

# Morecambe and Heysham Torrisholme Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119283
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326989
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gill Jones 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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	417
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Phil Huddart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Susan Fielden
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 July 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Low Lane Torrisholme Morecambe Lancashire LA4 6PN

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	326989

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

This is a large school situated in the popular residential area of Torrisholme. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small but an increasing proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds, but none of these are at the very early stages of speaking English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below that found nationally. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is just above the national average and some of these have severe physical disabilities.

The school has achieved a number of awards which include the Silver Eco Award, the Lancashire Healthy School Award and the Activemark. The headteacher was seconded by the local authority to become the executive headteacher of another local school in September 2007 in addition to maintaining overall responsibility for Torrisholme. The deputy headteacher stepped up to become the acting headteacher. The executive headship became a part time role in January 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Torrisholme provides a good quality of education. The headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher and a strong staff, has created a vibrant school where the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children start the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) with skills, knowledge and abilities that are typical of four and five-year-olds nationally. By the end of Year 6, they reach standards in English and science that are above the national average. This represents good achievement overall. However, since the last inspection, pupils' progress in mathematics has been relatively weaker. Although most pupils reach the standards expected nationally for 11-year-olds in mathematics, the more able pupils in particular do not achieve their potential.

Pupils are polite and friendly. Their behaviour in and around the school is excellent. They support each other well and demonstrate an outstanding level of care towards the pupils in wheelchairs. Pupils are keen to participate in the excellent range of sporting activities the school provides and they know how to keep healthy. The school council is very active and all pupils are keen to conserve energy, which is monitored closely by the 'eco warriors'.

Parents are appreciative of this warm, welcoming school where they say pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are 'really made to feel they belong'. Pupils say there is no bullying and that they are confident staff will help them if they have any concerns. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to take an active part, by sharing their views and explaining their work to each other. Teaching is imaginative and teachers capture the pupils' interest well. For example, in Year 2, pupils were dressed for the day as characters from Alice in Wonderland before they stepped through the looking glass to write about their experiences. The inspectors observed a range of lessons across the curriculum and the majority were good or better.

The curriculum and the care, guidance and support provided for the pupils are good. The pastoral care provided for pupils is first class. Parents appreciate the approachability of staff and the care provided. The curriculum is well designed to stimulate pupils' imaginations. A particular strength is the link made between English and other subjects, which is resulting in some excellent writing. A weaker aspect of the curriculum is the provision for mathematics. Although the school tracks the pupils' progress, it is not using the information it gathers effectively enough to guide pupils learning. As a result, not all pupils meet their challenging targets in mathematics.

The opportunities presented by the headteacher's executive headship have been used effectively to develop staff. In her absence, the day-to-day management is handled capably by the deputy headteacher. The strong senior leadership team knows the school well. A recent appointment to this team brings expertise in mathematics, which has been recognised by the school as an area needing improvement. Governance is good and governors have put in place some effective procedures to hold the school to account. However, they are not yet using all the information available to them to evaluate how well the school meets its targets. The school has tackled the key issue from the last inspection successfully. This together with pupils' good progress, particularly in writing, the many strengths in provision and the school's own accurate evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, secures a good capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Although children enter Reception with a wide range of skills, reflecting their different pre-school experiences, most start with knowledge and abilities that are broadly typical of four and five-year-olds nationally. Their progress before September 2008 was satisfactory and by the end of Reception, most reached levels of development typical of their age. The relatively weaker aspects of their development were in writing and mathematics. However, these are being tackled effectively by staff and children's progress this year has improved overall and is now good. This means they are now very well prepared to start the National Curriculum in Year 1.

The children settle quickly into the classroom routines and are happy to talk to visitors. They are confident to use all the areas available to them, both indoors and outdoors and become immersed in their play. Activities are well designed by staff to guide their learning. For example, an inspector was invited by some children to enter their café. 'The waitress' took her order making an excellent attempt to write it on her pad, using the words provided on the menu board to help her with spelling. The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers understand the learning needs of the children fully. This is reflected in their planning which meets the needs of individuals well. An appropriate emphasis is given to learning the basic skills and it is evident the children enjoy their 'letters and sounds' work, which is supporting their progress in early reading and writing well.

