

Torpoint Community College

Trevol Road, Torpoint, PL11 2NH

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- It has improved since the last inspection because the headteacher, senior leaders and governors have concentrated on improving teaching and raising students' achievements. Weaknesses have been tackled successfully.
- New staff have been appointed and the quality of leadership at all levels has been strengthened, with a focus on improving outcomes for students.
- The very good use of data to set targets and monitor progress has raised expectations and allowed the school to bring about significant improvement.
- The sixth form is good and has a consistent record of improving outcomes. The performance of students at the highest grades is above national average.
- Groups of students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, and those supported by additional funds (the pupil premium), make good progress in their learning.
- Behaviour has improved and is now good. Students have positive attitudes to learning and feel safe in school.
- There is a very strong community ethos in the school and within the wider community. The school has good links with local organisations and businesses.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of students making rapid progress to enable them to attain A* and A grades is not yet high enough.
- Not all subjects are used well to promote students' literacy and numeracy skills sufficiently.
- Marking and assessment are not consistent across the school in providing advice to students about exactly what they need to do in order to make further improvements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day’s notice.
- Inspectors observed 31 lessons taught by 30 teachers, including three lessons observed jointly with senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- An inspector made a number of short visits to lessons with the school’s special educational needs coordinator to focus specifically on the support for disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- Meetings were held with two groups of students, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, and school staff, including senior and middle leaders, a representative from the local authority, and a representative of the local primary schools.
- Inspectors took account of 53 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Responses to staff questionnaires were taken into account.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own data on students’ current progress, a review of recent examination results, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Ann Cox, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anne Barrett	Additional Inspector
Richard Kearsley	Additional Inspector
Babrul Matin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is below average size: the roll has fallen in recent years owing to a declining population of secondary-age students in the locality.
- The school serves the town of Torpoint in south east Cornwall. Most of its students live within the town or the surrounding Rame Peninsula area, though a small proportion cross the river and county boundary from the neighbouring city of Plymouth.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in the care of the local authority and for students known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs, or who are supported at school action plus, is above average. The number of students supported at school action is below the national average.
- There is a strong community dimension to the school and the on-site sports facilities are used extensively by the local community outside of school hours.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. A small number of students study courses at other locations, ensuring that they leave school with recognised qualifications.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the current upward trend and further increase the achievement of students so that they make rapid progress across all subjects, especially, but not exclusively, in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring students know what they must do in order to aim for the highest grades
 - using the improvements in marking and assessment to ensure that students are given clear advice about what to do next to further improve their work
 - refining the deployment of teaching assistants so that they are consistently able to help students to make progress
 - reviewing the policy for early entry into mathematics GCSE examinations.
- Increase the incidences for students to read, write, communicate and use mathematics in all subjects by:
 - making clear references in schemes of work and curriculum plans to the opportunities that exist to enhance skills
 - further extending the activities in place to encourage wider reading and writing across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with attainment a little below national averages. Outcomes in Year 11, especially the key measure of five A* to C GCSE passes including English and mathematics, have shown a trend of improvement sustained over several years. Results are now in line with the national average and the progress of current students within the school indicates further improvement.
- Students make good progress in English, exceeding national expectations for all ability groups.
- In mathematics, a substantial improvement has been made with most students making expected progress and a small but increasing proportion better than this. However, those with high prior attainment are not always sufficiently challenged or know precisely what is needed to ensure that they reach the highest possible grades. Some evidence suggests that early entry for GCSE is at least partly responsible for the most able students failing to achieve the very highest grades.
- Achievement across most subjects is good and in the humanities subjects there is a sharp and effective focus to further improve outcomes to match those of other subjects.
- Reading is actively encouraged with a focus on 'Word of the Week' to support vocabulary development with the result that reading, writing and communication skills are improving throughout the school.
- The progress and achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is good, and better than the national average.
- Students who receive pupil premium support make good progress, their starting point being a lower average point score than students without this additional support. The gap between those students receiving additional support and those not supported is smaller than the gap nationally, and the gap is narrowing each year.
- The percentage of students leaving school and entering employment, education or training is well above the national average.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are particularly good and exceed national averages. There has been continuous and sustained improvement in sixth form outcomes over several years, and a significant number of candidates attain the highest grades in examinations. Retention from Year 12 to Year 13 courses is slightly below the national average and the leadership of the sixth form is focusing on improving the advice and support given to students in the sixth form. Where students have not moved into a Year 13 course they have gone into employment or other training.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is often typically good. Some teaching is outstanding, particularly in sixth form lessons and in drama. Teaching has improved since the last inspection because teachers and other staff have been well supported to evaluate and develop their skills in helping students to learn.
- Most students make good progress and achieve well. Students with special educational needs and those supported additionally with the pupil premium make particularly good progress. Detailed assessment of students' development and identification of their specific needs is followed up with appropriate support to ensure that they receive maximum benefit. Some teaching assistants were observed making very effective interventions in lessons but this good practice is not consistent in all classes.
- Where teaching is good or outstanding, the students are engaged in a variety of activities which engage their attention, and the pace of the lesson is good. Teachers check the understanding and progress of students, and adjust the lesson activities as needed.

