



THORNTON

**CURRICULUM
INFORMATION
2025 / 2026**

PRE-RECEPTION

Curriculum Information for Parents: Pre-Reception 2025/2026

Dear Parents/Guardians

We are looking forward to a happy and successful new school year. At Thornton, we aim to provide stimulating and exciting activities within the framework of our curriculum, in order to enable your daughter to reach her full potential.

We recognise that the bond between home and school is of vital importance, so in order to keep you fully informed, we have enclosed a copy of the relevant Programme of Study for your daughter's Year Group. This contains a broad outline of what we intend to cover with your child throughout the coming Academic Year.

During the year, your daughter will receive a written report and there will be Parental Consultations, when you will have the opportunity to make an appointment to discuss your daughter's progress with her teacher(s), however, if you have any questions or concerns at all, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Form Teacher by telephone or email. They will be only too pleased to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet with you.

Thank you in advance for your support during the coming Academic Year. We will do our very best to ensure that your daughter feels secure, happy and supported in her learning, and we look forward to meeting you throughout the school year.

With very best wishes

Louise Shaw
Head of Thornton College

Curriculum Information

Pre-Reception

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The Curriculum

At Thornton we believe that all children deserve an education rich in wonder and memorable experience; one that allows children's natural curiosity to flourish, alongside the purposeful acquisition of skills and understanding. We believe that an education that does all of this gives children the best chance to become well-rounded, happy individuals, ready to succeed in an ever-changing world with the capacity to face life's challenges. Through the ethos of the school and a relevant curriculum we want our pupils to be encouraged to develop learning capacities which will help them to become confident, capable, creative lifelong learners.

We aim to provide an enquiry-based, creative curriculum which allows for many 'I wonder' moments as the children engage in real life experiences and use their imagination within an inspiring environment. Learning opportunities will be crafted from children's questions, purposeful dialogue and the world around them. In order to develop their thinking skills, children will be encouraged to articulate their thoughts as they explore and investigate.

The Curriculum is carefully structured to enable children to practise and master the necessary skills needed to achieve the Early Learning Goals and aims to ensure that children's levels of well-being and involvement are high. Each new topic will be introduced with a 'Wow' experience and the half-term will end with an opportunity to recall and reflect upon what has been learnt. In this way, children will be given the opportunity to engage, develop, innovate and express their ideas. The curriculum is designed to develop the EYFS characteristics of effective learning: Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, Creating and Thinking Critically and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

There are seven areas of learning and development which are all important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- English
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At all times, children's individual needs, interests and stage of development are closely observed and this information is used to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences for each child in all areas of learning and development. With this in mind, the following information should be used as a guide to the types of learning opportunities and topics we cover during this year.

Subject: Topics for Pre-Reception

Cycle A

Michaelmas Term

Michaelmas Term (first half)

All About Me

- Our bodies and how they work
- Our senses
- Our Families
- English theme: Our Wonderful World

Michaelmas Term (second half)

Famous Landmarks

- Using a world map
- Exploring landmarks and why they are important
- English theme: Into the Woods

Lent Term

Lent Term (first half)

Toys

- Old and New toys
- Materials toys are made from
- English theme: Out of the World

Lent Term (second half)

Once Upon a Time

- Traditional stories
- Puppets and role play
- English theme: Traditional Tales

Trinity Term

Trinity Term (first half)

Animals and Habitats

- Animal classification
- Animal adaptations
- Habitats-forest, savannah, desert and tundra
- Endangered animals and conservation
- Life cycles
- English theme: Under the Sea

Trinity Term (second half)

Electricity

- Where do we use electricity?
- Renewable energy
- Creating circuits
- English theme: Earth's Defenders

Cycle B

Michaelmas Term

Space

- Planets
- Stars
- Galaxies
- English theme: Where We Belong

Countries and Continents

- Maps of the world
- Globes
- Our Local Area
- English theme: Let's Celebrate

Lent Term

Ancient Worlds

- Romans, Greek, Egyptian and Aztec
- English theme: Voices of the World

Digging up the Past

- Dinosaurs
- Archaeologists
- English Theme: It's Rhyming Time

Trinity Term

Trinity Term (first half)

