STATUTORY

The school has carefully considered and analyses the impact of this policy and guidelines on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of its commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
Early years foundation stage policy

Our vision

At Someries Infant and Nursery School we believe anything is possible. We know that children have the right to be provided with a creative, innovative and exciting education that will inspire them to become lifelong learners who are enthusiastic and proud of everything they do. We want every child to excel in all aspects of their learning within an immersive, imaginative, expressive and inclusive environment. We want children to become confident discoverers, explorers and creators who live our values. We keep children at the focus of everything we do.

Our aims

As a school, our aims are to:

- become a unique school which meets the needs of the Twenty-first Century child
- support and challenge children so that they become happy, engaged and independent learners
- ensure children are leaders of their own learning to satisfy their natural curiosity
- ensure children receive a creative, immersive and innovative education
- be a truly inclusive school where children have the same opportunities to excel in their learning
- be an effective team
- live our values in everything that we do
- inspire new learning and create awe and wonder
- provide a rich and purposeful learning environment
- develop effective relationships with families and the community
- be the best that we can be
Introduction

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself. For young children there is no distinction between work and play.

Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. The ‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ refers to children from birth to the end of Reception class. It sets out a series of Early Learning Goals for children to work towards by the time they reach the end of Early Years Foundation Stage at the age of five. Whilst the expectation is that most children will achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of the reception year, younger children will be provided with experiences which will support them in reaching the goals at the appropriate time. In the Early Years Foundation Stage we acknowledge the potential for learning in every activity and situation that arises. Our aim is to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which children flourish and learn to make sense of the real world. We strive to make each child feel valued and give them the confidence to become active learners.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child’s welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued
- Fostering and nurturing children’s self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways
- Encouraging children’s independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes
- Developing children’s understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own
- Understanding the importance of play in children’s learning and development
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children’s personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn
- Providing experiences which build on children’s existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, both indoors and outdoors
- Providing quality and consistency in teaching and learning
- Ensuring every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Creating a close partnership between practitioners and with parents and carers
The Early Years Foundation Stage framework

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2017 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This document is a principled approach to early years education, bringing together children’s welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: ‘A Unique Child’, ‘Positive Relationships’, ‘Enabling Environments’ and ‘Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates.’

The curriculum is centred on three prime areas of learning:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication and language
- physical development

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children’s physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make many links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

Characteristics of effective learning

Characteristics of effective learning are a key component of the early years foundation stage curriculum. The curriculum advocates that these characteristics are considered when planning and guiding children’s activities. At Someries Infant and Nursery School, we emphasise each child’s individual learning and tailor our provision to help them achieve their full potential. Each child’s individual learning characteristics determine their engagement and response to teaching and learning and it is vital that we support their progress. The three characteristics of effective learning are identified as:

- 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 unique child uses the characteristics of effective learning to relate to people and things. At Someries Infant and Nursery School we work to ensure that we support the children in this. In the final Learning Phase of their reception year, parents and carers will receive a pupil attainment and progress report which provides a detailed picture of each child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities. By using the characteristics of effective learning as the basis of this report, we provide a clear picture of the learning characteristics of each child.
Personal, social and emotional development

The school fosters and develops relationships between home, school, children’s centres and places of worship in order to make links stronger for the good of the community as a whole. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self-image. The school’s values-based education effectively enables the children’s personal, social and emotional development and creates children who have confidence in their own abilities.

Physical development

Children are given opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. Our effective provision also provides children with an opportunity to experience risk in a controlled way, allowing them to make judgements and naturally self-risk assess.

Communication and language

This area covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills. Children’s developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on. We aim to extend and enrich the children’s vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions and saying rhymes and singing songs together. Through the use of our effective home-school links we encourage children to share their experiences inside and outside school as this aids their ability to speak and listen in a variety of different situations.

Literacy

We have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas indoors and outdoors independently but they also take part in teacher-led activities. These activities include whole class shared reading, phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing. Children have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence. We encourage children to treat books and other resources with respect and they are given frequent opportunities to listen to and read stories.

Mathematics

We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numeracy through practical activities and using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern, measurement and money using our play-based approach to learning. This is then supported through a variety of teacher-led activities.

Understanding the world

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They will learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.
Expressive arts and design

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, movement, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use tuned and un-tuned musical instruments. Children also learn new songs and rhymes and enjoy singing them with each other. At various times during the year, children are given the opportunity to participate in school productions and assemblies.

Active learning through play

At Someries Infant and Nursery School we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that early years education should be as practical as possible and our Early Years Foundation Stage setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children’s play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator, encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play, we understand the central position of play within the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. This is essentially a play-based curriculum and pedagogy since the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery.

Children are taught in a variety of ways. We organise the day to provide a balance between the following:

- Child initiated Activities - children make choices from within the learning environment to meet his/her outcome for learning.
- Adult focussed activities - practitioners provide the resources to stimulate and consolidate learning which children can independently choose to access
- Adult led activities – children engage in planned activities to meet specific learning outcomes

Assessment and record keeping

The main Early Years Foundation Stage assessment method is through practitioners’ observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children’s learning. All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children’s abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children’s learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child’s development using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2012). At the end of the year this provides a summary of every child’s development and learning achievements. A baseline assessment is carried out using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile during the children’s first six weeks upon entering the setting. Judgments made on children’s development in the Profile are
based on practitioners’ evidence of children’s behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

Parents as partners in their child’s education

At Someries Infant and Nursery School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents and carers, as highlighted by the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children’s learning and development. Practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about children with their parents or carers.

We value the role of parents and carers as children’s primary educators. We encourage parents and carers to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (for example, their characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes, etc.). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children’s needs and interests.

Parents and carers are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters, emails, reading records and informal discussions at the beginning and end of the day. Whole school learning newsletters are also sent home on a weekly basis which give suggestions of how parents can support their children’s learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

Parents and carers are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits, as well as offering their particular skills (for example woodwork, cooking, art, music, etc.) to support children’s learning. Parents and carers are invited into the setting during each Learning Phase where children show them how they learn in school. Parents contribute to assessment by ‘Home books’ and ‘I’m a star cards’. These provide the school with vital information about the child’s interests, experiences and developmental progress outside of the school environment. This information is used alongside observations of the child to aid assessments and plan the next steps.

The setting has a friendly, open-door ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents and carers at the beginning and end of every day. Parents and carers are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Implementation of Policy and Guidelines

The school’s Early Years Leader is responsible for leading the development and strategic direction of the school’s Early Years Foundation Stage Policy.

The implementation of this policy and guidelines is the responsibility of all staff.

Reviews

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