

Torkington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106081
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	336614
Inspection dates	15–16 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Anna Dawson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Hirst
Headteacher	Mr Andy Buckler
Date of previous school inspection	25 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and two parts of lessons. All 9 class teachers were observed. Meetings were held with the Chair of Governing Body, staff, groups of pupils and parents and carers and the local authority School Improvement Partner. The inspectors observed the school's and pupils' work and looked at school policies, records of meetings, assessment and monitoring information, curriculum planning and the school development plan. In addition, 91 parental questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether standards in English and mathematics are high enough at Key Stage 2, especially for the more-able pupils
- the quality of the school self-evaluation
- if the teaching is meeting the needs of all groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of the strategies to raise standards.

Information about the school

This is a primary school of average size. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Seven per cent are from minority ethnic groups, mainly from mixed ethnic backgrounds, which is below average. Of these, four per cent are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.

A new headteacher has just been appointed and took up his post three days before the start of the inspection. In the interim period of four terms previously, the school was led by the deputy headteacher who was the acting headteacher during this time. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and the Sportsmark awards. The out-of-school care provision on site was not part of this inspection and is subject to a separate inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school with some particular strengths. It is a calm and happy place with an enriched learning environment. Pupils behave well and are polite and receive good pastoral care from the staff. They feel safe and secure and have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. This is reflected in the awards they have gained for both health and sport. There is a good partnership with parents and carers and with the local community. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils and provides a good variety of opportunities for developing their interests, particularly in sport, music and French. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and achieve well, but progress is slower in Reception and children's achievement overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. In the Reception classes, the activities that children choose are not sufficiently challenging and motivating for more-able children. During Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is slower in Years 3 to 6, particularly for the more-able in mathematics and writing. Consequently, progress is satisfactory overall and pupils achieve satisfactorily to attain broadly average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Although there is good teaching in Key Stage 1, there is a more variable picture in Key Stage 2 where it is mainly satisfactory. This is because it is not challenging enough to ensure that all groups of pupils consistently achieve well. In most lessons, work is not matched well enough to the needs of the more-able pupils in writing and mathematics. Pupils do not always have sufficient guidance how to improve their work. Support and guidance, especially for more-able pupils, is satisfactory.

In the absence of a permanent headteacher, the acting headteacher and the staff have worked effectively as a team to raise standards. As a result, attainment in writing and in mathematics has improved, though these successes are not yet evident in national test results. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is at a very early stage of development. The roles of governors, subject and senior leaders are underdeveloped. These aspects of leadership and management are identified as future priorities. Satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and the support and expertise of a leadership team which is committed to ongoing development demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2, particularly for

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more-able pupils, by:

- matching work more closely to pupils' needs
- providing clearer guidance to pupils so they know how to improve their work.
- Improve outcomes for more-able children in the Reception classes, by:
 - planning challenging and interesting learning activities for children to choose so they make good progress towards reaching the Early Learning Goals.
- Develop the leadership and management of the school, by:
 - ensuring that both staff and governors are actively involved in ongoing self-evaluation of the school's performance
 - developing the roles of senior leaders, subject leaders and governors
 - monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning with rigour.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most pupils enjoy their work and learn satisfactorily in lessons. They are attentive but not all of them are sufficiently challenged in their work. They learn well and make good progress in Years 1 and 2, where overall they attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Particularly good progress is made in writing. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Years Key Stage 2 but progress tends to accelerate in Years 5 and 6. However, more-able pupils do not get consistently challenging work to enable them to fulfil their potential in writing and mathematics. This results in broadly average attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. This has generally been the case for the past three years with English, writing in particular, the weakest subject. As a result of effective strategies for improvement, current attainment in mathematics and writing is slightly higher than last year, but this is not yet evident in improved standards for the more-able. There are several examples of above average work in Year 5 and 6 in information and communication technology (ICT) and in music.

As a result of good support from teachers and teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those new to learning English make good progress and achieve well. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are not always challenged sufficiently and make satisfactory progress.

The overwhelming majority of pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy, recognising that, in their words, 'This is a healthy school'. They take lots of exercise and make healthy choices when eating snacks and lunches and when growing vegetables. The comment 'The school helps us to be healthy' is typical of pupils' views. Pupils are sociable and have a clear understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Older ones take on some responsibilities in school such as helping younger children as 'playground buddies'. Pupils know who to turn to when they have concerns

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and say they feel safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is demonstrated effectively through their growing participation in community activities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There are good relationships between staff and pupils, evident in pupils' enjoyment of school and in their good attendance. Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, because the teachers match the work well to the abilities of the pupils and plan work that consistently builds on their knowledge, skills and understanding. Where teaching is satisfactory, mainly in Years 3 to 6, work set in writing and mathematics for the most-able pupils is not challenging enough for them to make the good progress of which they are capable. Although work is neat and well presented, many find the work too easy. This is most evident in teachers' planning and in pupils work in Years 3 and 4 where targets are not consistently set and matched well enough to meet the needs of the more-able. There is more challenge presented in Years 5 and 6, but not enough for the most-able pupils to have reached their potential by the time they leave. Teachers' marking, although supportive, generally does not always tell pupils

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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clearly enough how to improve, except in Year 6 where it is detailed and informative. The curriculum has some good features. For example, links between subjects are developing well, providing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in writing and ICT. There are good opportunities in music for pupils to learn to play an instrument. Pupils learn French and there are plentiful opportunities for competitive sport. Pupils in Year 4, for example, recently won the local school swimming gala. The curriculum is enriched well by visitors to school, trips to the locality and a residential visit which add to pupils' enjoyment in learning. However, the curriculum is satisfactory overall because the provision for basic skills in mathematics and writing does not fully meet the needs of the most-able in Key Stage 2.

