



# **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**TO BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY BY THE GOVERNING BODY**

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

*“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential”* (Early years foundation stage statutory framework For group and school-based providers 2023)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of Foundation 2 (Reception year.) At Somerville Nursery School, children join Foundation 1 in the term following their third birthday. Eligible 2 year olds join our 2 year old provision the term following their second birthday. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years. These are:

- 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.
- **The importance of learning and development.** Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

### **A Unique Child**

At Somerville Nursery we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### *Inclusion / Special Educational Needs (SEN)*

All children and their families are valued at Somerville Nursery School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provision available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best

and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We take into account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents / carers at an early stage and the SENCO is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the Federation's Inclusion Policy for SEN

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

### Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why these exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. [See Federation Safeguarding Children Policy, which includes reference to 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023) and 'The Prevent Duty Guidance' (2023)]

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."

At Somerville Nursery School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2023. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

### **Positive Relationships**

At Somerville Nursery School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents play, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- Providing opportunities for children to spend time with their teacher before starting school
- Encouraging parents/guardians to complete the home/school admissions booklet
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress
- Sharing learning and celebrating achievements. Also encouraging parents to share special achievements at home
- Utilising new technology to communicate with parents e.g. website updates; Twitter, Evidence Me etc.
- Encouraging parents to celebrate their child's learning and development by sharing 'wow' moments which inform planning and provision.

- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's key worker if there are any concerns. There are also formal meetings for parents throughout the school year, for teachers and parents to discuss children's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Foundation 1 year.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents e.g. 'Stay & Play', phonics and maths workshops.
- Providing a quiet and confidential area where parents / carers are able to discuss any concerns.

### **Staffing and Organisation**

A teacher and teaching assistants provide the curriculum for Foundation 1 children, maintaining an adult/pupil ratio 1:13 in Nursery (often lower). In our 2 year old provision, ratios are 1:5 (or lower). The teaching staff meet weekly to plan together for the following week, to ensure equality of provision. All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. Each child in EYFS has a 'key person' who ensures that the child's needs are met and who also is the main point of contact for child and parents/carers.

### **Learning and Development**

At Somerville Nursery School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development and understand that they are inter connected.

### **Teaching and Learning Style**

The key features of effective teaching and learning in our school are outlined below:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;

- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;

### **Areas of Learning and Development**

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning, all of which are important and inter-connected. All areas inform provision and planning within Somerville Nursery School.

#### **Prime areas:**

“Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving”. (2023) these are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

#### **Specific areas:**

Through these areas of development, the prime areas are strengthened and applied

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are all important and depend on each other. All areas are supported through a balance of child initiated and adult led activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS (The Reception Year- F2).

According to current government guidance, children will be defined as having reached a “good level of development” (GLD) at the end of the EYFS if they achieve at least the expected level in the early learning goals in the prime areas of learning and in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

### **Characteristics of effective teaching and learning**

Planning and guided activities will take into consideration the different ways that children learn and will reflect these in practice. At Somerville Nursery School, we support children using the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These represent the processes involved in learning rather than learning outcomes:

*Playing and exploring* – Children investigate and experience things and ‘have a go’

*Active Learning* – Children concentrate and keep on trying even if they encounter difficulties and they enjoy achievements

*Creativity and Critical Thinking* – Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

[Taken from Early years foundation stage statutory framework For group and school-based providers 2023]

### Equal opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We value the diversity of everyone within the school and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children at Somerville Nursery School are treated fairly regardless of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special education needs, disability or social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-cultural society.

### Enabling Environments

At Somerville Nursery School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

**Observation:** EYFS staff build a full picture of children’s interests, abilities and needs through observational assessment. This involves reaching an understanding of children’s learning by watching, listening and interacting as they engage in everyday activities, events and experiences, and demonstrate their specific knowledge, skills and understanding. In order to ensure that staff can focus on high quality interactions with children, (scaffolding and supporting their development), we have aimed to limit the number of observations which are recorded. Every term parents will be sent a photo journal and will be invited to contribute to and take part in their child’s progress review.

**Assessment:** Practitioners’ knowledge of a child forms the basis of assessment within EYFS. This knowledge is built from: observation of the child’s self-initiated activities; some adult-led activities; and day to

day interactions with children. In addition children will be involved as practitioners encourage children to review their own learning. Parents / carers and other adults who have significant interactions with a child will also contribute to the assessment process by identifying children's achievements outside the school environment. Initially focus will be given to assessing the prime areas of learning and gradually the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents / carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the SENCO in order to assess the need for additional support. Within the final term of the Foundation 1, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting children's progress.

