

**Inspection report**

**Torwood House School**

**Independent school**

**DfES ref no: 801/6007**

**Inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002**

**Dates of inspection: 14 – 17 November 2005**

## **INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

### **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

### **Information about the school**

Torwood House School was established in 1915. It occupies a large grade 2 listed building in Durdham Park in the Redland area of Bristol, together with a further property purchased six years ago in the same road, which now houses pupils from Year 2 to Year 6. The larger property, which can accommodate up to 166 pre-school children houses the baby unit, nursery, the reception year (Year R) and Year 1. There are 77 pupils on roll from Year R to Year 6. Torwood House School is non-selective and non-denominational. It aims *"to provide its pupils with a happy, stimulating and caring environment ... where they are supported and valued as individuals; where they encounter stimulating and challenging experiences."* It has been in the ownership of the present proprietor since 1996.

### **Summary of main findings**

Torwood House is a good school which provides pupils with a sound education. There are plenty of opportunities for the pupils to gain in self-confidence and to attain high standards. Good attention is given to care and welfare with a focus on healthy lifestyles and pupils enjoy coming to school. The teachers plan lessons carefully and together with the assistants give pupils good support in their learning. The school is full of pupils' work on display of which they are justly proud and there is a very friendly atmosphere throughout the two sites. The headteacher is clear about the priorities for school development and leads the school very effectively.

### **What the school does well:**

- it enables pupils to make good progress and attain standards above the national average by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2;
- it provides a very good curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils;
- it enables pupils to enjoy their school life; and
- it provides parents with a very wide range of information.

### **What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002**

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

## **Next Steps**

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- raise teachers' expectations still further so that pupils are always being challenged appropriately; and
- provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility around the school and for their own learning.

# **COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION**

## **1. The quality of education provided by the school**

### **The quality of the curriculum**

The school makes very good curricular provision, which meets the pupils' needs. It gives them opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding in all subjects of the National Curriculum (NC). There is specialist teaching of music, drama, physical education, art and design technology and information and communication technology (ICT). French is taught to pupils from Year R onwards and the school has plans to introduce Spanish and German. Computer skills are taught using the well-equipped ICT suite. There is an emphasis on English and mathematics throughout the school in preparation for the exams that the older pupils may take for their next school. The school stresses the importance of personal development through a planned programme.

The detailed schemes of work ensure suitable coverage and content. Medium-term plans are used effectively for weekly programmes of study and daily lessons. The planning focuses on progression in the key skills of literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening. Pupils' work is further extended by the provision of homework from Year 1, which is carefully monitored by staff.

An interesting range of educational visits further enhances pupils' learning. These have included visits to museums, theatres and educational activity centres such as @Bristol. The pupils benefit from frequent visitors who share their skills and knowledge, including recently a road safety officer, and the Life Education mobile classroom. After-school clubs in sport, dancing, music, Rainbow Guides and Torwood Explorer extend the curriculum.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

In most of the lessons seen the quality of teaching was good or better. Some examples of very good teaching were also seen. Lessons are planned carefully and delivered in a manner which tries to interest all pupils. In the most effective lessons the activities were closely matched to the learning needs of the pupils. Questions were frequently open-ended to allow for a range of answers rather than a single right or wrong response. This encourages the development of thinking skills. Teachers give pupils good individual support and teaching assistants provide further valuable help for pupils during lessons. Many pupils apply intellectual and creative effort to their work but they are not given enough responsibility for the seeking of information, the planning of tasks or the organization and presentation of their work. Behaviour during lessons is mostly good but there is some room for improving listening skills and paying proper attention to each other when speaking.

Teachers keep records of pupils' achievements to help them plan work which is appropriate for their needs and consequently they make good progress. Many teachers give pupils helpful feedback in their books or orally to help them know how to improve their work. In some cases, particularly for the pupils with high ability, expectations of what they could achieve are not high enough and teachers are not

yet making enough use of the information which they collect. There is a good programme for carrying out more formal standardised tests and the results from these are used to provide information to parents as well as teachers. Pupils take the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the school does particularly well in these. Results are published each year.

Resources for learning are plentiful, in good condition and used sensibly to give ample opportunity for hands-on experience or to assist with problem solving. The younger pupils in particular make much use of practical equipment to provide them with good understanding before moving on to more general concepts.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

There is a friendly, welcoming atmosphere at Torwood House School and they make effective provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Pupils feel happy at the school, valued and known very well individually.