The learning environment is welcoming and caring, reflecting the school statement of 'Children are at the heart of what we do'. Parents and carers are appreciative of the care and support their children receive, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are most vulnerable. There are effective transition arrangements for pupils entering the school and transferring to their next phase of education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher has established a good working relationship with staff and governors. He quickly grasped the main priorities for the school and is keen to move the school forward. Before his appointment, an interim development plan was set for four terms by the acting headteacher and senior leaders, with the support of the governors. During this period, the supportive and caring ethos of the school and staff morale has been maintained and teamwork has improved. A more robust system for monitoring pupils' progress has been introduced. Staff have worked hard as a committed team with the help and advice of local authority staff to work towards the targets set in the school development plan. Self-evaluation, although not entirely embedded, is generally accurate and initiatives to improve performance in writing and mathematics have had some success. This has resulted in rising attainment across the school, most evident in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' progress towards their targets is evaluated each term and strategies are put in place so that pupils do not fall behind. For example, a positive outcome has been the narrowing of the gap in achievement, particularly for boys in writing and girls in mathematics although there is still more work to be done. Efforts to

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promote equality of opportunity are satisfactory as more pupils than previously are achieving as well as they should.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. There are effective links with the community and developing links with other schools. There are harmonious relationships between the different groups of pupils and most are beginning to appreciate diversity in a global context.

The school has a good partnership with parents and carers who are fully supportive of the school. They actively involved in fundraising activities which have led to increased resources, in relation to ICT for example, for the school. The mother and toddler group on site meets the needs of the parents and carers and of the local community effectively. There are good links with local schools and outside agencies to meet school priorities and the needs of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Governors are supportive of the school and statutory procedures for vetting staff and safeguarding pupils are met. The risk assessments for pupils when they go out on school trips are robust. However, those carried out on site on a daily basis are not as rigorous. Governors understand that to raise standards further, they require more information about pupils' outcomes to be able more fully to support the school. Finances are appropriately managed and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children achieve satisfactorily overall from their starting points. There is variation

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between the good quality provision in the Nursery and satisfactory provision in the two Reception classes. On entry to the Nursery, a majority of the children have skills which are usually expected and a minority have good language and communication skills. Children achieve well in the Nursery because there are good quality varied, challenging and interesting activities based on children's interests and needs. While effective support and questioning by staff to promote children's learning are well-timed in the Nursery, there are times when they do not extend the leaning and understanding of the more-able in Reception. From the start, the staff take good care to meet the needs of each child. For example, those at the early stages of learning English and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the support they need. Personal and social skills, particularly children's knowledge and understanding of calculation and sounds and letters are developed well in both the Nursery and Reception classes, partly as the result of small group work led by the staff. This shows an improving picture from last year. However, in Reception, there are missed opportunities to plan motivating activities that children choose which challenge the most-able to achieve well. Children behave and respond well and are generally confident, independent and happy learners. Most, for instance, have a good understanding by the end of Reception of how to stay safe and healthy. There is effective leadership and management as staff are beginning to work well as a team to achieve their priorities. However, the role of the manager in supporting and leading priorities for improvement is underdeveloped. By the end of Reception, the majority are working towards attaining the expected Early Learning Goals and a small minority reach them.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires were received from 40% of all parents and carers. They show they are supportive and say that their children enjoy coming to school. Parents and carers are appreciative of the hard work and support of the staff but in the absence of a substantive headteacher they look forward to the new leadership and management. A very small minority is concerned about pupils' behaviour. The inspection finds that behaviour is good overall and any concerns are generally sorted out when brought to the attention of the staff. A few parents and carers had concerns about their children's progress and a few would like more information on their children's progress. Inspectors judge this information to be good but they agree that some more able pupils should

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make better progress in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Torkington Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 232 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	66	17	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	56	22	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	44	23	46	5	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	46	23	46	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	42	28	56	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	34	29	58	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	46	24	48	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	40	22	44	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	38	29	58	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	42	25	50	3	6	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	42	25	50	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	15	30	26	52	8	16	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	54	19	38	4	8	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Torkington Primary School, Stockport, SK7 6NR

Thank you for the welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work and were interested in all your activities. Special congratulations to those pupils who participated and won the local swimming gala. We judged your school as satisfactory overall but with a number of good things. We know that:

- children do well and get off to a good start in the Nursery
- you learn well how to stay healthy and keep fit
- you get on well with each other, listen well in class and behave well
- the staff take good care of you and help you so you feel safe in school

We have asked your teachers to look carefully at the work they give you in writing and mathematics to help some of you to make better progress. We have also asked your teachers to give you more guidance to help you to continue to improve your work. In Reception, teachers are going to plan the activities that the children choose to help them make good progress. The headteacher, teachers and governors are going to look closely at all the school activities to help the school improve. You can all help by making sure you always try hard.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Anna Dawson

Lead inspector

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