In order to ensure accuracy of judgements practitioners: take part in internal moderation activities with year group partners; undertake LA moderation training when available; and take part in moderation of assessment with local schools. The Assistant Headteachers and Executive Headteacher monitor teaching and learning across the foundation stage each year and analyse assessments

### ***Progress check at age 2 years***

When a child is aged between two and three, we will review their progress, and provide parents / carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas. This progress will identify the child's strengths, and areas for development. We will discuss with parents and/or carers how the summary of development can be used to support learning at home.

We will encourage parents / carers to share information from the progress check with other relevant professionals, including their health visitor and other professionals where appropriate. Where possible, the progress check and the 'Healthy Child Programme' health and development review at age two will be carried out concurrently at the setting and should inform each other and support integrated working. Where this is not possible we will seek consent from parents to liaise with other professionals.

If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, we will develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development and will involve parents / carers and other professionals (e.g. SENCO, health professionals) as appropriate.

***Planning:*** Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. As such practitioners use assessment and observation of children to plan appropriate activities and resources – responding to the needs, achievements and interests of children. At Somerville Nursery School each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. "Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning." (Early years foundation stage



statutory framework For group and school-based providers, 2023) See Somerville Nursery School Curriculum & Assessment Policy.

### The Learning Environment

The EYFS environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The environment is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Children have access to an outdoor area which has a positive effect on their development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It enables the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

### Transition arrangements

#### ***Transition into Somerville Nursery***

Where children are joining the nursery the following steps are in place to support transition:

- Parents and children are welcome to look around Somerville Nursery School to see what provision we offer and whether you feel we can meet the needs of your child.
- Parents / Carers complete 'all about me' and 'parental views' forms
- Staff liaise with other professionals involved with the child e.g. health visitors, speech and language practitioners, portage etc. as appropriate.
- Children visit the new provision for short periods of time prior to their transition
- Staff meet parents / carers to discuss children's individual needs and their learning and development
- Parents / carers are provided with a 'transition booklet' to share with their child. This provides photographs of the environment and staff, as well as information about key routines.
- Children are supported to settle on an individual basis, in close liaison with parents / carers
- Parents / carers are kept fully informed throughout transition and have the opportunity to discuss any concerns with their child's keyworker.

#### ***Transition within Somerville Nursery School***

Where children are moving from one form of provision to another, within the Nursery setting, staff will liaise closely to ensure a smooth transition. Steps in place to support this include:

- Parents / carers complete updated 'All About Me' and 'Parental Views'
- Children visit the new provision for short periods of time during the term prior to their transition
- Staff meet to discuss children's individual needs and their learning and development

- Parents are advised of forthcoming changes and have the opportunity to discuss any concerns with a child's existing key worker and / or their new keyworker.

Some children may find transition to a new class within the nursery difficult for whatever reason and this can be stressful for them. We can offer these children internal transition support and regular, short visits to their new classroom and to meet their new class teacher.

### ***Transition into Foundation 2 (Reception)***

At Somerville Nursery School we have very close links with Somerville Primary School. We work collaboratively with Foundation 2 staff to ensure successful transitions to the primary school. The following procedures have been put in place to support children.

- F2 staff visit children at the nursery regularly in the summer term
- Staff meet to discuss how best to support children, including the well-being, learning and development needs
- Nursery staff will complete transition information for each child in accordance with Local Authority requirements. This will be shared with receiving primary schools.
- Parents are invited to a meeting at the primary school to ensure that they are familiar with school procedures and are advised about the allocation of classes and will have an opportunity to express any concerns they may have.
- The children are invited to visit their new class and to participate in activities

If children are transitioning to schools beyond Somerville Federation, staff from the receiving primary schools are invited to visit the children at Somerville Nursery and to meet with their key person.

### ***Children needing extra support***

Children who have been identified as requiring additional support or who are part of an Early Help Assessment process may find transitions more challenging and in these instances we will arrange meetings with parents / carers before the child transitions to or from nursery. This gives the opportunity for information to be gathered and plans put into place in advance. The Nursery SENDCO, Primary SENDCO and Social Inclusion Manager will work alongside key staff, parents / carers and other professionals as appropriate to ensure a positive outcome for children.

### **Other policies which form part of the EYFS framework**

Admission Arrangements

Behaviour Policy

British Values - Nursery

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Complaints policy

Curriculum & Assessment Policy

Equal Opportunities

Food and drink policy

Health & Safety Policy

Intimate care policy

Medication POLICY

SEN policy

Somerville Federation Early Years Foundation Stage Two Policy

### **Other documents linked to this policy**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook (DfE, 2023)

Early years foundation stage statutory framework - For group and school-based providers (DfE, 2023)

Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (DfE, 2023)

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Executive Headteacher and Assistant Headteachers will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.