'Getting started with SEAL (1)': A resource pack for primary schools implementing The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning

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www.sealcommunity.org

Contents

Also available on the website:
'Getting started with SEAL 2: Top tips for practitioners'

1. The importance of relationships in the classroom.
   How do we develop positive relationships with children?
2. The importance of a positive classroom environment.
   How do we develop a positive classroom environment?
3. The importance of involving children and empowering them through 'pupil voice'
   How do we involve and empower children?
4. The importance of developing children's social and emotional skills
   How do we develop children's social and emotional skills?
5. The importance of helping children to solve their own conflicts
   How do we develop children's skills to solve their own conflicts?
6. The importance of supporting children when they have a problem
   How do we support children when they have a problem?

1. About SEAL

1.1   What is SEAL?

The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) initiative was piloted by the DCSF (then DfES) in twenty-five English local authorities from September 2004. In June 2005 the materials were made available to all primary schools in England and funding given to local authorities to provide training and support to primary schools to implement and embed SEAL (from 3-11yrs). The initiative (including a range of web-based materials) has since been rolled out to secondary schools. In March 2011, the Welsh Assembly Government made the materials available to Welsh schools, adapted for the Welsh context and in the medium of English and Welsh.

The SEAL initiative aims to support children aged from 3-16 years to develop the personal and social skills of:
- self-awareness
- managing their feelings
- motivation
- empathy
- social skills.

These interpersonal and intrapersonal skills have been shown to improve learning and promote emotional health and wellbeing, alongside a range of other benefits to pupils, families and schools.

SEAL aims to provide an entitlement curriculum to develop social and emotional skills within a structured and progressive framework, offering class-based quality first-teaching to all children from 3-16yrs ('Wave 1' provision – see Fig.1 below). The approach does, however, recognise that schools will need to provide a continuum of provision to meet the needs of all learners in this area. In addition to providing curriculum resources for class-based work, schools have access to sets of materials designed to be used within a small group context, for children who may have additional needs in one or more area of the social and emotional aspects of learning. Small-group work is located at 'Wave 2' of the continuum of provision (see Fig.1). 'Wave 3' support is envisaged as the individual, intensive support that will continue to be necessary for the minority of children with long-term, complex needs within the area of social and emotional functioning. These are children at the highest level of need, who will usually have a statement of education need (or equivalent) and the involvement of a number of professions – social services, educational psychologists, CAMHS etc. The aim is for provision at Wave 3 to build upon the SEAL work undertaken by the child within the school context.

While the explicit curriculum in SEAL is a necessary aspect of effective provision for developing children's personal and social skills, research shows that by itself it is not sufficient. There exists a robust body of evidence[1] demonstrating the need for frequent reinforcement to embed new social and emotional learning and to ensure that children regularly apply the skills in real life situations. In addition to providing materials for an explicit spiral curriculum for all children (in which the Learning Outcomes[2] of SEAL form the focus of the taught session), the

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[1] See K. Weare for an overview of international evidence: 'Developing the Emotionally Literate School', 2010, Sage Publishing

SEAL initiative includes materials to train all staff in the school community to model and 'scaffold' these skills, so that they permeate the environment and the school day, as well as ideas for fostering and reinforcing SEAL skills across the curriculum. It also includes a set of resources (the 'gold' set) for children to work with their parents or carers at home.

Following the successful roll-out of the SEAL materials and whole-school approach, the DCSF produced a set of materials which would enable schools to further include parents[3] in SEAL entitled 'Family SEAL'[4], in order to support parents in developing and promoting the skills of SEAL in the home context.

Of course, the vast majority of schools have for many years been involved with projects, initiatives and approaches which aim to create an ethos and environment in which children's emotional health and wellbeing is promoted, and through which the development of their social and emotional skills is facilitated. These include:
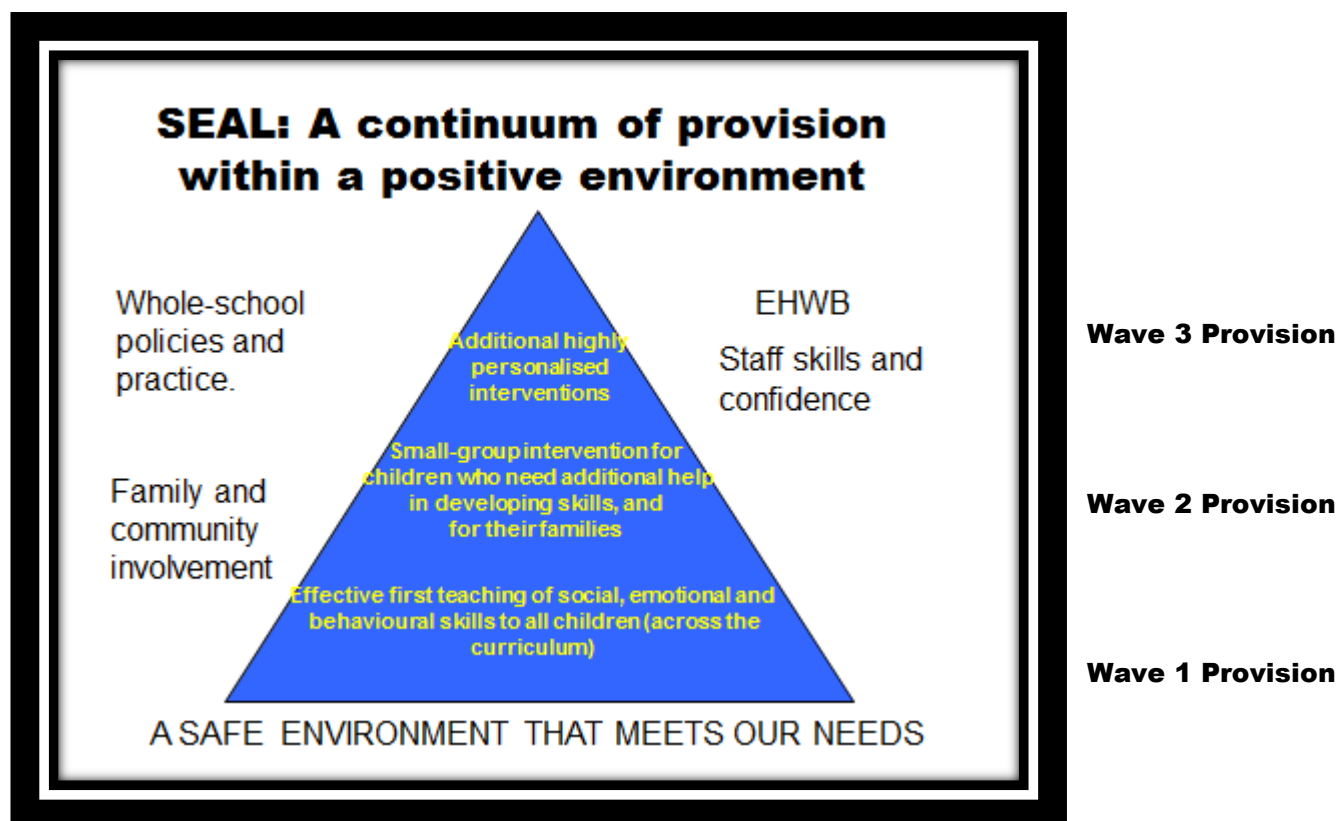
- School councils
- Buddying and peer mediation schemes
- Playground initiatives such as 'buddy stops' and social games promotion
- Restorative justice approaches
- 'quiet spaces' in schools
- Worry boxes
- Anti-bullying initiatives
- Rights respecting schools
- Critical skills training for staff
- Values Education
- Philosophy for Children (P4C)

Schools report that SEAL builds on these initiatives, and provides a framework within which to organise them into a cohesive whole. In addition SEAL supports schools' work in the area of Healthy Schools, contributes to the PSE curriculum and reinforces the key skills agenda.

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[3] The word 'parent' is used throughout this report in its widest possible sense, to indicate parent, carer or any member of the extended family who takes an interest in a child's upbringing.
[4] http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/66383

Fig.1: The three 'Waves' of the explicit SEAL curriculum within the whole-school environment

1.2 How does SEAL work in primary schools?

In Primary schools the suggested model of using SEAL in school (outlined in the DfES Guidance Booklet[5]) is to foster the primary SEAL learning outcomes (Appendix 4) through an explicit curriculum, reinforcing them through throughout all curricular areas and across the school day.

Curriculum materials for each Year Group are provided (from Nursery – Y6) to support the explicit curriculum, divided into 6 whole school themes (+ additional material for anti-bullying work). An overview is provided for each theme, which includes a whole school assembly, a staff training booklet (the 'Purple' set), family activities to send home (the 'Gold' set) and ideas for small group work (the silver set).

