

# Curriculum Policy and Pedagogy

## Our Vision

At South Milford Preschool we are a unique, professional and caring team who are committed to providing a happy, safe and stimulating environment enabling all children to become nurtured in an atmosphere of positive self-esteem.

We do this by:

- *Supporting independence, curiosity, creativity and resilience within every child.*
- *Providing high quality interactions whereby every child is listened to so that they know they have a voice, feel heard and know that they can make a difference.*
- *Encouraging all children to value and respect themselves, each other and their environment.*
- *Motivating children to learn through rich experiences; providing learning that is fun, engaging and suitably challenging.*
- *Building strong partnerships with our families.*

We are committed to giving our children the best possible start in life enabling them to be lifelong learners with a love of learning!

## OUR INTENT:

### Learning through play (A Unique Child)

We believe in developing curious minds within an environment that encourages independence and critical thinking whilst keeping play at the heart of everything children do. The teaching and learning of new skills are acquired through child-led and adult-led activities and the environment is built around this to support their knowledge and skills ensuring every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

. We allow children to be in control of their own learning, enabling them to play and develop creatively in the here and now. We empower children to follow their own curiosity and interests, with adults there to support their learning and find the “teachable moment” in order to move children on with their learning. As children grow older and are transitioning to school, we provide a greater focus on teaching the skills and giving them the knowledge they require in order to make a successful transition.

### The areas of Learning and Development (EYFS 2021)

By learning through play, we enable the children to experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live through the 7 areas of learning. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The prime areas ensure a strong foundation for children’s development and are particularly important when working with our youngest children. The specific areas provide a broader curriculum and enable the prime areas to be strengthened and applied. Communication and language are embedded throughout all areas of learning.

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas:

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

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning underpin the learning and development across all areas and support the child to be an effective and motivated learner. These are:

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and “have a go”
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

### Cultural Capital

Children arrive at South Milford Preschool with a range of different experiences, in their learning and play. We ensure that all children have access to excellent quality learning and interactions, ensuring that the experiences and opportunities are available to all children, particularly the most disadvantaged.

Each child is unique, and we value the diversity each child brings to the setting, reflecting individual communities and cultures. Children develop their own learning journey within the context of the relationships and the environment around them. We ensure that children develop the essential skills they need in order for them to develop a love of learning and enabling them to succeed in future life.

### Inclusion and Diversity

South Milford Preschool has an open admissions policy. Children’s special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly, and support put in place promptly so they are able to progress well in their learning. Diversity is celebrated and encompassed within the children’s learning. All children are supported to reach their full potential through differentiated and individualised approaches to learning. We strive to ensure that all learning, activities and resources are accessible to all children. Resources also reflect the diverse culture in our world as well as those represented within the pre-school.

### Transitions

Our aim is to manage transitions sensitively, ensuring continuity between home, South Milford Preschool and any other settings that a child may attend. Transition to preschool is tailored to meet the needs of each unique child and discussed with families before they start with us. When transitioning to school or another setting, children are supported and conversations with new settings will enable the bridge of transition to work effectively.

## OUR IMPLEMENTATION:

### Teachable Moment (Positive Relationships)

The teachable moment is when the skillful practitioner intervenes in order to capture the moment of engagement and then seizes it to ensure the child makes progress.

This can be done by:

- Communicating and interacting
- Modelling language
- Demonstrating how to do something
- Explaining why something is as it is
- Showing children something
- Exploring ideas with children
- Encouraging the children to have a go
- Questioning them and developing their critical thinking
- Checking what it is they understand
- Model "being stuck" and learning from mistakes
- Providing a narrative for what they are doing
- Facilitating what they are doing
- Encourage collaboration
- Enable children to see each other as tools for learning as well as adults.
- Setting challenges
- Praising and reinforcing positive learning experiences

During the teachable moment, the child should feel valued, important, interesting, capable, challenged and able to learn as well as gaining knowledge, skills, attitude and understanding, therefore making progress in one or several areas of the Early Years Curriculum.

Practitioners will gain a sound understanding of the child's knowledge, skill, attitude, understanding and progress.

#### The Skillful Practitioner:

At South Milford Pre-school, we support and develop each practitioner's understanding and learning to ensure they are providing the very best experiences for our children. Each child has their own special key person, ensuring that each child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. Our skillful practitioners at South Milford Pre-School will:

- Have a firm understanding of child development and an awareness of age appropriate needs, behaviour and learning in order to help sequence children's learning over time and identify any extra support needed.
- Provide strong support and high quality care to individual key children
- Be attuned to individual feelings, needs and fascinations.
- Be attentive of any patterns of play that may be emerging or reflecting an emotional need
- Encourage children to communicate in a variety of ways and value 1<sup>st</sup> language and cultural heritage
- Ensure a strong focus on communication and language development, putting early language at the heart of our curriculum.
- Ensure quality interactions which scaffold and prompt thinking, building on children's interests, strengths and questions.
- Encourage and support children's interactions with other children and adults
- Model feelings and exploration of well-being

- Ensure consistent routines, thus ensuring children feel secure and are able to operate independently.
- Ensure clear and consistent boundaries across the setting.
- Enable children to feel empowered to manage their own feelings, keep themselves safe and resolve conflicts, supporting each individual to develop their own self-regulation and executive function.
- Plan and organise enabling yet flexible environments based on children's own interests and fascinations, supporting high quality play.
- Ensure the environment is safe, calm, purposeful, challenging and supportive.
- Support children to become mastery learners – to ask questions, take and evaluate risks, develop resilience and to have ownership for their learning, developing a depth in their early learning.

