



## Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Overview

Our curriculum includes many common aspects and themes that are woven through all year groups and across all subjects:

- The topic based curriculum allows the children to relate their learning and skills to our school values of appreciation, compassion, love, perseverance, respect and trust and live their lives by them.
- Children are encouraged to learn from first-hand experiences and exploration, which is built upon to learn about increasingly less familiar and more abstract ideas, concepts and places.
- Life skills are progressively taught and embedded which children can transfer to the next phase of their education, and in time to the wider world of work and the outside world.
- The school grounds and immediate locality are made good use of for learning, and the children are encouraged to develop a greater understanding of Reading's place in national and international affairs, in addition to its place in the Thames Valley.

### Intent

“Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.” Margaret Mead.

The curriculum in Early Years is designed to provide a broad and balanced education that meets the needs of all pupils. It facilitates them to gain confidence, a sense of self, emotional wellbeing, cognitive security, independence and resilience to become well-rounded individuals who take forward a positive attitude in their learning.

Through the seven areas of learning we provide topics that excite and engage children, building on own interests and curiosity, and developing their experiences of the world around them. We recognise that all children come into our setting with varied experiences and backgrounds and staff work hard to ensure that the learning opportunities provided widen their knowledge and understanding of the world, setting ambitious expectations for all children to achieve and make progress at individualised levels.

The curriculum celebrates diversity and supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Those children with particular needs, including SEND, are supported appropriately allowing them to celebrate and understand success and maximise their learning outcomes.

We work collaboratively alongside parents to ensure children thrive and achieve clear outcomes for all.

### Implementation

At SMAS, we offer a curriculum which is broad and balanced and which builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills of all children, wherever their starting points. We follow the Early Years curriculum using topic themes and provide a wealth of enrichment opportunities.

The aim of our curriculum is to develop a thirst and love for learning by:

- Carefully planning sequences of activities that provide meaningful learning experiences, developing each child's characteristics of learning.
- Providing language rich interactions with adults that demonstrate and impact on the progress of all children.
- Using high quality questioning and interactions to check understanding, further expand learning and address misconceptions.
- Staff act as role models to the children they teach so that children develop their own vocabulary and listening skills.
- Staff carefully assess children through observations, which are recorded both on tapestry and in hard-copy formats. These are shared with parents and used to inform the next steps for learning and to meet individual needs.
- Developing an effective and engaging environment that is set up so that children can access all areas of learning both inside and outside at any one time during continuous provision periods and throughout targeted teaching sessions.
- Allowing children to have agency and assess and verbalise their own learning and successes.
- Suggesting home learning opportunities with information about what has been taught, allowing parents to build on their child's school experiences, at home.

We recognise the changing needs and interests of our pupils and we are responsive to this, regularly developing existing topics and embedding a wide range of vocabulary in a wealth of languages.

At SMAS we believe play to be the means through which young children learn. It is through play that children have the opportunity to explore, develop and act out experiences, helping them make sense of the world. Play helps children build up ideas and develop self-control and understand the need for rules. Children investigate and solve problems through collaborative and individual play. Children can work at their highest cognitive level in self-chosen play.

We provide the children with a safe and secure environment. We aim to develop good relationships with all children interacting positively with them and taking time to listen. We also model and support children in forming positive relationships and friendships with one another. It is the role of all adults within the environments to engage in high quality interactions with all children and scaffold children's learning in order to make progress.

We recognise the learning environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The nursery and reception classrooms, which incorporate the indoor and outdoor areas are well organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active and can be quiet when they wish to be.

From September 2021 all children in reception will undertake the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) from the DfE. In addition to the RBA baseline, practitioners within nursery and reception will carry out an in-house baseline assessments to create a secure judgement of all children's starting points.

Each child's level of development is recorded against the seven areas of learning and development using a 'best fit model'. These lead onto the child acquiring the early learning goal in each area at the end of the reception year.

The Early Years uses core texts as a basis for topic planning and start with an exciting hook to engage children in both the topic and the book. These texts are chosen for their level of challenge and quality language. We currently use a framework that draws on a broad range of texts that work in line with Read Write Inc (our phonics programme). They have also been chosen with a view to promoting reading for pleasure, ensuring the love of reading becomes intrinsic from an early stage in their learning journey.

The maths curriculum is taught through daily dedicated sessions, and through continuous provision activities which lie within the learning environment. These sessions are carefully planned using concrete resources and build on prior learning and 'real life' experiences across the theme and year. It starts with mastering numbers and subitising and moves forward to encompass all aspects of the maths curriculum. We want our children to become confident mathematicians who can apply what they have learnt to real life experiences.

All children in early years benefit from weekly Forest School sessions; these support a range of skills and develop their social interactions. All seven areas of learning are encompassed within these sessions and allow all children to take risks in an unpredictable environment whilst developing leadership skills and promoting mental health and wellbeing. We have a dedicated woodland to run these sessions.

Pupils have opportunities to share their learning with their parents and carers through Tapestry and visits to SMAS. Regular observation and activity entries allow parents to join in learning alongside their children and share the experience. Parents are invited in to look at the children's learning and comment upon the learning children share with them at home. SMAS also have a Facebook page where children's learning and successes are celebrated. Our values are promoted throughout all aspects of the curriculum to develop children's independence, motivation, and perseverance.

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and long-lasting educators and we value the contribution they make. We appreciate the role that parents play and their future role in educating the children.

We nurture this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before they start school.
- The teachers visit all children in their home setting prior to starting school in nursery.
- The children have the opportunity to come into school to spend time in the environment and get to know their teacher. They are invited to transition mornings or afternoons for a 'stay and play' sessions in June/July before starting school.
- We invite all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their children start school.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress before and after school, or swiftly addressing any concerns either the teacher or parent may have.
- We invite all parents to a variety of 'workshops' each term, including early reading sessions.

## **Impact**

Children demonstrate high levels of engagement in activities, enabling them to access all areas of learning and communicate with both adults and children. They develop skills across all seven key areas of the curriculum and feedback their findings on a daily basis.

Children develop a wider sense of the world around them and can draw on these experiences during interactions with others, linking this to new learning. They develop their characteristics of learning and are therefore able to apply their knowledge to a range of situations, making links and explaining their ideas and understanding. Children are confident to take risks and discuss their successes and failures with adults drawing on their experiences to improve or adjust what they are doing. Children develop a secure understanding of our Church distinctiveness through the teaching of the curriculum, our school values and they join whole school collective worship.

We value each child as an independent learner. All children make excellent progress so that they are well prepared for Key Stage 1.