

Great Torrington Community School & Sports College Profile

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Great Torrington Community School & Sports

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<http://www.greattorrington.devon.sch.uk>

Local Authority:	Devon
Age range:	11-16
Number of pupils:	906
Head teacher:	Mrs D J Nicholson
Chair of governors:	Mrs P. Hargreaves

What have been our successes this year?

- Pupils achieved higher standards at Key Stage 4 than they would have if they had attended 93% of other schools in the country. In 2007 59% candidates gained 5+ A* to C grades and 28 learners gained 5 or more A+ A* grades.

-At Key Stage 3 pupils achieve higher standards than they would have if they had attended 97% of other schools in the country. This is according to the contextual value added scores published by the government in the RAISEonline for our 2007 results.

- The school is recognised as being highly inclusive by officers in Devon LA due to having a low number of exclusions.

- The school more than met its targets for attendance and is above national average for low amounts of authorised and unauthorised attendance.

- A large parental survey showed that parents are very happy with most aspects of the school.

- We gained the Healthy Schools Award and the Investors in Work Related and Enterprise Learning.

- The school has been recognised by the Government as being one of only three hundred "high performing specialist schools". This has enabled the school to apply for and achieve another specialism. This means we are now a centre for "Applied Learning (Vocational)" as well as a Sports College.

What are we trying to improve?

In 2008/9 we are trying to improve:

1. By providing more personalised learning:

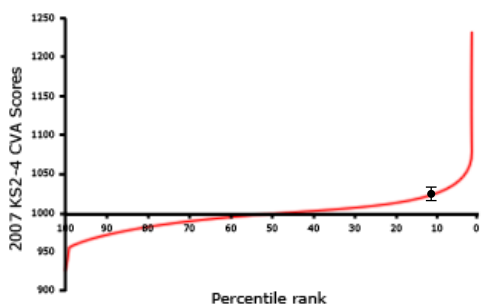
- we have increased our KS4 options from 13 to 31 including day courses at NDC.
- we have a nurture group for very low attaining Y7 & Y8 learners with more specialised teaching to suit the learners' needs and fewer teachers.
- through enrichment opportunities for more able learners to realise their potential with an express group for Y7 learners in 2008 to ensure that there is enough curriculum challenge for them.
- through specialist T.As who have been put in post to advise on learners with complex needs.

2. We expect to see these SEN groups of learners achieving as well as the rest of the school population as shown in Raiseonline data in 2008 onwards.

3. Learners' attitudes have been improved through setting up more school leadership opportunities for learners and the demand for more consistency in and outside the classroom. Our own data for sanctions should decrease and rewards should increase.

4. Learners' expectations have also been improved through a system of assertive mentoring and teachers' efforts to improve homework. We expect to see less underachievement in the public exams for Y9 and Y11 in 2008.

How much progress do pupils make between 11 and 16?



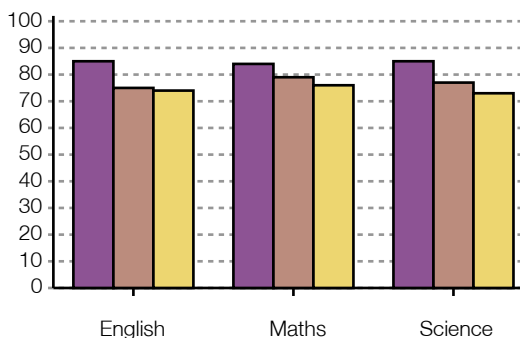
- Our School
- ┌ Confidence interval

The chart shows our school's contextual value added (CVA) score relative to that of other secondary schools. CVA is a statistical means of assessing how effective a school is, by measuring pupils' progress using their test and examination results. The confidence interval shows the range within which we can be confident the score (calculated on the results of only one year group) represents the overall effectiveness of a school. The percentile rank shows the percentage of schools with a score equal to or higher than ours.

As can be seen in the graph above learners here have made much more progress than expected when they leave this school at 16 years old, and more progress than they would have made if they had attended most other schools. Pupils at this school have more value added to their learning from age 11 to 16 than in 93% of other schools. We are in the top 7% of the whole country. At key stage 4 relative attainment is significantly better than the national average.

Progress measures from age 11 to 16 show that this school has been in the top 10% nationally for the last three years.

How well do our pupils achieve at age 14?



This shows Key Stage 3 results for 2007. It shows the percentage of pupils eligible for KS3 tests (usually 14 year olds) who achieved or exceeded level 5.

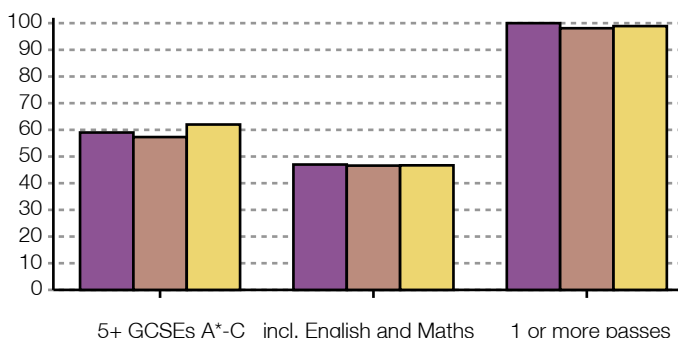
■ Our school ■ Local schools (Local Authority) ■ All schools

In 2007 our contextual value added put us in the top3% nationally with English in the top 4%, Science in the top 7% and Mathematics the top 12% in comparison to all schools across the country. In Mathematics a high proportion of pupils gained level 6, level 7 and level 8 in comparison to other schools.

In English 85% of pupils gained level 5 or above; in Maths and Science the figure was 84%

We were happy with the teacher assessed results in all the other areas of the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

How well do our pupils achieve at age 16?



This shows the percentage of pupils (who were at the end of Key Stage 4) who in 2007 achieved 5 or more GCSEs (and equivalent) at grades A*-C, 5 or more GCSEs (and equivalent) at grades A*-C including English and mathematics GCSE, and one or more GCSEs (and equivalent) at grades A*-G.

■ Our school ■ Local schools (Local Authority) ■ All schools

In 2007 59% of pupils gained 5 A* - C grades

96% of pupils gained 5 A* - G grades

One pupil gained the top mark in French out of 100,977 candidates

One pupil gained a top five mark in English literature out of 364,832 candidates

28 pupils gained 5 or more A*/A grades

10 pupils gained 12 A* - C grades

How have our results changed over time?

In the last three years:

At Key Stage 3 there has been a significant improvement especially in the tested Mathematics and Science. Pupils make considerably more progress than expected between Key Stage 2 to 3, and more pupils are gaining the higher levels each year.

At Key Stage 4 the school is achieving better than expected results when compared to most other Devon Community schools and is considered to be making better than expected progress by the Local Authority.

Pupils have made much more progress than expected in the five years that they attend this school i.e. from Key Stage 2 to 4. In 2007 our pupils made better progress than pupils in 93% of other schools. Able pupils have gained considerably more higher grades at GCSE each year.

How are we making sure that every child gets teaching to meet their individual needs?

With an emphasis on assessment for learning and the National Strategy, individual pupil attainment has been raised. We have made better use of assessment data and marking to recognise pupil progress or lack of it. All pupils have targets based initially on their KS2 results. We have developed a system, in which all pupils are assessed across all subjects once each term and parents are informed about progress

Teachers differentiate their teaching by input or outcome to suit the needs of each individual, similarly homework is sometimes differentiated.

In the Autumn term of Y10, pupils have minimal and aspirational targets for each GCSE subject based on their KS3 results and the national graphs in RAISEonline.

There is a mixture of pupil grouping arrangements depending on the demands of the subject being taught. Pupils are grouped in whatever way best ensures that the teacher can cater for the individual needs of the pupils. Teaching groups are mostly mixed ability in Y7. Setting, based on a

pupil's ability in that subject, increases as pupils move up the school.

Teachers are encouraged to use formative marking whenever possible in order to ensure that a pupil knows what to do to improve.

How do we make sure all pupils attend their lessons and behave well?

Attendance is monitored through two formal group registrations: one is first thing in the morning and the other is after lunch. It is school policy that teachers take a register at the start of each lesson to ensure attendance in lessons. If a pupil is absent from a lesson and was present at registration, this will be reported to Reception and if the pupil cannot be located then the parents will be informed.

