



Early Years Policy

Summer 2026

"Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments."

"Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage",
Early Education, 2012



Early Years Policy

Philosophy

At Southglade we believe that children learn best through purposeful play and we encourage our children to be independent, choosing their own resources and leading their own learning. We want our children to be inquisitive, creative and innovative with the resilience to keep on trying. We provide a learning environment that is happy, secure and stimulating. It is designed so that children can easily find (and put away!) everything they need. The classrooms are organised into areas of Continuous Provision, providing flexible and open-ended learning opportunities.

We also believe that the role of the adult in supporting children's learning and development is crucial. Through careful observations, shared and scaffolded play, challenging questions, adult led or guided activities and 1:1 support we ensure that every child reaches their full potential.

By working in partnership with parents, outside agencies, other childcare providers and the local community we support the children to become confident and independent learners. We aim to make Southglade Foundation Stage an exciting and enjoyable place to learn.

Organisation of the Foundation Stage

At Southglade we have a 52-place nursery (Foundation 1), and a 60 place Reception (Foundation 2), which together form our Foundation Stage. We have a purpose built outdoor play area which is accessed by all the EYFS children.

There are two part time teachers and two Teaching Assistants (TAs) based in the Nursery. The children are split into groups, each with a teacher or TA who will be the key person for the children in their group.

The Reception unit has two teachers and one full time Teaching Assistant. The children are grouped into two classes of up to 30, each with a teacher and TA.

There may also be Special Needs Assistants working with individual children according to their needs.

Morning and afternoon sessions are organised to allow a maximum amount of free flow play indoors and outside, during which time the adults support the children in their self-chosen play activities, or lead focus activities for small groups. There are daily phonics and maths group times, and story/singing/speaking and listening activities for the whole class.

Curriculum and Planning

We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework, September 2025. We have used the Revised 2023 document 'Development Matters', to provide Learning Outcomes appropriate for each year group.

The EYFS Framework is based upon four guiding principles which form our overall objectives:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.18). The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Characteristics of Effective Learning

All Foundation Stage staff model and encourage the development of these characteristics of effective Learning:

Playing and exploring – engagement

Finding out and exploring
Playing with what they know
Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning – motivation

Being involved and concentrating
Keeping trying
Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

Having their own ideas
Making links
Choosing ways to do things

We believe these Characteristics are essential to developing an attitude to life and learning which prepares our children for starting school and beyond

Early Learning Goals

Within the EYFS Framework there are 3 prime areas of learning and 4 specific areas. These provide the basis of how we structure the learning environment, the activities and opportunities we provide, and how we assess each child's development. For each of the areas of Learning there are specific 'Early Learning Goals' to work towards:

Prime Areas

Communication and Language: Listening, Attention and Understanding; Speaking

Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Self Regulation; Managing self; Building Relationships

Physical Development: Gross Motor skills; Fine Motor skills

Specific areas

Literacy: Comprehension; Word Reading; Writing

Mathematics: Numbers; Numerical Patterns

Understanding the World: Past and Present; People, Culture and communities; The Natural World

Expressive Arts and Design: Creating with materials, Being imaginative and Expressive

We aim to deliver this broad curriculum through purposeful play, which enables the children to build on what they already know and make meaningful links. Carefully planned and managed Continuous Provision provides the children with the resources they need to explore their own interests and extend their learning with an appropriate level of challenge for their individual ability.

Phonics

Southglade Primary School uses the Little Wandle Phonics scheme, which is started in Nursery and continued throughout F2 in daily sessions. Please refer to the whole school Phonics Policy for more information.

Assessment

All children are assessed using the outcomes from 'Development Matters' four times a year. This initially provides a baseline from which progress is carefully tracked. Assessments are moderated within the early years team and with other partner schools throughout the school year. Data is analysed at the end of each term, pupil progress is reviewed, and interventions are planned where necessary. The progress of children with Special Educational Needs and that of Disadvantaged children, and other vulnerable groups is also tracked.