### Our Learning Environment (Enabling Environments)

At South Milford Pre-school, we are aware that both the physical environment and the ethos of our preschool affect the children's ability to learn.

We are committed to providing a happy, safe and stimulating environment, both indoors and outdoors. The learning environment is constantly reviewed, adapted and changed to ensure that the children have a constant deep level of involvement in their activity.

Children are consulted about their learning environment, and given the opportunity to take control of their own learning. They are encouraged to initiate and carry out their own activities and make independent choices and decisions. We encourage children to find, use and replace equipment and resources independently, as well as reflect on their own learning.

Our ethos is to ensure all children are nurtured within an atmosphere of positive self-esteem. We encourage all children to value and respect themselves, each other and their environment.

### Parents in Partnership:

Parents and carers are fundamental in their children's development and learning, therefore we actively seek to learn from them and share with them all aspects of their child's learning.

We foster this relationship through:

- Talking to parents/ carers before the child starts and inviting them in for a visit.
- Having flexible settling in procedures to meet the needs of individual children.
- Gaining further information about the child before they start with us – their interests; friends; family; learning etc.
- An ethos of openness and honesty, that encourages parents/ carers to share their knowledge, understanding, hopes and concerns with us.
- Opportunities to find out more information about the family and value their personal histories
- Sharing and celebrating all our learning – through children's learning and achievements; emails; facebook posts; home learning; star moments.
- By listening to and offering support to families, identifying parents that may need extra support and ensuring parents engage with their children at home.
- Encouraging parents and carers to join us in stay and play sessions. Encouraging parents with particular skills, interests, hobbies, professions, cultural backgrounds to share with us their experiences.

## OUR IMPACT:

### Starting points

When a child starts at South Milford Preschool, we aim to gain as much information as possible to enable us to get to know the child quickly, identify areas where they may need support, and ensure progress is being made from the minute they start with us.

We gain information through:

- Initial phone conversations/ emails with parents, identifying needs
- Registration forms -identifying any health or developmental needs
- Child profile form – more detailed to give us an understanding of the child’s interests, any areas parents feel they would benefit from at pre-school and any concerns.
- Shared setting form – making links with other settings that the child may attend in order to further identify interests and areas for development.
- Links with other professionals – e.g. health visitors/ SLT – we ask for any 2 year old progress checks or any other information through parents before their child starts with us.
- Open days/ settling visits – this enables each key adult to get to know their key child and their families before they start with us. It enables discussions to take place regarding any support the child may need in particular areas and any concerns the parents may have.

### Planning, observing and assessing: “In the moment planning”

At South Milford Preschool we do not prepare a set weekly plan for activities. Instead we focus our attention on preparing an engaging and challenging environment with materials that will excite and interest the children based around our curriculum for the term. The curriculum is created collaboratively as a team and is shared with parents to encourage learning from home. We observe carefully where the children’s interests lie, enabling us to enhance provision straight away (when possible) and feed into teachable moments. From this, themes may develop, enabling links in the children’s learning.

Quality time is spent playing alongside and interacting with our children, enabling us to observe them in their play. Through this, we are able to identify what our children can do and what they know, ensuring that we understand each individual child well. Using our knowledge of child development, we are able to sequence children’s learning, building on children’s learning over time, ensuring every child is able to make progress. Detailed observations do not need to be recorded as this take time away from the children, although it is understood that some recording of observations (outlining outcomes achieved and lines of direction) can support practitioners in knowing their key children well. Individual children’s learning and development will be at the forefront of our weekly staff meetings, enabling professional discussions to take place and highlighting support plans, monitoring and challenge within our curriculum to meet the needs of our children.

At South Milford Preschool, we will assess whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, drawing on our own knowledge of the child and our understanding of child development. Birth to five matters or the EYFS will be used to guide practitioners in order to support practitioner's professional judgements. Reference can also be made to Development Matters, particularly if we have cause for concern and need guidance from the Observation Checkpoints. Evidence does not need to be collated to support our judgements, although may be needed to understand why a child is not meeting the expected progress. The progress of each child is tracked, weekly through professional discussions and termly through summative assessments. This is monitored by the manager in order to identify individual children who may need support, our strengths and weaknesses within the curriculum, and to measure impact and quality improvement. If a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, we will discuss this with the child's parents and agree how to support the child, developing targeted plans to support the child's future learning. We will consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support. We will make links with, and help families to access, relevant services from other agencies as appropriate.

### Progress check at two

When a child is aged between 2 and 3, we review their progress in a formal progress check which is shared with parents. The progress check is a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas. It will identify the child's strengths and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. It will highlight any areas where additional support may be needed, and enable discussions with parents (and other relevant professionals where needed) in order to put targeted support in place.

### In summary:

We believe that every child has the right to a well thought out and meaningful curriculum that will provide them with the tools needed to succeed throughout their lives, regardless of culture, social class, gender, physical and cognitive capabilities and beliefs. Regular monitoring and evaluation of children's progress enables us to continually adjust our provision in response to any areas of underachievement that may be identified.

M Riches - July 2023  
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