

St Francis of Assisi Primary School PROSPECTUS



Principal's Welcome

Dear Parent

Welcome to St Francis of Assisi Primary School. It is a pleasure to give you an insight into our welcoming and vibrant school. St Francis of Assisi Primary School is very much a family school at the heart of the community. The school is known for its warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos and commitment to high standards.

This prospectus aims to provide you with some information on our school and if you are a new parent, we take this opportunity of welcoming you and your child and we look forward to a happy and successful association over the coming years.

All our facilities are of the highest quality ensuring that children work and play together in attractive surroundings. The parents, teachers and governors cooperate daily to ensure that our children enjoy a safe, secure and stimulating environment. We recognise that each child is an individual and therefore the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and teaching approaches are all designed to encourage each child to experience success and know that he/she is cared for and valued. We therefore strive for high academic standards within a caring, stimulating environment.

Our high standards were recognised by the Education and Training Inspectorate in March 2015 when its report stated:

'the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding.'

Effective education demands that home and school work closely together, in partnership, to develop and maintain a shared vision of your child's education. It is our sincere hope



therefore that mutual understanding and trust will be the basis of our shared responsibilities.

This prospectus will give you some information which we hope you will find beneficial in ensuring your child will enjoy his/her stay at school. No prospectus can give a full picture of what school is like but we hope that you find it interesting and helpful.

Should you find you require more information or if at any time you want to view the school, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

N McGarvey (Principal)

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Ethos

Every good school has an ethos and a value system at its core which speaks of the care for its children and developmental goals. In our school the Catholic ethos and the principles of love, care, tolerance and respect permeate every dimension of school life. The teaching staff is dedicated to working in partnership with parents to hand on the faith to the children. Christ is at the heart of our vision and we strive relentlessly to make that vision a reality through the high quality of pastoral care and learning experiences we provide for our children.

We hope that the children will learn how to live according to the teachings of Christ and the good news of the Gospel. In order to achieve this, we seek the support of parents and carers by asking them to show by word and example that they too consider the practice of our faith to be of central importance.

We aim to provide a stimulating learning environment in which each child can fulfil his or her academic potential. Appropriate provision will also be made for the spiritual, emotional, physical, intellectual and special needs of our children at each stage of their development.

We prepare our pupils to take their place in today's multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society, mindful of the needs of others at home and in the world around us.

We offer a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum aimed at developing confident learners with enquiring minds.

We believe in a partnership between home and school and actively encourage parental involvement.



Mission Statement

In St. Francis of Assisi Primary School Keady, we aim to educate our children in a safe, happy and stimulating school environment to enable them to fulfil their unique potential. We aim to create opportunities for children to collaborate in the learning process, become lifelong learners, have mutual respect and contribute positively to their local and global societies for the good of all.

Christian values are placed at the centre of our daily life and underpin all the relationships we develop in a caring school community.

St. Francis of Assisi Primary School is a Catholic School and values strong links between home, school and parish, and welcomes all children and their families.



General Aims

- Encourage positive attitudes to learning so that each child may be helped to realise his or her potential in all curricular areas.
- Recognise and respect the feelings and attitudes of others
- Promote the Catholic ethos which should permeate and inspire all aspects of school life.
- Show a system of pastoral care which will exemplify fairness, compassion, tolerance and forgiveness while at the same time setting high standards of respect, self-discipline, commitment and generosity.
- Strengthen links among school, parents, governors and the wider community, thereby fostering a sense of mutual responsibility.
- To encourage children to enjoy reading and to develop a confidence with language which will enable them to communicate effectively with others.
- To help children develop the skills and knowledge of mathematics to enable them to cope confidently with everyday situations.
- To develop in our children the ability to work hard and to succeed at tasks to work independently and collaboratively with other children and adults, to appreciate human achievement and endeavour.
- To encourage our children to be the best they can be in all areas of school life.
- To enable our children to contribute to our school team.
- We aim to ensure that our children thoroughly enjoy and are proud to be a pupil of St. Francis of Assisi Primary School.



