

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



At St Catherine's Prep School, the Early Years includes our Pre-School Class, Reception Classes (Pre-Prep I), Cat Class and Cat Club (Extended day /after school care).

This policy was written in September 2009, and rewritten in November 2014, January 2015, January 2016, September 2018, September 2021, September 2022, September 2023 in line with the updated EYFS framework and then again in September 2024 and November 2024.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) October 2024, Development Matters (2023) non-statutory guidance for the EYFS, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook, SEND Code of Practice 2015 (updated April 2020) and Early years: guide to the SEND Code of Practice (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.

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.

1. 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 children a balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Each child has a well-balanced start to her education, developing intellectual, creative and physical talents.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.

- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- To provide a stimulating learning environment with teaching and facilities of the highest standard.
- To value each child's academic potential and personal development.
- To provide a supportive structure that encourages girls to develop confidence and self-belief.
- 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.

2. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, children can join our Pre-School class for a minimum of five sessions the term after they turn three years old. They can move into Reception (PPI) full time, at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five.

Weekly Cat Class sessions are held on a Friday afternoon for girls aged three to four years old. Our Pre-School class is a full-time provision for a maximum of sixteen children aged three to four in attendance during a session. Children are required to attend a minimum of five morning sessions. Our Reception year consists of two classes with a maximum of thirty-two children.

The EYFS team are well-qualified and experienced staff who are fully committed to providing the very best start at St Catherine's. Cat Class and Pre-School sessions are staffed by a minimum of two members of staff who have level 3 or above early years qualifications. Reception classes are staffed with a qualified teacher and a teaching assistant.

Playtimes are held in the EYFS garden and supervised by two members of staff, one with QTS/Level 6, supervising up to forty-eight children. Children are usually within sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing. While children are eating, children are always within sight and hearing of a member of staff. Staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. This is in line with staff:child ratio requirements.

Timings of the school day for Pre-School class:

8:00 am: Welcome (incl. breakfast on request); child initiated activities and settling in time in classroom

8:45 am: Registration and circle time/news sharing

9:00 am: Pre-School activities

10:00 – 10:30 am: Snack in classroom and playtime in EYFS Garden

12:00 – 12:45 pm: Lunch in dining room and playtime in EYFS Garden

12:45 am - 1:15 pm: Story/ circle time

1:15 pm: End of morning session / Afternoon Registration / Quiet time

2:30 pm: Afternoon snack
3:00 pm: Home Time – collection from Pre-School classroom
3:00 – 4:00pm: Extended day provision in Pre-School classroom
4:00pm – 6:00pm: Cat Club (after school care)

Timings of the school day for PPI (Reception)

7:30 am: Breakfast club (optional and booked in advance)
8:00 am: Gate opens for parents to drop off children
8: 25 am: Registration and official start of school day
10:00 – 10:20 am: Snack and playtime in EYFS Garden
12:00 – 1:15pm: Lunch in dining room and playtime in EYFS Garden
1:15pm: Afternoon Registration
3:00pm: Home Time – collection from classrooms
3:00pm – 3:30pm: Waiting class (in PPI classrooms)
3:30pm – 6:00pm: Cat Club (after school care)

All Pre-Prep staff attend weekly staff meetings - Monday (Whole Prep School) and fortnightly Pre-Prep meetings.

3. Curriculum

Our school follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework in force from October 2024.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children’s capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The curriculum 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 with teaching and support from adults
- learning and development; children develop and learn at different rates

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas:

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

3.1 Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences that enable children to develop and learn effectively. Staff also consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Additional support is provided when needed by Pre-Prep teachers and teaching assistants. The Academic Mentoring team and external experts are involved if and when appropriate (for example, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist). We recognise the importance of early intervention and support.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Development Matters 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 written termly. It is reviewed and amended daily and weekly according to the needs, interests and development of the children, showing flexibility within the EYFS.

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/Phonics and Mathematics with regular specific experiences relating to Understanding the World. Expressive Arts and Design activities are an established every day feature. We create opportunities for spontaneous self-expression through free exploration of different creative materials. Pre-School and PPI (Reception) children have lessons with specialist teachers for ballet, music, PE, computing and STEM.

3.2 Teaching and Learning

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1 (Pre-Prep II).

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 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 practitioners' and 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 reviewing 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;
- Pre-School practitioners liaise closely with PPI (Reception) class teachers to ensure a smooth transition between the classes;
- PPI (Reception) class teachers liaise closely with PPII (Year 1) class teachers to ensure a purposeful transition between the year groups;
- a culture of professional dialogue amongst the EYFS staff

3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring the quality and standard of each girl's progress and work is the responsibility of the Head of Pre-Prep, Early Years practitioners, teachers, teaching assistants and the Deputy Head, Curriculum.

