

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 can 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;
- 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.
- 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

We plan learning experiences from the children's interests and believe they should play an active role in generating ideas for the curriculum. The children will be given opportunities to explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world through play. They will practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They will have opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. Pre-School and Class 1 have plans for continuous provision inside and outside. We therefore ensure that children have plenty of opportunity to learn through play. We use the classrooms and our outdoor area to enable children to access both planned, structured play activities and self-initiated, spontaneous play activities. The learning environment is planned for both indoors and outdoors (which include a forest school area), to encourage a positive attitude to learning. The children make their own selection of the activities on offer as this encourages independent learning. Planning is flexible and adapted continuously, to ensure we meet the current needs of the learner. A class timetable is on display on the class noticeboard, detailing activities taking place each day. Weekly plans based on all prime and specific areas are displayed in the classrooms.

Assessment through Observation

Children give indications of their learning all of the time in their everyday activities. It is primarily by observing children that judgements are made, to inform records and planning. Specific time for planned observations is allocated each week, which may take place in the form of a general classroom observation, e.g. of an activity, an observation on a particular child or on one of the targets from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways e.g. photographs, post its, annotations on work and longer observation sheets. Observations should identify 'next steps' for learning and inform planning. Children are assessed on entry and their progress tracked across the year. Children's progress is assessed regularly against Development Matters and next steps set using this document along with professional judgements. The children's progress can be seen in their learning journals.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Regular meetings are held to evaluate the previous week and to plan the following week.
- EYFS meetings are held at least termly to discuss planning, progression, resources, current issues and share information from training courses.
- All Teaching Assistants and Pre-School Assistants have access to daily/weekly plans.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Leader and Pre-School Manager meet 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 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 cupboard.

Key Persons

In Pre-School 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. In Class 1 the Key Person is the class teacher.

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.
- Older Pre-school children attend a weekly come and play session in the reception classroom from February half term each year.
- Children attend school on a part time basis to begin with to ensure a smooth transition.
- The EYFS teacher meets with the Pre-school leader to discuss the children entering reception.
- EYFS staff meets the children at the start of the day and bring the children out at the end of the day allowing parents/carers to talk to staff on a daily basis.
- Parents are encouraged to help in school and on school trips.
- Parents of children in Class 1 are invited into school for assemblies and a reading session weekly.
- 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 or online journal.
- Link up letters ensure parents are able to support their child’s learning.
- Wow/proud moments are used half termly to ensure the parents voice is heard within the learning environment.

Transition

Starting school or Pre-School can be a daunting prospect for both children and parents. Making the transition from home to the pre-school setting or school, pre-school settings to Class 1 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 school has very close links with the on-site pre-school and regular meetings take place through the year between the EYFS teacher and pre-school manager. The EYFS teacher meets with each child's 'key person', to discuss transition. 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 setting the class teacher (or Headteacher) will visit them in their setting and speak with their Key Person.

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- Children attend school on a part time basis to begin with to ensure a smooth transition.
- The EYFS teacher meets with the Pre-School Key Person to discuss the children entering reception.
- Shared CPD and training opportunities.
- Shared resources.
- EYFS teacher and Pre-School leader 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 meet the needs of the individual child and support 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.

Admissions Arrangements

Arrangements for children starting in our Pre-School

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 eight children aged 3 and 4. Firstly parents will need to complete an admission form; this can be obtained from the Pre-School. Once this is completed the Pre-School manager will arrange for a home visit. After the home visit, a settling in programme will be arranged between the family and Pre-School 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.