

St Francis of Assisi Catholic School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

We love and grow in Christ
We live and learn in partnership
We build and share together

Policy Review Date: September 2025

Leader: Katie Berry

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Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

(DFE, Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021)

Introduction

At St Francis of Assisi, our aim is to promote the principles and commitments of the statutory EYFS framework (2023) and non-statutory curriculum guidance 'Development Matters' and 'Birth to 5'.

The statutory framework states the requirements for schools and early years settings to support children's learning and development, safeguarding and welfare. The Statutory framework briefly sets out the educational programmes and the early learning goals for each area of development

Overarching principles

The EYFS has four guiding principles that shape our practice at St Francis of Assisi. These are:

- Unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

Unique child –

At St Francis of Assisi we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We believe all children deserve to have an equal chance of success to enable them to become their personal best. We value the diversity of individuals and their families within the school and all children at SFoA are treated fairly. Our high-quality early education and our care are always inclusive. Early identification of special educational needs is key to ensuring all individuals have equal access to all provisions provided.

We meet the needs of our pupils through:

- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

Positive relationships –

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. At SFoA, we aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise the importance of working with ‘parents as partners’; parents are children’s first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. It is important we work together to develop strong links with parents so that we can work hand in hand to ensure the best for our youngest learners at SFoA.

Positive relationships are built on ‘Key Person’ relationships in our early years department. It is a statutory requirement that every child is assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child’s care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. At SFoA, we allow our children to settle in and begin to form relationships before allocating them a ‘Key Person’. Within their first half-term of starting, parents/carers are notified of their child’s key person. ‘Key person time’ takes place every day and is a special part of the child’s/adult’s positive relationship.

Enabling environments -

At SFoA we offer stimulating learning environments with rich learning opportunities for children to learn and develop independently through play. Through regular monitoring, we are able to organise our environments in which the children’s experiences and level of development respond to their individual needs. Children have daily access to indoor and outdoor environments that are set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Staff support and enhance play extending when needed to further individual learning.

Learning and development -

At SFoA, we must work in partnership with parents and/or carers, to promote the learning and development of all children in our care, and to ensure they are ready for year 1. We guide the development of children’s capabilities with a view to ensuring that children in our care complete the EYFS ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them.

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We teach our children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the Prime and Specific areas of learning and development. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected. They foster the Characteristics of Effective learning.

Curriculum

The EYFS framework is organised into seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and are inter-connected. A consistent observation, assessment and planning cycle ensures that all children can progress in all areas of development.

Prime areas – these are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These three areas are the most important to ensure a strong foundation for children’s development.

1. Communication and language
2. Personal, social and emotional development
3. Physical development

Specific areas – provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas. These are particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary.

4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

Our curriculum always considers the individual needs, interests and development of each child, and we use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences for all children in all areas of development. We work towards children achieving the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception year.

Alongside the seven areas of learning, when planning and guiding what children learn, we must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust our practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **playing and exploring** – engagement
- **active learning** – motivation
- **creating and thinking critically** – thinking

Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules.

They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as alone. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Children are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Observation and assessment

Observation and assessment plays an important part in helping our staff, parents and carers to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. On-going observations and assessments are an integral part of the learning and development process.

On entry assessments are carried out within 6 weeks of any children starting at any point within our EYFS. Observations, information from parents and any previous assessments from other settings all contribute to the on-entry assessment.

Formative assessments (on-going assessments) - continually take place as part of the 'observe, assess and plan' cycle. These assessments are taken from observations during child initiated play and adult-led activities. The assessments then inform future planning, taking into account children's level of development, their interests and their next steps.

Summative assessments - are made to provide a summary of a child's learning and development across all areas. There are three statutory summative assessments during the EYFS, 2-year old progress check, Reception Baseline Assessment and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. During the child's time at SFoA summative assessments are also made each half-term and recorded using Lancashire Pupil Tracker, and at the end of the academic year when parents/carers receive a written report.

Progress check at age two – children aged between 2 and 3 will have a progress check whilst in our 2-year old provision. The progress check identifies the child's strengths, the progress the child has made (based against the prime areas) and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. This is shared with parents/carers and they have the opportunity to contribute any information they wish to.

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) - The RBA is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts our reception class. It is carried out by an adult that children are familiar with, usually the Reception class teacher or teaching assistant. It is administered following the guidance published by the DfE. The purpose of the assessment is to enable us to measure the children's progress by the end of Key Stage 2.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile – The EYFS profile is the final assessment of the EYFS and is carried out by the end of June during Reception year. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals (see appendix 1). Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting 'expected' levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

A report of the profile is shared with parents/carers, our Key stage 1 team, and Lancashire County Council. Our local authority is under duty to return this data to the relevant Government department.

Planning

All planning in EYFS is primarily taken from the children's interests and is tailored to suit the needs of all our learners and their individual needs. To ensure a progressive curriculum, with opportunities across all seven areas of learning, EYFS staff use working planning documents that are easily adapted when required.

Long term planning – this is an overview of the academic year that ensures coverage of all aspects of learning and development in a sequential and progressive way. For Reception class, this includes all seven areas of learning and for nursery class, this includes the three prime areas of development. The long term plan informs our medium term plan (half-termly plan).

