St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

EYFS Policy

(Early Years Foundation Stage)

Learning and Growing Together in God's Love

September 2026

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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. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage was made effective from 1st September 2021

1. Aims

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School we will:

- Enable children to make an effective transition from home/playgroup/nursery to school;
- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging learning environment underpinned by Christian values.
- Provide a broad, balanced and creative curriculum which focuses on the needs and interests of the children and that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development. It will enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Recognise and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and enabling them to learn and develop skills, attitudes and understanding to reach the 17 Early Learning Goals.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build strong supportive partnerships.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child irrespective of their gender, ethnic or social background or special educational needs.
- Ensure a planned transition for pupils moving from Foundation Stage to Year 1.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich, creative and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

1. A Unique Child;
2. Positive Relationships;
3. Enabling Environments;
4. Learning and Development.

2. A Unique Child

At St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School we are committed to help every child become 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 celebrating successes and determination to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

2.1 **Inclusion**

All children are entitled to attend full-time but parents may request that their child attends part-time until they are statutory school age. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, 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 EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all children, catering to their diverse needs.

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, independence and confidence;
• using a wide range of adaptive teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
• providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
• providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
• 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.
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.

2.2 **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. At St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage revised framework 2021. 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;
• manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
• ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so;
• 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.

3. Positive Relationships
At St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through the formation of secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

3.1 Parents/Carers as Partners
We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parent/carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:
• liaising with parent/carers /nurseries about the children before they start in our school;

• inviting all parent/carers to an open evening meeting during the term before their child starts school;

• inviting parents and children to invitation to settling-in sessions in the Summer Term before they start school;

- informal daily contact at the beginning and end of each day so that parents and carers may talk to their class teacher at drop off or picking up time, or they can make an appointment to see the teacher after school if they require a longer meeting, providing opportunities for them to raise any concerns.

- providing opportunities to share key moments of a child's learning experiences through Tapestry Learning Journals and for parents/carers to leave photographs, comments and their own observations relating to the children's achievements;

- arranging formal meeting for parent/carers twice a year at which the teacher and the parent/carer discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parent/carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year.

- Inviting parents to curriculum information events, such as Phonics Workshops and Early Maths

- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parent/carers: The Nativity, school trips, liturgies, sports morning and special events.

- ensuring parents and carers are kept informed by 'Weekly What's On' email and occasional newsletters specifically from Reception;

- sending a home/school book in the child's book bag encourages a dialogue between parents and school about reading progress.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teachers act as a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by a high adult to child ratio.

4. **How Do We Establish Effective Enabling Environments?**

At St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests and development, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

4.1 **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

The Planning within the EYFS follows a Progression of Skills Plan and Medium Term Plans (MTPs), which are based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher will when necessary alter these MTPs in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. We make ongoing assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate.

4.2 **The Learning Environment**

At St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School the EYFS consists of two reception classes of 30 children supported by a high adult to child ratio. The Reception unit is one large open-plan space with two carpet areas for the delivery of whole class, adult-led sessions. The setting can be easily divided into two separate class learning areas by closing sound-proof doors. At other times, the unit is shared between the whole cohort and links to a large outdoor space to allow free-flow access for the children during continuous provision. The EYFS provision is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active as well as areas for them to be quiet and rest. The provision is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. This versatile space offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Alongside children accessing the environment as they wish, we also plan purposeful and challenging activities for them to achieve specific skills or outcomes.

5. How Do We Promote Excellent Learning and Development?

At Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. The Curriculum is underpinned by the principles outlined in 'Development Matters' including;

• Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';

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

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

These dispositions are fostered in our Early Years Curriculum so that the children are encouraged to have a "Growth Mindset" and a love of learning.

5.1 Planning

Activities are prepared and planned by the teachers based on their observations of individual children's interests, talents, learning styles and stages of development. We provide stimulating resources in an exciting and creative environment which are relevant to the children's interests, are accessible and open-ended appropriate to the development of the child. Activities are planned for indoor and outdoor learning opportunities. We ensure the quality of their play and exploration is not constrained by time. Through observation and assessment we plan opportunities to challenge and extend the children's learning through their own interests. We value their ideas and encourage them to become deeply involved in their learning. By incorporating challenges into the planned activities we support the children to take risks, learn from mistakes and become resilient learners. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff work in partnership with the parents and with the SENDCO to consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

5.2 `Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice 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.

5.3 Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

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.

5.4 Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given 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.

5.5 **The Areas of Learning and Development**

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. Activities are cross-curricular and all areas of the curriculum are accessed through a range of learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom.

Three areas known as the prime areas are seen as 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:

1 Communication and Language;
2 Physical Development;
3 Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Children are supported in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

5.5.1 **Communication and Language Development** involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

<u>Communication and Language Listening, Attention and Understanding</u>

• Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.
• Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding.
• Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

<u>Speaking</u>

• Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.
• Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, nonfiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.
• Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

All children, on entry, are screened using WellComm and NELI. Based on results, children receive appropriate Speech, Language and Communication intervention and support with our in-school full-time Speech & Language specialist.

5.5.2 **Physical Development**

Gross Motor Skills

• Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others.
• Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing.
• Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

Fine Motor Skills

• Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.
• Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paintbrushes and cutlery.
• Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

5.5.3 **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Self-Regulation
• Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly.
• Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate.
• Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

Managing Self
• Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.
• Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.
• Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

Building Relationships
• Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others.
• Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers.
• Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

5.5.4 **Literacy Development** involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write.
By the end of EYFS children should:
Phonics
- use phonic knowledge to decode common words and read them aloud accurately;
- read and understand simple sentences;
- confidently read by sight the Stage 2 and 3 common exception words;
- use phonic knowledge to write words in a way which matches how the sounds are said;
- write some irregular common words.

Comprehension
• Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
• Anticipate (where appropriate) key events in stories.
• Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, nonfiction, rhymes and poems and during role play.
Word Reading
• Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
• Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending.
• Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.
Writing
• Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
• Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
• Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

There is a daily story time led by the class teacher or by learning support assistants. The adult uses questioning techniques to encourage the children to explore the narrative more deeply. The children can access a range of books as part of continuous provision. They choose books from our class library to take home weekly. Once they have begun to read themselves a reading scheme book is also sent home so the parents can support the child's reading progress.

5.5.5 **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures. We devote sufficient time each day to the direct teaching of mathematics and use "Number talk" techniques to teach short discrete lessons encouraging the children to explore number facts and recognise number patterns. These are enhanced by a range of practical activities which challenge the children to use and develop their knowledge.

Number

• Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number.
• Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5.
• Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

Numerical Patterns

• Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system.
• Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity.
• Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

5.5.6 **Understanding the World** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Past and Present

• Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society.
• Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
• Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling. People, Culture and Communities
• Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.
• Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
• Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and (when appropriate) maps.

The Natural World

• Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.
• Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
• Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

5.5.7 **Expressive Arts and Design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Creating with Materials

• Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.
• Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.
• Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

Being Imaginative and Expressive

• Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher.
• Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs.

• Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and (when appropriate) try to move in time with music.

Religious Education We follow the Model Curriculum as outlined in the Catholic Education Service's RE Directory, details of plans can be found in the 'Planning' section of RE on our school website. Children learn about Jesus and His teachings and explore religious concepts at an age-appropriate level, including learning about other faiths and world views. They develop their understanding through a range of carefully planned independent activities incorporated into the continuous provision. We have daily collective worship and times for prayer, praising, singing and reflection.

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

For each ELG, teachers must judge whether a child is:

• meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (Expected); or

• not yet reaching this level (Emerging). The ELGs are based on typical child development at the age of 5, so most children are likely to meet the 'expected' level of development. Teachers should use their professional knowledge of the child to decide whether each ELG description best fits the child's learning and development.

6. Formative Assessment

At St Francis of Assisi ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. The adults observe pupils to identify their level of achievement against our Progression documents, as well as their interests, learning styles and stages of development. Adults share these observations with one another and records of significant events are documented using photos and annotations. These observations are used to shape future planning. We encourage the children to be reflective and introduce them to simple, pictorial self-assessment rubrics to encourage them to evaluate their learning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers, especially where children may have English as an Additional Language.

TRANSITION TO YEAR 1 – teachers meet and discuss individual pupils to support a positive transition experience. They also visit their new classroom in the summer term to prepare them for the year ahead. Parents will also have an opportunity to meet with Year 1 parents ahead of transition.

7. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding Policy documents.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the LGB every 2 years.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according the EYFS statutory framework.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	Safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	Health and Safety policy
Administering medicines policy	Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	Health and Safety Policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	Safeguarding Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	Complaints Policy