



Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

'Ensuring an excellent, child-centred education within a Christ centred philosophy'

Rationale

“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.” (The EYFS Statutory Framework, 2012)

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, all children enter Reception, after an induction period, from the September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. These children are in the final year of the EYFS.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the EYFS at St Francis’ Catholic Primary School.

Aims of the EYFS

In the EYFS setting at St Francis’ Catholic Primary School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child’s welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special in God’s eyes, and build on the foundations laid by the family and the parish communities.
- Ensure that children experience a range of meaningful prayer, worship and liturgy and have the opportunity to grow in the development of faith.
- Nurture each child’s relationship with God and help children begin to understand their role within the Christian family.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know they are valued by the practitioners looking after them,
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates – physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally,
- Nurturing children’s self-esteem and self-confidence,
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways,
- Encouraging children’s independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes,
- Developing children’s understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously,



- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions different to their own,
- Understand the importance of play in children's learning and development,
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn,
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development,
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of stimulating environments, inside and outside.
- Providing a well-resourced environment that meets the needs of all children

Guidelines:

- Use the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage to support teaching and learning and children's development in the EYFS setting.
- To ensure that early years practice includes the four themes: A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments and Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates.
- Deliver a holistic child-centred curriculum which allows children to make links between what they are learning and where all seven areas of learning (see appendix 1) and development are given equal weighting and value
- Support the teaching of Religious Education with "God Matters"
- Ensure a smooth transition from EYFS to the National Curriculum (see appendix 3)
- Provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities both inside and outside
- Provide an EYFS setting that has an ethos of learning through play.
- Provide play opportunities that encourage children to be creative and develop and apply their ideas, understanding and skills.
- Provide play opportunities that support the development of children's language
- Ensure the children have the opportunity to engage in practical first-hand experiences that will support them to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and curiosity and help make sense of the world around them
- Use the EYFS Profile and the Development Matters age bands to support monitoring and assessment of each child's development.
- Carry out baseline assessment using the Development Matters Document during the child's first term at school and track each child's progress throughout the year.
- Use practitioner observation as the main assessment method.
- Observe children in different teaching and learning contexts that include both adult focused activities and child-initiated play on a daily basis both formally and informally.
- Use observation to support practitioners knowledge of individual children and their abilities, needs, interests and learning styles, and evaluate children's progress and identify priorities and next steps in their learning and development.
- Use Learning Diaries as a record of children's progress over the academic year in all areas of Learning and Development.
- Complete the EYFS Profile for each child in the final term to provide parents, carers and practitioners with a well-rounded picture of the child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against the expected levels and their readiness for Year 1.



- Plan learning opportunities that include a range of adult focused and child-initiated activities both indoors and outdoors.
- Make use of visitors to the classroom and educational visits to support learning.
- Use the Early Learning Goals to support long and medium term planning.
- Develop and maintain an effective partnership and positive relationship between parents and school that will have a positive impact on children's learning and development.
- Regularly share information about the children with parents through an open-doors ethos, letters home, reading records, wow certificates and termly overviews.
- Share children's learning, wellbeing and development through curriculum evenings, parents' evenings, Learning Diaries and assemblies.
- Encourage parents to support their child's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the Early Years setting.
- Encourage parental involvement helping with activities such as trips and other events.
- Provide an induction programme for families and children in order to make the transition to St Francis' Catholic Primary School as smooth as possible (see appendix 2)
- Ensure that all practitioners working within the EYFS setting are recruited using the Safer Working Practice Guidelines and are appropriately qualified.
- Ensure and maintain appropriate staff professional development in safeguarding, health and safety and first aid.
- Ensure all practitioners understand and maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference in the EYFS setting.
- Ensure and inclusive EYFS setting where all children have equal access to all parts of curriculum.
- Carry out regular Risk Assessments to ensure the EYFS learning environment and resources are safe and well maintained.

Conclusion

By providing high quality provision in the Early Years classroom within the framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, the needs of each child will be recognised and met so ensuring that they make the best possible progress in their learning and development.

Links with other policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- SEN policy
- Equal opportunities policy
- Admissions policy
- Homework policy



Appendix 1

Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the EYFS setting at St Francis' Catholic Primary School is delivered in accordance with 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2012). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates'.

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

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

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

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

These seven Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum.



Appendix 2

Induction Procedure to EYFS

Induction to St Francis' Catholic Primary School will provide children with opportunities to become familiar with their classroom, its routines and expectations so that they feel confident about starting school. The Induction process will also give children the opportunity to meet with other children in their class. Parents will be informed about school expectations and have the opportunity to meet with the EYFS teacher, staff and governors prior to their child starting school.

- Visits to the school are welcomed and encouraged prior to application. Dates for parental visits and tours of the school will be published each year in the school newsletter, on the school's website and within parishes and local playgroups / nurseries.
- Parents submit their application for a school place to North Somerset by January 15.
- Parents will be encouraged to submit supporting evidence, eg: Baptismal certificates, to the school. The school will forward evidence to the LA on behalf of parents.
- Parents will be notified of their school place by North Somerset.
- A meeting will take place for all new parents in the Summer Term and an Induction pack issued and explained.
- Visits by a member of staff to Feeder playgroups / nurseries will take place as appropriate.
- The EYFS teacher will attend a joint cluster meeting in the summer term to discuss new pupils with their early years providers.
- Children are invited and encouraged to make two afternoon visits to their classroom in the summer term.
- The EYFS teacher will meet with parents as part of the induction process to help the teacher become familiar with the child, build a trusting relationship with the parent, and enable the teacher to plan effectively for each child.
- Children will be organised into two groups based on age and will start school within their group attending morning or afternoon sessions initially.
- Children's hours will gradually increase over the first few weeks to include staying for school lunch and playtime, then joining together as a full class.
- All children will be in school full-time before the end of the first term.
- At the end of the first term children are formally welcomed into the school community with a 'Welcome Assembly'.

A presentation evening is held for parents during the Autumn term to share their child's initial experiences at school and to explain the EYFS curriculum and how they can support their child's learning.



Appendix 3

Transition from Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 1

At St Francis' Catholic Primary School the practitioners in both EYFS and Year 1 class work together to make the transition for the children as smooth as possible. The children are supported in the following ways:

- Year 1 class teacher makes informal visits to the children during term 6
- 'Moving up' mornings where children spend time with the Year 1 teacher in their new classroom
- Children make a holiday scrap book over the summer holidays with support from parents
- Children share holiday scrap book with their friends and new teacher during the first week in Year 1
- Year 1 activities are play based for the first term
- Resources shared between both classes
- Handover time between EYFS and Year 1 teachers
- Year 1 class routines similar to EYFS for the first term
- Learning diaries used as a record of children's topic learning
- EYFS/Year 1 parents curriculum evening in October