The EYFS team 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. Early Years practitioners, 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 in house assessment results. Academic progress and pastoral matters feature as a regular item under 'Girls of Concern' at staff meetings. Termly progress meetings involve the Headmistress, Head of Pre-Prep, Pre-School lead, Early Years practitioner, PPI (Reception) class teachers and EYFS SENCO. This presents an opportunity to discuss academic and 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.

4. Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

When a child joins the Pre-School aged 2 years, it will be established if a **progress check at age two** was undertaken at the previous setting and parents will be asked to share the summary of this. If a child has not had a progress check, the EYFS staff will review their progress and provide parents/and or carers with a written summary of their child's development in the prime areas. EYFS staff will use their own knowledge of child development, information from parents and carers and observations of children to make a judgement about how children are progressing.

At the **end of the EYFS (Reception/PPI)**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development (expected)
- Not yet reaching expected levels (emerging)

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents for their child. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data requested by the local authority is submitted.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook is referred to, giving us guidance on how to complete an EYFS Profile, recording children's attainment and making accurate and reliable judgements about EYFS attainment.

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage plays an important part in helping parents, carers and EYFS staff to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. This takes the form of on-going formative assessments with observations involving Early Years practitioners, class teachers and other appropriate adults and key persons. The girls undertake an informal on-entry assessment at the beginning of the Reception Year (PPI) to inform planning.

Early Years practitioners spend time getting to know girls when they join Pre-School, supported by an 'All About Me' profile completed by parents. EYFS staff use their knowledge of the children's level of achievement and interests to shape teaching and learning experiences. Staff respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and reflect on observations shared by parents and carers.

The Early Years practitioners, class teacher, Head of Pre-Prep and the Deputy Head, Curriculum, 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. The Profile judgements are shared with parents in the Summer Term report at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage/Reception (PPI).

5. Working with Parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. To ensure they are a true reflection of the child's learning and development, parents' contributions are drawn upon.

Each child is assigned an Early years practitioner or class teacher (key person) who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. They support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They also help families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

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

- providing the children with the opportunity to spend time with their new key person/teacher and become familiar with their new classroom before starting school
- the Early Years practitioners, class teacher and Head of Pre-Prep being available to parents to talk informally at any reasonable time
- providing a weekly Monday Memo with learning objectives for the week, reminders and suggested home learning activities
- the Head of Pre-Prep and Headmistress being available by appointment to discuss 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, and in addition to this for parents of Pre-School children, a Summer term meeting
- providing a formal written report at the end of the academic year
- inviting parents to school events; Pre-Prep @Home, Nativity, Spring Service, Sports Day
- advice and guidance for parents via welcome talks, reading workshops and parent webinars
- parents are encouraged to share their daughter's achievements, using Seesaw to share photos and videos

6. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that 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.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

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

6.1 Use of Mobile Phones, Cameras and electronic devices in the EYFS

- Parents and staff are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone, camera or any electronic device, including smart watches, with imaging and sharing capabilities in or around the EYFS setting without prior approval from the Head of Pre-Prep or Headmistress.
- There are display notices in Pre-Prep prohibiting the use of mobile phones and cameras by parents and carers.

- Staff may only use their mobile phones in the Pre-Prep office, staffroom or an outside area out of the sight of pupils.
- Staff working within the EYFS classrooms must store their mobile phones in the Pre-Prep office or staffroom.
- Photographs taken for the purpose of recording an EYFS pupil or group of pupils participating in activities or celebrating their achievements must be taken on a school device and stored appropriately on the school system.

7. 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 training 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, first aid and administration of medicines training. The EYFS staff attend Paediatric First Aid training and is renewed every three years. 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. A record of EYFS staff qualifications and training is kept.

At least one member of staff who has a current Paediatric First Aid certificate is always on the premises and available when the children are present and accompany children on school trips.

In addition, EYFS staff complete their Food Hygiene and Safety for Early Years training as they prepare snacks and assist the children at mealtimes. Important practical daily routines are also 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 securely on the school's server.

All EYFS staff meet regularly as part of the weekly Prep School staff meeting and as part of Pre-Prep staff meetings that are held fortnightly and as needed. Pre-School and PPI (Reception) class staff meet weekly to plan learning and discuss the day to day running of the Early Years 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 meets 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.

7.1 EYFS Non-Collection

- No pupil is allowed to leave the classroom unaccompanied at the end of the day.
- Pupils staying for the Pre-School extended day (3:00 to 4:00 pm) and in the PPI waiting class (3:00 to 3:30pm) are supervised by EYFS staff in their own classrooms.
- Pupils are dismissed directly to their parent/ guardian or taken to Cat Club.
- When it has been established that a child has not been collected, an attempt will be made to contact the parents/ guardian by phone using all emergency contacts and if unsuccessful, by email.
- Children will be looked after in the classroom until their parent arrives or other instruction is received from the parent or guardian.
- PPI children will be taken to Cat Club (after school supervision) from 3:30pm until the parent is contacted and made aware of the situation.
- Pre-School children will be looked after in their classroom until 4pm and then taken to Cat Club (after school supervision) until the parent is contacted and made aware of the situation.
- In the event of a child being still at school after 6pm a member of staff (usually SMT) will wait with the child until they are safely collected.
- If parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the Surrey C-SPA (Children's Single Point of Access) will be contacted.

7.2 Visitors on site

- Parents and visitors must ring the doorbell for entry into the school building by office staff
- All visitors must sign the visitors' book on arrival and departure
- Colleagues attending in a professional capacity such as speech and language therapists will be required to show ID that contains their photograph and name
- All visitors are given and must wear a visitor's badge to identify themselves to staff
- Any person found unexpectedly on the premises must be challenged and not left alone at any time
- The member of staff accepting the visitor is responsible for their visitor(s) and must escort them around the school at all times; at no time should a visitor be left alone with a child unless the person has a cleared DBS check and the circumstances have been pre-arranged with the Head of Pre-Prep and parents
- Visitors must not use their mobile phones when children are present

- In the event of an emergency requiring the premises to be evacuated, visitors are to be accompanied to the assembly point by the member of staff who they are visiting.

8. Intimate Care

8.1 Toileting accidents procedures / Intimate care

The child's key person works in partnership with parents/carer to share relevant information and provide continued care appropriate to the needs of the individual child. All staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise the need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given.

- When intimate care is given, the member of staff explains fully each task that is carried out and the reason for it. Staff encourage children to do as much for themselves as they can - lots of praise and encouragement will be given to the child when they achieve.
- The adult who is going to change the child informs another member of staff that they are doing this.
- We ask parents to supply a change of clothes in case needed.
- Staff will wear a fresh pair of disposable gloves and apron when carrying out intimate care tasks, including toileting accidents and changing pull-ups.
- Staff and child will wash their hands and dry on disposable towels immediately after completing the task.
- Parents/carers will be informed on the same day about the timing of nappy/pull-up changes and any assistance provided to their child with intimate care needs (e.g. has had a toileting accident and soiled herself). This will be recorded in our Intimate Care book and the information will be treated sensitively.

8.2 Changing nappies and pull ups

We understand that children develop independence at their own pace, including in toileting. We are committed to ensuring that all Pre-School girls are cared for in a safe, hygienic, and respectful manner when it comes to nappy or pull-up changes.

- Staff follow a clear and consistent hygiene procedure to maintain cleanliness and minimise the risk of infection.
- Parent consent is obtained for staff to give personal and intimate care, and a written record is maintained.
- Nappies and pull-ups will be checked regularly and changed as needed to keep your child comfortable and clean.
- Nappy and pull-up changes will be recorded in our Intimate Care Book and the girl's Communication Book to inform parents.
- During each change, staff will interact with your child to make the experience as positive and supportive as possible.
- Parents are asked to provide nappies/pull-ups, and wipes for their daughter.

- Updates on toilet training progress are shared and discussed with parents/carers to support the girls in transitioning to greater independence when they are ready.

9. 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 (a daily EYFS risk assessment checklist is routinely carried out)
- 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 (EYFS SENCO & Head of Academic Mentoring) and abiding by the SEND Code of Practice 2015 to support early intervention
- being readily available to parents to discuss their daughter’s progress and any specific issues

This EYFS Policy should be read in conjunction with the EYFS Risk Assessment, Cat Class Risk Assessment and Prep and Whole School Policies, including Child Protection and First Aid.

Signed:

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Naomi Bartholomew
Headmistress
November 2024

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Emily Jefford
Deputy Head, Head of Pre-Prep
November 2024

Appendix 1. List of policies and procedures for the EYFS

Policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	Child Protection policy
Procedure for responding to illness and administering first aid	First Aid policy Pre-School Parent Handbook Prep School Parent Handbook
Administering medicines policy	See Medical policy Pre-School Parent Handbook Prep School Parent Handbook
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Critical Incident and Fire Management policy
Procedures for missing children	Prep School Action if a Pupil is Missing policy
Procedure for Non-Collection	EYFS Policy Prep Staff Handbook
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	Complaints Procedure Displayed on Pre-Prep notice board
Use of mobile phones	See Child Protection policy Staff Code of Conduct
Low level concerns	Staff Code of Conduct