Medium term planning – this is our half-termly plan which sets out intended learning intentions for the half term. The medium term plan informs our short term planning (weekly, or day to day). Our medium term planning is created using the information from the ‘observe – plan – assess’ cycle’.

Short term planning – this is our day to day planning in EYFS. Our short term plans will reflect children's prior knowledge and understanding, personal interests and observed development across all aspects of the seven areas of learning.

In all EYFS classes, children gather everyday as a class with their teaching staff. In Reception class, children will gather to take part in daily mathematics and literacy activities in preparation for year 1. Adult-led activities are also planned within the short term plans.

Continuous provision – these are the resources in the classroom available to children at all times. They provide the children with learning opportunities when they are playing independently. Continuous provision is planned for using observations and assessments to ensure they are developmentally appropriate and offer challenge to progress their learning. Each week, additional resources may be added known as ‘enhancements’. These are usually based on a child’s interest.

Reporting to Parents

Parents are given an end of academic year report from our 2 year-old room, nursery class and reception class. These reports are a summary of the child’s progress from their starting point. They also include comments about how the child learns through characteristics of effective learning. The Reception report also includes the profile assessment (as mentioned above). Parents from nursery class and reception class are invited to discuss the end of year reports if they wish.

SFoA operates an open door policy and parents are encouraged to share any concerns with regards to their child’s learning and development, or ask for further activities and guidance to support their child at home.

Organisation

Our EYFS department is organised into three classes. We have our two year old room, nursery class and Reception class.

Our two year old room and nursery class have shared toileting facilities and a shared outdoor area. Our Reception class have their own toilets and own outdoor area. All children come into school through their own external class door and are dismissed through the same external doors at home time.

All of our children have access to our library, ICT suite, practical kitchen, the school hall and the playing fields.

Ratios

- *Two year-old room: 1: 5 level 3 teaching assistant*

We have our room leader who is a level 3 teaching assistant, assisted by a level 2 teaching assistant.

- *Nursery class: 1:13 teacher and 1:8 level 3 teaching assistant*

We have a class teacher and a level 3 teaching assistant.

- *Reception class: 1: 30 teacher*

We have a class teacher and a level 3 teaching assistant.

Transition

For our children, it is essential that any transition taking place at any stage of our EYFS is effective and the child's needs are at the forefront of any decisions made. For children joining our school, they are always invited into their class with their parent/carer before formally starting. The following is in place for each of our EYFS classes:

Entry to two year-old room: children spend time with their parent/carer in the classroom environment. This is usually for an hour at a time, at least twice before officially starting. Once they have started, depending on the child's needs, the child is able to start for a full session or a reduced amount of time which is decided by the parent/carer and the two year-old room leader.

Entry to nursery: children spend time with their parent/carer in the classroom environment. This is usually for an hour, either once or twice, depending on the child's needs. The child then starts for a full session or a reduced amount of time, depending on the child's needs.

Entry to Reception Class: children are invited to visit the classroom environment with their parent/carer. The child then starts full time.

Transition between 2 year-old room and nursery: leading up to their third birthday, the child spends three to four sessions in the nursery class. This is usually for an hour at a time, accompanied by their key person and then independently.

Transition between nursery and Reception: during the summer term, the Reception class teacher spends time during the school day in nursery class. This allows children to become familiar with their Reception teacher. Later in the term, nursery children spend time in the Reception classroom, exploring their new environment and getting to know their new adults. Children spend at least half a day during 'move up day' taking part in activities and getting to know their new environment.

In September, children are allocated a morning or an afternoon session for the first two days. All children then start together on the third day of term. Adjustments can be made for children who require a slower transition schedule into full time school. This is arranged with school and parents together.

Transition between Reception and year 1: during the summer term, the year 1 teacher spends time during the school day in Reception class. This allows children to become familiar with their new teacher. Later in the term, Reception children spend time in the year 1 classroom, exploring their new environment and getting to know their new adults. Children

spend at least half a day during 'move up day' taking part in year 1 activities in their new year 1 classroom.

Safeguarding and welfare

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 uphold and maintain safeguarding and welfare requirements in order to create high quality environments which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

At SFoA safeguarding is a priority. We look to ensure children feel safe, aim to promote children's welfare and strive to safeguard children at all times following the guidance in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2022. This includes:

- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs, in ways that are safe for themselves and others
- develop the children's understanding of dangers and how to stay safe
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- ensure that the premises both indoor and outdoor, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- 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

Please refer to our whole school policies for Child Protection/Safeguarding/Health & Safety/Behaviour Management.

Staff Development

All staff working in this key stage are conversant with EYFS 2023, and procedures for observation, assessment, record keeping and planning.

All staff have an understanding of attachment theory and the key person role. All permanent members of staff will be key person to a group of children.

The identification of training needs for teachers and teaching assistants takes place through performance management.

The EYFS Leader will ensure that:

- appropriate dissemination of training/materials/good practice takes place regularly
- a record of INSET activities are maintained
- teaching and learning is monitored formally by appraisal systems and informally through provision audits and peer observation

- there is an assessment of the impact of INSET etc on the quality of teaching and learning

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The EYFS Leader provides feedback to the senior leadership team, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Headteacher and EYFS Leader will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Katie Berry

EYFS leader, September 2024