

Somerville Primary School English Policy

This policy describes our aims and our practice in the teaching of English: spoken language; reading, writing, spelling and grammar. It is based on current national guidance on best practice, CPD, staff discussion and professional judgement.

Aims for our policy:

- ❖ To provide a language rich environment that promotes a culture of reading and writing;
- ❖ To develop in pupils a love of books and high-quality literature that will not only support their learning across the curriculum, but also extend beyond the classroom environment and enrich their lives;
- ❖ To explicitly teach reading skills throughout the school that continually develop children's understanding and enjoyment of texts;
- ❖ To teach children the craft of writing in order to develop the confidence and skills to write well for a range of purposes and audiences;
- ❖ To teach the basics – spelling, grammar, handwriting and punctuation – well, so children have all the necessary tools;
- ❖ To foster in pupils the confidence, desire and ability to express their views and opinions both orally and in writing;
- ❖ To value and celebrate diversity in culture and language.

Planning – Learning and Teaching Strategies

Knowledge, understanding and skills are taught daily within the English lesson. Lesson planning is guided by the work of the 2014 National Curriculum and the Talk for Writing process. Teachers plan in units towards a longer writing outcome that is linked to reading, drama and other shorter writing tasks. As much as possible, writing is linked to the termly class topic and therefore the wider curriculum. There is a balance between fiction, non-fiction, poetry, play scripts and an emphasis on whole texts. Teachers use a variety of interactive teaching methods to deliver the curriculum and achieve set learning objectives.

Teaching and learning takes place within a whole class setting and, in the main, differentiation is by outcome and through setting different expectations. However, the teacher will lead attainment based guided reading and writing groups during the lesson. Within guided groups, teachers move children forward by focusing specifically on reading and writing issues which are particular to that group of children.

Teachers are also expected to plan time within certain writing lessons for children to reflect on their marked work, and independently respond to teacher prompts to improve their writing.

Spoken Language

At Somerville Primary School, we believe that speaking and listening form the foundations of all learning particularly in English. In formal and informal situations, we create and facilitate opportunities for conversation, discussion and talk around learning. Questioning forms the basis of our teaching, we strongly encourage children to be inquisitive and to share their thoughts confidently in a supportive environment.

What does this look like at Somerville?

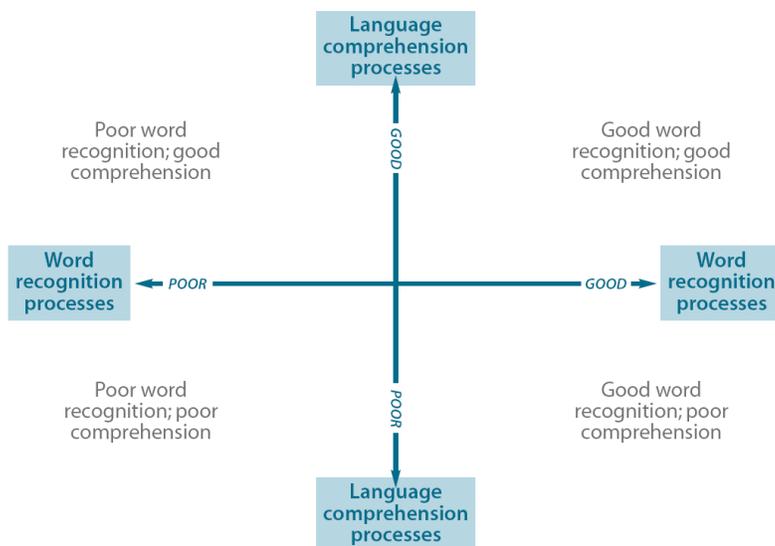
- ❖ Questioning and taking risks with language
- ❖ Presenting in front of an audience
- ❖ Reciting and reading aloud
- ❖ Re-telling, role-play and drama productions
- ❖ Listening to and participating in stories, poems, rhymes and songs
- ❖ Drama activities to enliven and enrich children's understanding of character
- ❖ Talking the text – opportunities for children to talk about and discuss their reading and writing

- ❖ Debating
- ❖ Collaborative work and reporting back following group work
- ❖ Presentations
- ❖ Justifying ideas with reasons
- ❖ Asking questions to check understanding
- ❖ Developing vocabulary and building knowledge
- ❖ Negotiating
- ❖ Evaluating and building on the ideas of others
- ❖ Giving well-structured descriptions and explanations
- ❖ Speculating, hypothesising and explore ideas
- ❖ Organising their ideas prior to writing

Reading

'At Somerville we promote a deep love of reading so our children become confident and reflective readers for life.'

