



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Autumn 2023



Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under company registration number: 07696069 and registered address: St. Alban's Catholic Academy, First Avenue, Harlow, Essex, CM20 2NP.

EYFS policy

Welcome

Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust, as a community of schools and through God's Love, endeavours to inspire and motivate our children so they can learn together, grow together, and achieve together. As a community of schools, we believe passionately in a rich education. John 10:10 "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." Through Jesus, we ensure that our children have life, and have it to the full. We ensure children excel, not just academically but in faith as disciples and as individuals. Our children learn to love themselves, love each other and the world around them and to love God.

The EYFS framework sets the statutory standards for the development, learning and care of children from birth to age 5. The EYFS statutory framework sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. As a trust, we aim to exceed these standards.

Within our Trust Children will have access to a rich learning environment where opportunities and conditions allow them to flourish in all aspects of their development. Our learning environments provide balance across all areas of learning and ensures a relevant, motivating, flexible and inspiring curriculum.

Introduction to learning in the Early Years. How do the children learn?

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

These cannot be delivered in isolation. They are equally important and depend on each other in order to maximise learning. All areas of learning 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 children to reach by the end of the EYFS. (Exceptions for children will be identified within the child Special educational needs planning – EHCP/One Plan)

Playing and Exploring

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children have opportunities to think creatively and move their own learning on. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. Children are free to learn in a safe and controlled environment where they can grow as independent individuals.

"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." Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007

Active Learning

“Children will become more deeply involved when you provide something that is new and unusual for them to explore, especially when it is linked to their interests.”

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

“Play is a key opportunity for children to think creatively and flexibly, solve problems and link ideas. Establish the enabling conditions for rich play: space, time, flexible resources, choice, control, and warm and supportive relationships.”

Children are given opportunity 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 access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Child-initiated activity

Children with effective learning characteristics:

- are willing to have a go
- are involved and concentrating
- have their own ideas
- choose ways to do things
- find new ways of doing things
- enjoy achieving what they set out to do

To accurately assess these characteristics, our adults observe the learning that our children have initiated rather than only focusing on what children do when prompted. Children are offered rich opportunities to initiate ideas and activities so that they can develop in all seven areas of learning in accordance with the EYFS profile. These characteristics also support lifelong learning.

Learning/Teaching

Early years teaching enables each child to demonstrate learning in the fullest sense. As the children move through the Early Years there will be a gradual increase in adult directed learning time where we focus on the more specific areas of learning.

What do we teach?

Learning and Development

Within Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust;

- Children must have access to a rich environment to learn through play
- A mix of adult and independent activities will be available
- Child initiated time is enriched by the adults in the classroom and learning is moved along through open ended questions and further learning opportunities
- The curriculum is carefully planned in a way that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS
- The provision for children to take part in activities will build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities

- Children are encouraged to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence and self-management
- Children are supported in their learning journey with adults who will help to move their learning on
- Children will have access to indoor and outdoor spaces for the majority of their learning
- Children develop their resilience through growth mindset and metacognition opportunities.
- Identification of the children's progress and future learning needs acquired through observations, are shared promptly with parents

Behaviour management

We promote excellent behaviour in the following ways:

- Values tree- This is prominent in our classrooms and used to demonstrate behaviour and learning expectations
- House points are also given to promote positive behaviour.
- Positive praise for effort and perseverance – not just outcomes

Expectation of behaviour:

Children are expected to sit for carpet sessions up to 15/20 minutes by the end of the EYFS. This is built up gradually depending on individual needs.

Children are encouraged to resolve any minor conflicts themselves and this is always modelled by adults and supported where necessary.

We use the term 'Kind Hands'.

We expect good Manners and we do not allow play fighting.

Prayer in EYFS

Praying with Children

Faith is a living relationship with God that, like any other relationship, requires communication to remain healthy. Another word for this communication with God is prayer. We teach our children that through Prayer we are listening and talking to God. For some of our children this will be a new experience for them, it is important that this experience is positive.

Through our prayer, we endeavour for the children to become aware of the presence of God around and in them. As an adult leading prayer, you are praying with the children, guiding them into a prayerful time and space. You are both a model and a participant.

Tips for Prayer:

- Prayer can be sung
- Create a sense of sacred space, this can be done by gathering silence and inviting the children to focus on the presence of God.
- Moving the children to a special prayer space.
- Using imagery, e.g., a small table covered with a cloth the colour of the liturgical, opening a Bible, a bowl of holy water, a cross, a religious image or statue, a plant or flower, or a candle.
- Play reflective instrumental music in the background.
- Sit comfortably.
- Asking the children to breathe slowly and relax.

Begin by leading the children in praying the Sign of the Cross. Speak slowly, deliberately, and reverently (all children to participate).

When appropriate, involve the children with actions or gestures (sign language is particularly effective) as a means of reinforcing the experience physically.

Foster a welcoming spirit for the prayer time and space. Inviting children to pray aloud in their own words. Be sure to invite the children to spend time in silence with God and help them to be aware of how God wants to be with each of them in a special way.

Bring closure to the prayer time by inviting the children to pray the Sign of the Cross.

Prayers to be taught:

<p>Sign Of The Cross In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. <i>(The sign of the cross is our most special Christian sign. We make the sign of the cross at the beginning and end of many things we do.)</i></p>	
<p>Our Father Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen <i>(When one of the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, He taught us the Our Father prayer.)</i></p>	<p>Hail Mary Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen <i>(The first part of the Hail Mary was said for the first time by the Angel Gabriel. The second part was said by Elizabeth when Mary went to visit her.)</i></p>
<p>Glory Be Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.</p>	
<p>Morning Prayer Father in heaven you love me, your with me night and day. I want to love you always, in all I do and say. I will try to please you Father, bless me through the day. Amen.</p>	<p>End of the Day Prayer God our Father we come to say, Thank you for your love today. Thank you for my family and all the friends you give to me. Guard me in the dark of night and in the morning send your light. Amen.</p>
<p>Grace before meals Bless us O God as we sit together. Bless the food we eat today. Bless the hands that make the food. Bless us O God. Amen.</p>	<p>Grace after meals Thank you God for the food we have eaten. Thank you God for all our friends. Thank you God for everything. Thank you God. Amen</p>

How do we teach what we teach?

At Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust, we take the time to understand the children’s level of achievement, interest and learning style. We then shape the learning experiences for each child reflecting on these observations and interactions. (Adapted from Statutory framework for EY P13 2:1)

There are consistent learning opportunities for all seven areas of learning within our indoor and outdoor provision through child-initiated learning (CIL) time and adult directed time.

Learning through play

At Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities and decide when Child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves, modelling the learning and moving the child's learning on.

Mathematics: By the time the children reach Reception, they are taught daily math sessions through either Abacus or White Rose Maths and partake in a range of activities based on the focus for the week. During this time, children will have the opportunity to work independently, with a partner and in a small group. While other children will be working with an adult for a more directed session.

During CIL teachers and Learning Support Assistants are there to look for the teachable moments where learning can be moved forward through the child's interest. Observations are then either recorded onto the child's online learning journal (Tapestry) or filed into their 'special folder'.

Other opportunities for math are also incorporated into the day; for example, counting the children at the start of the day, finding out what day of the week it is, working out if we have enough snack, weighing out ingredients, using shape to build models, create artwork etc.

Reading: Children are taught to read and write using phonics which is taught throughout our Trust. We use 'Floppy's Phonics' which is a systematic synthetic phonics teaching resource. This is taught in carefully planned and structured phonic lessons that take place daily throughout EYFS and KS1. The children learn individual sounds, digraphs and trigraphs to help them segment and blend words together when reading and writing.

Children read regularly with an adult in school and have opportunities to listen to stories and texts daily so that we can inspire a love of reading and increase their vocabulary. Outside of school, parents/carers involvement is particularly important to help children consolidate and practise their reading skills. It is essential that children are read every day and practise sounds and words from their 'Floppy's phonic passport'.

When reading to the whole class or small group, we encourage the children to talk and answer questions about the story to check that they understand the context and allow them to explore the book further. We want to develop a love for reading and time is given to read with and to the children. Mystery readers are sometimes invited in and adults talk fondly about their favourite stories. The children are then encouraged to ask questions of their own.

A cosy book corner is provided to promote a love of books and to promote independent reading and sharing of books. Books are also provided in other areas around the classroom to enhance that particular area or topic. A portable library is also available before and after school that children and their parents can access easily outside of the classroom.

Writing: The children will have regular writing opportunities with an adult where writing/mark making (which is emerging writing) is modelled and explicitly taught. The children will have daily encouragement to write as often as possible during CIL and through their interests to show them the value of writing. Good examples are celebrated on the child's wow wall and through Tapestry where we can keep the parents informed about their child's progress.

At Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust, we occasionally write 'helicopter stories' with the children. This is where the child will tell a story and the adult will scribe for them word for word. This is an opportunity for the children to be imaginative and descriptive, observe how words and letters are formed as well as developing an understanding for story structure, tense and sense.

Physical Development: Though the Physical Development (PD) area of learning, the children develop the muscles they need in order to write. At Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust, children come into school from 8:40am for a 'soft start' till 9am. During this time the children work on their 'busy fingers' activity where they can develop their fine and gross motor skills. This includes working with playdough, sewing, threading, sweeping, using tweezers to move something from one container to the next and so on.

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All practitioners who work in the EYFS department are involved in this process.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning: We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six terms and the early learning goals and educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to determine a broad and balanced coverage.

Medium Term Planning: We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term using different text as our driver. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning: We identify specific learning objectives and plan activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. We plan opportunities and activities that will grab the interests of the children, widen their vocabulary and set them up so that they are able to make strong links in their learning. Planning reflects and supports the characteristics of effective learning and the different ways children learn: play and exploration, active learning and creative and critical thinking. Assessment, communication and reflection of what sparks the children's imagination and learning is at the heart of creating high quality learning experiences.

Assessment

At Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust we undertake assessment for learning using Tapestry and other assessment tools. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process and moderate regularly.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, baseline assessment, other focused assessments e.g., sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents.

Summative assessment

The EYFSP Profile summarises all the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements against thirteen scales. It summarises children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

How Tapestry is used

Tapestry is a tool to create a record of a child's learning experience and journey throughout Nursery and Reception class. It documents a child's progress through photos, videos and observations.

Tapestry is used as a regular assessment and evidence tool in our EYFS, all staff members are trained to use it. This means that all staff are involved in helping to get a whole view of the child through their observations and interactions. The resource allows staff members to upload observations, share next steps and assess. The class teacher is then able to monitor children's progress and highlight any gaps for whole class provision and planning as well as individual next steps.

Tapestry is a resource to enable communication and a team approach to the child's learning. Observations are shared regularly through Tapestry and parents have the chance to comment on observations from school; it also shows parents any areas of learning their child may need extra support with at home. Parents are also able to share their own observations from home. This allows for parents to be involved in their child's learning and to get that 'parent voice' and input into the child's learning journey. Children are able to look back on their learning and reflect, celebrate and revisit experiences where they can make improvements or build on their learning. Tapestry is used by the teaching staff to track assessment through all areas of learning. The characteristics of effective learning are shared with the parents to show their child's approaches and learning styles.

The observations from home are also used to document home learning tasks. These tasks are then celebrated with the children in class. The photos and observations are displayed on the Smart board so children can share their efforts and home learning with their peers and have further opportunities for communication and language.

Tapestry is used to support professional conversations between practitioners when assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development.

We use Photographic evidence for children's work and send work home - Children learning is not kept physically in school. We retain the photos of the work in the children's folders and/or in Tapestry. NB: It would take far too long to photograph every piece of work therefore we choose a suitable sample. (The amount based on judgement and needs of the child.)

We keep any adult led activity work and child-initiated work in an individual folder/book for each child at school. This is used alongside their observations to show progression throughout the year and as further evidence against the ELG's during professional discussions and reflections. Furthermore, each observation is matched to an area of learning and used alongside teacher's professional judgement and knowledge of the child to make a final judgement against the ELGs.

