

TORBAY & DEVON CIVIC AWARD

Background and Overview

The Torbay Civic Award was first introduced by Karen Thomson (founder and coordinator of the award) in 2004. Teaching in Year 6 at Cockington Primary School at that time and the Advanced Skills Teacher for Citizenship and PSHE for Torbay LEA, Karen was inspired to create the award by a deep belief that education should be broader and more futures-driven and that leaders in education have a moral responsibility to develop children's attitudes and values as well as transferable skills to equip them for a future none of us can yet imagine. It was also born from a desire to balance the SATs-driven curriculum in Y6 with Character and Values Education to help those children become well-rounded, confident and caring individuals who strive to make a difference in their various communities and are prepared to take responsibility for change.



Pictured here, receiving their award from the mayor of Torbay in 2004, are the first pupils to receive the award. Many of these original pioneers, like those who have followed, have gone on to make a difference in their communities through taking part in DofE, International Baccalaureate, Scouts, Guides and in caring professions. This has been true of subsequent graduates, many of whom have reported how taking part in the award shaped their future career and life choices.

To achieve the award pupils have to prove their participation in six main areas. These are:

- Active Citizenship in their school community. This could be Peer Mediation, Reading Buddies, School Council or other positions of trust and responsibility in school.
- Active Citizenship in their home communities. In the past, pupils have taken part in beach cleans, bulb planting, helping at Brownies /Cubs/sports clubs and looking after people in the community. Pupils may also work with others to organise events in school to support local charities.
- A physical hobby(ies) and a non-physical hobby (ies). Children should spend about 30 minutes on average a week on their hobbies and one of them needs to be new to the child from the September of their Year 6.

- Residential experience and adventure training. This entails sleeping away from home and family and taking part in outdoor challenges. This section can be back-dated to Year 5.
- Children also need to adopt a cause or charity which they feel strongly about. They need to research it and find ways of supporting it.
- Children need to make a pledge to the planet during the time they are undertaking the award. Children will need to research ways to help save the environment and take action on at least one thing.

The children must also pass a rigorous assessment when they have to present all this evidence to an external assessor.

The award has grown over the years. In 2018 it was re-named and became the Torbay and Devon Civic Award because of the high interest from schools in Devon who wished to take part. Currently over 35 schools are registered and well over 4,000 children have taken part since the award first started.

Every year children receive their prestigious Torbay and Devon Civic Award certificates from Chairs of both Torbay and Devon Councils at the Annual Torbay Civic Award Presentation Nights. From presentations in Torquay Town Hall and Oldway Mansion, venues have changed over the years and In 2024 there were three Presentation Nights: two at St Cuthbert Mayne School in Torquay and one at Isca Academy, Exeter. During the years of the pandemic there were no Presentation Nights, but nearly 300 children received a limited edition certificate at celebrations in their own schools and the award became stronger than ever.

Over the years many groups, societies and individuals have been inspired to support the award. In 2014 Gary Vine joined and has looked after the award's online presence and the business-side of the award ever since. There is a website: www.torbaycivicaward.co.uk and a facebook and twitter account.

Philosophy behind the Torbay Civic Award

- It brings about community cohesion through linking school and community
- It empowers children to become global citizens – developing their awareness of the works of charities
- It develops empathy and the desire to strive for a fairer future. It encourages them to be compassionate and to take responsibility for positive change
- It enables children to achieve economic well being through the management of money
- It encourages children to be safe – action planning with risk assessments is an important part of the award
- It develops character education and skills of self esteem, confidence, resilience and assurance
- It develops a team working ethos and promotes related skills of collaboration and independence
- It supports children in leading purposeful and full lives and is great preparation for both secondary school and the workplace.
- The scheme develops Pupil Voice and Citizenship
- It encourages acquisition of important values (respect, contribution, compassion etc) and allows children to see them in practice
- It is about what we all believe in: moral purpose and integrity - developing and nurturing the whole child for life and placing education in a broader and more worthy context

Some children receiving their certificates at the Torbay and Devon Civic Award Presentation Nights 2024



Isca Academy July 2024

We warmly welcome new schools! Please register your interest on the website or contact Karen for support and further details:

