St Francis’ Nursery Unit

Observation and Assessment Policy

We the staff of St Francis Nursery recognise that good assessment of children’s learning and development is based on the day to day observations of, and interactions with children in a range of situations. These enable us to learn about the children’s interests, experiences, strengths and areas for development. The information gathered is essential when planning for each child and the class as a whole. Well planned, regular and skilful observation of the children’s play and language ensures that over time, an accurate picture emerges of the whole child and progress each child is making in each area of the Pre-school Curriculum.

Initial Visit to the Setting, Parent Assessment & Initial Observations

When the children first come to visit the setting with their parents in May/June, the parents are asked to fill in an assessment sheet about their child’s development to date and any relevant information they feel we should know about which may affect their child’s learning and development. They are asked to be open about visits to Child Development Clinic, Speech and Language Therapy etc. This also gives the staff an opportunity not only to meet the children but to make initial observations of the children. These observations help us to plan for each individual child settling in Nursery and also help us to identify children who may have Special Educational Needs, that we have not been informed of and so begin the process of adding the children to the SEN register.

Baseline Observations & Target Setting

When the children first come into Nursery we make initial observations of their Personal, Social & Emotional Development and start to make initial Baseline observations in each area of the Nursery curriculum to obtain a holistic picture of each individual child and their specific needs. A checklist is used for this purpose as well as spontaneous observation taking. These observations are used to set our first term targets (See Target Booklets) for the children and to inform our weekly/monthly plans.
New targets are set for each child for each term or when the target is achieved.
**WellComm Speech & Language Assessment**

We carry out the WellComm language assessment on all the children in early October to ascertain their level of receptive and expressive language. On completion of the assessments referrals are made to the Speech & Language Therapy Department of the local Child Development Clinic.

**Daily Observations and Record Keeping**

In our Nursery, we carry out Focused/Target and Spontaneous Observations each week.

**Focused/Target Observations**

On a five weekly cycle we carry out focused target observations on each area of the Nursery curriculum. These observations are focused on the target skills and concepts highlighted in each teacher’s Target Booklets. These observations will be recorded either by a short comment in the Target Booklet or by a label in their profile.

All the information gathered is transferred into each child’s Pupil Profile, named “All About Me” at the end of each term. This is a record of each child’s holistic development and highlights the children’s achievements & areas for development over the three terms in Nursery in the six areas of the Pre-School Curriculum.

**Spontaneous Observations**

On a daily basis we take spontaneous observations of the children. We write these on address labels and then stick them into the Pupil Profiles.

We also keep a portfolio of each child’s work, including for example drawings, collages and photographs to show progression in their learning and development.

Our observations are used to inform planning to ensure that we cater for the needs and interests of each child. This information is then recorded on two reports throughout the year and includes details on each child’s strengths, areas where he/she may need additional support or opportunities to learn, and what action is to be taken.

**Settling In Report**

In mid to late October we complete a Settling-In Report using the information gathered from our findings. This includes information on Personal, Social & Emotional Development, Physical Development & Movement and Language
Development. This also includes any other additional information relevant to the child.

**Sharing Of Assessment Information**

Our assessment process includes sharing the information with the parents/guardians of the children in our care. This is done informally on a daily basis. However, we have one formal parent/teacher meeting in November and informal meetings when required throughout the child’s year in the Nursery:

- At the end of October a “Settling In” report is discussed at a Parent Teacher Meeting.
- In February/March parents are free to make an appointment for a general discussion on their child’s learning and development, in the six areas of the pre-school curriculum if they wish.
- In June, a “Transition” report is given to the parents and passed to and discussed with each child’s new Year 1 teacher. This is a general report and is a summary of each child’s development to date in the Nursery Curriculum.

During parent teacher meetings, we emphasise the children’s achievements and also identify any areas where further support may be required. We also discuss the next steps in each individual child’s learning and how the parent can support this learning at home. Parents are invited to comment on these reports and to sign them.

**Providing for Children with Special Educational Needs**

The term “special educational needs” refers to a child who has a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her. Some of the difficulties that young children experience are temporary and will be resolved as they develop, while others will have difficulties that are long term and will require additional support to ensure that they make progress.

We also take account of those children who need to have their learning challenged and extended beyond what is normally provided in pre-school settings, but do not fall into the category of having special educational needs.

We aim to identify early any difficulties that a child is experiencing. From the earliest stage we consult with the parent’s of a child who is experiencing difficulties. It is our policy to draw up “Individualised Education Plans”, known as IEPs to meet such children’s needs or to identify appropriate support during play and other planned activities. These plans are reviewed and discussed with the parents/guardians regularly.
Action for Specific Children/Differentiation

We recognise the need to meet the individual needs of all the children and the specific needs of individual children, including children with special educational needs. Our observations of all the children enable us to ensure that we are catering for the needs of each child, for example, we provide a range of puzzles of varying degrees of type, size and difficulty and may encourage different children to use a range of different strategies to complete them.

For children with special educational needs we:

- Organise activities and materials for the special needs of each specific child.
- Ensure that SEN children have equal access to the curriculum where appropriate.
- Provide the necessary support when special needs are identified and write and implement Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- Seek appropriate help and advice from other relevant professionals.
- Keep the parents fully informed and involved.

For newcomer children we:

- Organise monthly language plans to enhance their learning
- Use our Polish Assistant where applicable
- Use relevant information from the Inclusion and Diversity Service File
- Provide monthly newsletters in their relevant language

Evaluation

In our setting we recognise the importance of being self-reflective practitioners, reflecting on planning, practise and all aspects of pre-school life. As a whole Nursery each week, we evaluate how we feel each day has gone, the activities/experiences provided, the learning outcomes of the children and the children’s interest in what was going on. We state how things went and how they could be improved if required. These evaluations are used to inform future planning.

At the end of every month we evaluate our provision and planning in the areas of the pre-school curriculum and the areas of play, both indoors and out. These too are used to inform future planning.

September 2015