We attach relevant statements to observations as a way of documenting the progress, seeing what the next steps are and monitoring the different areas of learning as we go along. If there is a specific area of learning that the children need support with, then we will change our planning and teaching accordingly.

Parents

Parents will be invited into Reception class towards the end of each half term to celebrate the learning completed that half term. Examples of parent sessions in the past include 'The

Gruffalo's Tea Party', Christmas Craft workshop, Visiting the chicks, Easter bonnet parade, Bug hunt, Superhero movie afternoon, End of year celebration etc. This is in addition to whole school celebrations, masses, and assemblies.

Transition

At Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust we endeavour to ensure a smooth transition for pupils across the EYFS into Nursery and Reception class and also between EYFS and Key Stage 1. Children and parents/carers need to feel secure and confident to face the challenge of starting school and the significant changes as they progress through their school life. We recognise that children are vulnerable at stages of transition, we therefore implement a range of strategies and activities to ensure that it is as smooth as possible.

Aims

- To provide a smooth transfer from home to Nursery and/or from Nursery to Reception for both pupils and their parents/carers
- To ensure that the children's emotional well-being is a priority
- To ensure good communication between staff, parents and pupils
- To raise parents' awareness of school routines and how to support their child at school
- To provide a smooth and positive transition between Reception and Key Stage 1 and to ensure that the EYFSP information is effectively communicated.

Into Nursery

June:

Parents will receive a call from a Nursery staff member who will ask for a password (shared via the welcome letter). During this call they will ask questions about the child joining Nursery to help us to build a picture of what they are like and how we can support them and their interests. This is also an opportunity where parents can ask any questions or raise concerns that they may have.

Parents will receive a welcome pack with forms to fill in, a Nursery booklet containing information and ways that they can support their child.

Home Visits:

Where required, home visits will be offered to parents and are optional. Home visits provide an opportunity to ask wider questions and get to know the child and their family better.

September:

All parents and carers are offered a visit at the point of being offered a place. During the first week in September, they will be invited in for a slot where they will have an opportunity to explore the classroom with their child, get to know the staff, set up their Tapestry account, ask questions and take photos of the new environment with our devices. These will then be uploaded to their Tapestry account where they can discuss them with their child at home to help them get used to the setting further.

Parents will also have access to an induction presentation, virtual meetings or invited into school for a meeting with the Nursery room leader and or the Early Years Leader where the EYFS curriculum is introduced as well as practical information given, such as school times and how parents/carers can help their child to settle into the nursery as quickly as possible.

The SENCO (Inclusion leader) will liaise with agencies, within the authority, to discuss any children with Special Educational Needs and how the school can meet their needs. Where

necessary/ possible, staff will visit children in their current setting or in their home and additional visits to our Nursery will be arranged. Individual needs are considered, and some children attend for a shorter period of time if they find the session too long.

Admissions

There is NO automatic transfer from Nursery into Reception. Parents should be reminded of this information.

In November, contact will be made with all Nursery parents to ensure they understand the admissions process.

Into Reception

June/July Transition

Children who attend our Nursery will have regular opportunities to get to know the staff and the setting during free flow time in the second part of the Summer term (where they can go between their new setting and their current one). Reception and Nursery will also join regularly via TEAMS or face to face for mini assemblies, celebrations and story times with the class teacher/s. The Inclusion Lead will liaise with staff and parents to discuss any necessary additional visits or contact with Reception staff as reassurance of what is happening. This aids a smooth transition into the Reception class. The Reception teacher/s will meet with Nursery staff for a hand over meeting where details about the children are shared including abilities, needs and style of learning.

Nursery staff will also provide opportunities where the children in Nursery can get to know the school grounds better and visit other areas such as the hall, the forest school, the big playground etc to help them to develop a sense of the whole school. Any additional necessary resources to support those with Special Educational Needs, such as photo books, will be organised by the Inclusion Lead and staff.

Parents will receive a call from a Reception staff member who will ask for a password (shared via the welcome letter). During this call they will ask questions about the child joining Reception to help us to build a picture of what they are like and how we can support them and their interests. This is also an opportunity where parents can ask any questions or raise concerns that they may have.

