

St Mary and All Saints CE Primary School

Head

With our heads we learn

Hand

With our hands we create

Heart

With our hearts we love and care for each other

Early Years Policy

Staff member responsible: Annwyl Charlesworth

Governor: Alison Hart

Policy Date: October 2023

Due for review: October 2025

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

Legislation

At SMAS this policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2021.

INTENT

At SMAS it is our intent that all children who enter our EYFS have the opportunity to develop socially, emotionally, physically, verbally and cognitively, regardless of background, circumstances or needs in a safe and nurturing environment. We aim to work collaboratively with our community of parents and carers to provide every child with the skills to become happy, independent, creative and curious lifelong learners who have the courage to try new things and subsequently reach their full potential. It is our intent that all the children in the EYFS will be encouraged to be respectful to their peers, the adults they encounter in school and in the school community as well as their environment.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. At SMAS it applies to children who are in our Reception classes.

In the EYFS at SMAS we seek to provide each pupil with the best possible start to their school journey. We aim to:

- Provide a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued
- Provide a stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum, based on the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2021 that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making fostering independence and self-confidence
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs
- Providing early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Develop and work in close partnership with parents and guardians, valuing their contributions to build a strong partnership in supporting their children

At SMAS we aim for children to have the opportunity to:

- Be happy, secure, safe, and motivated to learn
- Become confident and independent learners
- Enjoy a broad and balanced creative curriculum
- Develop positive relationships with peers and adults
- Stimulate their imagination and curiosity
- Learn in both a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment
- Learn in a way that supports and recognises their individuality
- Benefit from positive working relationships between parents, staff and other agencies

2 CURRICULUM

At SMAS we follow the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS Statutory framework that applies from September 2021. The EYFS framework includes:

The seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, the 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical Development
- Personal, social and emotional development

These areas are essential for fostering early learning skills and are promoted heavily through our planning and provision. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in the specific areas of learning and their continued learning through the school.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas :

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and design

The ELG's summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the Reception year and the assessment requirements.

The EYFS is based upon 4 overarching principles which should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- **A Unique child** -at SMAS we recognise that every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
- **Positive Relationships** - at SMAS, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful, supportive, and professional relationships with the children and their families.
- **Enabling Environments** - in which children learn well and in which their learning experiences respond to their individual needs. There is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. At SMAS, we value all learning opportunities and experiences and recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Our environment is safe and secure and is set up for children to find and locate equipment and resources independently.
- **Learning and Development** – Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. At SMAS, we aim to provide an environment that celebrates the different ways in which children learn including children who have additional needs. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning..

The EYFS also outlines **the Characteristics of Effective Learning**. We ensure that our learning environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates **the 3 Characteristics of Effective Learning**:

- **Playing and exploring** – children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things and 'have a go'. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world around them. They practise and build on their own ideas and those presented to them. They learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own and how to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.
- **Active learning** – children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need

some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- **Creating and thinking critically** – we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things. Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning. This learning allows children to develop their abilities to play and explore, take an active role and think creatively.

3 TEACHING AND LEARNING (CURRICULUM)

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Each area of learning and development and regular assessments are an integral part of the learning and development process. The staff are continually assessing the children in their everyday activities, play and through more focused work. We use observations of the children, photos, the work they do, feedback from parents and comments made by the children, to decide where we believe the children are working in the 17 areas of learning. These support us in understanding their learning needs, interests and learning styles and the information is then used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Staff plan activities and experiences that enable children to develop and learn effectively. Staff take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. At SMAS planning is divided into long term, medium term and short term. Long term plans state the topics to be covered each year with ideas to plan throughout each strand of the curriculum. Medium term plans illustrate objectives begin taught each term including key core texts. Weekly plans show specific activities and planned for objectives for the cohort of children. These will include a variety of adult led activities and provision to inspire and support child led learning. Staff ensure that all children are encouraged to experience all areas of activity throughout the week. This is carefully monitored and altered as the year progresses and we begin to support children's transition into Year One.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the EYFS are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- The good relationships between our school and the pre school settings where our children attend
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching

- Approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and speech or other means of communication
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the ELGs by the end of the EYFS with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents at parents evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms, as well as 'Book Looks' throughout the school year
- The clear aims for our work and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do
- The range of activities and experiences that give children opportunities to:
 - Experience a rich language environment
 - Develop their co-ordination, control and movement
 - Develop a positive sense of themselves and others
 - Link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write
 - Develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, spaces and measure
 - Make sense of their physical world and their community
 - 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 art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology

4 PLAY IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, investigate and experience things and 'have a go'; to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; to think about problems and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing this. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning ready for year 1.