Partnership work is excellent. Staff visit the children before starting school and transition into Key Stage 1 is well managed. Parents say they appreciate the approachability of the staff and the information provided regularly about their children's progress. Staff work well as a team and provide the children with an excellent level of care and support. Welfare arrangements are excellent. The recently introduced system for assessing the children's progress is working effectively. Reception is well led and managed.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that managers use all the information available to them to check the effectiveness of their improvement plans against the outcomes achieved by the pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils start Key Stage 1 with levels of development that are typical of five-year-olds nationally. They make good progress and by the end of Year 2, most have reached standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above those expected for seven-year-olds. The percentage of pupils who reach the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. This has been a consistent picture over the past five years.

Since the last inspection, the standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have been generally above those expected for 11-year-olds nationally. In 2007, standards dipped slightly below the national average. The school identified the reasons for the dip and tackled it successfully. In 2008, the standards reached by pupils in Year 6 were higher. Pupils' progress, although good in most subjects, is much better in English and science than in mathematics. The more able pupils in particular do not reach the standards of which they are capable in mathematics. The work in pupils' exercise books in Key Stage 2 demonstrates

that standards in science and English, particularly in writing, are above average. However, the school's provisional national test data for 2009 shows that pupils' achievement in mathematics remains relatively weak. This is recognised by the senior leadership team and there are plans of good quality in place to raise achievement in this subject.

Pupils' progress in Spanish and physical education are particularly good. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with their peers.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are polite, confident and friendly and show high levels of consideration to each other. They understand that all individuals are different, but equally worthy of respect and this is demonstrated by the easy way they interact with pupils who have severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are excellent and they are keen to do their best. However, where teaching is weaker, some pupils are inattentive and a minority become restless. Pupils say there is no bullying and they are confident that staff will help them to deal with any concerns effectively. Pupils say they enjoy school and their attendance is good. They are keen to take part in the large number of sporting and extra-curricular activities. They know how to keep healthy and safe. They are particularly aware of the dangers of the internet and well informed about issues such as 'cyber bullying'. The school council takes its role seriously and has led improvements to the school grounds. Protecting the environment is high on the pupils' agenda and they are active as 'eco warriors', turning off lights and recycling plastic bottles to make a greenhouse. Pupils willingly volunteer to take responsibility as monitors. They enjoy acting in their annual productions and say their residential visit to Robinwood challenges them physically and they learn to be independent. Pupils make friends easily and are well prepared socially for the next stage in their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors observed a range of lessons across the curriculum. Some were outstanding, the majority were good and a small proportion was satisfactory. Teaching is generally confident and imaginative. Teachers capture the pupils' interest well and relationships are excellent. In the better lessons, work was well matched to the pupils' ability and provided a good level of challenge. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. For example, in a Year 6 lesson based on the poem 'The Highwayman', pupils were expected to empathise with one of the characters in the poem and explain clearly why the character felt as he/she did. The teacher's and pupils' highly skilled questioning and the planned linked activities, led to pupils responding with a depth of understanding well beyond their age. Teachers are confident using information and communication technology (ICT) to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. This is used effectively for the more able pupils in particular, who are often directed to linked independent work. Where teaching was satisfactory, pupils were often sitting for long periods squashed together on the carpet. Some resources, particularly the interactive whiteboards were not well used and examples provided for pupils to learn from were not always clear enough. In these lessons, pupils became inattentive and their rate of progress was slower. Teaching assistants provide good support for individuals with learning difficulties and/or

