

# Curriculum Development at Torriano Primary School

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To discuss this case study, please contact us via email [customersupport@camdenlearning.org.uk](mailto:customersupport@camdenlearning.org.uk)



## Key Points

- UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award Programme underpins the whole school ethos and is central to our curriculum development;
- Innovative, whole-school themes are planned each term involving all stakeholders

## Purpose

### **What were your reasons for doing this development work?**

This case study describes our approach to the curriculum: the principles and practice in developing and planning a disciplined, innovative curriculum for all years (3-6), which is rooted in our ethos. The school curriculum has constantly evolved over ten years; initially our purpose was to raise pupil achievement – not academic alone, but holistically, incorporating children's rights, cultural as well as educational. We regard our school curriculum as a work in progress.

### **Who were the identified target learners?**

All pupils.

### **What were your success criteria?**

To raise achievement, not solely academic but of the whole child – incorporating their cultural rights as well as educational rights.

Our success criteria relating to both National Curriculum and our school curriculum are agreed during the curriculum planning process. Outcomes are reviewed and evaluated by teaching staff and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with the results fed back into the planning process.

### **What did you do? (What success criteria did you use?)**

The SLT develops at least three curriculum themes each year, which are determined annually. For example, 2014-15 themes include:

- Their past, Our future: World War 1 Centenary remembered throughout the year

<https://www.torrianojun.camden.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/arif-radio-poetry-300x224.png>

Autumn term: Remembrance – service to society, giving back to society (Careers Week focus).

Spring term: Engineering our Future – Innovations arising from conflict (incorporating STEAM science, technology, engineering, arts, maths – see Photographs of STEAM exhibition attached below) *The school would select photos and/or provide link to short film which includes children talking about the curriculum.*

Summer term: Contribution of the Commonwealth, the first truly World War (global dimension)

- Law, Liberty, Legacy – The road to British democracy

This theme unit is still at the planning stage with its focus being Magna Carta and the British Library exhibition.

Once themes are agreed in principle by SLT, the Curriculum Development Leader (CDL) produces an initial brief for discussion and development. Teachers then consider with the CDL the progressive knowledge, understanding, skills and values of their respective subject requirements which can be taught in the theme through a cross curricular approach. The rigour and statutory obligations of the National Curriculum are non negotiable as these themes are planned.

Our children usually form a task force for projects within the theme, sometimes in collaboration with our Rights Respecting School Council. They actively explore possibilities and suggest ideas to be incorporated. As we are committed to our children's right to a quality cultural education, we contact organisations (artist in residence, musicians and dance groups, theatres, galleries, museums, etc) to initiate collaborations, which ensure diverse, creative outcomes. Parents' talents are regularly exploited to best effect too!

The key components of our curriculum methodology can be summarised as:

- Maintain the rigour of National Curriculum subjects within themes at all times
- Incorporate global learning and the UNCRC in keeping with the school's ethos
- Ensure there is opportunity for varied creative expressions of learning
- Incorporate topical, relevant issues and events which will inspire learners, staff and the school community; from the local to the global
- Include all of our children, each one must experience this innovative curriculum

### **The Planning process**

Once a thematic plan is agreed at a macro level, the next step is more detailed unit plans, by subject. The CDL facilitates their completion by each year group in collaboration with subject coordinators, any involved parents and the cultural organisations. We are committed to developing themes in co-creation with our pupils and they have begun to design and organise activities to involve their parents in their learning.

Examples of whole-school project events can be viewed at

<https://www.torrianojun.camden.sch.uk/school-ethos/projects/>

Quality, disciplined, creative outcomes are essential to us. We have long required commitment from those organisations and individuals with whom we collaborate to invest their time at the planning stage to devise bespoke input for our children. The [Camden Cultural Commissioning Project](#) has been a helpful route to funding and initiating relationships with some of these cultural organisations. Each term the theme culminates in an exhibition or event, often curated by the pupils, past examples can be viewed on the school website.

Year groups consider umbrella 'Big Questions' to facilitate a coherent approach to teaching and learning. For example Y3's big question is *What makes me an active and caring citizen?* while Y5's is *What makes me a responsible and respectful citizen?* They are encouraged to consider how their learning relates to them as individual citizens on a local to global scale.

Curriculum overviews can be viewed at [www.torrianojun.camden.sch.uk/school-info/curriculum/](http://www.torrianojun.camden.sch.uk/school-info/curriculum/)

Our Twitter feed <https://twitter.com/TorrianoJuniorS/media> provides a view of the range of outside speakers and events related to the curriculum.

### **What specific teaching resources did you use?**

The resources are from relevant subject and cultural organisations and individuals within our school community and beyond. All our themed units are devised to reflect our school ethos.

To explore one term's theme in more detail, readers can download a report on our themed unit on The Multiple Stories of Brazil: *Louder Together* (Summer 2014). There is also an example of outline planning from Year 5. The report has links to relevant sections of the school website, with movies, photographs, blogs, etc. (See attachments below)

## **Outcomes and Impact**

### **What has been the impact on pupil learning and teaching?**

We have teaching staff passionate about, and committed to, the role of the curriculum in helping their pupils achieve. The frameworks of the UNCRC and the RRSA, the support from curriculum leaders, SLT and the CLD all combine to help them deliver quality teaching and learning of a consistent, coherent nature. They have high aspirations for *all* their pupils.

Being a Rights Respecting School results in pupils' raised sense of security and self-confidence, which allows them to take the next step in advocating the rights of children everywhere. They acquire values and skills which our expert teachers explicitly plan to develop; they are not contingent! Our disciplined curriculum

innovation has resulted in quality outcomes in speaking, writing, thinking and interaction with adults. We are proud of our children who feel passionate about their learning and can talk articulately about it and its significance to them and the wider world.

### **Evidence of impact on pupil learning and teaching/leadership**

We are proud of the impact that we have had beyond our school in demonstrating the benefits of this disciplined, innovative approach to the curriculum. We have supported many schools, in London and beyond, in their adoption of the UNICEF RRSA programme. As an Expert Centre (EC) in the Global Learning Project, we have seen great progress made by our partner schools, in part as a result of our CPD, one has been appointed an EC and two more are beginning the process.

The school has recently received a Pupil Premium award, which is in recognition of the fact that our many disadvantaged children achieve well.

96% of our children achieved level 4 and above in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014, further data on the school's results can be found on our website here:

<https://www.torrianojun.camden.sch.uk/school-info/sats-results/>

Evidence from the IoE research evaluation on our participation in a 5 year longitudinal study relating to our participation in Grand Curriculum Designs. Quotes from the children direct:

- 'It helps to be consulted about what you learn – if the teacher always decides you may already have done it.'
- 'The worst thing is when you're ill and can't come to school – it's so boring.'

Asked to comment on how they respond to their learning experiences at Torriano:

- 'It's when I really want to tell someone about what I've learned'
- 'Feeling really excited by something'
- 'OK, that is wicked'
- 'Understanding what it means when I hear about street children' (in a non-school context)
- 'Linking things to real life'

Teacher interviews, quoted in the IoE evaluation report:

- Teachers know that children benefit from the curriculum approach because of their motivation and their skills development and, more than this 'it generates children who are curious'.
- Immersion in a topic is viewed as particularly beneficial for those children with special educational needs, who have constant reinforcement of key ideas and vocabulary and for whom the range of learning experiences, including especially drama and oral work, supports the quality of written work, 'they are able to explain quite complex issues'.

From the GLP Case Study: Quote on the impact of Global Learning at the school:

- 'It raises awareness for everyone. What we learn we pass on to our family and our families pass it on. It spreads the word" (Y5 pupil)