



Townlands C of E Primary Academy

A journey of learning in the light of God's love.

Vocabulary

“Good words are worth much, and cost little”.

George Herbert

Our Vision for developing vocabulary

At Townlands, we are dedicated to enriching, enlarging, and enhancing children's vocabulary. We believe that a deeper understanding of vocabulary provides not only an understanding of word use, but also how language fits into the world in which we live.

Why do we teach vocabulary?

At Townlands, vocabulary underpins the planning and delivery of all areas of our curriculum. Research has shown that children who have very limited vocabulary, find it difficult to make positive, meaningful relationships, in addition to the impact this has on academic success. Some children have limited cultural experiences, which inevitably restricts what they can talk about, comprehend, and write about.

We believe that it is crucial that all children have explicit and robust instruction in vocabulary, to support their verbal and written communication.

Through initiatives in school, we strive to close the 'Word Gap'.

Enrichment

Children will develop an understanding about their own culture and other cultures around the world through the introduction of new vocabulary.

Townlands has a well-stocked and purpose-built school library. The books are good quality and up to date. The space is open to all children across the school and adults encourage children to feel empowered as they make their own reading choices.

All classrooms and displays around school have key vocabulary displayed.

We hold an annual English Inspire morning, whereby parents/carers are invited into the classroom to participate in an English lesson with their child/children. A recent example focused upon the importance of vocabulary and how this is taught at Townlands.

Specialist visitors are encouraged into school to support understanding of key areas of the curriculum for example, STEM ambassadors, history specialists.

Oracy is encouraged through a number of whole school initiatives:

- Partner talk, group work and class debate
- The school council election process and subsequent school council meetings – led by the councillors
- Peer mediators
- Collective worship monitors (liaising with teachers and visitors to prepare the hall for collective worship)
- Participation in and delivery of collective worship – both in school and at St Simon and St Judes Church
- Leading class curriculum assemblies
- EYFS nativity performance
- Subject leaders seeking pupil for curriculum development
- Our focus on children's mental health and the strategies we have in place to encourage talk
- Close links with the local high school across various curriculum areas

How do we deliver vocabulary within our curriculum?

One of our **Curriculum Drivers** is to be an Effective Communicator. At Townlands, we provide opportunities for pupils to communicate their learning through speaking and listening, writing, collective worship and through the use of technology. We know that having a broad vocabulary aids both understanding of language and self-expression. Therefore, our curriculum is language-rich, involves the use of high-quality texts, promotes an inquisitive approach to language and provides opportunities to practise new vocabulary. We know that communication skills are vital for both success and confidence in many areas of life and therefore we want our pupils to develop the ability to express themselves clearly and effectively. We also want our pupils to be able to offer their opinions and reason whilst also being able to debate a topic or viewpoint and disagree respectfully.

Vocabulary Centered Curriculum

Townlands has developed a vocabulary centered curriculum which encourages talk and exposure to new vocabulary. All lessons, across the curriculum provide opportunities for discussion – talking with a partner, in groups, as well as whole-class, discussion led by the teacher. Discussion precedes most tasks and writing. All teachers try to use sentence stems to help children structure their responses and to answer in a full, detailed way. Staff are also conscious of the need to model language and conversation, so children learn to recognise language structure as well as vocabulary. In EYFS, oracy is taught explicitly as an integral part of the day and children are given enough time for talk and to express themselves.

In English, texts are chosen based on the rich vocabulary opportunities they offer, as well as cross curricular links. This supports the children's understanding of vocabulary, helping them to become immersed in the language and exposing them to new words in multiple different contexts. For example, in Year 3 during History, the children develop knowledge of The Stone Age; they are exposed to both Tier 2 and 3 words which are shared with them via their Knowledge Organisers and through vocabulary activities. There is a clear ethos within the school that the teaching of vocabulary should not just be left to reading or English lessons. It must be part of what we do every day, in every lesson.

Adults have high expectations of all pupils, even if children struggle with reading words themselves, they are still be exposed to a high level of vocabulary orally.

Explicit teaching of Tier 2 vocabulary in daily reading lessons

Teachers pre-teach Tier 2 vocabulary to aid comprehension, writing success and access to the wider curriculum. Each class reads a carefully selected, high-quality text. The teacher models reading the text and unfamiliar vocabulary is presented and discussed. Children complete activities designed to reinforce their understanding of the new words, for example finding synonyms and antonyms of the newly acquired vocabulary, as well as using these words in a different context to ensure their meaning is embedded. This text will then be used for retrieval, exploring inference, and can be used to support the writing process.

Knowledge Organisers

Knowledge organisers have been introduced across the breadth of the curriculum. Each knowledge organiser explicitly details Tier 3 and or Tier 2 vocabulary linked to the curriculum area. They also reference vocabulary definitions that children will come across. Children are expected to use these words as part of their learning.

Vocabulary boards

Vocabulary boards are used in each classroom, not just to display new words, but to actively integrate the teaching of vocabulary into lessons. This means including vocabulary in lesson planning, explicit teaching during the lessons and constantly revisiting words, so that 'words' become fully embedded in children's minds. Words displayed are regularly revisited to ensure they become really embedded.

Parental Involvement and Engagement

Our 'Inspire morning', allowed us to work in partnership with our parents to support vocabulary development. This workshop gave parents practical advice on how they can help to develop their children's language and vocabulary skills as well as introducing them to how vocabulary is taught in school.

Tracking vocabulary development

On a weekly basis vocabulary quizzing takes place, which links to the words previously taught during reading lessons. We also monitor vocabulary acquisition through Accelerated Reader.

Extending spelling lessons

In spelling lessons, children also spend time looking at synonyms and antonyms for words featured in each unit. Children are encouraged to apply this new knowledge during writing, so that they can select the best words for their text. There is also a focus on word building, where children work with prefixes and suffixes to develop a bank of knowledge that they can then apply to work out the meaning of new words which contain the same prefixes or suffixes.

Timetabled reading

Timetabled for reading for pleasure includes time for children to listen to an adult read out loud, as well as provide children with an opportunity to talk about the book and the words that they have heard.

How does vocabulary embed knowledge?

Townlands is a language-rich school, not just in English but across all areas of the curriculum. Teachers believe children are becoming more confident and skilled orally, participating in discussion, talking about what they read, applying new vocabulary and understanding what they read across all areas of the curriculum. Quizzing supports the impact of vocabulary teaching. The replacement of guided reading books with a deliberate choice of a whole-class reading text which is rich in vocabulary and the introduction of Accelerated Reading books has engaged all pupils. At Townlands, we believe that there is a strong correlation between reading success and an understanding of vocabulary.

Now, all teachers (from EYFS to year 6) prepare vocabulary to be taught in advance and our teachers now understand the different 'tiers' of vocabulary instruction. They are clear about which tier needs to be taught when, why and how. Teachers are also more confident in developing pupil-friendly definitions (as evidenced on our subject knowledge organisers) and establishing follow-up activities, in order to embed the vocabulary learning.

Most importantly, all teachers understand that their efforts in delivering robust vocabulary instruction can advance pupils' access to the curriculum.

Wordhippo is an interactive thesaurus and word tool to generate multiple meanings, synonyms and opposites of words.

<https://www.wordhippo.com/>

RhymeZone is a website that will generate a list of rhyming words, sorted by number of syllables, for any word. Users may also look up definitions, synonyms, and more.

<https://www.rhymezone.com/>