Relationships are good at all levels with pupils playing happily together at break and lunch times. Pupils understand the simple school rules which they helped to formulate, and which are promoted effectively throughout the school. They behave well and move very sensibly between the two school buildings. There are four houses in the school with house points awarded for effort and good work. House captains are appointed and pupils have the opportunity to help choose whom they would like as head of school. They also have the opportunity to make their voice heard through the school council which has recently been formed.

During their time at the school pupils are developing a strong sense of self worth and are growing in confidence. They are learning to respect others and become valued members of the school community. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to take responsibility around the school and share in the organisation of their own classrooms. Younger pupils operate a self-registration process but these skills are not fully used as they move through the school.

The school organises many suitable visits outside school with a view to broadening the pupil's spiritual and cultural development. They study world religions and have recently been introduced to the festival of Eid with the help of a parent, and there are interesting displays throughout the school reflecting this. Opportunities arise in the curriculum through literature, music, art and history to add further dimensions to the pupils' cultural understanding.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

### **3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**

The school takes good care of all its pupils. All pupils are clear that bullying is unacceptable and most of those spoken to said they felt safe and secure. Although some pupils said playtimes could be boisterous. The school has taken steps to monitor this and nothing untoward was seen during the inspection. The school implements a range of effective policies designed to promote good behaviour and a safe and healthy lifestyle. Healthy eating and regular exercise are emphasised particularly well. Relationships are good and pupils generally get on well with each other and with adults in the school.

Pupils are well supervised, both in classrooms and on the playground. The school has appropriate procedures in place for child protection and for assuring the safety of pupils on educational visits and field trips. Fire drills are held regularly and the school complies with all fire regulations. Admission and attendance registers are properly kept. The school has a written First Aid policy. There are sufficient staff with relevant First Aid qualifications on both sites and a trained nurse part-time on the site for the youngest pupils. Because of the number of stairs the sites are not easily accessible for people with some disabilities. The school has not yet drawn up a written plan covering a three year period to show how it will increase the accessibility of the premises.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the DDA?***

*In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the school should:*

- *devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.*

### **4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The school is owned by a limited company. The procedures for the recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff are good and fully comply with the regulations. The school is careful to check on qualifications and employment history, and all staff have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

### **5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**

The school is housed on two sites within a short walk of each other. Accommodation on both sites is adequate. One of the buildings is grade 2 listed and has been carefully adapted to meet the demands of its current use. This site has class bases for pupils in Year R and Year 1 as well as the pre-school children and babies. The school hall, music room, language room and ICT suite are also in this building. There is a kitchen which prepares healthy school meals each day.

The other building is used by pupils from Year 2 to Year 6. Some of the rooms are relatively small but there is sufficient space for the current number of pupils. It has extra rooms designated for science, art and food technology. There is also a library stocked with a range of fiction and reference books. Standards of decoration and cleanliness on both sites are very good. Classrooms are bright and cheerful with thoughtfully designed displays of pupils' work and accessible resources providing well-organised learning bases.

There is an all-weather games surface and good playground space on the site for the younger pupils, which is also used by the older pupils. The second site has very limited outdoor play space and break times are staggered to allow pupils enough room for running around. Good use is made of local facilities including a swimming pool, gym and park.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**

The school provides a very wide range of information for parents. The attractive and informative prospectus contains all the necessary information including a very detailed curricular section and policies on child protection, behaviour management and anti-bullying. The prospectus is also available in audio and Braille form and the school has an informative website. There are regular, well-presented newsletters, which are written in a friendly style. Day-to-day information is communicated via message books that pupils take home each day. The Friends of Torwood House Parents Association take an active role in fund raising and organising social events.

Parents are provided with a written report twice a year and have regular opportunities to discuss their children's progress with their teacher. The parents who responded to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the school.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**

The school's complaints policy meets all the regulations. The school keeps parents well informed and in the parent questionnaire most parents said they are aware of the school's complaints procedure.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Torwood House School
DfES Number:	801/6007
Type of school:	Preparatory
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys: 41    Girls: 36    Total: 77
Annual fees (day pupils):	£3,464 - £3,889
Address of school:	27-29 Durdham Park Redland Bristol BS6 6XE
Telephone number:	0117 973 6620
Fax number:	0117 973 5620
Email address:	Torwood house2@btconnect.com
Headteacher:	Mrs D. Seagrove
Proprietor:	Torwood House School Ltd
Reporting Inspector:	Mr Peter Way HMI
Date of inspection:	14 – 17 November 2005

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