High standards in pupil behaviour are enforced by all staff. Consistency is achieved through an agreed policy, which includes rewards and sanctions. Our Behaviour policy is reviewed regularly and annual data on rewards and sanctions is analysed in order to monitor changes. Behaviour in this school is considered to be very good (see Ofsted report 2006). A variety of strategies are used to reduce bullying. Learners tell us that they feel safe in this school.

What have pupils told us about the school, and what have we done as a result?

Learners monitor and evaluate the canteen through a Food User group.

Learners have Year and School Councils, through which they consider all aspects of the school e.g. this year learners have given their views on what makes a good lesson, and these responses have been passed to the teaching staff. Some of these Council representatives have volunteered to form a premises committee to monitor the new build and choose colour schemes etc

Homework reviews are undertaken each term and pupils are asked to comment on various aspects of the quality of the homework set, and teachers have improved their use of homework in response to these comments

Teaching staff have been encouraged to gain evaluations of their teaching from pupils as part of their self evaluation process.

School Leaders (Prefects) volunteer or are nominated and then they are interviewed for their roles; they receive leadership training. School Leaders report on any problems and suggest improvements.

How are we working with parents and the community?

We aim to develop a close partnership with parents as soon as their child enters the school, and before through induction arrangements. The child's tutor is the key contact for parents. They meet each year at the Tutor evenings and at other times as required. Parents are invited to contact the Tutor whenever they have concerns.

All Parents are also invited to the Award ceremonies, Careers events, Open evenings, Sports events etc.

Pupils take part in a number of community activities e.g. festivals in the town, drama in our feeder schools and art exhibitions.

Members of the community are invited to fundraising events organised by our very active Parents and Friends Association. We ensure that our events are reported in the local press.

The school has a strong link with the local Rotary Club through presentations, copies of our half term newsletter and termly visits to school by the rotarian responsible for international links.

Learners with staff attend the termly Care Forum in the town.

There are many links with local sports clubs.

What activities and options are available to pupils?

A great variety of activities are available to pupils, as well as sport there are concerts at Christmas and in the Summer, a drama production in school and a dance production at the Plough in May. We also have a full programme of extra curricular sport.

Study provision is available in the library before and after school as well as at lunchtime. A computer room is available at lunchtime as well as after school when the Homework club is based there for an hour. There are weekly after school activities i.e. cooking, film making, and beauty as part of our childcare programme. On a day to day basis there are a range of activities at lunchtime.

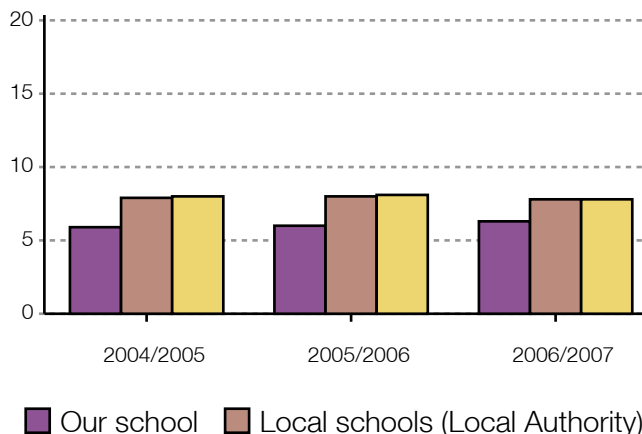
There were many day trips throughout the year, arranged by most subjects to enrich the curriculum. Residential experience was gained through a week's skiing in Italy, a french exchange and water sports in France.

A number of pupils took part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and the Ten Tors challenge.

All pupils in school choose from a wide selection of mostly sporting activities for two full Activities days as well as taking part in the competitive athletics events on Sports Day.

We offer 31 different options for KS4 including three languages.

How do our absence rates compare with other schools?



This chart shows the percentage of half days missed through authorised and unauthorised absence by all pupils at the school. Information is given for the school, for schools within the local authority and for all schools.

The chart shows that our absence totals for all the pupils in this school are lower than all local and other schools. This means that we have excellent attendance totals as recognised by Ofsted in 2006. We believe that this is because pupils enjoy coming to this school.

