

Torridon Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100708
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	276371
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Robert Lovett HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Johnston
Headteacher	Mrs Lisa Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2000
School address	Torridon Road London SE6 1TG
Telephone number	020 8698 5822
Fax number	020 8695 1287

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Torridon is a larger than average infant school with a nursery. It is situated in an area of mixed housing but most is owner occupied. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is about average. A much higher than average proportion of children are from minority ethnic groups with about twice the national average speaking a first language other than English. Of these relatively few are in the early stages of learning English. The school is part of the Sage Educational Trust which seeks to promote high standards and achievement. It is part of a collaborative of six primary schools.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed from September 2006 following a period of significant change in the senior leadership of the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Torridon Infant School is a satisfactory school with a number of good features. Children generally learn and play together well and their personal development is good. Attendance is above average and this is in part a reflection of children's good enjoyment of school. Children develop good spiritual and social awareness through good assemblies, good strategies for building positive relationships and an inclusive school ethos. As one parent wrote 'Torridon Infants is an inclusive school where they care for the whole child'.

Since the new leadership team started in September a range of initiatives have been introduced intended to raise standards and increase children's rate of progress. Everyone who works in the school has approached these with enthusiasm and commitment. As a result, while it is too early to see the full impact of these initiatives, the early indications are positive and it is already apparent that this is an improving school with a good capacity to improve further.

The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, is providing the school with good leadership. Together they have a clear vision which is focused on raising standards while maintaining the importance of developing the whole child which is rightly valued by parents. The senior leadership team is working well to help ensure that this vision becomes a reality. The governing body has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve. Their ability to do this would be better if the school improvement plan was clearer about exactly how progress is to be measured.

Children join the school with a range of skills and knowledge but overall their ability is about average. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children are encouraged to play and work together well and make good progress in developing their personal and social skills.

During their time in Years 1 and 2, although children do best in reading, they make satisfactory progress and leave with standards which are about average. This is because, while some teaching is outstanding, most is satisfactory. The school has started to observe teachers in order to identify which teaching strategies work best so that it can share these more widely. While the school's monitoring of writing suggests standards are beginning to rise, in some lessons time is not being used well enough so that children are not writing as much as they could. In some lessons, work planned does not meet the needs of all learners and does not match well with what teachers are trying to teach.

What the school should do to improve further

- Identify and share the best practice so that all teaching is as good as the best.
- Enable teachers to make better use of time in lessons so that pupils are able to write more.
- Improve planning so that activities are consistently well matched to what children are intended to learn.
- Ensure that the school improvement plan has measurable targets so the school knows how well it is doing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with a wide range of experience, knowledge and skills. While some have personal and social skills which are less well developed than one would expect, overall

skill levels are about average. Children make good progress in developing their personal and social skills so that by the time they enter Year 1 they are able to work and play together well.

Children make satisfactory progress and leave at the end of Year 2 with standards which are average. Children do best in reading. There are some indications that standards in writing are beginning to rise. This is because assessment of children's work is now more regular and rigorous and joint working has raised teachers' expectations of what children can achieve. The school's tracking systems suggest children currently in Year 2 will do best in mathematics and that standards overall will be close to average. Some Black boys are not doing as well as other children in the school and the leadership team is taking robust action to address this.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

In the Nursery and Reception classes children are well behaved and motivated and grow in independence. Most are keen to try and do things for themselves. They enjoy working and playing and learn happily together. Children are developing a growing awareness of healthy eating so that when playing in the shop they know that fresh fruit and vegetables are important for maintaining a healthy body and can advise customers on what to buy.

Overall, children's personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school encourages an awareness of healthy lifestyles very well through the physical education curriculum, out of school clubs and encouraging children to eat fruit and vegetables. Good displays around the school encourage children's awareness of other cultures. Behaviour is satisfactory in lessons and around the school, with the best behaviour being seen where expectations are high and learning is most interesting. Children and their parents are very positive about the range of out of school activities provided, including sports, sewing, gardening and computer clubs.

Members of the school council are keen to take on new responsibilities and spend some of their class budgets. Children also act as playground monitors and help care for the school grounds.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. Resources are well organised and readily to hand, which enables all children to work on a range of interesting learning tasks and encourages a sense of independence. Children are also able to cooperate well so that several worked together very well to construct a large rocket for a picnic on Mars.

Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. In most lessons there is appropriate planning to support teaching but sometimes the tasks selected do not match well enough what children are expected to learn. This can result in confusion about exactly what children have to do. Children are keen to contribute to lessons and most enjoy learning. In some lessons learning is too teacher led and makes too little use of opportunities for children to discuss their learning or to work with others. In an outstanding mathematics lesson the teacher used a range of teaching strategies such as paired working, the use of bead strings and encouraging children to use the interactive whiteboard to maintain a lively pace and good sense of fun. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed and make a good contribution to children's learning. An examination of children's

books indicates that the pace of recording is improving. However, in some lessons it takes too long for children to begin writing so that by the time they have finished writing the date and learning objective there is too little time left.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. It is exciting and creative and there is a good balance of indoor and outdoor activities to support the children's learning. The Foundation Stage curriculum has a good focus on the development of phonic skills through explicit teaching and talking to children while they play.

The curriculum for Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, but there are occasions when planning is not sufficiently clear about what children are to learn. Appropriate use is made of information communication technology to support learning. The curriculum to support children's personal development is good and enables them to become confident learners.

The school values the creative aspects of the curriculum and drama, music and the arts are well represented. Visitors such as theatre, music and drama groups support the curriculum well. Children with learning difficulties are given appropriate support so that they make similar rates of progress as others.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Staff are caring and approachable and children feel confident about talking to them. The school undertakes appropriate checks on the suitability and qualifications of those who work with children. The school works well with parents, who say they are contacted at an early stage if there are concerns about their child's progress.

Satisfactory systems are in place to track children's progress and these are being developed further. The school is building a bank of evidence to support shared judgements of children's levels of attainment and track the progress of children's writing over time. These initiatives are beginning to raise expectations of what children can achieve but it is too soon to be able to judge their effectiveness. Targets to enable children to improve their work are in place but not all have been updated to show progress and not all children are clear about what they need to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The relatively new headteacher and deputy have introduced a number of initiatives intended to improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise standards. These include a rigorous programme of lesson observations so that the best teaching can be identified and successful practice shared. The senior leadership team have also put in place new systems for tracking the progress children make. The impact of these changes is already apparent in improvements in children's writing, particularly in Year 1. This shows good use of the process of self-evaluation. Subject leadership in core subjects such as English and mathematics is satisfactory. The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator is providing satisfactory leadership. All teachers

and governors have been involved in the process of self-evaluation and so know what the school needs to do to improve.

The majority of parents are very positive about the school, with many remarking on the impact of the new leadership team; as one parent wrote they have had 'an extremely positive impact on the school'.

Governors provide committed management and support and are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is in part because the headteacher's reports are now closely and accurately linked to the school's self-evaluation processes. While governors are determined to help bring about school improvement they could do this more effectively if the school improvement plan had more targets which are easily measurable.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school to see how well you are doing. Everyone I spoke to was very friendly and polite. Thank you for telling me what you think about your school; it was very useful to hear your views. In return I would like to tell you about what I found out;

- I think your school is doing what it should which means that it is satisfactory. But I also think the new things the school is doing such as visiting all the classes to see what works best will help your school improve. Your new headteacher and deputy headteacher and everyone who works in the school are trying very hard to make sure this happens.
- You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You enjoy school and because of this you mostly attend very well.
- While your behaviour in lessons and on the playground is fine some of you think it could be better and it would be nice if it was always good. You can all help make sure this happens by always listening carefully and making a real effort to share.
- You know about keeping healthy and most of you say you eat well, drink lots of water and take plenty of exercise.
- You are well looked after and well cared for.

As a result of all this, you make the progress one would expect and when you leave the school at the end of Year 2, the standard of your work is about average. I have suggested some things the school can do to help it improve;

- Find out what ways of teaching work best and share them among all the teachers.
- Make sure you settle quickly to your writing so that you get more done.
- Explain to you more clearly what you are going to learn and how the work you are given will help.
- Find better ways of measuring how well the school is doing.

Thanks, again, for my two very enjoyable days. I wish you all the best in the future and hope Torridon Infants will go from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools