



# **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 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** involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills & learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Physical Development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

#### **Four Specific Areas**

- **Literacy Development** involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

- **Understanding of the World** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

### **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 against Development Matters. The children's progress can be seen in their learning journals and on Target Tracker.

~~In September 2020~~ due to COVID 19 this has been delayed until 2021 a new 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.

### **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 annual 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 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.
- 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 phonics sessions.
- Shared CPD and training opportunities.
- Shared resources.
- EYFS teacher and Head teacher collaborate on summative assessments.

Please note Transition arrangements have had to be different for September 2020 due to Covid 19. Families have been contacted via phone and meetings have taken place virtually. Home visits have been arranged on the doorstep or in an outside space.

## **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.