

SAINT CHRISTINA'S SCHOOL: EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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| <i>Review Initiated by</i> | <i>Head / Head of EYFS</i> |
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This Policy is publicly available on the School website and on request a copy may be obtained from the School Office.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Early childhood education is valued in itself and should not be seen merely as a preparation for the next stage of learning.
- 1.2. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In Saint Christina's School children start the Nursery class the September after they are three years old with a few starting part way through the year after their third birthday. They progress into one of two Reception classes the following September once they have turned four.
- 1.3. This policy has been informed by current DfE documentation.

2. Aims

- 2.1 The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A Unique Child** – who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** – through which children can learn to be strong and independent.
- 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.
- **Learning and Development** – Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in EYFS provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

N.B (For the purposes of this document the term Parent(s) refers to the principal carer(s) of the child.)

3. Equality Statement

3.1. At Saint Christina's School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, special educational needs and disability, religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected with the School feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in School life.

4. Effective Early Years Education

4.1. Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements. At Saint Christina's School we believe that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Therefore, practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued. The Early Years' experience should build on what the children already know and can do. No child should be disadvantaged. Parents and practitioners should work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

4.2. To be effective, the EYFS curriculum should be carefully structured (recognising different starting points; relevant to levels of need). There should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that they plan or initiate for themselves. Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children informed by knowledge of how children develop and learn. Well planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process. For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised. Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by practitioners.

5. The Early Years Framework

5.1 **A revised EYFS Framework became statutory from January 2024.** At Saint Christina's School we will adhere to this framework and the learning and development requirements. We promote the overarching principles and these guide our practice. 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
- importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

5.2 All children in the EYFS have access to a broad, rich curriculum which responds to the children's interests as well as a focus on different topics such as nature, the seasons and significant celebrations.

5.3 Spiritual and Moral Development: All Foundation Stage Staff adhere to the Saint Christina's Religious

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Education Policy. At Saint Christina's School we follow 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' scheme for Religious Education. Within the Catholic ethos of the school, children are encouraged to develop an awareness and respect for themselves and others, valuing individuals and their groups with justice and fairness, developing a sense of awe and wonder, different cultural experiences and awareness, religious experiences, faiths and festivals. Children and staff in Reception join Key Stage 1 for assembly every Wednesday with Nursery joining on special occasions throughout the year. The Nursery and Reception classes attend a weekly Liturgy service and celebrate Mass with the whole school on special feast days. Every day starts and ends with a prayer and we say Grace before and after meals. The children in Nursery and Reception also take part in a daily period of reflection as a part of the 'Daily Examen' as well as weekly collective worship in the form of 'The Prayer Toolkit'

5.4 The seven areas of learning and development and the end of Early Years expectations, in addition to Spiritual and Moral education, are:

- Prime area: Personal, Social & Emotional Development

Self-regulation: Children show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly; They set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate; They give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

Managing self: Children will be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge; they will explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly; they will manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

Building relationships: Children will work and play cooperatively and take turns with others; they will form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers; they will show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

- Prime area: Communication and Language

Listening, attention and understanding: Children will listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions; they will make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding; they will hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

Speaking: Children will participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary; children will offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate; children will express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

- Prime area: Physical Development

Gross Motor Skills: Children will negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves

and others; they will demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing; they will move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

Fine Motor Skills: Children will hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases; children will use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery; children will begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

- Specific area: Mathematics

Number: Children will have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number; they will be able to subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5; they will be able to automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

Numerical Patterns: Children will be able to verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system; they will compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity; they will explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

- Specific area: Literacy

Comprehension: Children will demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary; they will anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories; they will use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

Word reading: Children will say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs; Children will read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending; They will read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

Writing: Children will write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed; they will spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters; they will write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

- Specific area: Understanding the World

Past and Present: Children will talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society; they will know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; they will understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

People, Culture and Communities: Children will describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps; children will know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; they will explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

The Natural World: Children will explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants; they will know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; they will understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

- Specific area: Expressive arts and design

Creating with materials: Children will safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function; children will share their creations, explaining the process they have used; children will make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

Being imaginative and expressive: Children will invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher; children will sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs; children will perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.

5.5 **Specialist teachers and extra-curricular opportunities:** As well as specialist teachers and whole class lessons for P.E, music and movement, Spanish and IT during the school day, children in the Foundation Stage also have access to a variety of after school clubs such as ballet, cooking, around the world club, and sports to further their interests and development.

5.6 **Characteristics of Effective Learning:** The Characteristics of Effective Learning are the key principles which underpin the child's foundation for successful lifelong learning. These are also vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to Year 1. The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child's Characteristics of Effective Learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

- 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

6. Play

6.1. Play underpins the delivery of the EYFS and as Foundation Stage practitioners we understand play is central to young children's development and educational growth. During play children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. Well thought out continuous provision and well-planned activities, both indoors and outdoors, supports children's learning through play to ensure that they are learning at the highest level. Both within the continuous provision and planned activities the focus is on supporting and extending the children's current development through their own interests. This allows them to engage in higher level learning through play both independently as well as with input from adults.