In the Autumn term of F2 the Reception Baseline Assessment is completed, in line with Statutory requirements, for each child, and then the EYFS Profile is completed in the Summer Term to determine whether children have reached the Early Learning Goals.

Profile scores are moderated both internally and externally, and the results are shared with parents.

At the end of the year parents of children leaving the nursery and children leaving reception receive a written report on their child's development in relation to the Areas of Learning and Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Working with Parents

We fully acknowledge and value the contribution that our parents and carers make to their child's education. We aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure each child achieves their full potential.

Regular newsletters inform parents of what their child will be learning and how they can support them at home. We value and love to hear about the children's achievements outside of school and encourage parents to share these with us.

Parents are invited to two parent consultations throughout the year, but staff are also available on a daily basis to discuss any issues that arise. Marvellous Me is used to update parents and inform them of their child's learning. Evidence Me is used to email parents photos and observations of their child on a regular basis.

Home work

In Nursery, the children choose a story or non fiction book each week to take home and share with their parents. Parents are encouraged to make a note in their reading diary when they share a book at home.

In Reception the children also bring home reading scheme books matched to their Phonics ability, to practise with their parents. This is to help build children's confidence with reading and to develop their sight vocabulary and blending skills. Occasionally the children may bring home a curriculum related activity or challenge to complete with their parents.

Community Links and the Wider World

As part of our work around the Learning Aspect "People, Culture and Communities" we ensure the children find out about the local area, the jobs people do and the contributions people make to their community. This is done through visitors, trips and activities. Film clips, non-fiction texts and artefacts are also used as learning tools. The children are encouraged to explore their own and other cultures through festivals and celebrations across the year.

Behaviour Management

Behaviour in the Foundation Stage is managed in line with the Whole School Behaviour Policy and reinforces the Whole School Ethos, including work around Rights Respecting Schools. This contributes to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum by supporting the children's Personal, Social and Emotional Development. The focus is on teaching children how to behave and respond appropriately and giving them the skills to manage their own behaviour.

Please see the whole school Behaviour Policy for more information.

Safeguarding

All staff are fully aware of the importance of safeguarding children. They have up to date safeguarding training and follow school procedure when a safeguarding concern is raised. Guidance from the EYFS Statutory Framework is followed.

Please refer to the whole school Safeguarding policy for more information.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

In the Foundation Stage we aim to ensure positive attitudes to diversity.

The children are encouraged to recognise and value similarities and differences between themselves and others.

All children are challenged appropriately to ensure they reach their full potential.

Both boys and girls are expected to fully participate in all aspects of the curriculum and are free to explore all resources and activities, following their own interests.

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are carefully assessed and, if necessary, have their own individual provision to ensure they are accessing the curriculum and are making good or better progress in their learning.

Please see the whole school Equality Policy, EAL Policy and SEN Policy for more information.

Transition

Into Foundation 1

Parents are invited to bring their child along for a visit prior to starting nursery, during which parents share information with staff about their child, including their favourite toys and activities and how best to comfort them if distressed. Parents are able to stay throughout this first visit, if they choose to, and at the end decide with staff whether their child is ready for a full session or needs more settling visits.

Transition from Foundation1 to Foundation 2

In the Summer term there is a talk for all new parents about starting school and an opportunity to look around the F2 classes if desired. Parents meet the class teachers, the Foundation Stage Lead and the Head teacher. They are given a Starting F2 Brochure and advice on how to support their child with being School Ready. For the children, there are two visits to their new classes, the first for a half day, and then for a full day, to make sure they are familiar with their new surroundings, routines and teachers.

Transition from Foundation 2 to Year One

In the Summer Term there is a talk for parents about moving up to year 1 and how this will affect their children. There is an opportunity to meet and ask questions with the Year 1 teachers and a starting Year 1 leaflet is given out.

The children have two visits to their new class and spend some time with their new teacher. The Year One classrooms are organised to reflect aspects of Foundation Stage provision to help the children to feel secure in their new environment.

We aim to ensure that all children move into, through and out of our Foundation Stage smoothly, whilst achieving their full potential.