In addition to these curriculum based resources, there are a number of 'whole-school' materials such as posters, photographs and protocols (e.g. for conflict management and problem-solving) which are designed to offer a set of shared concepts and vocabulary to be used by the whole school community.

Each half-term the following process is followed:

- The theme and curriculum materials are introduced in a staff meeting

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[5] Excellence and Enjoyment: Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning: Guidance: Ref: DfES 1378-2005 G

- A whole school assembly takes place to launch the theme

- Curriculum work takes place in every classroom, using the curriculum booklets to achieve the learning outcomes for the theme. Family activities may be sent home, and some small group work might take place from the resources provided.

- At the end of the half-term a follow-up assembly+ celebration of the application of the focus SEAL skills takes place

- A staff meeting review takes place.

While the theme is ongoing, the focus skills (the learning outcomes for the theme) will be reinforced, modelled, noticed and celebrated by all staff (including lunch-time assistants etc.) both across the curriculum and during unstructured times.

1.3   The Rationale – what benefits does SEAL offer?

Research[6] over the past 2 decades on developing the social and emotional aspects of learning, including systematic reviews of programmes, using the most rigorous and exacting criteria, are repeatedly demonstrating that the best social and emotional learning programmes are effective and impact positively on the following:

- Academic learning (achievement and attainment)
- Behaviour and attendance
- Reductions in bullying, violence and juvenile crime, in schools and the community
- Improved mental health, such as reduced stress, anxiety and depression in pupils and staff
- Health outcomes – reductions in teenage pregnancies and drug abuse
- Improved staff retention and morale.

Recent international reviews of work in schools (primary and secondary) commissioned by National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) (Adi et al, 2007; Shucksmith et al, 2007) show excellent outcomes for such work.

Aspects of the Primary SEAL programme have been evaluated by the Institute for Education[7] (Primary) and the DCSF (2008)[8].

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[6] See for example: Izard 2001; Fleming et al 2005; Carneiro 2006; Wang et al 1997; Zins et al 2004

[7] 'Evaluation of the Primary Behaviour and Attendance Pilot', Hallam et al, 2006

[8] Evaluation of primary school group work workhttp://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/RRP/u015120/index.shtml

2. Accessing the SEAL resources

All materials can be accessed via www.sealcommunity.org. You can use the search function to access any of the resources listed below. Note that you need to register in order to download the materials (this is free). There is a guidance booklet and 7 sets of theme resources. The themes are:

☐ New beginnings

☐ Getting on

☐ Say no to bullying

☐ Going for Goals

☐ Good to be me

☐ Relationships

☐ Changes

Within each theme there are the following booklets:

☐ Theme overview (Assembly text and learning outcomes for the theme from Nursery – Y6)

☐ Red: Learning opportunities for nursery and reception children

☐ Blue: Learning opportunities for Y1 and 2

☐ Yellow: Learning opportunities for Y3 and 4

☐ Green: Learning opportunities for Y5 and 6

☐ Silver: Small group activities (KS1) Nb. Small group activities for KS2 are available for four
   themes (search for KS2 small group activities)

☐ Gold: Family activities

☐ Purple: Staff development activities (linked to the theme)

In addition there are a number of supporting resources (those needed for particular theme booklets are listed in the booklets):

☐ Photocards (over 100 A4 photographs showing different emotions and situations)

☐ Posters: Circle time; Assertiveness; Feelings Detectives (x2); Peaceful problem-solving (conflict
   management); Problem Solving;

☐ Feelings fans and feelings barometer templates

☐ Other: Group work review sheet

Primary Resources : you can search by typing the name of the theme booklet or resource into the 'Search' box, or use the resource browser to select by type, theme, year group or category (e.g. small group work, professional development etc.).

Search

Search this site:

[   ] [Search]

Resource browser

Click any item below to begin browsing.
Major categories
National SEAL resources (261)
National SEAL evaluations (5)
Research and policy, local authority documents (2)

Category
Primary (201)
Secondary (63)
Small group work (29)
Professional development / teacher guidance (29)
Family (23)
Early Years (20)

Country and language
English - English medium (78)
Wales - Welsh medium (76)
Wales - English medium (70)

Year groups
Years 1 and 2 (36)
Years 3 and 4 (28)
Years 5 and 6 (28)
Year 7 (22)
Early Years Foundation Phase (Wales) (16)
Year 8 (14)
Year 9 (13)
Early Years Foundation stage (9)

