils and encourages them to be active learners. One parent emphasised that 'the level of teaching is fantastic'. Meaningful lessons taught through a practical approach provide a wealth of learning experiences. This enables the pupils to climb up each stage at a consistently good pace, extremely safely, healthily and with an excellent level of fitness. By the time they reach the top of the school, they have attained academic standards that are above average. Pupils develop extremely high levels of teamwork skills, which they use to solve problems in their work. By working skilfully together, they excel in sporting competitions and business enterprise events. An outstanding curriculum and excellent use of resources make learning come to life and ensure that the pupils are extremely well equipped for their journey ahead. One parent explained that 'there is so much going on and great new topics are on offer to the children'.

The preparation for their journey through Torre is extremely thorough and excellent induction systems ensure that they quickly settle into the Nursery and Reception classes. Throughout the school, an exceptional pastoral support system nurtures pupils and ensures that they feel safe and secure. Best use is made of the outstanding links with other schools, local community organisations and parents to promote learning and ensure that they travel up to the top of Torre smoothly and consistently. Whilst academic guidance is helpful, the school is aware that the way in which staff mark and target pupils' work is not sufficiently refined to help the pupils move on as quickly as possible to the next stage of their learning.

The headteacher and her leadership team are key features in the success of this exciting expedition for pupils. They provide outstanding vision and direction and work very successfully in partnership with the local community to ensure that the pupils' journey through Torre is of the best quality. Since the last inspection, the school has travelled a long way and has made excellent progress. It is in an exceptional position to reach even higher summits. As one parent commented, 'Torre is going from strength to strength.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make excellent progress in the EYFS because the overall effectiveness of provision is outstanding. Despite the physical isolation of the two separate classroom areas as a result of building restrictions, the Nursery and Reception classes provide excellent learning environments. The areas of learning planned for these young children are exceptional, and consequently children make connections in their development of knowledge and skills. The activities and resources on offer are challenging and have a clear purpose. They are extremely well organised and stimulating enough to inspire the children and promote good learning. Exceptionally

well-planned role-play areas, such as the 'Doctor's Surgery' and the 'Garden Centre', ensure that the children develop their creative skills, build up their vocabulary and extend their awareness of the world around them. The outdoor areas are fully utilised and the very good variety of planned activities link well to relevant themes such as 'Growing up' and 'Going on bear hunts'. Assessment procedures are extremely well established and used very effectively to plan children's learning.

Provision for their welfare is first class. The children are safe and relationships between adults and children are extremely warm and caring. Parents and carers form a very strong bond with staff and this helps the children settle into school life very well. Interactions with other staff and pupils around the school contribute to the excellent progress they make in their personal and social development. Most meet age-related expectations in personal and social development by the time they are ready to move out of the EYFS.

The leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding because the headteacher, her leadership team and governors have an extremely good knowledge and understanding of the importance of this early stage in education. It is a high priority for the school and this has an excellent impact on the quality of provision and the outcomes for the children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine the ways in which the teaching staff help the pupils move on to their next step in learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Given their standards on entry into the Nursery class and the above average standards attained in Year 6, coupled with their outstanding personal development and well-being, overall achievement is exceptional. Children leave the EYFS having made very good progress and attained age-related expectations in most areas of learning. This very good progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2 and by the time pupils are ready to move onto Year 3, they have attained above average standards. Despite increased rates in mobility and the personal challenges occasionally faced by pupils out of school, the maintenance of consistently good progress ensures that they leave Torre with standards that are significantly higher than the national average in English, mathematics and science. A particularly strong feature is the way in which the pupils confidently solve problems and apply their skills to everyday situations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' very positive attitudes to school are not reflected in the satisfactory attendance rates. They love coming to school because learning is so interesting. As one pupil confirmed, 'Every day I feel really excited to get to school to find out what we are going to do.' They grow into sensible young people who speak with confidence. They use their key skills in everyday life in role-play, and the business and budgeting skills developed through market research projects around Torquay prepare them very well for their future lives. Contributions to the school council to improve the school environment and writing to their local MP about battery farming are examples of their thoughtfulness and ability to be reflective, and also enable the pupils to prepare themselves very well for their future lives. The pupils have a clear understanding of how to conduct themselves and they behave exceptionally well. They grow into individuals who