5 INCLUSION IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

In our school we give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the ELGs by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

6 ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of child and adult led activities. In both types of activities, the Early Years practitioners in our school respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through caring and positive interaction. The staff are continually assessing the children in their everyday activities, play and through more focused work. We use observations of the children, photos, the work they do, feedback from parents and comments made by the children, to decide where we believe the children are working in the 17 areas of learning. These support us in understanding their learning needs, interests and learning styles and the information is then used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). As well as this statutory assessment the school will also carry out its own baseline to assess areas that are not covered in the statutory baseline. This includes all the prime areas of Communication and language, Physical development and Personal, Social and Emotional development. Information from the baseline is used to inform our teaching and learning for the year and the modifications we need to make for individual children and groups of children. At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels (emerging)

This profile also assesses whether a child has reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). To achieve a good level of development a child needs to be expected in all the Prime areas and in the Literacy and Mathematical areas.

Information from the EYFSP provides a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the EYFSP report together with a discussion on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the 3 Characteristics of Effective Learning and each child's progress against the ELGs. The child's next teacher can then use this information when planning the child's learning needs. This information is also shared with parents through the annual report in July.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Samples of each child's work are kept as a record of their progress and these are shared with parents at parents meetings and 'Book Look' sessions.

In July parents receive an annual report that offers comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the children's strengths and developmental needs and gives details of the child's general progress. All data and information on each pupil is shared with the Year 1 teachers prior to the start of the new academic year.)

7 TRANSITION

We believe that a successful transition into a child's first year in school is paramount to ensuring it is as smooth as possible for each child so that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

The transition process at SMAS is as follows:

In the Summer Term, the Early Years Co-ordinator visits the preschools where prospective pupils are attending to meet them and their key workers to discuss each child. In order that as much information is gathered well in advance of the children starting school This enables us to build as holistic as possible a profile of each child and their needs. As we take children from between 9-14 different settings this is not always possible for all children. If a meeting cannot take place in person a phone call will be made as an alternative communication. Parents of all children entering the Reception class in the next Academic Year are invited to an Induction meeting in the Summer Term to meet all the key staff at SMAS. This is an opportunity for staff to:

- Go through general school information
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/free school meals
- Explain about holiday and absences
- Answer any questions parents might have about starting school
- Explain the arrangements for starting school in September
- Explain the arrangements for drop off in the mornings and collection at the end of the school day
- Talk to the parents about the EYFS curriculum and Government expectations for the end of Reception
- Give parents an opportunity to visit the Reception classes and the outside learning environment

Children are invited to a taster session in the Summer Term prior to them starting school, and for the first 2 weeks of the Autumn Term, children attend mornings only. In the afternoons the Reception teachers and LSA's do home visits so that they are able to spend time with each family gathering more information about their child's needs and other general information to ensure that their child's time at school is a happy and fun experience.

TRANSITION INTO YEAR ONE

During the summer term we begin to prepare children for transition into year one and the key stage one curriculum. We have put provision and opportunities in place to support this transition period. These include;

- A transition day when the children visit their new teacher and classroom and spend time in their new environment. This gives them the opportunity to experience new routines and adjust to their new surroundings
- A thorough handover between teachers ahead of the summer holiday
- An opportunity for the children to visit their new classroom with their parents and/or carers on an open evening at the end of the summer term

8 ROLE OF THE PARENTS

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between school practitioners and parents and/or carers. We facilitate this by:

- Talking to parents individually about their child before their child starts in our school
- Inviting parents to an Induction meeting in the Summer term before their child starts school
- Providing a Phonics session for the parents in the Autumn term and Reading and Maths sessions early in the Spring term
- Running parents evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms to discuss a child's progress as well as 'Book Looks' in the Spring and Summer terms
- Providing parents with an end of year report on their child's attainment and progress
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if they have any concerns
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year to encourage collaboration between child, school and parents e.g. Harvest assembly, Christmas performance, Christmas Church service, World Book Day, Science week and assisting with school trips
- Encouraging parents to add any information or evidence of their child's progress they have witnessed at home onto Seesaw. A weekly announcement is sent to parents on Seesaw.

9 SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE

At SMAS we create a high quality setting which is welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We have a Health and Safety Policy, Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy, for the whole school which covers the EYFS requirements.

Our staff are also regularly trained and updated on Health and Safety, Child Protection, Safeguarding requirements, Intimate Care as well as First Aid. We also have staff who are Paediatrically First Aid trained.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following school Policies:

Assessment
Marking and Feedback
SEND
Safeguarding
Behaviour

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on a two yearly basis or earlier if circumstances require it.