Type
Curriculum resource (159)
Assemblies (42)
Curriculum guidance (15)
Posters (12)
MIscellaneous whole school resources (11)
Interactive texts (3)
Photos (2)

Theme
Good to be me (30)
New beginnings (29)
Changes (28)
Getting on (27)
Say no to bullying (26)
Going for Goals (26)
Relationships (25)
Keep on Learning (14)
Learning to be together (13)
Learning about me (13)
A place to learn (7)
Anti-bullying (1)

3.Action planning: A sample action plan

Aim/ Success criteria	Task		Lead Respons-ibility	Timeline	Resources	Monitoring/ evaluation	Links with other plans
SLT and governors have opportunity to make decisions with informed awareness Leadership and governors take SEAL forward	1	Discuss pilot plans with SLT/governors					
Staff buy-in (the majority support plans)	2.	Initial awareness of SEAL INSET					
SEAL coordinator is appointed and has clear description of role, resources and non-contact time to fulfil	3.	Appoint SEAL coordinator					
There is a clear and cohesive mapping which outlines how SEAL links to what the school does. Areas of duplication and gaps are identified.	4.	Provision mapping outlining what do we already do in school and links to SEAL					
Medium and short-term planning feature SEAL	5.	Agree curriculum time allocation and planning protocols					
Parents are aware of SEAL	6.	Initial letter to parents (primary) outlining pilot					
The resources to implement the theme are available for the staff meeting.	7.	Preparation of materials for staff					
Staff have the confidence and expertise to implement the theme. SEAL work is planned in.	8.	Introduction and planning for pilot theme staff/ team meeting. Resources to be given to staff					

Assembly takes place (led by head) and all staff attend.	9.	Initial assembly for pilot theme (primary)	10				
Curriculum work takes place in all classes	10.	Curriculum work undertaken from Theme booklet in all classes					
	11.	Classroom posters displayed as appropriate					
	10.	Follow-up assembly (sharing work from theme) (primary)					
Plans are revised in the light of staff feedback	12.	Staff/ team review meeting					
Staff meetings and assemblies take place	12	Schedule staff meetings, and assemblies for next theme					

1. Introducing SEAL to staff (Sample agendas for staff awareness sessions)

All PowerPoint™ presentations referred to below are available on the website to use for a whole school staff awareness session. Materials and activities can be mixed and matched to suit a staff meeting or inset day. They can be found by searching for: ***Getting Started: An introduction to SEAL PowerPoint™ 1 – 4.*** The content areas are as follows:

> PPT 1: What is SEAL and why do we need it?
> PPT 2: SEAL: Effective teaching and learning
> PPT3: Exploring the explicit materials
> PPT4: Action Planning for SEAL

You might also like to share with staff the materials contained in 'Getting Started with SEAL 2: Top tips for practitioners'

Suggested agendas for twilight session and inset days are described below:

Staff meeting (1 ½ hour duration)

1. Check-in activity (from Presentation 1)
2. Introduction to the Learning Outcomes to SEAL (see Appendix 4)
3. Activity – 'What have these skills got to do with learning?' (From Presentation 1)
4. An introduction to the pilot theme, 'New Beginnings' (From Presentation 3): Content and structure of the curriculum booklets, whole school tools.
5. Time for staff to look at the relevant curriculum booklets and identify positives, concerns and questions.
6. Agreement as to how to proceed with the pilot theme: assembly; curriculum work; follow-up assembly and staff feedback.

Inset (whole day or half-day duration)

1. Starter activity (Check-in)
2. Presentation 1: What is SEAL and why do we need it? (From Presentation 1)
3. Presentation 2: How do we learn social and emotional skills and what works in teaching them? (From Presentation 2)
4. Exploring the explicit curriculum resources (From Presentation 3)
5. Agreement as to how to proceed with the pilot theme: assembly; curriculum work; follow-up assembly and staff feedback.

6. Action planning by staff – selecting activities to try etc. (From Presentation 4)
7. Closing activity

Top Tips:

Making up a hard-copy SEAL file for each class with all the resources that they will need for the first theme is hugely motivating, and helps ensure that staff buy-in to the pilot. This would ideally include:
- The curriculum booklet for the appropriate age-range
- The whole-school tools that they will require to deliver the pilot theme (these are listed in the curriculum booklet)

It is suggested that staff are encouraged to 'dip in' to the theme materials, agreeing to try out three or four activities over the course of the theme, and to feedback on these at a staff meeting at the end of the theme. This will enable staff to become familiar with the materials and methods of delivery.

