



International
School of **London**

ISL London Early Years Policy 2020-21

**Date reviewed
August 2020**

**To be reviewed
August 2021**

Mission statement

Since 1972, we have established a welcoming and inclusive community. Our diverse cultures and languages drive all our learning experiences.

We nurture creativity and curiosity to stimulate deep thinking. We foster insight, compassion and resilience to enable us to play a meaningful part in a changing world.

Vision statement

We celebrate our stories, our worth and our purpose to make a difference in a shared world

At the ISL London Primary School, we believe in:

- Empowering students to maximise their learning opportunities and to fulfil their potential.
- Actively integrating cultural diversity in the curriculum.
- Creating inclusive, vibrant and innovative learning communities.
- Offering a diverse and extensive international programme that supports personal, social and professional growth.

Principles and aims

Throughout the Early Years at ISL London Primary School, we actively encourage the children's enjoyment of learning, their creativity and curiosity, whilst ensuring the highest safeguarding and welfare standards. We follow the principles and guidance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), emphasising the development of children's unique and individual potential as inquisitive, active learners by providing a broad, stimulating and balanced curriculum.

At ISL London Primary School we firmly believe that every child should feel welcome, loved, safe and secure when entering our setting. Our aim is to provide a safe, nurturing, stimulating environment that accommodates and embraces differences. We believe every child is unique in terms of life experience, developmental readiness, and cultural heritage. Partnerships between family and school is, therefore, essential to the optimal growth and development of each child. We believe in learning through play, as children learn best by hands on experiences. We strive for a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, providing the foundation of a developmentally appropriate early childhood program. We offer a wide range of opportunities to explore the world around them, so our young students become active, involved learners. We encourage the children to become independent, resilient learners who approach problem solving with confidence and an open mind. We believe, with this foundation, children become inquisitive and adaptable learners. They will develop into strong communicators who are able to make independent choices and act responsibly.

We believe it is important to have high, realistic expectations for every child. We believe in our children and encourage them to have high expectations of themselves. We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers and strive to achieve this through our open-door policy and ongoing communication channels.

Structure

At ISL London Primary School, we offer places for children who have turned three by the 31st August of each academic year. Our Early Years provision is for three to five year olds and consists of EC1 (Early Childhood 1) for the 3-4 year olds and an EC2 (Reception class) for the 4-5 year olds. This is a full day, (08.30-15.30) five days a week.

Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2018 statutory framework of the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** as well as the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme. Through the IB Units of Inquiry we teach all aspects of the EYFS framework.

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

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The EYFS focuses on how children learn, not just what they learn. These characteristics underpin and drive the children's learning across all areas. Throughout our setting we continually promote and encourage the development of these characteristics of effective learning:

- **Playing and exploring**
Finding out and exploring / Playing with what they know / Being willing to 'have a go'
- **Active learning**
Being involved and concentrating / Keeping trying / Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- **Creating and thinking critically**
Having their own ideas / Making links / Choosing ways to do things

Learning Opportunities

Each area of learning and development are implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of child-initiated and adult-led activities. During Free Flow, the Early Years team respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions. Where relevant, class topics are largely generated by the children's interests through observations of their play while staff extend the children's learning through sustained-shared thinking.

The Early Years team considers the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each individual. They set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of all children with the learning opportunities offered reflecting the individual needs of all students. The SENCO, who links with relevant agencies when appropriate, supports the Early Years team.

Our learning environments are organised in such a way as to foster independence. The children are encouraged to take ownership of their learning environment and this, in turn, promotes responsibility and respect. Our young learners have access to a, well-resourced indoor and outdoor environment. All children in the Early Years benefit from Physical Education and Music classes plus time with their Mother Tongue language teachers.

Assessment

At ISL London Primary School ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Our child-centred approach to learning recognises that children develop at different rates and in different ways. Staff observe pupils to identify their interests, learning styles and levels of development. Throughout the Early Years staff track the children's learning against the development statements and learning goals set by the EYFS on their individual Tracker. This is shared with parents and carers regularly and informs our planning, enabling us to create individualised next steps for each child. We place great importance on the whole child and seek to work very closely with families, taking into account their views, observations and reflections to ensure we create a complete picture of each child in order to empower all individuals to fulfil their potential; socially, emotionally, physically and academically.

To ensure each child's individual learning targets are monitored throughout the year, staff assess and track their progress quarterly. At the beginning and end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child based on the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development (expected)
- Exceeding expected levels or, (exceeding)
- Not yet reaching expected levels (emerging)

Transition/Settling In

At ISL London, we aim to provide a smooth transition where each child feels safe and secure and therefore each child's needs are continually observed and monitored. At ISL London Primary School we have a rolling admissions programme and children may start at different times during the year.

To ensure a smooth and successful transition into school life at ISL, Early Years students are invited to come in for a trial session to meet their teachers and fellow students. This gradual start supports students in familiarising themselves with the classroom layout and transitions before a full school day.

During the Summer term arrangements are made for the next year's class teacher to spend time with their future students and for the children to visit their new class.

Being Healthy

ISL London Primary School believes in promoting healthy living habits from an early age. Early Years children enjoy fruit for snack in the morning. Fruit is always available during the day if needed. Fresh water is available at all times and students self-help themselves to this throughout the day. Children are asked to bring a reusable water bottle from home that is easy for them to use independently. EC1 children are offered milk in the morning and learn the importance of nutrition during snack times. During meal times, discussions, gardening activities and cooking opportunities, children are made aware of the importance of making informed food choices. Children are also encouraged to be risk takers and try new foods. During transitions between indoor/outdoor experiences, children are encouraged to become independent in their self-care. Children are encouraged to be active throughout the day and the importance of physical activity and its effect on the body is regularly discussed and reflected on. We believe that outdoor learning is essential in promoting a healthy and active lifestyle and ensure that students access the outdoors on a regular basis throughout the day.

Role of Parents/Carers

At ISL London Primary School we recognise and value parents/carers as the child's primary educator. We believe that all parents/carers have an important role to play in the education of their child; we recognise the role that parents have played, and will play in educating the children. We seek to develop an effective partnership with parents/carers through our open-door policy and ongoing communication channels (informal chats/ daily message book /newsletters /email / parent-teacher meetings / Seesaw-digital portfolio etc.). We aim to provide a professional, friendly atmosphere where parents/carers feel comfortable to share concerns, questions or suggestions and feel welcomed and valued. Collaboration in class with parents/carers is highly valued and appreciated and parents/families are welcome to take part in different activities throughout the year or offer an activity of their choosing.

The following procedures are outlined in our whole school policies:

- *Safeguarding and Welfare procedures*
- *Health and Safety procedures*
- *Complaints and grievances procedures*
- *Behaviour policy*