

Academic Philosophy for Stamford Junior School

Our educational philosophy reflects the expectations we have of ourselves, as teachers, and of our pupils as learners. We believe that for our school community to thrive academically we must work in partnership with one another and with our parents, each of us taking responsibility for achieving the best that we are capable of in the classroom and beyond. Our primary objective is to encourage our pupils to enjoy their time in the classroom so that they will want to do well for themselves and so that they will become confident about their learning.

As teachers we have high expectations of all the pupils and see the classroom as a place to inspire pupils across our ability range. Our lessons are driven by curiosity about our subjects and passionate interest in them and we seek to pass this on to our learners. Lessons are varied in terms of style, content, breadth and use of resources because we believe that by taking a varied approach to teaching we will extend every pupil and help them to achieve their potential. As the organisation of the Endowed Schools embraces both single sex and co-educational teaching, the benefits of boys and girls being taught together at Junior level are many, recognising the fact that children have different learning styles which we identify and respect. In keeping with this, SJS offers a range of extension activities for pupils which take them beyond the curriculum, by providing enrichment opportunities through, for example, clubs, workshops, cultural and educational visits. These help to create and to direct pupil curiosity.

SES recognises that this approach to learning needs to be supported by excellent resources both inside and outside the classroom. At SJS we have invested in a new Nursery, enhanced sports facilities and ICT facilities including on line resources. Going forwards there will be further developments at SJS such as a Hall extension and enhanced music facilities.

Pupils at SES are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to be proud of and committed to their own progress. We encourage pupils to develop a critical-thinking approach to their learning and we expect them to use a range of skills in exploring the different worlds they encounter in the classroom. We believe that pupils should be motivated, energetic and confident. They enjoy learning for its own sake, not only because this will help them to achieve their own educational goals but because taking pride in their own achievements will empower them beyond their life at school. We take literally Eric Hoffer's words 'In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists'. As we go further into the third millennium we recognise that for our young people the world is changing rapidly and we seek to equip our boys and girls to cope with it and to relish its challenges.

We encourage our pupils to become independent learners and this will happen at different times according to their maturity and motivation. Some pupils require support such as additional lessons to help them produce work to the standard of which they are capable and this is provided through differentiated work and support both in and out of the classroom. A firm foundation ensures the pupils have excellent learning skills and high motivation and all our pupils benefit from receiving praise and encouragement.

Assessing pupil progress is important to us. We have a formal and informal assessment and reporting programme in place which aims to support individual pupil development in an effective

way through a timely provision of meaningful information to pupils and parents. Homework is a means of reinforcing concepts and encouraging every pupil's independent learning. In keeping with our approach to teaching and learning, the nature of assessment is varied, diverse and appropriate to the development stage of each pupil.

We provide opportunities for pupils to have the confidence to voice their own ideas and to reflect on their own thinking. The school week also allows for the development of non-academic activities, whether sporting, dramatic or practical, which broaden boys' and girls' enjoyment of life as well as giving them the opportunity to grow as rounded individuals. Our school week is busy and has purpose but it also provides pupils with a balance of work and play.

None of the above is possible without the commitment of our parents. We value their support of the school's educational philosophy, working with us to ensure that their sons and daughters work towards taking responsibility for their own learning. At SES we see that education is a shared responsibility, between pupils, teachers and parents. Teachers show intellectual courage in driving the educational process forward and pupils confidently embrace their role as thinkers and learners who actively seek to extend their understanding. Our responsibility for providing exciting, interesting and purposeful lessons is very important, and as such we invest in our own professional development. Our parents are essential partners in producing assured and happy children who will eventually take their place in the wider world.

July 2011