Recycling

- Growing
- Saving the Planet
- Renewable Energy
- English theme: Where the Wild Things Go

Trinity Term (second half)

Minibeasts

- Minibeasts and their habitats
- English Theme: From the Tiny Ant

Subject: Religious Education

For Religious Education we follow the new national 'Religious Education Directory'. It is a spiral curriculum and so the topics covered throughout the year are repeated by each year group but at greater depth as the students progress through the school. The topics covered are:

Michaelmas Term

Branch 1: Creation and Covenant - Our beautiful world. God made me.

Branch 2: Prophecy and promise - Mary was going to have a baby.

Lent Term

Branch 3: Galilee to Jerusalem - The Wise Men visit Jesus, Jesus welcomes and blesses little children.

Branch 4: Desert to Garden - Lent and Holy Week.

Trinity Term

Branch 5: To the End of the Earth - Jesus goes back to His Father (Ascension), Pentecost.

Branch 6: Dialogue and Encounter - Friends of Jesus, The life of St Peter and St Paul.

Encounter - Explore another religion.

Subject: Communication and Language

‘The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and 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. 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 range of vocabulary and language structures.’ Statutory framework for the EYFS, DfE March 2021.

Listening, Attention and Understanding

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions and when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding.
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

Speaking

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

The Communication and Language Curriculum in Pre-Reception will enable children to:

- Enjoy listening to longer stories and remember much of what happens.
- Pay attention to more than one thing at a time, which can be difficult.
- Use a wider range of vocabulary.
- Understand a question or instruction that has two parts, such as: ‘Get your coat and wait at the door’.

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- Understand 'why' questions, like: 'Why do you think the caterpillar got so fat?'
- Sing a large repertoire of songs.
- Know many rhymes, be able to talk about familiar books, and be able to tell a long story.
- Develop their communication but may continue to have problems with irregular tenses and plurals, such as 'runned' for 'ran', 'swimmed' for 'swam'.
- Develop their pronunciation but may have problems saying some sounds: r, j, th, ch and sh and multi-syllabic words such as 'hippopotamus'.
- Use longer sentences of four to six words.
- Be able to express a point of view and to debate when they disagree with an adult or friend, using words as well as actions.
- Start a conversation with an adult or friend and continue it for many turns.
- Use talk to organise themselves and their play: 'Let's go on a bus...you sit there...I'll be the driver.'

Subject: Physical Development

'Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. 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.' Statutory framework for the EYFS, DfE, March 2021.

Gross Motor Skills

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others.
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing.
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

Fine Motor Skills

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery.
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

The Physical Development Curriculum in Pre-Reception will enable children to:

- Continue to develop their movement, balancing, riding and ball skills.
- Go up steps and stairs, or climb up apparatus, using alternate feet.
- Skip, hop, stand on one leg and hold a pose for a game like musical statues.
- Use large-muscle movements to wave flags and streamers, paint and make marks.
- Start taking part in some group activities which they make up for themselves, or in teams.
- Increasingly be able to use and remember sequences and patterns of movements which are related to music and rhythm.
- Match their developing physical skills to tasks and activities in the setting. For example, they decide whether to crawl, walk or run across a plank, depending on its length and width.
- Choose the right resources to carry out their own plan. For example, choosing a spade to enlarge a small hole they dug with a trowel.
- Collaborate with others to manage large items, such as moving a long plank safely, carrying large hollow blocks.
- Use one-handed tools and equipment, for example, making snips in paper with scissors.
- Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils.
- Show a preference for a dominant hand.
- Be increasingly independent as they get dressed and undressed, for example, putting coats on and doing up zips.

Subject: Dance

Children are taught Dance once a week. Throughout the year we look at developing basic movements in Dance such as running, hopping, galloping, skipping, jumping, rolling and balancing. We also use instruments to begin developing musicality.

Subject: 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.' Statutory framework for EYFS, DfE, March 2021.

