

## Townley School and Pre-School Policy Front Sheet

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# **Townley School and Pre-School**



## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

*'A child's future choices, attainment, wellbeing, happiness and resilience are profoundly affected by the quality of guidance, love and care they receive during their first years' (Dame Clare Tickell, 2011)*

## **What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?**

This begins when the child is born and continues until the end of the reception year. It is a crucial stage in education, both in its own right and in preparing children for learning in Key Stage 1(Year 1). We believe that all children should be given the best possible start to their education. We therefore place great value on the quality of our provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

## **General Philosophy**

At Townley we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Learning is for life, the EYFS is the foundation upon which all future learning is built, it develops the child as a whole and so we ensure that children are included, secure and valued, thus preparing them for future learning. As an inclusive school we provide for the different starting points of all children, so they are able to develop, building on what they already know and can do. Our aim is to enable children to learn purposefully within a secure and happy environment.

## **Themes**

Four guiding principles shape practice in the EYFS. These are:

- **A Unique Child** recognises that every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** recognises how children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments** recognises that children learn and develop well in environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.
- **Learning and Development** recognises that children develop and learn in different ways.

## **Aims**

The EYFS meets the aim of improving outcomes and reflects that it is every child's right to grow up safe; healthy; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution; and with economic well-being. We:

- enable children to make an effective transition from home or previous setting to school;
- ensure that children feel included, safe, secure and valued;
- develop an effective partnership with parents, carers and outside agencies;
- promote positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning;
- provide a curriculum which underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's personal, social and emotional well being;
- ensure a balanced curriculum covering each of the seven areas of learning: Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; Communication & Language; Literacy;

Mathematics; Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design, along with promoting and supporting children to develop Characteristics of Effective Learning.

- ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability;
- ensure the children have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment is well planned and well organised;
- continually monitor and evaluate each child's progress celebrating learning achievements.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

Focusing on the characteristics of effective learning is an essential part of the EYFS, helping the children develop these characteristics is integral in ensuring they become effective, lifelong learners.

- **playing and exploring** – children investigate, find things out and explore, play with what they know, and being willing to have a go
- **active learning** – children being involved and concentrating, keeping on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoying achieving what they set out to do;
- **creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and choosing ways to do things and finding new ways.

### **Areas of Learning**

The 7 areas of learning and development are:

- communication and language
- personal, social and emotional development
- physical development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

The goals are there to be used to assess children at the end of reception year, rather than for pre-school children.

The EYFS covers a wide span of development. Children progress through the 'Development Matters' statements at their own rates and in their own ways towards the Early Learning Goals within each of the seven areas of learning. These consist of:

#### **Three Prime Areas**

##### **• Communication and Language Development**

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on

what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

- **Physical Development**

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practise of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

## **Four Specific Areas**

- **Literacy Development**

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

- **Mathematics**

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

- **Understanding of the World**

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

• **Expressive Arts and Design**

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

**Planning**

At Townley we use a 'Planning in the moment' approach in Early Years. We believe young children have a natural desire to learn, explore and question. We observe and interact with children as they pursue their own interests and assess and move the learning on in that moment. Our focus is to provide an engaging environment with materials that will excite and interest the children, rather than detailing focus activities. The cycle of observation, assessment, planning, observation is carried out on a moment by moment basis. We have focus children each week and the child led learning that occurs is recorded once the cycle is complete. These records are in the learning journals for each individual child and in our floor book.

**Assessment through Observation**

Using the planning in the moment approach we have focus children not focused activities. We work this way because high level involvement occurs during child initiated activity. Every week there are a number of focus children. The focus children are given extra attention but all the children are busy and learning all the time. They are experiencing and learning in the here and now and it is in that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest- the teachable moment- that the skillful adult makes a difference. Thus the observations take the form of observation, assessment and adult intervention to move the learning forward. Adults will record the initial observation (& assessment), the teaching and the outcome at a later time. They will model language, show, suggest, provide resources, explain, demonstrate, explore ideas, encourage, remind, narrate what a child is doing, facilitate and set challenges. By using this cycle on a moment by moment basis, the adult will always be alert to individual children (observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child's thinking (assessment) and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children's well-being and learning (planning for the next moment) Observation forms identify 'next steps' for learning and inform planning.

Children are assessed on entry and their progress tracked across the years/ throughout their time in EYFS. Children's progress is assessed regularly. The children's progress can be seen in their learning journals.