Our priority is both the teaching of reading skills and the enjoyment of literature, enabling children to become lifelong, confident readers. As children begin to read, we focus on decoding, primarily through phonics in addition to other strategies e.g. whole word recognition, rhyme and context. As children build fluency, comprehension skills become our main area of focus and questioning looks at skills such as re-telling, inference and prediction. We believe that high-quality literature is key to motivating children to read and instilling in children a love of literature. We believe that talking about and discussing books is an important key to developing comprehension.



What does this look like at Somerville?

The teaching of reading

- ❖ We have a structured early learning programme. The teaching of early reading skills begins in the Nursery. A wide selection of early reading books is available and parents are encouraged to share these with their children.
- ❖ Phonics is taught systematically from Nursery following the Letters and Sounds 'phased' programme supported with Jolly Phonics resources. Children have regular short sessions until the end of Year 2, learning sounds, actions and letters; with games and activities to support sounding out; segmenting and blending; to develop reading and writing;
- ❖ Children read on an individual basis to their class teacher and teaching assistant. The frequency of this is dependent on their reading level.
- ❖ Children are taught during shared and guided group sessions using both structured and repetitive books, and other guided reading texts in groups.
- ❖ Those children who are not making expected progress have intervention sessions, this includes Project x code.
- ❖ We are flexible with our use of scheme books. If a child is 'stuck' at a level and losing motivation, we will always look for alternatives, for example read aloud plays, to re-ignite enthusiasm.

Developing a love of reading

- ❖ We encourage reading across the curriculum: topic books, news articles, class magazines etc.
- ❖ We do story telling and re-enacting stories: we have visits from storytellers, authors and poets.
- ❖ We have a dedicated library area in each classroom.
- ❖ We have a new school library that pupils and parents are encouraged to visit weekly.
- ❖ Class teachers read to their class at the end of every day. Much thought goes into the selection of texts.
- ❖ Teachers are involved in developing a Reading Spine through Talk for Writing.
- ❖ Each year group will study in depth at least 3 book studies per year.
- ❖ We encourage lots of talk and discussion about reading in a variety of contexts, both formal and informal.
- ❖ We have regular school Book Fairs.

Children are expected to read every night at home, writing in their reading diaries or planners to share ideas about books and to keep a record of what they are reading. This is monitored very systematically by staff, who liaise directly with parents if this is not happening.

Writing

At Somerville we strive to create an environment that will promote both reading and writing. Teachers carefully plan using Talk for Writing. Our writing is, where possible linked to the termly topic, and has a purpose. In order to ensure that all pupils learn to be confident writers, we encourage children to write creatively whilst teaching key writing skills explicitly and systematically. Writing takes place daily within English lessons and in other lessons linked to the wider curriculum. Writing at length is encouraged and developed at all times.

What does this look like at Somerville?

- ❖ A purpose and audience for each piece of writing is decided from the outset.
- ❖ Writing is displayed all over the school.
- ❖ We use high quality texts, modelling and shared/ collaborative writing to demonstrate good practice.
- ❖ We encourage and promote oral rehearsal.
- ❖ Writing is taught as a sequenced activity – cold tell/write, imitate, innovate, invent, hot tell/write. From Y2 – Y6, the innovate stage can be reduced as and when appropriate.
- ❖ We provide writing frames to support the least confident.
- ❖ We provide time for planning, editing and revising.
- ❖ We mark all writing building up to the hot write as well as the hot writ in-depth.
- ❖ We use checklists for pupils to self assess or peer assess, when appropriate, so they can evaluate effectively.
- ❖ We use drama and hot-seating to help pupils to think about another point of view.
- ❖ We provide stimulating first hand experiences, the hook e.g. trips, visitors.
- ❖ Teachers provide regular, helpful feedback through marking.
- ❖ Time is planned into lessons for children to respond to literacy marking and feedback.
- ❖ Writing is, in the main, linked to class topics to promote engagement.
- ❖ We ensure progression in complexity of tasks and reading material year on year.
- ❖ We build stamina for writing by providing opportunities to write for extended periods.
- ❖ Some pieces are 'published' i.e. Somerville Hot Writers Board.
- ❖ Self and Peer marking is encouraged as an additional way for children to respond to writing.
- ❖ Meetings and workshops are held with parents to help them support their child/ren.

