



# South Wonston Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

**Approved by:** Full Governing Body

**Date approved:**

**Review date:**

## **Statement of intent**

At South Wonston Primary School, we greatly value the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for the future learning and development of our children. We believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life; we aim to create a safe, secure and happy learning environment, developing and nurturing strong positive attitudes for children to become confident, active, engaged and creative learners.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their Nursery and school life in which they can propagate a love of learning. We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning through play to give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

### **Our aim is to provide:**

- Quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners, parents and outside agencies if needed.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

**At South Wonston Primary School, the Early Years education we offer our children (from age 3 to 5) is based on the following four principles for high quality provision:**

### **The unique child**

At South Wonston Primary School, we believe every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We give every child the opportunity to achieve their best by having realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children across the areas of learning and development. We achieve this by planning bespoke tasks to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with disabilities, children with additional educational needs, children with medical needs, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates and we accommodate the needs of all our children by:

- using individual learning plans where appropriate
- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, skills, experiences, and interests
- planning opportunities to develop their well-being, self-esteem and confidence, including experiences that provide risk and challenge
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a secure and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is respected and valued
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination or stereotyping
- planning challenging and appropriate experiences for higher achieving children
- monitoring children's progress and providing additional support when identified
- using age-appropriate ways to seek the views of all children through observing, listening and sensitive discussion
- seeking advice from specialist agencies where appropriate.

### **Positive relationships**

Children learn to be strong and independent through developing secure and positive relationships with adults and peers alike. Practitioners in both Nursery and Reception have the overall responsibility for the children in their class, supported by the Learning Support Assistants. All adults are responsible for ensuring that all children feel safe and cared for, in order to develop a positive sense of well-being and achievement. In Early Years, we aim to develop good relationships with all children by interacting positively with them and taking time to listen. We also model and support children in forming positive relationships and friendships with one another.

We respect that parents are the child's first and future educators. We believe that the positive relationships we build are the key to effective partnerships between all practitioners, parents, carers and families. We do this by:

- Developing positive relationships with parents during the induction / transition process and home visit
- Working with parents / carers right from the start to find out about their child's needs, feelings, and interests
- Developing effective partnerships with families throughout the year by offering regular opportunities for them to talk about their child's progress through our open door policy, open sessions, an end of the year report and parents' evenings
- Helping parents to support children's learning and development and keeping them up to date on Tapestry, workshops, 'walk and talk boards' and newsletters
- Encouraging parents to help in school and become involved in a range of enrichment activities and family learning

- “Proud moments” display

## **Enabling environments**

At South Wonston Primary School, we recognise that the environment is vital for supporting and extending children’s development and learning. Our environment is carefully planned both indoors and outdoors to help children achieve across all aspects of the EYFS. Opportunities are provided for children to take part in a wide range of experiences and to extend their interests. We value our outdoor space as much (if not more!) as our indoor space as an integral aspect of our provision.

We meet the needs of all of our children by:

- encouraging children to communicate and talk about their experiences prompted through the use of interesting artefacts, curiosity cubes, areas of interest both inside and outside and carefully planned spaces to support interaction and communication
- bringing the outdoors in and providing a natural and purposeful environment that children can feel calm and comfortable in
- developing children’s independence and decision making by providing an environment where children can freely access resources and select from the experiences on offer
- using the outdoor environment to enhance learning and development by providing opportunities that cannot be replicated indoors
- creating spaces where children can interact with the natural world, such as an outdoor learning area which the children have dedicated time for on ‘Welly Wednesdays’. In addition to this we provide opportunities to explore our local environment off site.
- planning our environment in a workshop style to encourage the use of loose parts and open-ended opportunities to stimulate problem solving and creativity
- analysing children’s responses to different situations and identifying their future learning needs
- using materials and equipment that reflects both the community that the children come from and the wider world
- encouraging a positive attitude to learning by ensuring our planning begins by observing the children in order to consider their current interests and developmental stage.