Parents will receive a welcome pack with forms to fill in, a Reception booklet containing information and ways that they can support their child.

Parents and children are invited into school on the Transition Day (to coincide with secondary transition). The children will spend time in the classroom with the staff and the parents will go to the hall for an 'induction meeting' with the Executive Headteacher/Head of school and Early Years Lead/ Class teacher. During this time, parent and carers can ask questions, find out ways they can support their child, learn more about Tapestry, the routines of the school day, and buy uniform. Refreshments are offered and examples of school dinners/school packed lunch tasters are offered.

Home/Setting Visits

Where necessary or possible, staff will visit children in their current setting or in their home which provides an opportunity to ask wider questions and get to know the child further.

The school liaises with the local pre-schools/Nurseries and children's needs and levels of development are discussed. These will take place in May/June/July.

September Transition

In the first week of school, children will be invited in for a slot (with a small number of other children and their parents). Here, children and parents/carers will have an opportunity to explore the classroom, get to know the staff, learn more about Tapestry, ask questions and take photos of the new environment with our devices. These will then be uploaded to their Tapestry account where they can discuss them with their child at home to help them get used to the setting further. For the remainder of the week children will come into school for an AM or PM slot. By the second week most children will be ready to continue in Reception full time. For those with Special Educational Needs, individual needs are considered, and some children attend for a shorter period if they find the session too long.

Parents will be invited into school to discuss their child's progress in the form of a 'parent consultation'. These usually take place during the Autumn term for the 'focus child' meeting and again during the Spring term.

Into KS1

We recognise that all children are unique and reach different stages of development at different times. Entry into Key Stage 1 is, therefore, an important transition. There are several strategies to ensure that the move from Reception into Key Stage 1 is a smooth and happy one for the children. The following strategies are embedded in order to ease transition:

- Circle time discussions about moving to Year 1
 - Ensuring that in Year 1 there is an appropriate balance of adult led activities and child-initiated activities to support children's learning needs in the first half term of Year 1.
 - The new teacher will visit current Reception cohort to read a story or spend time with the children in the Summer term. KS1 staff are also invited in as mystery readers throughout the year.
- * Early Years and Key Stage 1 teachers share in the leading of Key stage assemblies weekly.
- * Reception and Year 1 have opportunities for free flow sessions between the classrooms in the Summer Term where possible.
- A whole school transition day in June/ July.
 - The Reception teacher will meet with the Year 1 teacher to discuss the children's' individual needs and to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

By the end of EYFS the child will:

Reading

- Look at books and listen to stories
- Read some common irregular words.
- Use phonic knowledge to decode regular words & read aloud accurately.
- Be secure at Phase 4 phonics
- Read Phase 2, Phase 3 and Phase 4 helpful words
- Identify rhymes and alliteration.
- Join in with rhyming patterns.
- Read & understand simple sentences.
- Demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.
- Make basic predictions.
- Identify start and end of a sentence.

Writing

- Use phonic knowledge to write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others
- Write name (correct capital and lower-case letters)
- To use a capital letter and full stop to demarcate a sentence(s)
- Write clearly demarcated sentences
- Use a correct pencil grip
- Correct formation of all letters

Speaking, listening and understanding

- Use complete simple sentences to explain or describe things
- Listen carefully to what is being said and repeat this if needed
- Know not to interrupt when someone else is saying something
- To speak in front of others using clear, simple, audible sentences.
- To retell something in the correct order
- Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversations and discussions.

Mathematics

- Count reliably to 20
- Count a number of objects by pointing to/moving each one as they count
- Begin to recognise numbers to 20
- Subitise up to 5
- Order numbers 1 – 20
- Say what is 1 more and 1 less than numbers to 20
- Add and subtract two single-digit numbers
- Form all digits 0-9 correctly
- Know the names of the days of the week in order
- Begin to recognise and name common 2D shapes and name some of their properties, e.g. square, rectangle, circle and triangle
- Begin to recognise and name some 3D shapes and name some of their properties, e.g., cube, sphere, cylinder, cone