

'Let God's love shine in our lives as we care share and learn together'

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School and Nursery

School Entrance 027 354488



St. Francis Xavier
Catholic Primary School



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Welcome to St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School



Foreword: Nicholas Collins, Headteacher, says...

It is with pride that I welcome you to our fantastic school. We have a very strong Catholic ethos, and this Christian attitude shows in our happy, well behaved and enthusiastic pupils. They tell us that they love their school!

Lifelong learners

If learning is stimulating and creative, it will encourage our children to continue their education outside of school, and become lifelong learners. We want to ignite an interest in the world around them, and for that interest to lead to fulfilling and imaginative lives. Learning should be fun!

Music

We also offer a wide variety of instrumental musical experiences.

Inclusion

We warmly welcome families from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds which reflects our local community. We are a school for everyone!

Parent partnership

Another very important part of our school is you, the parent! As you will see, by reading the many parent and pupil stories within this prospectus, you and your child are very important to us. We champion the link between school and parent and work very hard to involve you in every step of your child's time here...and increase your child's enjoyment of learning.

Get in touch

I would truly urge you to visit our wonderful school. I am very confident you will find this a welcoming and supportive school, with staff that listen, consult and actively encourage your involvement. I know that you will be impressed by the quality of education we can offer your child. To make an appointment please email: office@xavier.doncaster.sch.uk or call 01302 344678.



Gerald and Chineme have been given a good start on their educational journey by St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

Sithembiso and Larry Anigbo live in Balby with their son, Gerald, aged eleven, and daughter Chineme aged ten.

Well prepared

Sithembiso and Larry are confident that their children have been well-prepared for secondary school by St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School. Sithembiso says: "Gerald is talking about it as though he is ready now and seems mature enough to move up in September. Chineme has another year to go and she is also doing well with reading and writing and is coping with all of her subjects."

Christian ethos

Sithembiso says: "The main reason we sent our children to the school was because we are Christians. Although we are not Catholics ourselves we wanted our children to attend a faith school and we liked the strong Christian ethos of the school. We are glad we made that choice as both our children have been very happy at the school."

Settled in well

"I remember that he settled in very well," says Sithembiso. "The teachers were really great with him and made him feel comfortable and at home. I used to go in sometimes to help with reading which helped me to feel connected with the school. All Gerald's teachers have been friendly and Mr Collins, the Headteacher, is a very nice man. When I have attended the parents' evenings over the years I have always had very detailed reports about how good Gerald is and how much progress he is making."

Achieving grades

Gerald particularly enjoys Maths and religious studies but he is doing well in all his subjects. "One of his favourite things is PE and he likes playing football and doing after school clubs," Sithembiso says. "His teacher has put a lot of work in to prepare him for secondary school because the new school will expect him to be on certain grades. His teacher has done really well and she has helped him to achieve those grades."

Good teachers

Chineme has a lovely, friendly personality and has been happy at the school and got on well with all her teachers. Sithembiso says: "She grew really attached to one of her teachers and was very sad when she left, but she has grown to like her new teacher now. She has been very successful in most of her subjects. She loves reading and writing, enjoys sports and running and has done dancing in one of the after school clubs."

Open to all

"I would definitely recommend St Francis Xavier Primary to other parents. It is a brilliant school and the staff are always so accommodating to everyone. Neither of my children has ever had any problems with the school since they started," Sithembiso says.

Children say

Gerald says: "I like doing PE and playing with my friends."

Chineme says: "I love going to school because I like to learn new things and play with my friends at break."

School day



School hours

Children can arrive at school from 8.45am, in time for an 8.55am start of day. Our school day finishes at 3.20pm and at 3.30pm children will be brought to the front of school ready for collection by parents.

Breakfast/Homework Club

The Breakfast Club is open from 7.30am to 8.45am daily. During the session children are encouraged to read and finish off their homework.

Uniform

A simple uniform is helpful in establishing good standards of appearance in school and by wearing it children quickly feel part of the community. School uniform lists can be obtained by contacting the school office or by consulting our Parent Handbook.

School meals and snacks

A midday meal is available for all children attending full time school. A choice of main course, plus a vegetarian option and dessert is available each day.

All children in Reception, Years 1 and 2 can receive a free hot school meal. Children can also bring in lunch boxes. Children can also go home for lunch.

Break-time and drinks

Under the Fruit in School scheme children are entitled to a piece of fruit each day free of charge. This is given as a playtime snack. Water is always available during the day.

Milk is available for all children up to the year in which they are seven (Year 2).



Michal and Szymon are making fast progress in the happy atmosphere at St Francis Xavier Primary

Joanna Jankowska and Pawel Jankowski live in Balby with their sons, Michal, aged seven, and Szymon, aged four, and their daughter Maja, who is three months old.

Learning language

Although the family speak Polish at home, Michal and Szymon have come on with their English in leaps and bounds since starting at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School. Mum Joanna says: "Michal, who is in Year Two, now speaks perfect English. The mothers of some of the other children have said they didn't even realise he was Polish. I am also impressed with Szymon's language skills now he has started at the school. He has begun to speak English with the other children and is learning new words every day."

Catholic faith

"We are a Catholic family and so the faith side was a priority for us when we chose the school but we are also very happy with the way our boys have progressed there. I can see what a tremendous job the staff do each day, both from the point of view of a parent and in the course of my work as a Learning Support Assistant at the school," Joanna says.