Building Relationships

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others.
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers.
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

Managing Self

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

Self-Regulation

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly.
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate.
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

The PSED Curriculum in Pre-Reception will enable children to:

- Select and use resources, with help when needed. This helps them to achieve a goal they have chosen, or one which is suggested to them.
- Develop their sense of responsibility and membership of a community.
- Become more outgoing with unfamiliar people, in the safe context of their setting.

- Show more confidence in new social situations.
- Play with one or more other children, extending and elaborating play ideas.
- Find solutions to conflicts and rivalries. For example, accepting that not everyone can be Spider-Man in the game, and suggesting other ideas.
- Remember rules without needing an adult to remind them.
- Increasingly follow rules, understanding why they are important.
- Develop appropriate ways of being assertive.
- Talk with others to solve conflicts.
- Talk about their feelings using words like 'happy', 'sad', 'angry' or 'worried'.
- Understand gradually how others might be feeling.
- Be increasingly independent as they get dressed and undressed.
- Be increasingly independent in meeting their own care needs, e.g., brushing teeth, using the toilet, washing and drying their hands thoroughly.
- Make healthy choices about food, drink and activity.

Subject: English

'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 they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing.' Statutory framework for the EYFS, DfE, March 2021.

Comprehension

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories.
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems during role-play.

Word Reading

- Say a sound for each letter of the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending. Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

Writing

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

The English Curriculum in Pre-Reception will enable children to:

- Understand the five key concepts about print: print has meaning; print can have different purposes; we read English text from left to right and from top to bottom; the names of the different parts of a book; page sequencing.
- Develop their phonological awareness, so that they can: spot and suggest rhymes; count or clap syllables in a word; recognise words with the same initial sound.
- Engage in conversations about stories, learning new vocabulary.
- Use some of their print and letter knowledge in their early writing. For example: writing a pretend shopping list that starts at the top of the page; writing 'm' for mummy.
- Write some or all of their name.
- Write some letters accurately.

Subject: 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'. Tell adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes

Number

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number.
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5.
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

Numerical patterns

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system.
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity.
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

The Maths Curriculum in Pre-Reception will enable children to:

- Develop fast recognition of up to 3 objects, without having to count them individually ('subitising').
- Recite numbers past 5.
- Say one number for each item in order: 1,2,3,4,5.
- Know that the last number reached when counting a small set of objects tells you how many there are in total ('cardinal principle').
- Show 'finger numbers' up to 5.

- Link numerals and amounts: for example, showing the right number of objects to match the numeral, up to 5.
- Experiment with their own symbols and marks as well as numerals.
- Solve real world mathematical problems with numbers up to 5.
- Compare quantities using language: 'more than', 'fewer than'.
- Talk about and explore 2D and 3D shapes using informal and mathematical language: 'sides', 'corners', 'straight', 'flat', 'round'.
- Understand position through words alone – for example, 'The bag is under the table,' – with no pointing.
- Describe a familiar route.
- Discuss routes and locations, using words like 'in front of' and 'behind'.
- Make comparisons between objects relating to size, length, weight and capacity.
- Select shapes appropriately: flat surfaces for building, a triangular prism for a roof, etc.
- Combine shapes to make new ones – an arch, a bigger triangle, etc.
- Talk about and identify the patterns around them. Use informal language like 'stripy', 'spotty', 'blobs', etc.
- Extend and create ABAB patterns – stick, leaf, stick, leaf.
- Notice and correct an error in a repeating pattern.
- Begin to describe a sequence of events, real or fictional, using words such as 'first', 'then'...

Subject: Understanding 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 of the world around them. 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.’ Statutory framework for the EYFS, DfE, March 2021.

Past and Present

- Talk about the lives of people around them and their roles in society.
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

People, Culture and Communities

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate - maps.