Recent Inspection Report

The most recent DENI inspection took place in March 2015. The inspectors highlighted and commended the following good practice.

- The drive and commitment shown by the Senior Leadership Team, along with the full support of staff and governors has been determined, sustained and highly successful.
- The highly effective strategic leadership provided by the Senior Leadership Team who monitor and evaluate rigorously all aspects of the provision.
- The development of pedagogy across the three key stages under the leadership of the senior Leadership Team who mentor staff by explaining clearly what is effective about their work and providing guidance on how to improve further.
- The consistently very high quality of learning and teaching observed.
- The very effective planning for literacy and numeracy which takes close account of the children's interests and ability
- The collegial approach to all aspects of school improvement to ensure the highest quality provision for all of the children
- The highly effective use of assessment information to identify the individual needs of the children, to track their progress, to evaluate the impact of the intervention strategies and to inform learning and teaching.
- Almost all of the children are achieving in line with their ability, or above expectation and the very small number who are underachieving are being supported very effectively.
- The outstanding quality of the children's work across the curriculum and the standards they attain; and
- The very high levels of motivation and disposition to learning of the children who respond positively to their teacher's high expectations in relation to their learning and behaviour

'the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding'



About Our School

The school is set in extensive well maintained grounds in the town of Keady within walking distance from St Patrick's High School and St Patrick's Church.

The present building, has 8 permanent classrooms, a school library, a shared play area and resource rooms. The school has a large hall which is used for Assembly, PE and whole school events. It also has its own school meals kitchen, an accessible washroom and outdoor play area, located at the Foundation Stage/ Early Years department.

The teaching staff- including a principal and 7 full time teachers -work closely with the classroom assistants and ancillary staff. Together they all provide a happy and secure learning environment in which all children can reach their full potential and have the opportunity to succeed. The children are normally taught in straight classes and we have separate break and lunch times for older and younger children.

Admission

Parents considering sending their children to St. Francis of Assisi Primary School should contact the Principal who will arrange an appointment to visit.

Reception Class

St. Francis of Assisi Primary School is pleased to be able to offer places to children who are not of compulsory school age (i.e pre school age)

The places are allocated to children who reach their 4th birthday between 2nd July



and 30th June. Children who fall into this category will be admitted into our Reception class the day after their 4th birthday. The purpose of our Reception class is to build on the learning that has taken place in the home and its immediate environment. Through providing sensory, creative and other experiences, our staff aim to develop in the children habits of observation, questioning and listening. The staff provide the children with a rich variety of challenging play and other activities through which the children develop a readiness to embark on their compulsory education in a familiar setting in our Primary One class.

Children in our Reception class follow the CCEA pre school curricular guidance, learn at their own pace and through their learning, build a positive self image.



Visiting and admission arrangements for new pupils and their parents

Prospective pupils and their parents are most welcome to visit the school at any time by appointment. Children who are admitted to Reception and Primary One in St. Francis of Assisi Primary School embark on a programme of induction commencing in June when parents are invited to meet the Reception / Primary One teacher. Parents receive a formal written invitation to this meeting.

A follow on morning is arranged prior to commencing school for all children who are to be admitted into Early Years/ Foundation Stage. This gives parents and children an opportunity to view the classrooms, meet each other and members of our teaching and support staff.

At the beginning of September, children new to Reception class and all Primary One children come to school for a shorter period until 12:00p.m. From the third week in September the school day ends at 12:00 for Reception class although children from Reception class are welcome to stay over lunchtime and go home at 1:40p.m. Children in Primary One remain in school until 2:15 p.m.

New pupils transferring to the school in years 2-7 are seen by the Principal and class teacher in advance of their enrolment in the school.