Appendix 1: The Primary SEAL Learning Outcomes

SELF AWARENESS:

Knowing myself

1.1. I know when and how I learn most effectively
1.2. I can take responsibility for my actions and learning
1.3. I feel good about the things I do well, and accept myself for who and what I am.
1.4. I can recognize when I find something hard to achieve

Understanding my feelings

1.5. I can identify, recognize and express a range of feelings
1.6. I know that feelings, thoughts and behavior are linked
1.7. I can recognize when I am becoming overwhelmed by my feelings
1.8. I know it's OK to have any feeling, but not OK to behave in any way I like

MANAGING FEELINGS:

Managing how I express my feelings

2.1. I can stop and think before acting
2.2. I can express a range of feelings in ways that do not hurt myself or other people
2.3. I understand that the way I express my feelings can change the way other people feel
2.4.   I can adapt the way I express my feelings to suit particular situations or people

Managing the way I am feeling

2.5. I can calm myself down when I need to
2.6. I have a range of strategies for managing my worries and other uncomfortable feelings
2.7. I have a range of strategies for managing my anger
2.8. I understand that changing the way I think about people and events changes the way I feel about them
2.9. I can change the way I feel by reflecting on my experiences and reviewing the way I think about them
2.10. I know that I can seek support from other people when I feel angry, worried or sad
2.11.   I know what makes me feel good and how to enhance these comfortable feelings

MOTIVATION:

Goal-setting, persistence, resilience

3.1. I can set myself a challenge or goal, thinking ahead and considering the consequences for others and myself.
3.2. I can break a long-term plan into smaller, achievable steps, plan to overcome obstacles, set success criteria and celebrate when I achieve them.
3.3. I can choose when and where to direct my attention, concentrate and resist distractions for increasing periods of time.

3.4.   I know and can overcome some barriers to my learning such as feelings of boredom and frustration and know when to keep trying or try something different.
3.5.   I can bounce back after a disappointment or when I have made a mistake or been unsuccessful.

Evaluation and review

3.6.   I know how to evaluate my learning and use this to improve my future performance.

EMPATHY:

Understanding the feelings of others

4.1.   I can recognize the feelings of others
4.2.   I know that all people have feelings but understand that they may experience and show their feelings in different ways or in different circumstances
4.3.   I can understand another person's point of view and understand how they might be feeling

 Valuing and supporting others

4.4.   I value and respect the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of other people
4.5.   I can be supportive to others and try to help them when they want it
4.6.   I know that my actions affect other people and can make them feel better or worse

SOCIAL SKILLS:

Belonging to a community

5.1.   I feel that I belong and am valued in my class, school and community
5.2.   I understand and accept my rights and responsibilities in school, and know how I can take responsibility for making the school a safe and fair place for everybody

Friendships and other relationships

5.3.   I know how to be friendly – I can look and sound friendly, be a good listener, give and receive compliments and do kind things for other people
5.4.   I recognize 'put-downs' and know how they affect people, so I try not to use them
5.5.   I can make, break and sustain friendships without hurting others

 Working together

5.6.   I can work well in a group, cooperating with others to achieve a joint outcome
5.7.   I can tell you what helps a group to work well together

Resolving conflicts

5.8.   I can resolve conflicts to ensure that everyone feels positive about the outcome

Standing up for myself

5.9.   I can be assertive when appropriate

 Making wise choices

5.10. I can solve problems by thinking of all the options, identifying advantages and disadvantages, choosing a solution and evaluating it later on.
5.11. I can make a wise choice with work or behaviour

Appendix 2: BINGO! Learning opportunities that promote social and emotional learning and emotional health and well-being

ACTIVE LEARNING (Moving around to energise)	LAUGHTER (promoting relaxed learning state)	BONDING/GETTING TO KNOW OTHER GROUP MEMBERS	BASIC NEEDS (MASLOW) BEING MET PHYSICAL – FOOD, WARMTH, COMFORT
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ('feeling' the learning point)	OPPORTUNITY TO 'CHECK-IN' (identify and manage emotional state)	APPROPRIATE PREPARATION AND CLOSURE	FEELING WELCOMED AND VALUED
EXPERIENING A SENSE OF BELONGING	FEELING INCLUDED AND 'HEARD'	FEELING SAFE AND WILLING TO SHARE OPENLY AND HONESTLY (feeling safe to take a risk)	YOUR OWN CHOICE HERE!