## **Learning and Development**

The learning environment is arranged so children can access continuous provision (Exploring Time) during the day. We highly value learning through play as this is how young children learn best, and enables adults to see children apply their learning and identify their next steps; because of this we protect long periods of time in the day for children to engage in uninterrupted play. Resources are enhanced according to children’s interests and based on observations noted during child-initiated play. This is designed to enable children to initiate their own learning play purposefully and learn actively through first hand playful experiences. The adults’ role is to act as coplayers, observers and extenders to support and teach children new skills in this time.

## **Characteristic of Effective Teaching and Learning**

Our Early Years classes follow the Curriculum as outlined in the 2021 Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) >>> Early years foundation stage statutory framework For group and school-based providers . The EYFS framework outlines the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning (CoETL) and the 7 areas of Development. The CoETL are organised into three primary strands and are essential components towards children becoming self-regulated learners. It identifies a child’s attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

At South Wonston Primary School we recognise the value of these characteristics, and we work to instil these in our learners in both the Reception year and beyond. The three characteristics 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.

The EYFS framework includes 17 aspects within 7 curriculum areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected.

### **The 3 Prime areas of learning:**

- 1. Communication and Language**
- 2. Physical Development**
- 3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

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. Communication and language underpins all areas of learning within our early years curriculum and continues to be developed within our provision, teaching, learning and planning methods. Planned learning supports the progress and development of listening and speaking, enabling children to process information into thinking and understanding. Children practise their physical skills alongside developing social skills, which supports greater independence and higher levels of confidence.

Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding
----------------------------	--

	Speaking
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-regulation Managing Self Building Relationships
Physical Development	Fine Motor Gross Motor

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through the further four areas, which are referred to as specific areas:

**The 4 Specific Areas of Learning:**

4. **Literacy**
5. **Maths**
6. **Understanding the World**
7. **Expressive Arts**

Literacy	Comprehension Word Reading Writing
Mathematics	Numbers Numerical patterns
Understanding the World	Past and present

	People, culture and communities
Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with materials Being imaginative and expressive

The 4 specific areas of learning provide a context for development and reflect cultural knowledge and accumulated understanding. They are dependent on learning in the Prime areas. Our continuous provision demonstrates a strong emphasis upon supporting children's understanding of the world along with enabling them to express themselves imaginatively and creatively across all areas of the curriculum. New learning and topics are adapted to reflect the needs of the children, their prior experiences and their interests.

No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all areas of learning and development are interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. At the end of Reception Year (Summer 2 term) children will be assessed against these 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) as to whether they have met (expected) or not yet met (emerging) each of the goals in line with the EYFS statutory framework. This will be shared with parents and carers as well as the next teacher to ensure a smooth transition to their next class.

## **Aspirations**

At South Wonston Primary School, we have four Aspirations (Appendix 1). Our aspirations outline what we would like each child to achieve by the end of their time in the Early Years (Nursery and Reception). These aspirations are based on our school's 'I CAN' values of 'Inspire, Challenge, Achieve and Nurture'. They are cross curricular statements based on child development milestones and Birth to 5 Matters and Development Matters non-statutory guidance.:

### **Inspire**

To be able to retell a story using learnt vocabulary and a range of props

### **Challenge**

To show resilience through learning to ride a pedal bike

### **Achieve**

To host a party involving the whole community

## **Nurture**

To look after our environment, show care for animals and plants and identify trees in our school grounds

We have mapped out the steps to these outcomes and we use this to assess the children's progress throughout the year and inform our future planning.

## **Teaching**

We ensure there is a balance of child-initiated learning through continuous provision, and adult led activities, across the school day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential. The adults respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. Staff understand that child-adult interactions need to focus not only on curriculum content but as importantly, support children to build the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. This enables them to develop flexible minds and an enquiring spirit. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions. They take into account the equipment provided and the attention to the physical environment as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Staff understand that teaching is in every activity provided within all of the learning environments. There are no activities that occur in the setting which adults do not consider to be opportunities for teaching. While staff do not always know where these opportunities will present themselves, it is the skill of the adults that enable them to readily recognise the 'teachable moments' when they arise and respond to them appropriately.