6.2. Within our Early Years setting the children have access to the outside in all weather. All children in Nursery and Reception have their own waterproof clothing and footwear and all weathers are utilized for their valuable learning opportunities. With our canopied areas we are also able to offer the children shelter all year. Local areas such as Primrose Hill also offer us the chance to extend our learning environment and the children's experiences.

7. The Learning environment

7.1. We understand the importance of an environment that is inspiring and stimulating and encourages the children to be independent. Therefore, we strive to provide an environment which is safe and secure, where the children can play, explore, experiment, develop confidence, be curious and learn. We foster autonomy and therefore, resources are clearly labelled for the children's ease of accessibility.

7.2. In the Early Years setting, indoor and outdoor learning have equal value. The outdoor environment has characteristics and features which offer opportunities that the indoor setting cannot provide. The outdoor area offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and energetic. The activities and resources available for the children outdoors, help them to develop in all seven areas of learning. Nursery and Reception children take part in weekly Forest School sessions run throughout the year by our Nursery teacher, Fran Randle – an accredited Forest School leader.

8. Planning, Assessment & Record Keeping

8.1 At Saint Christina's School, teaching staff first identify the children's individual and collective interests and use these as a starting point to inform planning. These interests, along with the knowledge and understanding of the child's development and progress informs weekly planning. The teacher may alter these plans on a day-to-day basis response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children as well as using 'in the moment' planning to effectively respond to a child's input and extend their learning. Staff ensure that all children are encouraged to experience all the areas of an activity during the week, although they may not experience them each day.

8.2 We ensure our day offers a balance of child-initiated and adult-led based activities. We use small group or whole class times as an opportunity to encourage a particular aspect of learning or to discuss a particular topic. In Nursery and Reception, we encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. In Reception, the children are introduced to a more structured day and the activities are directed and differentiated as well as being more teacher led.

8.3 Planning is continuously informed and guided through teaching judgment and observations^[FR1]^[AG2] and these feed into the Early Years assessment and reporting system used to track the child's overall progress. Throughout the year we carry out both formative and summative assessments.

8.4 Teaching staff observe the children closely and input relevant assessments of the seven areas of learning and of the characteristics of effective learning to the web suite **2Simple**. The initial assessment made of each child is marked as their baseline, and teachers assess progress at the end of each term until the end of the EYFS. Children at the End of Reception are also assessed according to the Early Learning Goals.

8.5 **EYFS Profile** - The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage. It provides both parents and carers, as well as teachers, a well- rounded picture of the child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the

curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging or Expected. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. At the end of Reception parents are invited to have an additional meeting with their class teacher to talk through their child's EYFS Profile.

8.6 In addition, parents receive an annual report at the end of the summer term commenting on the child's Characteristics of Effective Learning, as well as their progress in phonics and maths. Specialist subject teachers also comment on each child's progress in their subject. This report highlights the child's strengths and development needs, as well as giving details of the child's general progress and next steps.

9. Meeting the diverse needs of our children

9.1 We are committed to providing a learning environment for all, where the most able, those who have English as an additional language, the less able and children with learning difficulties or disabilities work alongside each other and are catered for with differentiated approaches.

- Parental involvement in a child's education is paramount to their success and happiness in school. We therefore work closely with parents to ensure we are meeting a child's needs together.
- All children's progress is tracked and observed and those that need extra support are identified and supported by the teacher in the classroom or the SENCO that can either work alongside the child during class or in individual sessions.
- There are termly Pupil Review sessions during which children are discussed in-depth by the class Teacher and the SENCO.
- All children and families have access to a Speech and Language Therapist and weekly sessions are available either in a small group or 1 to 1 with the therapist. Children with identified needs also have access to a visiting Occupational Therapist if required.
- We are able to offer support and guidance to families that display a need for specialist involvement.

10. Positive relationships

10.1 In the early years we recognise that children learn best when they are happy, safe, their individual needs are met and they are able to develop secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. All staff understand the importance of developing excellent relationships with the children.

10.2 As a result of our small class sizes, the class teacher is the designated key person for each child in our setting. Support staff feed information back regularly to the class teacher with regards to the well-being of the children in their care.

11. Parents as Partners

11.1 We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We always make time for parents at Saint Christina's School and they are free to discuss their child's development and relating issues, or concerns as necessary. Staff are approachable and love to share with parents children's achievements and successes.

- Parents of Nursery children starting school are invited to attend a 'Starting Nursery' meeting.
- Parents of Reception children attend an introductory meeting before the term starts in September.
- Parents of Nursery and Reception children are offered a taster session before starting in Early Years.

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- Parents of Nursery children starting school are offered a home visit before their child starts in September.
- Parent Teacher meetings take place in the autumn term and spring term
- All children receive a written report at the end of the School Year.
- Parents receive weekly class newsletters
- Parents are invited to access the observation portal where they can view their child's observations within school and upload some from home.
- We welcome parents into the classroom to share their knowledge, read stories and to celebrate festivals from around the world with us.
- Opportunities arise throughout the year for parents to accompany us on outings.
- All parents are invited to join the school's thriving Parents' Link association. Each class has a nominated Parents' Link representative who liaises between the parents and the school and organises social and fundraising events.
- Throughout the year there are a range of activities to which families are invited to share with the Foundation Stage and the whole school; Class assemblies, Sports Day, Christmas celebrations and discos and parties which are organised by Parents' Link.

