

Charitable Objects of St. Catherine's School

The Objects for which the Company is established are to promote and provide for the advancement of education by providing, conducting, governing, carrying on and maintaining in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere, a boarding or day school or schools for girls in which the teaching shall be in accordance with the principles of the Church of England.

St Catherine's Prep School
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



The EYFS Policy refers to the Reception class (Pre-Prep I).

This policy was written in September 2009, and re written in November 2014 and January 2015 and January 2016, in line with the School's Policy Review schedule which ensures that all policies are kept up to date. This policy is in line with the government's Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (March 2014), the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook (2014), Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Exemplification Materials (2013) and SEND Code 2014. This policy should be read in conjunction with all other safeguarding and welfare policies. All other relevant Whole School and Prep School policies also apply to the EYFS.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, all children join us, full time, at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

St. Catherine's Pre-Prep is a welcoming department where everyone is highly valued in a supportive, secure, fun and creative environment. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all pupils to begin to realise their potential.

St Catherine's School Pre-Prep Aims

While recognising the whole school ethos and aims of St Catherine's, Pre-Prep staff are also committed to the following. Our aims are tailored to support the unique developmental stage of girls in the Early Years.

To give each girl a well-balanced start to her education, developing intellectual, creative and physical talents.

To provide a stimulating learning environment with teaching and facilities of the highest standard.

To value each child's academic potential.

To provide a supportive structure that encourages girls to develop the confidence and optimism to take risks.

To work in partnership with parents, providing a friendly, reassuring community based on mutual respect.

To foster a sense of responsibility and concern for others.

1. Early Years Foundation Stage

The revised curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2014, underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering and promoting development through the early learning goals.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Overarching principles are:

- a unique child
- positive relationships
- enabling environments
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

PRIME AREAS:

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

SPECIFIC AREAS:

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

2. Teaching and Learning

Through play and structured activities our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build upon ideas; learn how to express themselves appropriately and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively; independently and alongside other children. They communicate with others as they investigate, solve problems and enjoy the school setting.

We plan a learning environment both indoors and outdoors. We encourage the children to make their own selection of activities on offer in order to foster independent learning. The girls have opportunities to participate in trips and appreciate the interesting contributions of visitors to the school throughout the year.

The features of good practice in our school that relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents;
- our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- liaison with feeder settings;
- our teachers' understanding of how children develop and learn;
- using varied approaches that provide first hand experiences;

- giving clear explanations and making appropriate interventions to extend and develop play;
- providing activities for children to engage, build and extend their individual interests, and by valuing their self-initiated constructions, role play ideas and written items;
- planning to develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- actively encouraging girls to talk about their learning;
- providing appropriate, accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- regularly tracking progress to assess future learning needs;
- identifying and supporting the training needs of all adults working within the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the specialist teachers;
- having high expectations for the development and progress of all the girls in our care;
- Reception class teachers who liaise closely with Year 1 teachers to ensure a purposeful transition between the year groups;
- a culture of professional dialogue amongst the EYFS staff.

3. Curriculum

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook provide our guidance for planning throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers are guided by the principles laid down in these documents and enhanced by their knowledge and experience of the age range.

Our medium term planning is completed half-termly. It is reviewed and amended daily and weekly according to the needs, interests and development of the children, showing flexibility within the EYFS. Our plans are annotated, filed, and readily available for consultation in subsequent years.

Great consideration is given to the different ways that children learn. We provide learning opportunities that accommodate three characteristics of effective teaching and learning: playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically. Our girls are encouraged to “have a go”, “get involved”, “have their own ideas”, “choose”, “find new ways” and “enjoy achieving what they set out to do”.

The curriculum contains daily Literacy and Mathematics with regular specific experiences relating to the Understanding of the World. Expressive art and design activities are an established every day feature. We create opportunities for spontaneous self-expression through free exploration of different creative materials.

4. Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In our school the welfare of our girls is paramount. We give all girls every opportunity to achieve.

The needs of all our girls are met through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend a child’s knowledge, experience and interest;
- seeking specific opportunities to develop self-esteem and confidence;
- using a range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs;

- by providing a variety of opportunities to motivate and support our girls;
- providing a safe and appropriate learning environment;
- ensuring 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 girls' progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- having access to an established SENCO (Head of Academic Mentoring) and abiding by the SEND Code 2014 to support early intervention;
- being readily available to parents to discuss their daughter's progress and any specific issues.

5. Assessment and reporting to parents

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of formative assessments with observations involving the teacher and other appropriate adults/key persons.

