



Understanding the World (UTW)

Area Overview

At St Keyna, we believe Understanding the World helps children make sense of themselves, their families, their community and the wider world. Through first-hand experiences, meaningful conversations, stories, visits and exploration, children develop curiosity, respect and an appreciation of the diverse world around them. Our curriculum encourages children to ask questions, investigate, observe closely and make connections between their own experiences and new learning. Children begin by exploring their immediate environment in Nursery 1, broaden their understanding of the school and local community in Nursery 2 and, by the end of Reception, develop an understanding of the wider world, the past and the natural environment.

Through carefully planned experiences, children develop the knowledge, vocabulary and curiosity needed to become confident, inquisitive learners.

Why this area matters?

Understanding the World helps children to:

- Develop curiosity about people, places and the natural world.
- Build knowledge through first-hand experiences.
- Understand similarities and differences between themselves and others.
- Appreciate diversity and different cultures.
- Develop early scientific thinking through observing, questioning and investigating.
- Understand how environments, seasons and living things change over time.
- Become active members of their school and wider community.

Supporting Understanding the World at home:

Talk about family and special people - discuss who lives in the home and who is important in your child's life.

Notice changes in the local area - point out houses, shops, parks, roads and familiar places.

Explore the natural world - look for plants, insects, birds and other animals.

Talk about the weather and seasons - notice sunny, rainy, windy or cold days and changes.

Celebrate different festivals and traditions - talk about family celebrations, religious events and cultural traditions.

Look at photographs - discuss what has changed from when parents or grandparents were young.

Use everyday technology safely - talk about phones, tablets, remote controls, washing machines and other devices at home.

Take children out and about - visit the shop, park, library, farm or museum.

Encourage curiosity and questions - support children to ask *why*, *how* and *what if* about the world around them.

Vocabulary Progression

Nursery Year 1		Nursery Year 2		Reception	
family	sun	school	map	society	religion
home	snow	community	habitat	history	tradition
nursery	animal	job	season	similar	community
today	bird	teacher	weather	different	material
yesterday	bug	doctor	grow	compare	solid
baby	same	builder	change	environment	liquid
grown-up	different	celebration	past	observe	season
plant	help	festival	present	investigate	country
flower	leaf	culture	village	predict	continent
tree	rain	country	town	lifecycle	



Past and Present		
Nursery Year 1	Nursery Year 2	Reception Early Learning Goals
- Talks about familiar people within their family and nursery. - Recognises familiar daily routines and remembers recent events.	- Talks about people within the wider school community and describes some of their roles. - Begins to compare past and present experiences through stories and personal experiences.	- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society. - Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on 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		
Nursery Year 1	Nursery Year 2	Reception Early Learning Goals
- Talks about their own family, home and familiar celebrations. - Notices simple similarities and differences between people.	- Talks about different families, celebrations and communities. - Explores traditions, beliefs and places that are familiar within the local community.	- 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. - Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries.
The Natural World		
Nursery Year 1	Nursery Year 2	Reception Early Learning Goals
- Explores natural materials and living things using their senses. - Notices weather and seasonal changes.	Observes changes over time, explores habitats, talks about life cycles and begins to explain what they notice about 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. - Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world including the seasons and changing states of matter.