We are delighted to meet prospective parents and pupils, make arrangements to show them around the school and provide information about the life of our school. Our whole school community contribute to welcoming and supporting new arrivals and their families, and all staff work closely to identify needs of new pupils and track and monitor early progress.

As soon as the child enters our school we liaise closely with parents to form supportive links for the child and build firm foundations for their future learning.

When a child moves to our school, it is important that he/she settles as quickly as possible and is able to continue work at the most appropriate level. A child's old school will normally transfer documents to our school, but it is useful if these are supplemented. This can be done by providing us with the following information.

- The list of previous schools attended.
- Examples of children's work
- Information about what your child is good at doing.
- Information about his/her interests.
- Evidence of his /her achievements
- The last report given to parents.
- Details of any difficulties your child has had at school
- Relevant information about the family-number of children in family, etc.
- Information about his/her dietary needs
- Information about his/her medical conditions



School Uniform

It is the policy of the school that school uniform should be worn by all children. The wearing of school uniform has a very positive effect, not only with regard to ethos, but to standards of discipline and on the children's self esteem. The uniform helps define our school community, as well as instilling a sense of pride in the children and the staff. The co-operation of parents is greatly appreciated in this respect.



School uniform	School uniform
BOYS WEAR:	GIRLS WEAR:
A white shirt	A white shirt/blouse
School tie	School tie
Green v neck jumper with crest	Green v neck jumper with crest
Navy trousers	Navy pinafore/skirt
Black shoes with non marking sole	Black shoes with non marking sole
Navy coat with school crest	Navy coat with school crest
Navy socks	Navy socks/tights

PE UNIFORM

White polo shirt
 Plain navy jogging/tracksuit bottoms with school crest(no brands)
 Black trainers ,
 Navy zip up hoodie with school crest (can also be worn as jacket)
 Trainers (black) should be worn during P.E lessons only



School Hours

Breakfast Club 8:00 - 9:00a.m	Breakfast Club operates daily from 8:00 a.m to 9:00a.m All children attending must be registered. Forms available from school.
8:55 - 9:10a.m	Supervision of children commences (children must not enter premises prior to this time unless registered with Breakfast Club)
8:55 - 9:10a.m	Lessons commence
Break time	Reception - P4 10:30 - 10:45a.m
Lunch	Reception - P4 11:55- 12:40p.m. Primary 5-7 12:30- 1:15p.m
Lunch	Reception 12:00 <i>(children are welcome to stay over lunch)</i> Primary 1-3 2:15p.m Primary 4-7 3:00 p.m

Arrangements for Break and Lunch times

We operate a healthy breaks policy. Children are asked to drink water or milk and eat fruit at break times. Parents will be advised of break/ snack time arrangements for Reception class, Primary One and Primary 2 children at Induction meeting in June, or prior to children starting.

Milk is available for those who wish to purchase it. Milk is provided free of charge to all reception children. Parents are asked to make termly payments for milk.



Lunch arrangements

School meals are cooked on the premises and served in the dining hall. The cost of a school dinner is £2.60 daily which includes a main meal and a dessert. The dinner menu is sent home each month and available on the school website. Pupils may also bring a packed lunch which they can eat in the dining hall. Parents are reminded to ensure that packed lunches are as healthy as possible.

Meals are provided free under certain circumstances. Application for such should be made to Education Authority (Southern Region), 3 Charlemont Place, Armagh. All children have outdoor playtime where a range of games and activities are available to them. The school has a playground Buddy Scheme in place where KS2 pupils assist supervisory staff in ensuring that all children are included at play times.

Organisation & Management of the school

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective management of the school. As well as nominees of the Trustees, the Education Authority and the Department of Education, its membership also includes an elected parent governor and an elected teacher governor. The Principal completes this team which represents all the main interests concerned with the school. The present Board of Governors are lead by the Chairman and Vice- Chairman and comprise the following.

- Trustee Representatives (4)
- EA Representatives (2)
- Elected Parent Representative (1)
- DENI Representative (1)
- Elected Teacher Representative (1)
- Principal

A Senior Management Team consisting of the Principal and senior members of staff provides a framework for the management of the school. Subject and Key Stage Co-ordinators have specific responsibilities relating to curricular areas and ensure that the curriculum is delivered in as meaningful a context as possible, while at the same time attending to pastoral, administrative and managerial duties. These responsibilities are continually renewed in light of changing circumstances and the needs of the school.



Curriculum

Children learn best when learning is practical, interactive and enjoyable. Teachers are committed to teaching each pupil to fully develop their talents and aptitudes, to be able to meet realistic challenges and to have expectations of them. We believe that this is what parents want from the school and to do otherwise would be a waste of a child's potential.

The curriculum is a broad and balanced one, taught within the Catholic ethos of the school. The whole curriculum develops learners' knowledge, understanding skills and personal qualities in order that they become successful learners and confident individuals. Pupils will learn good habits of work, develop their intellectual, moral and spiritual capacity to emerge as well-educated, responsible citizens.

Pupils are taught using a variety of methods including whole class teaching, group work and on a one-to-one basis. Teachers are very conscious that every child matters and adapt their teaching methods accordingly.

Staff development is vital and staff are highly valued. The support staff are also a vital part of the school who provide a high standard of work which all contributes to the pupils' vital success. All staff plan on a weekly basis and set out clear learning intentions which are carefully monitored and reviewed.



Mathematics & Numeracy

In this primary school our aim is to enable all pupils to acquire numeracy skills and to develop the abilities of each pupil to think for themselves. The mathematics programme followed includes:

- i. **Processes in Mathematics**
- ii. **Number**
- iii. **Measure**
- iv. **Shape and Space**
- v. **Handling Data**

Language & Literacy

Language permeates all learning. A strong emphasis is placed on the acquisition and consolidation of literacy skills. The teaching of literacy comes under the headings

- i. **Talking and Listening**
- ii. **Reading**
- iii. **Writing**

Our pupils participate in drama productions and in many interschool activities which provide opportunities for all aspects of literacy to be developed.

Curriculum

The World around Us

This subject in the Revised Curriculum unites the subjects of Science, History and Geography. This area of learning helps children to explore and find age appropriate answers to some profound questions about themselves and the nature of the world around them. Through a thematic / topic based approach children's natural curiosity will be fostered and extended.

Physical Education

Physical Education is an important element of the curriculum. Pupils have an opportunity to develop their skills, experience success in order to reinforce a positive attitude to physical activity. Physical Education is divided into the following areas:

- i. Athletics
- ii. Dance
- iii. Games
- iv. Gymnastics
- v. Swimming

Pupils in Years 5 to 7 have swimming lessons at the Orchard Leisure Centre. The school competes with other schools in Gaelic, Soccer, Cross Country running, Camogie and Hurling. Sports Day is a celebration for all the children. We have a number of trained coaches who visit the school on a regular basis.



Music

The music curriculum offers pupils the opportunity to make music, compete, listen and respond to music and to perform. Pupils from years 3 to 7 may avail of violin and guitar tuition provided by Education Authority tutors. There are many opportunities for children to perform with their music which includes assemblies, concerts, plays, culture days and festivals.

Art and Design

Art and Design allows the pupils to develop their awareness of the environment around them and respond to the things they see by recording by drawing. Art and Design works includes working with a range of materials including paint, clay and textiles. Pupils are encouraged to learn about artists and to appreciate the work of their peers.

Information Technology

St Francis of Assisi Primary School is networked and a number of computers are located in each classroom. Each classroom is equipped with an Interactive White Board and iPads and all staff are trained in their use. Pupils are encouraged to use computers as an aid to learning. The use of computers and iPads aids and enhances teaching and learning and encourages pupils to develop essential skills necessary for communicating in the modern world. The school has an Internet and e Safety Policy which is regularly updated. The school has invested in iPad technology and is very keen for its long term development.



