



# **The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

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The Early Years Foundation Stage policy includes the academy's vision and mission statement and core aims:

**Vision Statement** Growing, learning and succeeding together.

This means;

- Growing** Our focus is on the whole child, their health, happiness and development as a member of the community.
- Learning** Our job is to create a rich stimulating environment that will foster learning. Skills and expertise are key to children's learning and they should also learn about themselves and each other.
- Succeeding** We have high standards and expectations – but success breeds success and we work to create a positive 'can do' culture.
- Together** Our school is a community and all members of this community should be aiming to grow, learn and succeed. This includes all staff, governors and parents as well as children.

### **Our Shared Vision**

To nurture and develop children from their own starting points to grow creative global citizens that aspire and achieve.

### **Our Curriculum Intent**

At The Southwater Infant Academy, we aim to nurture and develop children from their own starting points to grow creative learners that aspire and achieve.

Our curriculum is broad and progressive, built around the children and community, and enriched by memorable experiences and opportunities. We believe strongly in supporting children to develop key learning skills that prepare them for lifelong learning, as well as competence in the core skills of maths, reading, writing and computing.

Southwater Infants has an inclusive ethos, with stimulating learning environments that challenge, support and celebrate learning. Underpinning our curriculum are our key drivers - ambition, environment, respect for diversity, and wellbeing. These work alongside our academy values to ensure the children leaving the academy have high aspirations and are encouraged to succeed through a purposeful and meaningful curriculum.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At The Southwater Infant Academy, children join the EYFS in Reception in the year that they become five.

We wholeheartedly believe that “every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.”

In partnership with parents and carers we work to give children “the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life”. We recognise that “Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

The EYFS is based upon four principles;

### **The Unique Child**

We acknowledge that every child is an individual learner. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to the provision available. We value all children and their families. Children are encouraged to achieve their full potential and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all learning styles and individual needs. Through our planning and resourcing we ensure that children develop skills enabling them to be resilient, resourceful, reflective, confident and collaborative learners. We understand that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates.

We aim to meet the needs of all children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests, developing their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs;
- developing independence and critical thinking skills
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively with a curriculum that is relevant to them;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued and diversity is celebrated;
- planning challenging activities that inspire all children.
- monitoring children’s progress and adapting teaching accordingly.

### **Positive Relationships**

At The Southwater Infant Academy, we recognise that children learn to be independent, ambitious learners by developing secure relationships with their peers and supporting adults. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise and value the influence of the family in children’s early development and work to build on prior learning through open, honest communication with parents, carers and pre-school providers.

## **Enabling Environments**

At The Southwater Infant Academy we aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to indoor and outdoor environments that are organised to reflect the seven areas of learning. Play based learning is of paramount importance at this stage of development. Children can direct their own learning through self-initiated activities or from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff.

It is vital that the learning environment is stimulating, challenging and inspiring, and that it encourages and promotes independent learning. Our classroom environments reflect and celebrate the broad range of children's achievements and learning journeys.

We believe that effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and follows children's interests. Staff will always look for opportunities to enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning. Effective planning is informed by observations of, and interactions with, the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences and understand the progress they are making. Key milestones and next steps are recorded in personalised online Learning Journals which parents can view and contribute to at any time.

## **Learning and Development**

We believe that children learn best when they are interested, motivated, engaged and have opportunities for first hand, direct experiences. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there are three characteristics of effective learning. 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”.

In the EYFS there are seven areas of learning and development. “All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.”

“Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These are the prime areas” - Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. We also support children in “four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.”

The specific areas are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

At The Southwater Infant Academy we provide a creative curriculum built around the children and community, enriched by memorable experiences and opportunities. Our aim is for children to become confident in the core skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing, maths, science and computing

We believe that children should be engaged by learning that develops and challenges them and excites their imagination. They will enjoy learning skills and knowledge within a rich and creative curriculum.

### **Transition**

We appreciate and recognise that successful transition is vital to children's ongoing achievement, attainment and wellbeing. Positive transition practices help all children and we recognise that some individuals may also need additional support.

At The Southwater Infant Academy, key principles of good transition practices are:

- communication
- induction
- finding a balance between continuity and change

These practices include:

- Providing timely information and guidance for families before the transition through a variety of events and publications.
- Arranging visits to the Academy for children and their parents and carers and home visits prior to starting formal education
- Effective links and communication with pre-school providers which includes academy staff visiting settings and vice versa.

### **Assessment**

At The Southwater Infant Academy, we complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first six weeks of the children starting school. We also carry out and record our own assessments in order to inform the children's next steps, through observation, conversation, interaction, and play.

In the Summer Term we complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) "The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1."

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Learning and Assessment Policy
- Behaviour Policy

*Quotes throughout taken from Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021*