How do we make sure our pupils are healthy, safe and well-supported?

We are a Sports College and this means that we have extra resources to give pupils many more opportunities to be healthier through sport and exercise. The timetabled curriculum, which contains four hours of P.E. lessons per fortnight in Year 7, and five hours in all other years. There are also many extra curricular sessions available covering a wide range of activities. Healthier meal options are encouraged in the canteen and from the vending machines.

Learners are kept safe through a vigilant Health and Safety policy, which is closely monitored by the staff and governors.

Child Protection procedures are regularly reviewed and the staff are annually updated through further training.

All pupils are supported through a highly effective Year System where tutors and Year Heads are the main points of contact. Many outside agencies are utilised when their expertise is needed to support individual learners and to support the teaching of social, legal, economic and health issues.

In October 2006 Ofsted graded the pupils' healthy lifestyles as excellent. In 2008 the school gained the Healthy Schools award.

What do our pupils do after year 11?

According to data from Connexions 91.26% of the Y11 cohort, who left this school in Summer 2007, stayed in education and training; 2% were unemployed.

Ofsted's view of our school

Great Torrington Community School and Sports College is a good school. High expectations and a strong focus on learning ensure pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy coming to school, which is demonstrated by their outstanding attendance and positive behaviour. The school's work as a specialist sports college is very effective in promoting pupils' health and fitness and developing their self-esteem. They learn to take responsibility and many participate in the extensive range of clubs and sporting activities. As one appreciative pupil commented, 'You achieve your potential and grow here'.

The curriculum is broad and provides for a wide range of capabilities and interests. The school works well with external partners, both to enrich the curriculum and to provide a high level of care, guidance and support for pupils. The high quality of teaching ensures pupils make good progress and achieve standards which are better than average. This is demonstrated by the consistently good results pupils gain in examinations. Arrangements for setting learning targets and checking on pupils' progress are generally very good and are a significant factor in raising standards. Pupils with LDD make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils at Key Stage 3 have made good progress in recent years. The learning targets of some pupils with LDD are not used to inform planning in all lessons and support is not always closely matched to their needs.

The large majority of parents are happy with the school. They are particularly pleased with how new pupils are welcomed in Year 7. This view is summed up by one parent who wrote, 'My daughter has settled well. She enjoys getting up in the morning and going to school, and comes home feeling good about her work'. A very small number of parents have concerns about pupils' behaviour. Inspection evidence suggests pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils report that they can approach a member of staff if they have a problem and that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly. The school seeks to involve parents through regular open evenings and by conducting surveys of their views. A few parents feel that the school does not take sufficient account of their views and suggestions, particularly in relation to the school's rules regarding uniform.

The headteacher and senior management team provide good leadership. They have tackled very effectively issues identified for improvement in the last inspection report. A clear focus on improving teaching and learning has ensured standards have risen each year. The monitoring of teaching is well established, although arrangements for identifying features of the very best lessons and for extending them across the school are underdeveloped. The accommodation has been improved significantly since the previous inspection. Some parts of the building are cramped and require continual maintenance, although plans are in place to rebuild these areas. The school uses resources well and provides good value for money. The strength of leadership and quality of teaching mean the school is well placed for further improvement.

Date of last inspection: 05-Oct-2006

Ofsted graded our school as good

Inspectors made judgements on a scale: outstanding (grade 1); good (2); satisfactory (3); inadequate (4).



[View the Ofsted page for Great Torrington Community School & Sports](#)

What have we done in response to Ofsted?

The school has responded to Ofsted by reviewing our provision for learners with special needs (LDD). We have introduced a responsibility structure for the teaching assistants in order to gain more expertise within the school for pupils with complex needs; this expertise will support teachers and enabled them to plan more effectively for the learning needs of these learners. We have extended the target setting system to include learners on the lowest and P levels.

Teaching staff have been encouraged to share good teaching practice in a variety of ways.

More Information

If you would like more information about school policies, including our policies on special educational needs and disability, admissions, finance, school food and our complaints procedure, please contact us:

By telephone 01805 623531

Our website <http://www.greattorrington.devon.sch.uk>