disabilities and groups of pupils. In some classes the interaction between teachers and support staff was seamless and enabled the pupils to progress particularly well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are provided with an imaginative and interesting curriculum, which makes very effective use of visits, visitors to school and the local environment. It meets statutory requirements and an appropriate emphasis is given to the basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. A strong feature of the curriculum is the way subjects are linked together providing excellent opportunities for pupils to fully understand the context of their work. For example, a topic in Year 6 involved pupils studying aspects of history, geography, art, drama and writing. Staff provide pupils with interesting real-life experiences. For example, in Year 5, a visitor to school was invited to share her vivid memories of the Blitz. This enabled pupils to empathise with how it felt and gave them a good understanding of the human perspective of war. Spanish is taught throughout Key Stage 2 and pupils learn about the culture in addition to speaking the language. However, the curriculum for mathematics is a weaker aspect of the school's work, particularly in Key Stage 2. It is less well matched to pupils' knowledge, skills and abilities. There are few opportunities for pupils to practise their computational skills in problem solving and there is not yet a consistent approach to developing pupils' mental arithmetic skills. An excellent range of after-school and lunchtime clubs are provided for pupils, which include a residential visit to Robinwood. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well designed to meet their needs.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The pastoral care the school provides for the pupils is excellent. All the current statutory requirements to safeguard the pupils' health, safety and well-being are met. Parents appreciate the support staff give to their children, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Families are included well to ensure that the school fully meets the needs of its most vulnerable pupils. Partnerships with a local specialist school and health professionals are used effectively to ensure all staff are well trained and the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent.

The guidance given to pupils in lessons is good. Staff mark pupils' work regularly and give an appropriate level of praise and encouragement. Pupils have learning targets in their exercise books, but these are used more effectively in English than in mathematics. A relatively weaker aspect of the school's work is the tracking of individual pupils' progress in mathematics. This is not always used to identify underachievement early enough. Consequently, pupils do not reach their challenging targets in mathematics.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher, supported well by the deputy headteacher and senior leadership team, has created a school where pupils are confident individuals who care for each other exceptionally well. Standards are fairly consistent with those reached at the time of the last inspection. Opportunities presented by the headteacher's role in another school have been used well to



develop the skills of senior staff and partnership work between the two schools is excellent. The senior leadership team knows the school well. It identifies its strengths and weaknesses accurately, but does not always use all the information available quickly enough to check whether its actions for improvement are successful. This resulted in the school missing its challenging target in mathematics, though targets are met and exceeded in English and science.

Subject leaders are keen to develop their subjects and survey information they gathered on what pupils like about the curriculum is used well. They have strong subject knowledge and as a consequence, provide high quality training to staff. However, subject leaders do not yet check how well pupils are achieving in their subjects and so the impact of their work is not always evident.

Governors are supportive of the school and are keen to gather the views of stakeholders to inform their decisions. They hold the school to account effectively. However, governors recognise that in some aspects of their work they are too reliant on the information provided by the school.

The school is making a good contribution towards promoting community cohesion. The school's own community is fully inclusive and pupils understand and respect the differences between individuals. The school has plans of good quality to develop its links with the wider UK community.

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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?	2
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	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

3 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Morecambe and Heysham Torrisholme Community Primary School, Lancashire, LA4 6PN

You may remember that I inspected your school recently with Mr Stafford and Mrs Martin to carry out an inspection. Thank you for talking to us and sharing your views. This letter is to tell you what we found.

Torrisholme provides you with a good quality of education. Children in Reception get off to a good start and you are taught well. You reach above average standards in your work, although we know that some of you in Key Stage 2 should do better in mathematics. Your behaviour is excellent. We were particularly impressed by the way you involve the children in wheelchairs in your activities and are caring towards those who need extra help. You have excellent attitudes to your work. Even though we had a heat wave during the inspection, you were sensible in your very hot classrooms. You remembered to drink lots of water and kept yourselves well protected with sun hats and sun cream outside. This shows that you understand how to keep fit and healthy!

You told us that you enjoy all the sporting activities and your visit to Robinwood. The school council work hard with you to raise money for charities and hold special days. Your 'eco warriors' are working well to protect the environment, we like the plastic bottle greenhouse! You told us that you are proud of your school and particularly enjoy the productions; this was very evident to us during the inspection.

Although your school is good, we would like your curriculum in mathematics to be as interesting and effective as in other subjects, so that you reach higher standards in mathematics by the time you leave Year 6. We have asked Mrs Fielden to use all the information she has on your progress to check that this happens. You can help by making sure that you always try your best and letting your teachers know if you find the work too easy or difficult.

With my best wishes for the future,

Yours faithfully

Gill Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector