

St Francis School Curriculum update – Autumn 1

Pre-Formal – Autumn Term- Curriculum Updates

EYFS

- EYFS curriculum booklet has been developed in line with the new reforms.
- EYFS pupils are now split across three classes to allow for individual needs to be met. This is working really well and
- Teachers are identifying where the challenge is needed.
- Non statutory EYFS curriculum guidance has been incorporated into the development of both the Pre-Formal and Informal curriculum offers.



Pre-Formal

- Explore and Discover session has been added to the curriculum offer.
- SEST continue to work closely with class staff to shape individualised core skills sessions. Regular class 'drop ins' have highlighted that core skills sessions are purposeful and individualised to meet the needs of all pupils across all Pre-Formal classes. Pupils have motivator boxes which are used to fostered interaction and engagement.
- Assemblies are working well- instead of all joining together- classes are paired according to need. The two primary Pre-Formal classes join together in the drama studio and the two Secondary Pre-Formal classes join together. The younger Pre-Formal classes have celebrated 'Acts of Kindness' and the work of The Children's Trust by dressing in Pyjamas.
- One of our Pre-Formal teachers is going on some training through the ACE centre

Informal

This is a new and developing curriculum offer to respond to the need to 'challenge' pupils who fall in between the Pre-Formal and the Semi-Formal pathways and to meet the changing needs of school. A curriculum booklet has been developed to highlight the offer. In Informal classes you will see sessions such as 'Exploratory Play' and 'Body Awareness'. This area continues to be a main focus for research-working closely with Equals.

"The informal curriculum is for those pupils who are working consistently and over time around the P4-P5 bracket. They will typically have the ability to follow instructions, have a sound understanding of cause and effect and can imitate the actions of others. Due to recognised difficulties with social communication and interaction; sensory sensitivities; repetitive behaviours and difficulties in attention and concentration, these pupils need to learn to 'be' before they can learn to 'do'. They need to learn who they are, gain self-confidence, self-esteem and how to self-regulate through child led, positive interactions and process based teaching and learning"

- New equipment has been purchased for the M.I.L.E room to continue the development of Sensology and motor skills.
- We now have a teacher who has been trained in 'Attention Autism' and floor focus sessions are working well- engagement levels are high.
- Continued development of outdoor learning- to ensure that pupils have the access to an outdoor learning provision.

Semi-Formal – Autumn 1 - Curriculum Update

Updates and Developments

It has been great to have the pupils back in school after the Summer. All pupils have settled in to school really well, particularly the new starters who have joined St Francis in September.

The 4 pupils that have transitioned from EYFS have also settled really well into their new class. The pupils have loved having some normality back into their school routines such as: sharing the playground and socialising with their friends from other classes, getting out into the local community by visiting the park and the local shops during their 'My Independence' sessions as well as their collective favourite – the reopening of the swimming pool!

As a team of Semi-Formal teachers, we have started to continue with the curriculum developments. One of the key developments this year is our Phonics Reading Pathway within my Communication. Previously we have followed the Letters and Sounds structure to Phonics. However, as this is no longer a recommended and verified method, we are researching into alternative systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programmes.

We are currently investigating No Nonsense Phonics created by Debbie Hepplewhite and also Little Wandles which is similar to the structure of Letters and Sounds. As an SSP programme is statutory by Spring 2022, as a school we are looking to trial and implement a phonics programme within the Autumn Term for those learners following that reading pathway.

In addition to the new phonics programme, we will also need to re-structure some of our reading books to ensure that it correlates with the new phonics programme.

Upper School – Curriculum Update

In Upper School, we have 58 students and are finally back to a sense of normality. The social central area is the hustle and bustle of Upper School and students are travelling around school as independently as they can from lessons to lesson, but at the same time still remembering and being reminded to take extra care all of the time.

Socialising at break and lunchtimes is lovely to see as well as new friendships amongst peers being made. Covid-19 definitely has a lot to answer for!

Teachers and tutors are now able to deliver the entire curriculum to all of the different curriculum pathways that we have within Upper School. It is so lovely to see, listen and be part of. Students are really enjoying all aspects of their individualised curriculum, producing some excellent pieces of work, making progress within their Functional Skills where appropriate and having some great experiences that will be new to them and some that they will have done previously allowing them to progress as they move onto adulthood.

We have been back out into the local community allowing students to further develop their independence, again this has been great to see and share with parents about the things we are told some students can't do, when actually with a little support and gentle persuasion they are more than capable of doing!! It does really show what we have been missing due to COVID!

Year 14 students are in early stages of their transition. Annual reviews are taking place and students are really starting to drill down in what they would like to do next. Whether this be a continuation of education at their most local FE provider or a move into the Adult Social Care sector, where it is felt that their individual needs would be best met from a community based approach rather than a continuation of education.

We continue to have some real successes from our Work Experience programme with Jemima at the early stages of starting her 'Supported Internship' at St Christopher's school, where she will be at work more than she is at school. She will have the opportunity to develop her skills set required for the Teaching Assistant role that she is currently doing with the longer-term ambition of her accessing paid employment.

We also have Sean who will after the half term be going out with 'Gordon' from Aaron Services one day a week to learn and support him in his job role on heating engineer, Telshia who will be joining a class in Semi-Formal and Amber who will be helping on Mondays in the school kitchen. We have lots more planned and I will be able to update next time around.

Space and storage of equipment continues to be a slight concern, but we have had some lovely cupboards built in the central area that have definitely supported. We are already starting to show students and families around for a September 2022 start, we have 21 students leaving St Francis this academic year, but we are certainly up for filling those spaces and I have no doubt that we will.