




# St Francis Catholic Primary School

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis unless circumstances require policy update in the interim.

Approved by:		Date: 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Reviewed on:		
Reviewed on:		
Reviewed on:		
Reviewed on:		

***‘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. (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021)’***

## School Mission Statement

**‘I am a sign of God’s love’**

At St Francis we love, learn and grow in the footsteps of Jesus and are active signs of God’s love through praying, respecting and serving others.

### **What is meant by the Early Years Foundation Stage at St Francis Catholic Primary School?**

The EYFS refers to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St Francis Catholic Primary School children join us in the Nursery class at the age of 3, where they are offered their 15 hours per week or 30 hours per week. Other children enter our setting at the start of the Reception year where they receive full time places. Children join the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four themes:-

- **A Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

### **A Unique Child**

At St Francis Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at St Francis Catholic Primary School are treated fairly whatever their race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school, we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using children’s backgrounds and life experiences as a basis for the development of learning within the classroom;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs and styles;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities and resources to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Working alongside the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and parents to ensure appropriate provision which supports the learning and development of children with additional needs;
- Using the interests and needs of the children to feed into our planning;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which 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 children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

## **Welfare**

It is important to us that all children in the school are ‘safe’. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We undertake risk assessments when appropriate.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

At St Francis Catholic Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2023. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Ensure whole school procedures for dispensing medication and taking care of intimate needs are followed.
- Ensure paediatric first aid qualification requirements are met.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs.
- Use technological equipment safely in order to promote the welfare of children. (Technological equipment is used as part of our observation and record keeping schedule within the EYFS. Only school owned iPads are to be used. No personal phones, cameras and recording equipment are to be used within the EYFS while

children are present. Parents are required to sign to agree to the use of photographic evidence as their child joins the setting).

- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so. Ensure that the required staff : child ratio is adhered to at all times.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure risk assessments for in school activities are completed when appropriate.
- Procedures for off site visits are followed including risk assessments, child : staff ratio's and transport and contact arrangements.
- 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.

### **Positive Relationships**

At St Francis Catholic Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school either through a home visit, virtual meeting or through an informal meeting at school.
- Providing information for new parents via a pack sent home for both Nursery and Reception Parents.
- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to spend time in the Early Years Foundation Stage before starting school where possible.
- Operating an open door policy for parents with any queries.
- Keeping parents informed about what their child is learning and how they can support this learning through the use of Tapestry and parent/teacher meetings.
- Encouraging parents to contribute to Tapestry with home learning experiences which can then be shared in school.
- Sending a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year.

\*When the term 'parents' is used it refers to all those with parental responsibility.

## **Transition**

Entering a new setting or moving year groups, can be daunting for both parents and children. We aim to make this transition as easy and comfortable as possible for all involved.

Our practitioners endeavour to meet with parents and pre-school providers (where necessary) in the lead up to a child starting in our setting. Our practitioners visit children in their homes where possible to discuss each individual child and their transition process into school.

Where possible, each family is offered an opportunity to arrange a home visit and visit the setting in the term prior to their child's starting date. They are also asked to fill in an 'All about me' information sheet which helps us to understand the child's needs, likes and dislikes.

When moving from Nursery to Reception the children are given several opportunities to meet any new adults in their familiar Nursery environment. They are then given the opportunity to work in the Reception classroom alongside these new adults. Children in Nursery and Reception work closely with all of the EYFS team in their joint outside area as well as during special joint events.

## **Enabling Environments**

At St Francis Catholic Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

## **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

The planning within the EYFS is based on the Early Learning Goals and the non-statutory 'Development Matters' statements. These are used to inform our 'Building the Kingdom' overviews which indicate which of the statements teachers will be focussing on assessing during that half term. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning as well as continuous provision enrichment planning. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of observations as well as samples of children's work. These observations are recorded on Tapestry while some work is put into Religious Education books or put into their individual folder. Children's progress is also tracked using summative assessment methods on a termly basis. We use the statements on our 'Building the Kingdom' overviews to inform this. This then feeds into planning for whole class, identified groups and individuals.

At the start of the Reception year children are assessed against the seven areas of learning as a baseline. They are also assessed using the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). They also complete a Phonics baseline, a Religious Education baseline and a WELLCOMM baseline. At the start of Nursery children are assessed against the seven areas of learning through observation. They also complete a Religious Education baseline and a WELLCOMM baseline.

At the end of the Reception year in school, the child's progress is recorded as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Guidance 2024). Each child's level of development is recorded against the Early Learning Goals. These assessments are shared with the local authority, parents and Year 1 staff.

### **The Learning Environment**

The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative etc. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Early Years Foundation Stage has a shared enclosed outdoor area, and children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces when appropriate. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan focus activities and continuous provision enrichment activities both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all areas of learning. Staff often have discussions with a play leader to help develop the environment.

### **Learning and Development**

At St Francis Catholic Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are the prime areas.

#### **Prime Areas:**

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. These are the specific areas.

#### **Specific Areas:**

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

## Teaching and Learning

We recognise that features of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers and teaching staff have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout the EYFS;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence;
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, assessment for learning conversations, regular completion of individual trackers linked with 'Building the Kingdom' and summative assessment analysis.
- EYFS staff collaborate with a play leader who works with children in EYFS weekly to share progress and ideas.

## Characteristics of Effective Learning

At St Francis Catholic Primary School we recognise the importance of the development of 'characteristics of effective learning' as a way of supporting future learning readiness. We consider the development of characteristics of effective learning in both our planning and teaching. We also assess against these characteristics in our observations, learning journeys and end of reception assessments. How children have progressed against these characteristics is shared with parents as part of children's end-of-year report. These characteristics include:

**\*Playing and exploring** - Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. We deliver learning for all of the areas through, purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

**\*Active Learning** - 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 satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

**\*Being creative and thinking critically** - Children should be given an opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can 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.

### **Monitoring and development**

All members of the EYFS team are involved in carrying out 'learning walks' to improve and develop practice within the setting.

The Early Years Foundation Stage at St Francis Catholic Primary School is continuously working to improve and develop its practice.