



Townlands C of E Primary Academy

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

EYFS

"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." Philippians 4:9



Our Vision for EYFS

We are very proud of our Early Years provision and follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, providing children with a safe and nurturing environment which enables them to learn and develop.

We believe that a child's capacity to learn and develop is a reflection of the environments that they are exposed to. By providing an environment that is engaging, inclusive, caring and responsive, the children at Townlands Church of England Primary Academy are much more likely to thrive in their learning, becoming confident and enthusiastic life-long learners.

Intent

At Townlands, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways, at different rates and at different starting points and this is reflected in how we work with, plan for and support our children. We work in partnership with parents, carers and other settings early on in the year to provide the best possible start for our children, ensuring that each individual reaches their full potential from their various starting points.

The children receive an exciting, broad and balanced curriculum, allowing them ample opportunities to develop across the 7 key areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. The three prime areas of learning are entwined within everything that we do, with a large focus being on developing the pupils' communication and language skills and their social skills.

Children experience a variety of whole class, small group work and independent learning, both indoors and outdoors. Independent learning involves both directed tasks and opportunities for child-initiated learning to promote the use of their imagination, whilst developing their language development, communication and social skills.

Our setting has taken on a more 'formal' approach in how we deliver learning in the Early Years. We acknowledge that many children within this year's cohort and subsequent cohorts to come will have had a disrupted couple of years prior to starting in an Early Years setting. Due to this, our more formal approach intends to provide the children with a clear structure to their day to enable them to feel safe, secure and able to arrive within school with a clear understanding of what is expected of them in order to achieve their best. Our intention is to encourage and develop the children's sense of curiosity, resilience, perseverance and independence through a more structured and directed approach to their learning. Each term looks slightly different in approach as the children mature and become more confident within their setting, enabling them a smoother transition into the demands of the Year 1 National Curriculum and their continuing learning journey.

Implementation

Each half term, EYFS staff introduce a new 'question' to provide inspiration for learning. These 'questions' act as a vehicle to developing the children's skills and knowledge as they progress through the year and through the school (see progression of skills document for EYFS and whole school progression maps to show how the progression of skills develops throughout years EYFS – 6). These questions, along with the key skills that need to be taught, provide the roots for our planning. The interests of the children influence these questions in EYFS to ensure that their engagement is maintained and they thrive within their learning environment.

The timetable is carefully structured so that children have a variety of directed whole class teaching, teacher lead and learning support assistant lead group work and opportunities to work more independently on a daily basis. This approach lends itself to variety throughout the day, as well as providing ample opportunities for adults to work with all of the children within the class closely on a daily basis, meaning the teacher can systematically check for understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time verbal feedback, having a strong impact on the acquisition of new learning.

Children are provided with plenty of time to engage in 'exploration' more independently throughout the variety of experiences carefully planned to engage and challenge them in the provision. The curriculum is planned for both indoor and outdoor settings, with equal importance being given to both areas. Learning areas are adapted regularly to ensure that the children find the contents engaging and challenging, whilst also promoting the growth of important skills such as sharing, taking turns and playing cooperatively.

Literacy

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum and our aim is to encourage not only confident and competent readers, but to encourage a love of reading right from the start. In EYFS, we have daily phonics sessions. We follow the Sounds Write program, where children are taught that a letter is a symbol that represents a sound. Sounds are introduced systematically to support the children's reading journey. Children are taught to recognise sounds, segment and blend in order to read. We follow Sounds Write and Dandelion Launchers books which accurately sync with each child's level of development, providing them with a smooth progression when learning to read. Children are encouraged to read at home and are listened to regularly in school. They are given books that match their phonic knowledge in order for them to apply their learning with the aim of becoming successful, confident and fluent readers.