- The effective use of target setting has helped to raise expectations and teachers plan lesson activities to develop students' skills and extend their knowledge and understanding.
- Most teachers monitor the learning and progress of students regularly so that they can match tasks to their needs. Marking and assessment generally provide advice to students about improvements they should make, though this is not yet consistent across the school and further improvement is called for.
- The majority of parents rightly consider that appropriate homework is given to students to extend their learning.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills are on the whole taught effectively but opportunities are not always clearly identified in planning documentation or capitalised on in lessons to put these skills to best use across all subjects.
- Students enjoy a positive climate for learning in the great majority of their lessons. They are keen to do well and engage in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students feel safe in school and cooperate well with each other and staff.
- Students conduct themselves well around the school and are polite to visitors. Relationships between students and staff are good, and behaviour in lessons is generally good, at times better. A small number of students were observed in low-level disruptive behaviour, but this was largely due to inappropriate tasks and lack of engagement.
- Students and staff confirm that behaviour has improved well over the last 18 months. This has been a whole-school focus, and a professional consultant is used to provide further support. Students were involved in designing the new policy, and house leaders have been particularly successful in bringing about improvements. The number of fixed-term exclusions has declined over the last three years.
- Students are well informed about how to keep themselves safe, understand the dangers of, for example, abuse of drugs and alcohol, and have a sensible attitude to risk taking. They are aware of different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying, and are confident that any bullying in school will be quickly and effectively dealt with. Peer mentoring and other support systems are accessible to all students.
- Attendance is good and improving. The school is tackling some issues of punctuality and has a range of strategies in place to help students to improve where necessary. Parents have been fully involved in this process.

The leadership and management are good

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are exemplary and meet all statutory requirements.
- The headteacher and other senior managers have been relentless in the pursuit of improvement. They have built up a 'can do' expectation throughout the school. There has been a particular focus on improving the standards of teaching. A robust system of monitoring teaching has been systematically followed, with additional support made available in a variety of forms. This has resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching, which is being reflected in outcomes. There have been rapid improvements in outcomes in Key Stage 4, and sustained improvement in outcomes in the sixth form.
- The inspectors' assessment of teaching closely matched judgements made by senior leaders.
- The school is aware, at all levels, of strengths and weaknesses, and plans have been implemented to successfully deal with targets from the last inspection. Excellent longer-term, meticulous plans are in place to ensure continuous and sustained improvement over time.
- Management of the performance of teachers is rigorous and used well to support teachers'

development and inform salary progression.

- The curriculum has been successfully developed to meet the needs of all learners, particularly in Key Stage 4 and for disabled students and those with special educational needs. There are valuable opportunities for extended learning, such as days when there is a focus on particular activities and experiences. A broad range of experiences including the vertical pastoral system facilitate students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The curriculum is appropriate for the students and includes good quality vocational courses and off-site provision for a small number of students. The 'Forest School' programme based in the grounds of nearby Antony House successfully supports students to enable them to prepare for the world of work. Other alternative courses are made available to students through providers such as Caradon Short Stay School.
- The use of data to set targets for students, and then monitor their progress, has been developed effectively since the last inspection. The accurate monitoring of groups of students has enabled the school to put in place strategies to maximise opportunities and ensure increasing success for all groups of students.
- Where monitoring has identified underperformance of students, targeted interventions have been put in place to support them. The school has recognised the need for further developments to ensure that the most able students are stretched to make more rapid progress.
- Behaviour of students, particularly behaviour for learning, is good. Strong leadership and the provision of appropriate support have ensured that this development has been secure. The school's leaders have worked effectively with advisers, and welcomed good levels of support from the local authority.
- The broad and balanced curriculum, along with the many effective opportunities for extended learning, provides good opportunities for all groups of students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs. Monitoring students' progress provides a constant check to ensure that there are equal opportunities for all students, and any potential discrimination is identified and dealt with in a positive manner.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The governing body is extremely well informed and knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Through written reports and meetings they receive information and they provide school leaders and managers with a high level of both support and challenge. They have a good awareness of the progress and achievement of different groups of students and of how the school's students perform in comparison to others nationally. The governors have a good knowledge of the management of performance within the school, and how this links to salary progression, and they have supported the leadership team in taking action to ensure that students benefit from the highest quality of teaching. Governors attend regular training to broaden their expertise. Financial resources are managed well to support the provision for students and there is clear accountability for the use of the pupil premium funding which is published on the school's website.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112041
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	405371

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	779
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Mann
Headteacher	Andrea Hazeldine
Date of previous school inspection	March 2011
Telephone number	01752 812511
Fax number	01752 815014
Email address	enquiries@torpoint.cornwall.sch.uk

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