Personal Development & Mutual Understanding

Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage are integral parts of the primary school curriculum. We stress the importance of home, school and community and the value of the links between each. As a Catholic school we seek to promote respect and tolerance of others both in school and outside school.

Through the curriculum, pupils are encouraged to appreciate, explore and learn about our shared and diverse cultures and become aware of the cultures in other countries. Pupils are given the opportunity to become involved in a range of cross community events.

In order to make the curriculum as meaningful as possible, a topic or thematic approach is often adopted with the child's local environment being used to its best advantage.

At the heart of the curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities.

Cross - Curricular skills

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using information and Communications Technology

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities:

- Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision Making
- working With Others
- Self Management
- Managing Information
- Being Creative

Religious Education

As a Catholic school, St Francis of Assisi Primary School promotes a set of values which are universally acceptable to all. We seek to promote the spiritual development of each child within a caring community with Christ as its centre. The R.E programme (Grow in Love) is the foundation on which religious education is grounded within the school. Our children are carefully prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. The teachers work closely with the local priests and diocesan authorities. Our catholic ethos is an inclusive one which accommodates children from other Christian faiths within one school community.

Inclusion

We are fully inclusive and welcome all students to St Francis of Assisi Primary School Students whose first language may not be English are supported in many ways by the school.

As a school we are lucky to be involved with the Inclusion and Diversity Service and have an advisor assigned to ensure the needs of our EAL children are fully met. We welcome the cultural diversity that our EAL children bring to our school and we have introduced a number of cultural events throughout the school year.



Special Educational Needs Provision

In St. Francis of Assisi Primary School each class teacher delivers the full curriculum for all children in his or her class at a level appropriate to their ability. Care is taken at all times to match the curricular provision for all children to their particular stage of development. Account is taken of particular difficulties or special talents which children show and every attempt is made to meet their needs by the school teaching staff. We follow the Code of Practice in identifying, assessing and supporting children with special educational needs.

The initial responsibility for each child's educational needs rests with the class teacher. Our special educational needs coordinator manages the school programme for children requiring support with their learning, and the school provides a

range of interventions to support children with particular learning needs. When pupils with special educational needs are identified, parents will be kept informed and these children placed on the school's special educational needs register. Parents will be invited to the school at regular intervals to discuss their child's progress and ways in which they can help their child.

Where necessary, advice and support will be sought from psychology service and other relevant agencies. We receive support from education authority tutors under certain circumstances. Close liaison is also maintained with other child health professionals including speech and language therapists.



Assessment

At St. Francis of Assisi Primary School we understand that assessment lies fundamentally at the heart of the teaching and learning process.

We believe the key purpose of assessment is to move children on in their learning. It provides opportunities for pupils to demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and skills they have acquired. It enables teachers to reflect, evaluate and interpret individual pupil's strengths and weaknesses. Assessment is on going and can be informal or formal.

Assessment For Learning enables staff to scaffold children's learning and move them to the next stage. This involves sharing Learning intentions and Success Criteria with the children. It requires marking to be informative highlighting a pupil's strengths and showing how they can further make improvements.

Assessment For Learning begins shortly after new Reception and Primary One children are admitted into our school. By way of an initial meeting with parents and from teacher observations a baseline is established for each child and continues throughout the child's life time at the school.

Weekly class tests in spelling and mental maths help to assess the child's learning at a given time. Each child is regularly assessed throughout the year in Using Mathematics,

Communication and Using ICT. These assessments are collated to build a profile on each child.

Each child from Year 3 to Year 7 complete standardised tests in literacy and numeracy. Outcomes of this data access staff plan further imfective provision for all our children and ensures that early intervention and target setting may be strategically planned for and implemented to overcome barriers to learning at the earliest opportunity. This help in moving towards closing the gap between the most and least able pupils and ensuring that all children are fulfilling their potential.

