



Torridon Primary School

The Annual Report to parents and carers from the governing board

Dear Torridon Community

It is hard to believe that the Primary school is now 4 years old. Enough has been said about the disruption for everyone over the last couple of years, but how pleasing it is now to see school life returning to its usual rhythm - even if that does mean SATs for Year 6!

As you will remember, the Autumn term started with many of the measures to contain Covid still in place. That was the same for the governing board. We have got to grips with meeting via screens and, until April, a more limited programme of visits. I am very pleased to say that we have returned to face-to-face meetings in the school, although we now take “blended” meetings in our stride when a governor may be unable to get to the school because of work or family commitments but can be part of the meeting through a screen.

Governors are responsible for overseeing the management side of a school: strategy, policy, budgeting and staffing. Their role is to provide challenge and scrutiny so that their school is run as effectively as possible. They work alongside senior leaders and school staff to deliver an excellent education to children. There are 14 governors, and each is a member of two of the three committees, coming together at the end of each term to review progress against the school’s Improvement Plan. In addition, Manda meets with me, as chair of governors, between meetings. Governors also contribute to working parties on key issues, and each governor links with the school on a particular School Improvement Priority or an aspect of school life such as Safeguarding – ensuring that children are protected from harm

The Committees have been busy across the year.

Quality of Education has scrutinised how the school settled the children back into full time schooling and how they identified the areas where children needed more support.

Governors came to a “Governors Breakfast” where we looked in detail at how writing is taught. We learnt that during the pandemic children were more likely to use a keyboard than a pen and so needed more practice in holding a pen or pencil. They also needed to

build up stamina to tackle longer pieces of writing. We had the chance to see teaching in practice and how the new interactive whiteboards can transform teaching.

Manda has invited an external assessor into the school as a critical friend. She visits twice a term and Manda shares her reports with governors at Quality of Education and at the Full Governing Board. I am pleased to tell you that our assessor's verdict is that the school has made good progress this year and is well-placed to move on to the next stage of development.

Quality of Education also reviews the curriculum content, particularly to ensure that it is relevant to the world that our children will inhabit. Whilst there is still a place for the Great Fire of London in the history curriculum, it must also ensure that children understand the journey that many families have taken to find themselves now living in this part of London.

Community has been at the heart of the work of the **Children, Families & Community Committee**. Torridon has signed Lewisham's Race Equality Pledge to tackle the fact that some groups of pupils, and particularly boys of black-Caribbean heritage, do not reach their full potential in the borough's schools. The governing board supports unequivocally the right of every child to be recognised as an individual and understands the responsibility of the school community to ensure each child benefits from their time in education. I wrote last year that I hoped we would be able to organise some opportunities to work with parents and carers to get YOUR views on delivering this. I hope that this will happen in 2022/23.

Children, Families & Communities also monitors how the school keeps children safe in education. This year we have developed our understanding of what makes children happy or worried when they are at school, or on their way to and from school. We have also looked at Online Safety as there can be no doubt that social media can be part of bullying and can introduce children to adult material that they are too young to deal with. These are also areas where we want to talk to YOU.

Our third committee is **Resources** which looks at Staffing, Health & Safety, site development and the budget which underpins all these. Budgets are stretched and face some uncertainties in the next year. There will be some belt-tightening in 2022/23 but we have prioritised retaining high quality teachers and attracting the best teachers and support staff with opportunities to enable them to develop at Torridon. We are aware that teaching methods have changed since the school was built (1906!). We hope to continue our programmes to update IT and to resource the new curriculum. Children have told us that the toilets are not up to standard so financing improvements will also be important.

Manda has led the school through an important year. The routine of the classroom has been re-established. Children can learn with and from their classmates rather than through a screen. Exciting new topics are being introduced, but at the same time, gaps in learning must be, and are, identified and filled. Manda is supported in all this by a fantastic staff team and none of this could be achieved without them. Governors know that discussion and planning will not get anywhere without the team to deliver it. We are immensely grateful to every member of Team Torridon.

We are losing Anne McCoy, one of our long-standing governors this year as her youngest daughter leaves Year 6 in July. We are very grateful to Anne for all her support, especially in keeping Maths on the agenda. We wish her and her family all the very best for the future. Bethan George will be joining the Board in September as a Parent Governor. She brings current teaching experience to the Board. Kate MacKonochie is stepping down this summer having been a member of both the Junior and the Primary school governing board. She too will be missed, especially for her commitment to maintaining the Arts curriculum. We have been joined this year by Sarah Wright who is championing a review of the school's attendance policy in line with recent DfE pronouncements. We are very pleased to welcome two new Associate members who will be joining the board in September.

It has been a delight to come to the school and see the site transformed by murals, to observe the children's excitement at the new playground equipment (which was so generously supported by parents & carers) also to meet some of you at events. The Year 6 production of the Lion King was just wonderful. None of that was possible in the last two years. I hope that the Torridon community will continue to come together over the next year and support the development of OUR school

Margaret Brightman

On behalf of the governing board of Torridon Primary