are proud of taking responsibility in and around school as 'buddies'. Involvement within the wider community through raising money for charity, performing at the local Proms and surveying the views of local residents is very good. Linking with schools in Germany, supporting a project in India, and studying a range of different religions ensure that very positive relationships develop with people from different backgrounds and give them greater global awareness. Pupils know why it is important to eat a healthy balanced diet. Participation in 'Wake and Shake' activities and involvement in the diverse range of sporting activities ensure that they keep fit.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Using scenarios where the pupils pretend they are pirates looking for treasure or creating posters to help them find stolen toys from their class shop are examples of the ways in which teachers make lessons come alive. These activities provide the pupils with excellent opportunities to extend their vocabulary, and the clear learning focus ensures that they know what skills they are developing. Interesting resources such as treasure troves and glove puppets captivate the pupils' imagination extremely well and this reinforces their learning. Explanations are extremely clear and effective questioning effectively assesses how much the pupils have learnt. The outstanding use of teaching assistants to support pupils who find some aspects of learning difficult ensures that their work is personalised and consolidated at a suitable pace.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The exceptionally well-matched links made across all subject areas stimulate the pupils' interest and enable them to learn in a meaningful way. The use of themes such as 'chocolate' and 'pirates' develops and consolidates key skills well and enables pupils to make connections in their learning. Inspired by a 'Tudor time traveller', pupils shared traditional preparations for Christmas and enjoyed dressing-up in period costume for the day. Participating in a banquet brought learning to life and gave them the confidence to achieve. Visits out of school to local restaurants and a Victorian schoolroom and field trips to Dartmoor enable the pupils to learn from their community and put the knowledge they gain into context. The outstanding choice of extra-curricular activities that include sporting, musical and arts events, successfully motivate and enthuse the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care given to the pupils, particularly in nurturing their personal needs, is outstanding and is highly praised by parents. One parent explained that 'Torre School has the best caring teachers and all my children have been very happy there'. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' well-being are extremely secure. There is outstanding provision for pupils with learning difficulties because the activities planned meet their needs exceptionally well. Staff work exceptionally hard to promote good links with parents and the local community and have created a wonderful centre for learning and enjoyment. The use of individual targets in Year 6 for English and mathematics guides the pupils well in their future work. Whilst pupils in the rest of the school know their group targets, these are not as effective in challenging further

learning. Work is marked regularly but there are not enough consistent ways to ensure that the pupils know what the next step in their learning will be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher demonstrates a relentless focus on providing the best quality of education for all the pupils. Together with her outstanding leadership team and her extremely knowledgeable governing body, this means that the school is led and managed with exceptional direction and precision. Rigorous monitoring and evaluating systems ensure that the leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Challenging targets for improvement are set, as exemplified by the cross-curricular improvements, the focus on maintaining improvements in writing and the introduction of the informative learning diaries. There is an exceptionally strong team approach, which ensures that everybody who is involved in school life is fully included. Maintaining the strong relationship with the church, supporting local events and developing international links ensure that the pupils develop an exceptional understanding of community values.

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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

28 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Torre Church of England Primary School, Torquay TQ1 4DN

A big thank you to all of you for making my team so welcome at your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and finding out about Torre School. Thank you to those pupils who talked with my colleagues and me about life in your school.

Torre is an outstanding school and we know that you and your parents agree with this. Your personal achievements are excellent and this enables you to exceed the expected levels for your age in English, mathematics and science. You develop into confident and sensible young people who behave extremely well. It is very clear that you thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school and take a full part in its life. You make an excellent contribution to your own school and the wider community. In particular, we enjoyed watching Years 5 and 6 participate in the Tudor Day and were most impressed to hear about how you used your marketing and research skills in a Monopoly project. Your involvement in sporting activities keeps you extremely fit and it is good to see that you find the 'Wake and Shake' sessions fun. You are extremely knowledgeable about healthy foods, and your morning snacks reflect this.

You progress really well because you receive the highest quality teaching and follow an exceptionally well-planned work programme that makes learning extremely interesting for you. The outstanding range of enrichment activities provided for you, particularly the trips out of school, are real favourites. Links forged with other schools and local organisations are outstanding. You feel safe because the school looks after you and you confidently talk to adults if you have a problem.

Your headteacher is an excellent leader and works extremely well with the staff and governors as a successful team. To help the school become even better, I have asked them to make sure that you always get the best possible support to help you understand how to take the next steps in your learning.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults in school to make sure that Torre gets even better.

Best wishes

Lorna Brackstone

Her Majesty's Inspector