The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to complete a task with them; at other times they will participate in the child's play, extending it where possible. There are set routines that we follow each day. There are designated times when the children come together to be taught and we focus on maths, literacy, phonics, stories, gross and fine motor skills work. These times provide the opportunity for children to develop their ability to work as a group to listen, to take turns, to answer and concentrate. Whole class reading and story time are important parts of the day. We want our children to develop a lifelong love of reading. Children are exposed to a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction texts to provide them with opportunities to hear and use new vocabulary. We make sure there is always time for a whole class story during the day, as well as opportunities to enjoy books within the continuous provision. In Nursery, the focus is on developing a love of stories, songs, and rhymes, alongside early phonological awareness through playful opportunities. In Reception every child is provided a full phonetically decodable reading book (relevant to their phonics knowledge) once a week. In school, they will share this book with an adult 3 times a week, either on a one to one basis or in a group. They will also have the opportunity to select a

'reading for pleasure' book from our school library once a week and to read a range of e-Books from our Collins Big Cat library online, which will be selected according to reading abilities.

## **Health and Safety**

At South Wonston Primary School, we are fully committed to implementing the revised EYFS safeguarding reforms (September 2024) to ensure that children are kept safe and well at all times. In line with the updated statutory guidance:

- All staff appointments are subject to robust safer recruitment procedures, including the requirement to obtain meaningful references prior to employment. Our safeguarding policy sets out clear procedures for ensuring the suitability of staff.
- We closely monitor attendance, follow up promptly on unexplained or prolonged absences, and maintain more than two emergency contact numbers for each child wherever possible.
- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall responsibility for safeguarding across the Early Years. The DSL and all staff undertake safeguarding training in line with Annex C of the EYFS, renewed every two years, with refreshers as appropriate.
- Safeguarding training details and the ways in which practitioners are supported to put this training into practice are outlined in our safeguarding policy.
- Whistleblowing procedures are in place so staff can confidently raise concerns about unsafe practice.
- We follow the new statutory requirements for **safer eating**, ensuring PFA-trained staff are always present at mealtimes, food is prepared in line with choking prevention and allergy management guidance, and staff work in close partnership with parents on dietary needs and weaning.
- Children's privacy is respected during nappy changing and toileting, balanced with safeguarding considerations.

This commitment ensures that our practice aligns with the latest EYFS statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements, keeping children safe while supporting their well-being and development.

## **The Induction process**

A smooth transition into Early Years, whether from home, childminder, pre-school, or another setting, is imperative for children to be confident learners and to ensure they achieve their best. For children joining us at age 3, this includes induction and transition arrangements tailored to our Nursery provision, including stay-and-play sessions and phased starts if appropriate. For children starting in Reception, this includes a planned induction programme of events such as Teddy Bears' Picnic and Rhyme Time sessions in the summer term before they start, alongside home

and pre-school visits to ensure continuity of learning and personal, social and emotional development.

Parents are invited to induction events and information sessions led by the Headteacher and Early Years Lead, as well as other representatives, such as ABM (School Catering), the Parent Teacher School Association, the Admin Officer, the Chair of Governors, pastoral support staff and the class Teacher. The exact content and pattern will necessarily vary from year to year but will be established jointly by the Headteacher and the Early Years Lead.

We recognise the importance of the role that playgroups and nurseries play in preparing children for school and accordingly strive to strengthen the links that we have with them, which includes children visiting our classes throughout the year before they start. Where relevant, inter-agency meetings take place between the School, the Nursery and other outside agencies. This is in conjunction with the SENCo from pre-school (where applicable), the SENCo from South Wonston and any other outside agencies.