Vocabulary

We are passionate that learning vocabulary is an important key to 'learning and progress across the whole curriculum' since it allows pupils to access a wider range of words when writing and for them to understand and comprehend texts efficiently.

Vocabulary teaching needs to be:

- ❖ Active
- ❖ Progressive/ systematic
- ❖ Making links from known words
- ❖ Developing understanding of shades of meaning
- ❖ Include 'instruction verbs' used in examinations
- ❖ Include subject-specific, accurate mathematical and scientific words

We encourage our pupils to have a wide and growing vocabulary in a number of ways, these include:

- ❖ Spelling lists/ key words (understand in context) to take home and learn.
- ❖ Display of key words linked to topics and subjects.
- ❖ Using the correct vocabulary orally.
- ❖ In-depth word based lessons looking at patterns.
- ❖ Using dictionaries, thesauri and glossaries.
- ❖ Using book talk to explore vocabulary choices and the effect they have on the reader.
- ❖ Carrying out spelling tests and providing feedback to pupils.
- ❖ Targeted one to one/ small group support, where appropriate.

Spelling

Understanding how to spell correctly is important in supporting children to organise their thinking around language. Knowing how to apply spelling rules and recognising root words is empowering for children. Spellings are taught systematically throughout the school and play a significant part of standardised assessment. In the EYFS/KS1, a new spelling rule or phonic sound is introduced weekly and relevant spellings taught e.g. mnemonics, word sorting and spelling games.

What does this look like at Somerville?

- ❖ Pupils are encouraged to 'have a go' in their first drafts and refer to class word banks when writing.
- ❖ Later on pupils are encouraged to use dictionaries automatically to check spellings.
- ❖ We use the 2014 National Curriculum as a guideline as to which spellings should be taught in which year group. We also use Nelson Spelling.
- ❖ Children practise spelling corrections in their books - chosen by their teacher as 'ones they should know' - as part of their response to marked work.
- ❖ We link handwriting to common spelling patterns.
- ❖ Children learn to spell explicitly in weekly spelling lessons.
- ❖ From Year One, children are actively encouraged and taught to proof read their writing for spelling errors.

In addition to in-class focus on spelling, the spellings are also given to children as part of their homework;

- ❖ Children learn spellings for weekly spelling tests.

Handwriting

We place value on children taking pride and care over their work and handwriting is a key part of this. In the Early Years there is a big emphasis upon fine motor skills and we use a range of resources to practise these basic skills. This moves into correct letter formation with a focus on both upper and lower case letters.

What does this look like at Somerville?

- ❖ We use the Nelson Handwriting scheme as the basis for our teaching, which links handwriting to common spelling patterns.
- ❖ We take the view that handwriting should be taught little and often – every day the children practise at the start of their English writing lessons.
- ❖ We use cursive script and encourage children to join their writing as soon as they are forming their letters correctly.
- ❖ So that children are constantly focussed on developing the habit of neat writing, we award pen licenses for those who have achieved consistency.

Grammar

An understanding of how to use grammar correctly, use relevant meta-language and sentence types is taught both in the context of a piece of writing and explicitly in whole class work. Linked to the National Curriculum guidelines for year groups, grammar is taught and planned to fit in with relevant genres of writing.

What does this look like at Somerville?

- We start with the basics of sentence construction (including full stops and capital letters).

- Children begin to identify word classes early on (noun, verb, adjective, adverb).
- We follow the 2014 National Curriculum as guidance as to what is taught in each year group and from this, have devised a specific structure for our school detailing expectations year on year.

Inclusion

We aim for all children to participate in mainstream lessons. Work is differentiated and extra support is in place for children with SEND. This support maybe, on an individual or small group basis. Staff have access to advice from specialist support services. We aim to provide a range of resources that reflect the diversity of culture and language within our school and the wider local community.

Assessment

See *Assessment Policy* for more information on whole school monitoring and evaluation, tracking and work sampling.