We also have daily reading sessions. Our key 'question' for the term lends itself to a selection of high-quality books which follow the term's theme and these are used to not only inspire our learning across the curriculum, but to expose children to a range of books that develop their oracy, vocabulary and comprehension. It is also an opportunity for children to hear texts that are too challenging for them to read and enjoy on their own. This way, children encounter more demanding sentence structures, vocabulary and themes. Children have the opportunity to listen to these books being read to them, whilst being presented with daily opportunities to discuss the books, ask questions to deepen their understanding and verbally retrieve and infer information. Vocabulary plays an important part in our reading sessions and books are chosen which not only follow our theme, but that also develop the children's vocabulary. The children are then encouraged to use the new vocabulary in conversation to support their language development. Through this, children begin to internalise new vocabulary, language patterns and begin to retell stories.

Maths

At Townlands, we understand how important it is for children to become truly secure with the fundamentals of maths. We endeavour to ensure this happens by taking on a 'little and often' approach. We revisit taught skills frequently for short bursts of time; this, alongside our daily maths sessions, helps the children to retain the key facts that will support them in becoming confident and knowledgeable mathematicians. We use White Rose Maths and Number Blocks to support our teaching of mathematics, guiding the children to dig deeper and challenge themselves, explaining how or why they know something, facilitating opportunities to develop their language and communication skills.

Wider curriculum

Our wider curriculum is taught through the learning areas 'Understanding the World' and 'Expressive Arts and Design.' EYFS staff have a good understanding of how ELG's feed into the National Curriculum through our clear 'progression of skills' documents. In reverse, colleagues throughout the school are also aware of the key ELG's that link to each foundation subject and the progression of the subject. This allows EYFS staff to have purposeful conversations with the children to develop their knowledge and upskill their language choices, as well as teachers from across the school to visit the Early Years setting and be able to clearly identify how their particular subject area is approached within the setting.

Exciting, purposeful and relative activities are planned to build on children's natural curiosity. Building further on our intention to develop the children's vocabulary, children are encouraged to employ subject specific language and terminology in foundation subjects, and such vocabulary will be modelled verbally by supporting practitioners.

Inclusivity

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together, but we have a range of additional intervention and support for children who may not be reaching their potential, or are showing a greater depth of understanding and need further challenge. This includes, for example, sessions for developing speech and language, social skills, fine motor skills, phonics, and mathematics.

Home-school links

Parents are valued as partners in their child's achievements at Townlands Church of England Primary Academy. We work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that children "can learn and grow as part of God's family". We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents and carers to participate confidently in their child's education and care.

Impact

Baseline

Prior to children starting, staff spend time speaking to the child's parents, previous settings and read previous learning journeys to gain an understanding of the whole child and where they are at. During the first half term in EYFS, all staff use ongoing assessments, observations and conversations with the child to develop a baseline assessment. This identifies each individual's starting points in all areas so we can plan experiences to ensure progress. The RBA (Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment), a national and compulsory assessment, is also completed and focuses on 'Language, Communication and Literacy,' and 'Mathematics.' The purpose of this is to show the progress children make from Reception until the end of KS2.

Ongoing Observation

All ongoing observations are used to inform weekly planning and identify children's next steps. This formative assessment does not involve prolonged periods of time away from the children and excessive paper work. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgements through discussions with other practitioners, photographs and physical examples such as a child's drawing or piece of writing.

Assessment

A more formal phonics assessment is carried out each term to identify pupils that are not making expected progress, however ongoing assessment for learning is carried out on a daily basis to ascertain which pupils are falling behind. Our aim is for children to 'keep up' rather than 'catch up' where possible.

In Summer Term 2, the EYFSP is completed, where teachers judge whether the child has met each of the 17 ELG's. They will be assessed as either 'emerging' or 'expected.' Whilst there is no judgement to state if a child is exceeding beyond an ELG, teachers have a duty to provide a narrative for both parents and the Year 1 teacher. Impact is also evident through our successful transitions into Year 1. EYFS staff have a good understanding of how ELG's link to the National Curriculum, and through our robust planning and delivery across the spectrum of subjects – both core and foundation - children leave the EYFS stage with the skills, knowledge and confidence to continue their journey as scientists, historians, artists and geographers, as well as being well on their way to becoming secure readers, writers and mathematicians.