Reporting to parents

St. Francis of Assisi Primary School shares information on pupil progress on an annual basis. Comments and information reported reflects the learning experiences the pupil has had over the course of the year. Further reporting procedures also include:

Baseline meeting for parents of Reception children.

Parent/ teacher interviews at end of October.

Annual Report to parents.

Reporting on Individual Educational Plans.

Comments on written work including homework.

Meetings at request of parent or teacher.



Pastoral Care & Child Protection

Our Pastoral Care Policy is centred on the pupil and involves the parents, the teachers and the school support services and is grounded in the Principles of Catholic Education.

The school, as well as maximising the potential of each pupil, is aware that it has a duty to ensure that everything possible is done to care for the pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing. The school endeavours to ensure that each of our children feels secure, confident and happy in themselves so that true and meaningful learning can take place.

Parents are seen as a vital part of this aspect of school life and are invited at regular intervals to visit the school for consultation on matters concerning their child's progress and welfare. These visits are seen by teaching staff as a vital factor in the establishment of the child's happiness and in the enhancement of progress. There are many opportunities for informal meetings between parents and class teachers. The

school has developed policies and procedures for Child Protection, Anti-Bullying and Positive Behaviour. On enrolment of children, parents/guardians receive a copy of summary of Child Protection procedures. There is a comprehensive programme of pastoral care throughout the school which is regularly reviewed. The school has an open door policy whereby we encourage parents to contact the school if they have a concern about their child. The class teacher or Principal will always endeavour to meet with parents as soon as an issue is raised.

Our school places Pastoral Care at the top of its agenda. We set extremely high standards for our children and recognise that our pupils will not reach these unless they are surrounded by a nurturing environment where they feel safe and cared for with friends who take care of them and adults who are committed to teaching as a vocation. We strive to ensure that our children flourish and contribute positively to their school and extended community.



Extra Curricular provision

In St. Francis of Assisi Primary School we offer the children a wide variety of extra curricular activities to further enhance their social, physical and emotional wellbeing. They include the following:

Breakfast Club (8:00a.m)
 Minding Club (2:15-3:00p.m)
 Choir
 ICT
 Numeracy Club
 Literacy Club
 Art Club
 Football (soccer)
 Traditional Club
 Coding
 Badminton
 Lego Club

Breakfast Club

This opens each morning from 8:00a.m. Children can choose their breakfast (cereal, fruit, toast) and are supervised until school opening time.



Charging & Remissions Policy

It is the policy of the school to maintain the right to free school education for all pupils. The school may however request voluntary contributions towards the cost of educational visits and other activities.

Parent Support Group

This group of parents and friends assist with many of the social and fundraising activities that take place during the course of the year. The 'Friends of Saint Francis' meet on a regular basis and all parents are welcome to attend these meetings

Homework

Homework in St. Francis of Assisi Primary School is an enjoyable way in which children can consolidate and build upon the learning which has taken place during the school day. Our homework policy seeks to accommodate the age learning needs and abilities of all children via the differentiation of tasks and outcomes.

However the success of home learning depends on the supervision and interest of parents on the supervision and interest of parents in their children's work. The tasks and teacher comments help parents monitor their children's progress.

Attendance & punctuality

Both attendance and punctuality are the legal responsibility of the parent. Good school attendance and being on time for school are important factors for the consistency and progress of learning. Good attendance is acknowledged and rewarded. Parents are strongly discouraged from taking holidays during the school term.

Conclusion

I hope you have enjoyed reading this prospectus and that it gives you most of the information that you require.

Every journey begins with the first step. You have taken a step in the right direction by choosing St. Francis of Assisi Primary School for your child's primary education.

Some things to remember

Good learners ask good questions.

No one can do everything but everyone can do something.

The first place to practice being successful is in your head.

The person beside me is not responsible for my behaviour - I am.

Every journey begins with the first step

Clever people ask for help

Smiles are free





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