From September 2021 a baseline assessment, introduced by the Department for Education, will be administered to all children in our Reception Class. It will be an assessment of early ability and involve practical tasks administered on a one to one basis.

Age 2 progress check - The purpose of the 2 year check is to help identify strengths and any areas where progress is less than expected. It is not a requirement to identify a child as exceeding, emerging or expected for the 2 year check.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- EYFS meetings are held weekly to discuss the previous week and to plan for the following week, focusing on the children's interests and how to extend their learning. Progression, the learning environment, resources and current issues are also discussed as well as a sharing of information from training courses/reading/CPD.
- All teaching assistants have access to daily/weekly plans.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Leader meets regularly with the Headteacher to discuss all aspects of the EYFS.
- Members of the EYFS team attend relevant training in order to keep up to date with new developments. The EYFS teacher attends moderation meetings.
- Members of the EYFS team attend local Early Years Cluster group meetings.
- Meetings between the EYFS Leader and the EYFS Governor are held regularly.
- Meetings between the EYFS team and Early Years Advisor are held as necessary throughout the year.

### **Resources**

We audit our resources regularly to ensure that they are:-

- Safe and clean.
- Appropriate for all areas of learning.
- Match the needs of the children.
- Stored in a child friendly way.
- Clearly labelled and largely accessible to the children.
- Some resources are kept in the classrooms store cupboards.

### **Key Persons**

In the EYFS Unit each child has a Key Person who monitors their progress and ensures that they have opportunities to take their next steps in learning. This person is allocated to a child upon entry into the setting. However, all staff in the setting contribute to the learning journey of all children in the setting through the planning in the moment approach.

### **Parents as Partners**

We firmly believe that "parents are children's first and most enduring educators."

To this end, we work hard to promote a successful partnership, with a two-way flow of knowledge, information and expertise. An overview of formal/in-formal meetings is summarised below:

- Home visits are offered to all new pupils.
- New Intake Evenings for reception parents are organised for the term prior to admission.
- Visits are arranged for children in the term prior to entry.
- EYFS staff observes children in their pre-school setting prior to entry.
- EYFS staff greet the children at the start of the day and parents/ carers collect children from the classroom allowing them to talk to staff on a daily basis.

- Parents are encouraged to help in school and on school trips.
- Parents and carers are invited into school to attend assemblies, Story Cafes and training sessions e.g. phonics.
- Parents' Evenings are held twice a year and an end of year report sent out.
- Through the year special events are held which parents are invited to attend. For example, story cafes and picnics.
- Parents can see their child's learning journey through their journal book.
- Weekly News letters ensure parents are able to support their child's learning.
- Wow/proud moments are used to ensure the parents voice is heard within the learning environment.

## **Transition**

Starting school or nursery can be a daunting prospect for both children and parents. Making the transition from home to the EYFS Unit or school, pre-school settings to Reception needs to ensure that everyone feels ready for the next stage of learning. We aim to make this transition as easy and comfortable as possible for all involved and we have an extensive transition programme in place to ensure the best start for our pupils. The main school works with the EYFS Unit to ensure smooth transitions into Year 1. The EYFS teacher visits new pupils and parents in their home setting and holds a welcome meeting in the classroom. For children starting the school from other settings the class teacher (or Headteacher) will visit them in their setting and speak with their Key Person.

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- New Intake Evenings for reception parents are organised for the term prior to admission.
- Visits are arranged for children in the term prior to entry.
- EYFS staff observes children in their pre-school setting prior to entry.
- The Year 1/ 2 teacher visits reception children in the summer term and takes them for some story times.
- Shared CPD and training opportunities.
- Shared resources.
- EYFS teacher and Head teacher collaborate on summative assessments.

## **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals at Townley, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our separate policy on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

## **Admissions Arrangements**

### **Arrangements for children starting in our EYFS Unit**

We can take children from the age of two (depending on spaces). We have a ratio of one adult to four children aged 2 and one adult for up to 13 children aged 3 and 4. Firstly parents will need to complete an admission form this can be obtained from the school office. Once this is completed the EYFS Lead and Head teacher will arrange for a home visit. After the home visit, a settling in programme will be arranged between the family and EYFS Lead for some children they come for

one session with a parent, for others they may require several shorter sessions with their parent, this is arranged to ensure a smooth transition for the child.

For children starting in Reception we follow the Cambridgeshire admissions process. Please see the Admissions policy.