The Natural World

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

The Understanding the World Curriculum in Pre-Reception will enable children to:

- Use all their senses in hands-on exploration of natural materials.
- Explore collections of materials with similar and/or different properties.
- Talk about what they see, using a wide vocabulary.
- Begin to make sense of their own life-story and family's history.
- Show interest in different occupations.
- Explore how things work.
- Plant seeds and care for growing plants.
- Understand the key features of the life cycle of a plant and an animal.
- Begin to understand the need to respect and care for the natural environment and all living things.
- Explore and talk about different forces they can feel.
- Talk about the differences between materials and changes they notice.
- Continue developing positive attitudes about the differences between people.
- Know that there are different countries in the world and talk about the differences they have experienced or seen in photos.

Subject: Expressive Arts & 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.’ Statutory framework for EYFS, DfE, March 2021.

Creating with Materials

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.
- Make use of props and materials when role-playing characters in narratives and stories.

Being Imaginative and Expressive

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher.
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs.
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time to music.

The Expressive Arts and Design curriculum in Pre-Reception will enable children to:

- Take part in simple pretend play, using an object to represent something else even though they are not similar.
- Begin to develop complex stories using small world equipment like animal sets, dolls houses, etc.
- Make imaginative and complex ‘small worlds’ with blocks and construction kits, such as a city with different buildings and a park.
- Explore different materials freely, to develop their ideas about how to use them and what to make.
- Develop their own ideas and then decide which materials to use to express them.
- Join different materials and explore different textures.
- Create closed shapes with continuous lines and begin to use these shapes to represent objects.
- Draw with increasing complexity and detail, such as representing a face with a circle and including details.
- Use drawing to represent ideas like movement or loud noises.
- Show different emotions in their drawings and paintings, like happiness, sadness, fear, etc.

Subject: Music

The Music Curriculum in Pre-Reception will enable the children to:

- Listen with increased attention to sounds.
- Respond to what they have heard, expressing their thoughts and feelings.
- Remember and sing entire songs.
- Sing the pitch of a tone sung by another person ('pitch match').
- Sing the melodic shape (moving melody, such as up and down, up and down) of familiar songs.
- Create their own songs or improvise a song around one they know.
- Play instruments with increasing control to express their feelings and ideas.

Subject: French

Students are introduced to the French language through songs, games and a variety of fun activities. They will learn about the culture and food as well as the language, with practical lessons which help to develop their confidence and ability to communicate in French.

The French Curriculum in Pre-Reception cover the following topics:

- Introducing themselves
- Basic greetings
- Monsieur, Madame and Mademoiselle
- Numbers and Counting
- How Christmas is celebrated in France and Christmas vocabulary
- Colours
- Family members
- Pets
- French food
- Fruits and vegetables
- How Easter is celebrated in France and Easter vocabulary
- Days of week
- Happy birthday song
- The Weather

Each September, the Prep School also hold a morning of European Languages where the girls are introduced to the language and culture of other European nations through a range of fun and engaging lessons and activities.

Subject: Japanese

Who are you?

Greetings and Introductions

Children learn how to say and understand basic greetings and phrases, including:

"Good morning", "Good night", "Hello", "Thank you", "You're welcome", "Here you are", "Please", "Goodbye", "I", "You", "I love you", "Everyone", "Yes", and "No".

Vocabulary Development

- Numbers: 1–16
- Body Parts: head, shoulders, knees, eyes, nose, ears, mouth
- Family Members: father, mother, grandfather, grandmother
- Questions & Position Words: what, who, which, here, wait, not yet, together, friend
- Sizes: big, small, medium
- Colours: red, blue, yellow, purple, white, black
- Animals: dog, cat, pig, tanuki (Japanese raccoon dog), fox
- Sensory Words: hot, cold, chilly

Songs & Rhymes

We enjoy singing traditional and fun Japanese songs such as:

Hajimaru yo, Otousan yubi, Atama-kata-hiza-pon, Kobuta tanuki kitsune neko, and Sanpo from My Neighbour Totoro.

Cultural Celebrations

We explore seasonal Japanese traditions through activities related to:

- New Year (Shōgatsu)
- Setsubun (bean-throwing festival)
- Hina Matsuri (Doll Festival)
- Tanabata (Star Festival)

Cultural Experiences

- Using Chopsticks: Introduction to holding and using chopsticks correctly.
- Origami: Folding paper to create animals and seasonal decorations.