Formative assessment in Reading

- ❖ In Nursery and Reception, children are assessed in their early literacy development against the ‘Development Matters’ goals;
- ❖ From Year One onwards, teachers regularly set termly reading targets; individual and guided group reading targets that are related to the reading objectives and shared with children in this context;
- ❖ Starting in the Reception year, staff carry out assessments to assess children’s reading levels.
- ❖ All staff would continue this process, if there is cause for concern. Appropriately levelled books are then provided until a child is ready to make an independent choice.

Summative Assessment in Reading

- ❖ Year 1 take the end of year Phonics test in June.
- ❖ Year 2 and 3 are retested if they had not passed in the previous year
- ❖ Children in Year 2 and Year 6 take end of Key Stage national tests which examine a range of reading comprehension skills.
- ❖ Published assessments for reading are being used half termly, from Year 1 - Year 6, to validate teaching judgements on Classroom Monitor.

Formative Assessment - Writing

- ❖ **Genre and Language Toolkits:** for every piece of written work, children are given a toolkit which they can use to help them reflect on the structure and language features of their own writing. These comprise of 4-8 specific criteria which will help to make the piece of work a success. There are also 2 targets (green arrow or box) that the teacher identifies, after they have written their cold write. These are shared with parents.
- ❖ **Marking** – see marking policy

Summative Assessment in Writing

- ❖ Since 2013, final outcomes at both the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 in writing are teacher assessed. We work closely with our consortium group to moderate our writing.
- ❖ Spelling tests are carried out across the whole school.
- ❖ An externally Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation test takes place in Year 2 and Year 6.
- ❖ Published assessments for spelling, grammar and punctuation, are being used half termly, from Year 1 - Year 6, to validate teaching judgements on Classroom Monitor.

Continued Professional Development:

- ❖ The English team attend regular training and provide feedback to all staff.
- ❖ Each staff member has an English folder and a Reading folder for reference.
- ❖ The local consortium holds an English Network meeting termly
- ❖ Staff are expected to attend relevant courses during the school year

- ❖ Moderation takes place in house, within the consortium group and other Talk for Writing schools.
- ❖ The assessment and standards leader has a writing moderation file.

Specific groups:

- ❖ Analysis of English achievement is carried out termly, pupils who are not making expected progress are discussed and plans made accordingly.
- ❖ Pupils entitled to pupil premium are given additional English support and this is monitored termly.
- ❖ Pupils with EAL are given additional support in all aspects of English if needed.
- ❖ Pupils who are gifted and talented receive additional support, differentiated curriculum and extracurricular experiences.
- ❖ Specific English targets are identified for SEND pupils. These are reviewed termly.

Year group (age at end of year)	School Term	Summative Assessment	Book Band	Approx reading age in years
Foundation Stage		Emerging Expected Exceeding	PINK	Less than 5 years
			RED	5 years
1 (6 yrs)	Autumn	Yr 1 Ent	YELLOW	5 – 6 years
		Yr 1 Ent +	BLUE	
	Spring	Yr 1 Dev	GREEN	
		Yr 1 Dev+	ORANGE	
	Summer	Yr 1 Sec Yr 1 Sec+	TURQUOISE	
2 (7 yrs)	Autumn	Yr 2 Ent	PURPLE	6 – 7 years
	Spring	Yr 2 Dev	GOLD	
	Summer	Yr 2 Sec		
3 (8 yrs)	Autumn	Yr 3 Ent	WHITE	7 – 8 years
	Spring	Yr 3 Dev		
	Summer	Yr 3 Sec		
4 (9 yrs)	Autumn	Yr 4 Ent	LIME	8 – 9 years
	Spring	Yr 4 Dev	BROWN	
	Summer	Yr 4 Sec		
5 (10 yrs)	Autumn	Yr 5 Ent	GREY	9 – 10 years
	Spring	Yr 5 Dev		
	Summer	Yr 5 Sec		
6	Autumn	Yr 6 Ent	DARK BLUE	10 – 11 years

	Spring	Yr 6 Dev		
	Summer	Yr 6 Sec	BURGUNDY	
(11 yrs)	Autumn	Yr 6 Sec+		11 – 12 years
Reading Ready for Secondary School	Spring	Yr 6 Sec+	BLACK	
(12 yrs)	Summer	Yr 6 Sec+		

Somerville Handwriting

Lower case letters

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Capitals

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Cursive Script

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The break letters (letters that aren't joined from) are:

b g j p q x y z