12. Transitions

- 12.1 Foundation Stage practitioners understand that transition periods can be an unsettling and apprehensive time for children and their families, therefore we try to see transitions as a process rather than an event.

Nursery

Parents are invited to a 'Starting Nursery Meeting', offered a home visit before September and are provided with an Introduction Booklet and additional useful information regarding supporting their child at home in preparation for school. Children and their parents are invited to visit the Nursery to experience our setting, play with others, and for parents to meet. In addition, for the first three weeks we provide a settling in period in which the school day is gradually extended. This allows the children to gradually learn their new routines, and get to know their new teachers and friends.

Transition from Nursery to Reception

The Nursery Staff put great consideration into the transfer of the children into the Reception Classes. Once their classes have been allocated, the outgoing Nursery class attend an orientation afternoon, to meet their new Reception teacher at the end of the summer term and begin to explore their new classroom. Parents are invited to attend an introductory meeting before the term begins. Parents of Reception children have the option of their child doing half days in the first week or they can stay full-time from the start of the term.

Transition into Key Stage 1

In the summer term, Nursery and Reception and Year 1 staff meet to transfer information/records and discuss the new children entering their class. Information shared includes;

- Foundation Stage Profile results
- Significant Events Folder
- Work Samples
- Assessments

13. 12.2 We endeavour to prepare children for the formalities of Key Stage 1 by increasing the structure and types of activities by the end of the Summer Term in Reception. In the second half of the Summer Term, Reception children have lessons in the Year 1 classroom to familiarize themselves with the new format, layout, and move away from small group learning. The Year 1 teacher conducts whole-class carpet sessions

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once a week with Reception, as well as working with a phonics group consisting of Reception children. We also have regular EYFS/KS1 meetings to discuss the transition process.**Admissions**

- 13.1 Children who wish to attend Saint Christina's Nursery or Reception places, are invited to an informal 30 minute taster within the setting. Admission to the EYFS is governed by the general criteria set out within the Admissions policy (available on the website).
- 13.2 The Reception Classes each can hold 20-22 children, and Nursery can hold 20-21 subject to availability. Nursery children will normally transfer into Reception.

14. Staffing ratios

- 14.1 The Nursery Class has one teacher, one nursery nurse and one teaching assistant. Additional support is sourced as required to ensure we stay comfortably within ratio. Depending on numbers each Reception Class has a designated teacher and teaching assistant. Members of the teaching and TA staffing in the EYFS are also trained as Pediatric First Aiders.
- 14.2 We uphold the required adult to child ratio at all times in all EYFS classes both inside and whilst outside; For Nursery this is 1:13 with a teacher present and 1:8 with other suitably qualified staff. Reception is 1:30 with a teacher present and 1:8 (1:13 in the presence of QTS) with other suitably qualified staff. Therefore, there is always adequate supervision to ensure that the needs of the individual children being cared for are met and that their learning and play is supported and developed.

15. Safeguarding and Welfare

- 15.1 In the Foundation Stage we understand that we are legally required to comply with Safeguarding and welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024. We adhere to all guidance and procedures outlined in our school Safeguarding and Child Protection school policy which takes full account of the child protection procedures agreed by the Bi-Borough (Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea) which is our Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership, statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), and the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024).

15.2 Corporal punishment is not used at Saint Christina's School.

- 15.3 We understand that we are required to:

- Keep children healthy, safe and secure.
- Our school policy includes the use of mobile phones, mobile devices and cameras in our setting and also an explanation of the action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.
- Manage behavior effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs including children with special educational needs. (See Behaviour policy)
- Have a whole school policy on the use of physical restraint.
- Any use of force by staff will be reasonable, proportionate and lawful. Reasonable force will be used in accordance with the DfE guidance Use of Reasonable Force (see Saint Christina's School Physical Contact Policy) and only when immediately necessary and for the minimum time necessary to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:
 - a) committing a criminal offence
 - b) injuring themselves or others

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- c) causing damage to property, including their own
- d) engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to good order and discipline at the School or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom or elsewhere.

- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so and each child has been assigned a key person.
- Adhere to the first aid/medical and medicine requirements through our whole school procedures and policies (see First Aid Policy)
- Provide children with access to drinking water throughout the day.
- Smoking is against the law and is not allowed on the premises when children are present or about to be present.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose and carry out all necessary risk assessments.
- Our School Trips Policy refers to transporting children in the EYFS and includes specific directions for trips that involve EYFS children e.g. ratios etc.
- 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.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Related policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid policy
- Pupil Contact Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Supervision and Missing Child Policy
- Drop off & Collection Policy
- IT Policies
- Trips and Expeditions Policy
- Behaviour and Exclusions Policy
- SEND Learning Support Policy
- Equal Opportunities (Single Equalities) Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy