

Nursery Admissions Play Session Assessment Guidelines:

Aims and Values

The aim of the St George's Nursery play session is to ascertain whether a child is showing readiness for the social, physical, emotional and academic learning and developmental aspects of Nursery. The assessment will be conducted by any of the following team members:

- Head of Junior School and Nursery - Mrs. Lisa Nettleton
- Nursery teacher – Miss Eirini Chasomeri
- Lead Practitioner – Miss Rachel Meadows

A child may be able to join St George's Nursery when they turn 3 years of age, or from the term of their third birthday, after attending at least one play session, though a child may be asked to attend an additional session.

St George's Nursery is committed to providing high quality early education and childcare for all nursery aged children. We have created a warm, nurturing and stimulating environment designed to inspire passion and curiosity in young learners. Children learn through their experiences both indoors and outdoors in our nursery setting.

Nursery Structure and Ratios

We have a nursery teacher, room lead practitioner and a team of Early Years practitioners who are responsible for planning, assessing and tracking each child's learning and development milestones.

St George's Nursery is responsible to the Care Inspectorate for governance of all policies and procedures. St George's Nursery is accountable to the regulations, policies and monitoring of School, through the Head and Head of Junior School and Nursery, and the Care Inspectorate.

St George's Nursery adheres to the ratios as established by the Care Inspectorate for the care and safety of the children attending. These are:

- 1:8 for children aged three years of age and upwards
- 1:5 for children aged two years of age.

We are aware of our duty to make reasonable adjustments where a child has a disability. St George's Nursery will work in partnership with parents and external agencies to put in place appropriate reasonable adjustments to ensure that a child is not placed at a substantial disadvantage because of a disability either in the admissions process or when they take up a place in the Nursery. A careful assessment is carried out as to whether, with reasonable adjustments in place, St George's Nursery is the right environment for the child to thrive at this stage of their development. The final decision rests with the Head, on advice from the Head of Nursery and Junior School and will be based on the best interests of the child. Parents will be asked to provide all information relating to their child's developmental assessments, in the form of documents and reports, to the Head of Junior School and Nursery at admissions stage. These documents will also be shared with the Senior Leadership Team and Head of Support for Learning in order to determine whether reasonable adjustments will be required for the admissions process and/ or in relation to any future place.

Play Session Assessments and Procedure

Attendance at a play session assessment does not guarantee a Nursery place. In some instances, consultation will be required with the Head, Senior Leadership Team and Head of Support for Learning. This ensures that consideration has been given to each child's whole learning and development journey. We strive to ensure that a child can be supported through every transition and stage at St George's in order that they may reach their full potential.

At every stage, starting from Admissions, we aim to communicate with openness and clarity with parents about the level of care and support we can provide. We respect the wishes of the parents for their child and treat each family with dignity and kindness. At all times, we strive to ensure that we are the correct setting, providing an optimum environment, at every stage of a child's learning and development journey.

We acknowledge that each child learns at their own pace and can meet key developmental milestones at different times. Our assessment checklist for Nursery is therefore not rigid and allows scope for differences in individual development. We understand that there are occasions when a child's development can be enhanced through an opportunity to learn from adults and peers in a suitable nursery environment.

Nursery Admissions broad acceptance criteria:

- Does the child show interest and curiosity in the Nursery environment?
- Does the child acknowledge the other adults or children in the room in a meaningful way?
- Does the child show interact appropriately with the other adults or children in the room for their age and stage of development?
- Is the child aware of boundaries for behaviour, communication and safety?
- Is the child in control of their emotions and actions? When requested, can they successfully regulate their emotions or actions on their own or with support from an adult?
- Is the child aware of risk for themselves and others around them? Can they moderate their actions based on this self-assessment of risk?
- Can the child communicate their feelings, thoughts and needs effectively with the nursery team or their parents? We acknowledge that a child can be non-verbal for a variety of reasons, including when they are learning English as an Additional Language.
- Does the child recognise and know the names of common objects found in the nursery, either in English or their native language? Do they show signs of making connections with these objects and their contextual life experiences?
- Is the child meeting their developmental milestones, as established by the NHS and assessed through Health Visitor appointments and checkups? The Nursery team will ask for more information when this is not clear.

As part of the nursery assessment, the team will also observe, or ask questions relating to, the level of independence the child has reached in terms of personal self-care, eating and attachment. The nursery team are also interested in establishing the level of understanding a child has reached with regards to aspects of numeracy (i.e., number, shape, position, colour language). These areas are all noted but not in themselves barriers to the admissions process, if the child is showing aptitude across the aforementioned criteria.

Admissions – Next Steps Following a Play Session

If the Nursery team assess that the child meets the above broad criteria on a significant number of sections, an offer of a Nursery place will be made by the Head of Junior School and Nursery, through the Admissions team.

In some cases, and for a variety of reasons, the stages of development may not be clearly identifiable during the play session. In this instance, the Head of Nursery and Junior School may make a request to the child's parents, through the Admissions team, for a second play session at a later date, to gain further understanding of a child's developmental requirements and level of engagement. When a second play session is requested, the Head of Junior School and Nursery will inform the Senior Leadership Team and the Head of Support for Learning so that the appropriate next steps may be taken. The Head of Support for Learning may also be present at the second play session. The best interests of the child will be foremost in this decision-making process, and we seek to establish whether our nursery is the most appropriate setting for the child's continued development at this moment in time.

In a small number of cases, it may not be possible for a place to be offered after either the initial or second play session. This is not a decision that is made lightly and is in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and Head of Support for Learning. We would convey this message by letter in the first instance, in a sensitive and understanding manner. We would provide a supportive pathway for the family to seek additional information about the decision, either in a personal face to face meeting or with follow up written correspondence.

Guide to our St George's Nursery Play Session and Assessment Process

1. Application made by parents through Admissions team.
2. In collaboration with The Head of Junior School and Nursery, your child will be invited to attend a play session at a mutually convenient time. This is an informal assessment with feedback provided as soon as possible after the session. One or both parents may stay throughout this session and is a requirement if the child is under 3 years of age.
3. Your child may be invited back for a second play session. This may be to allow for clarification of attachment or developmental milestone related to - but not restricted to – the items listed above.
4. If a place is offered, this information will be conveyed through the Admissions team and the application will continue to progress.
5. If it is not possible for the nursery to provide the correct learning and development environment for the child, this decision will be conveyed directly to parents in the form of a letter in the first instance. The parents have the right to respond to request further information.