The class teacher (key person), Head of Pre-Prep and the Director of Studies maintain the assessment records for each child. Our records contain a wide range of evidence, including child initiated items, that we share with parents at parental consultation meetings during the Autumn and Spring Terms and on a regular, informal basis.

Parents receive a written report at the end of the Summer Term that offers a summary of their child's progress in each area of learning. The written report contains comments upon their daughter's progress relating to three characteristics of effective learning; playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.

Parents are informed of any concerns regarding a child's development both academically and socially. Decisions to involve external specialists or to support a child's learning through specific SEN programmes are made in consultation with parents.

At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, each child's Profile judgements are submitted to the Local Authority by the Head of Pre-Prep following the guidance and practice recommended by them. The Foundation Stage is regularly moderated by the Local Authority. The Profile judgements are shared with parents in the Summer Term report at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The girls undertake the GL baseline assessment at the beginning of the Reception Year.

6. Parents

All parents have a vital role to play in the education of their child. We actively recognise and support that role.

We do this by:

- being available to speak with parents on a daily basis;
- inviting all parents to meetings before and at the start of the school year;

- the class teacher making a phone call two days before the start of school to the parents of each child whereby small worries or greater concerns are dealt with immediately;
- providing the children with the opportunity to spend time with their new teacher and become familiar with their new classroom before starting school;
- the class teacher and Head of Pre-Prep being available to parents to talk informally at any reasonable time;
- the Head teacher being available by appointment to discuss particular worries or issues;
- informing parents of any incidents or concerns that may have arisen during the school day;
- asking parents to inform us of any urgent information regarding the welfare of each child;
- discussing progress through formal parent/teacher meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms;
- providing a formal written report at the end of the academic year.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Teaching and Learning:

Monitoring the quality and standard of each girls work is the responsibility of the Head of Pre-Prep, Early Years teachers, Teaching Assistants and the Director of Studies.

Class teachers plan activities and review outcomes on a regular basis as part of their planning regime. The Deputy Head, Curriculum, oversees regular book audits conducted by subject coordinators. Class teachers, Head of Pre-Prep, Deputy Head, Curriculum and Head of Academic Mentoring all monitor the progress of girls through observation and scrutiny of EYFSP and GL baseline assessment results. Academic progress features as a regular item under ‘Girls of Concern,’ at staff meetings. Termly progress meetings involve the Headmistress, Head of Pre-Prep, class teacher and Head of Academic Mentoring. This presents an opportunity to discuss academic or pastoral concerns and, where appropriate, to put in place early intervention strategies. Data is presented to the Governing Body Academic Committee as it becomes available for discussion and evaluation.

The Local Authority moderates the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile judgements regularly. EYFS teachers attend Moderation and Standardisation training provided by the Local Authority on a regular basis.

8. Supervision of the EYFS

Those involved in recruitment of EYFS staff have undertaken Safer Recruitment training. Newly appointed EYFS staff take part in induction training, including child protection, Prevent and introduction to school policies and procedures relating to safeguarding. All new staff are provided with an established member of staff as a mentor for their first year.

All EYFS staff attend regular safeguarding and first aid training. The EYFS teachers attend paediatric first aid training. EYFS staff are advised by the Head of Pre-Prep

(DSL) of any significant changes to practice or procedure relating to welfare and safeguarding of EYFS pupils. A programme of yearly review identifies areas of training needs and supports the continuous improvement of established skills.

In addition, important practical daily routines are explained as part of our staff induction, for example, procedures for personal and intimate care.

In our EYFS setting personal mobile devices and cameras are not permitted in the teaching areas. All images of children are stored on the school's server.

All EYFS staff meet regularly as part of the weekly Prep School staff meeting and also as part of Pre-Prep staff meetings that are held as needed per half term. Reception class staff meet weekly to plan learning and discuss the day to day running of the EY classes. EYFS staff have opportunities to meet both formally and informally with the Head of Pre-Prep and the Headmistress in conjunction with regular EYFS team meetings. Staff are encouraged to voice small concerns and/or observations regarding the welfare of our girls immediately.

An 'open door' culture is encouraged and supports the spontaneous supervision of staff in the event of safeguarding and welfare issues. All meetings commence with the item 'Girls of Concern' providing opportunities to discuss any pressing issues, identify solutions and inform us of areas for the future training of staff.

Should any concerns arise relating to the conduct or performance of an EYFS staff member, the Senior Management Team meet immediately to agree how the matter is to be addressed.

'INSET' is provided at the start of each term, supplemented by twilight focus sessions. Topics are chosen to support the schools' academic development plans and to ensure that the overall quality of the EYFS setting is maintained.

Signed

Naomi Bartholomew
Headmistress
January 2016

Jill Cochrane
Deputy Head
Head of Pre-Prep
January 2016