LEARNING IN THE EARLY YEARS



At Savannah International School, our Early Years section includes two year levels: Pre-Reception and Reception. We believe that the Early Years are a crucial stage in a child's development, and that learning during this time should be engaging, fun, and age-appropriate. Our learning programmes have been carefully chosen with this in mind, supporting young learners through play-based, hands-on experiences that lay strong foundations for future learning.

International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC)

This curriculum offers thematic units that encourage exploration, play, and discovery. Through hands-on activities and projects, children develop skills in areas like communication, social skills, and problem-solving, fostering curiosity and a love of learning. It focuses on **four key learning strands** that help children build essential skills:

Independence and Interdependence: This strand emphasizes the importance of personal, social, and emotional development in early childhood. It nurtures positive self-awareness, social confidence, and emotional regulation. Children will learn to:



- Follow familiar routines
- Convey ideas
- Express and self-regulate emotions
- Form positive relationships and respond to their own and others' feelings
- Recognise boundaries within specific contexts
- Play, cooperate, and collaborate with others in various situations
- Approach routines and tasks with growing confidence and independence.

Communicating: Recognising the diverse ways young children communicate, this strand develops skills across language, early literacy, and the expressive arts. While IEYC tasks support early reading development. Children will learn to:



- Use phonics to decode simple words
- Recognise and read common words and familiar sentences
- Write and spell some common words
- Experiment and express ideas using various art tools, materials, and musical instruments
- Represent ideas through music, movement, dance, role-play, and drama.

Enquiring: This strand encourages children's innate curiosity, fostering problem-solving skills and a desire to learn about people and the world around them. Children will investigate by:



- Posing questions
- Exploring ideas
- Making observations
- Providing simple explanations.

Healthy Living and Physical Well-Being: Recognising the significance of physical development, this strand nurtures a positive attitude toward health, self-care, and physical activity. Children will learn to:

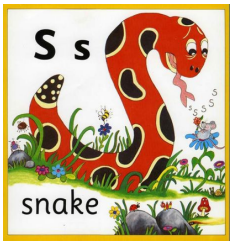


- Take care of basic hygiene and personal needs
- Demonstrate control, coordination, and growing confidence in a variety of physical activities.

Through these strands, the IEYC provides a well-rounded framework that supports your child's intellectual, social, and physical growth, fostering skills that will serve them throughout their school journey.

Jolly Phonics – Building Early Literacy Skills

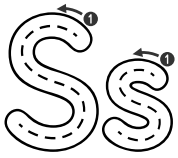
At Savannah, we use Jolly Phonics, a well-established and engaging phonics programme, to support children's early reading and writing development throughout the Early Years. The programme is taught in a fun, multi-sensory way that makes learning memorable and enjoyable for young children.



- **Phonics-Based Learning:** Jolly Phonics introduces children to the 42 main sounds (phonemes) of the English language, including both single-letter sounds (like /s/ or /t/) and common digraphs (such as "sh" or "ai"). In Pre-Reception, children begin by identifying and saying these sounds accurately. As they move into Reception, they learn to blend these sounds together to read words and begin to break words into sounds (segmenting) to help them spell.
- **Multi-Sensory Techniques:** Each sound is taught through stories, songs, actions, and visuals, making it easier for children to remember them. For example, children might make a snake-like motion with their hand while saying the /s/ sound. These interactive and playful methods ensure learning is active and engaging.



- **Blending and Segmenting:** As children gain confidence with their sounds, they begin to blend sounds to read simple words (e.g., "c-a-t" becomes "cat") and segment words to spell them. These skills are central to developing independent reading and writing.



- **Writing Practice:** Throughout both years, children practise forming letters and writing words. This supports phonics learning while also developing essential fine motor skills needed for confident writing.

For more information on Jolly Phonics: https://www.jollylearning.co.uk/jolly-phonics/

Numicon Firm Foundations – Developing Early Mathematical Thinking

Throughout the Early Years at Savannah, we use **Numicon Firm Foundations**, a hands-on, visual maths programme designed to help young children build strong foundations in number sense and mathematical thinking. Numicon uses uniquely shaped, colourful tiles that children can touch, see, and manipulate to explore key maths concepts in a playful and engaging way.

- **Introducing Numicon Shapes:** Children begin by exploring Numicon shapes, each of which represents a number from 1 to 10 and contains the corresponding number of holes (e.g., the shape for "3" has three holes). In Pre-Reception, children become familiar with the shapes through free play and hands-on exploration—holding, arranging, and comparing them to begin understanding the concept of quantity. In Reception, children use the shapes more intentionally to represent numbers, count accurately, and make number comparisons.
- **Building Number Sense:** As children progress, they develop number sense—an intuitive understanding of numbers and their relationships. Through matching quantities to Numicon shapes, arranging shapes in order, and recognising patterns, children learn foundational concepts such as one-to-one correspondence, ordering, and sequencing. In Reception, they begin to understand part-whole relationships, which is key to early addition and subtraction.



- **Exploring Mathematical Concepts through Play:** Across both year levels, Numicon supports exploration of early maths ideas such as patterns, comparisons, and simple problem-solving. Children might create a pattern using alternating shapes or explore which shapes are "bigger," "smaller," or represent "more" or "less." These experiences develop critical thinking and early analytical skills in a way that feels natural and enjoyable.

- **Developing Mathematical Language:** Children are encouraged to talk about what they're doing using maths-related vocabulary—for example, "I have two fours, that makes eight!" or "This one is smaller than that one." This use of language builds their understanding and confidence in expressing mathematical ideas clearly.
- **Laying the Foundations for Future Learning:** By the end of the Early Years, children will have a solid foundation in number recognition, counting, simple operations, and mathematical reasoning. They'll also have developed the confidence to approach maths with curiosity and enjoyment—ready for the more formal concepts introduced in the Primary Years.

For more information on Numicon: https://learningmole.com/numicon-a-guide/