Settling in

"The school has a very friendly atmosphere and both Michal and Szymon were looked after when they first started and settled in well. The teachers were kind and the boys felt comfortable being left with them. It feels like a safe environment in which to leave your child. All the older children are kind and friendly towards the younger ones and play with them in the playground," Joanna says.

Challenging work

Joanna is pleased that children working at a higher level are given more challenging tasks and helped to progress as well. "For example, Michal is very good at Maths and so his teacher challenges him with more difficult work. I am really happy about this as a parent. Michal loves going to school. Every year he says the teacher is his favourite. He has never had one he didn't like, they have all been kind. If Michal has done particularly well, his teacher will leave me a message. When he does something good in Maths she shows him that she is proud of him and is constantly helping him to move forward."

Literacy and numeracy

Szymon is also making good progress and now knows all his letters and numbers. "I used to be a teacher in Poland and I know that Polish children don't usually reach that stage until they are six or seven. They are still just playing in the nursery. But at St Francis Xavier there are different areas for different subjects, such as Maths, writing and reading. There is also a beautiful outside area for the children with bikes and dressing up clothes to play with," Joanna says.

Children say

Szymon says: "I always want to go to school."

Michal says: "I like school because my teacher challenges me with hard work."

Curriculum



The curriculum is divided into three stages:
Early Years Foundation Stage: from ages 3-5
Key Stage 1: from ages 5-7
Key Stage 2: from ages 7-11

Reception

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is based on seven areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Key Stages 1-2

Areas of the curriculum are:

- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Science
- Information and Design Technology
- History
- Geography
- Art
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- Health
- Citizenship
- Personal and Social Education.

Collective worship

Each school day begins and ends with prayer time in the children's own class. There are four scheduled weekly acts of collective worship - two are for the whole school (one is usually based on the Sunday Gospel and one on our Ethos Statement) and one is for each Key Stage and is based on aspects of the Church's year, prayer or other themes as appropriate.

There is also a "Celebration of Good" assembly for the children of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 separately each week, where they share their talents and gifts from God, their academic success and attendance with their peers.



Moving on to secondary school

When our pupils move to secondary school we make the process as smooth as possible. We have strong links with local secondary schools. We arrange visits to these schools and also invite staff from these schools to our autumn opening evenings.

Inesa has been proud to see her sons develop and flourish during their time at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary

Inesa Ruleviciene lives in Balby with her sons, Augustas, aged sixteen, and John, aged nine.

Good start

Inesa has always been very happy with the progress her sons have made at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School. She says: "When Augustas first started at the school at the age of seven he knew only two words in English; 'Hello and Byebye'. We had just arrived from Lithuania and he understood only Lithuanian. But within one month of starting at St Francis he was speaking and understanding English well."

Hard work

Four years after he started learning English, Augustas had a poem published in an anthology of work by young writers that had been submitted by his teacher. Inesa says: "He was a good pupil and the staff at Saint Francis helped him progress. I was out at work a lot at that time and unable to help him with his English but he worked hard and succeeded at school all by himself."

Enjoying nursery

John started in the nursery at St Francis at the age of three. Inesa says: "He could speak English and had no communication problems and settled in well and made some good friends. He was familiar with the school and knew some of the teachers because we lived close by and he was used to going with me to take Augustas. He has always had a lot of friends and has liked all his teachers and the Headteacher."

Developing well

Now he is in Year Four, John is doing well in most subjects and particularly enjoys reading and writing. "Sometimes he has a little bit of a problem with Maths and I have to help him at home," Inesa says. "He likes doing his homework and works hard. He doesn't need to be pushed. When he was smaller I had to encourage him more but now he knows he has to do his homework. I think he is being well prepared for secondary school. He has grown up into a very kind, helpful boy. He understands that I have health issues and he is a big help to me at home."

Good choice

"We are a Catholic family and I am therefore happy that St Francis is a Catholic school but that is not the main reason I like the school. Even if I was not a Catholic I would still think it was a good school. I originally chose St Francis Xavier because it had been recommended by other people and now I would be very happy to recommend the school to other parents as well. It has turned out to have been a good choice for my sons and I have been very happy with the school. I have now joined the midday staff at St Francis and am enjoying working there," Inesa says.

Children say

John says: "I like going to school to see all my friends and play with them in the playground."



Extended curriculum: Visits

To extend the curriculum, and make learning even more fun, we offer many visits and activities. Recent educational visits have included:

- Year 1 and 2 trip to Cast Theatre
- Years 3 & 4 trip to Murton Park
- Year 3 Austerfield residential

We have also had special theme days, including a day of peace, where children explored peace in a range of different situations. The day included sign language, hymns, reflection, dove making, world peace, bread making and sharing.

Behaviour and self-development

At St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School we provide a loving, Gospel-inspired environment and work with children and parents to nurture happiness and success in their developing Christian lives. We expect and encourage high standards. All members of our school community are expected to be courteous and well mannered. We foster a spirit of individual and community responsibility in our school.

We help every child to understand the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes:

- 1) staying safe
- 2) being healthy
- 3) enjoying and achieving

- 4) achieving economic well being
- 5) making a positive contribution.

Communicating with parents

Your child's achievements

Each term we also invite parents and children to come into school to talk to teachers and discuss the progress of pupils. We also invite parents and children each term to come into to school talk to teachers to discuss pupil's progress. Parents are welcome to speak to the school at any time if they have any concerns. We have an 'open door' policy so parents are always welcome.

School News

Parents are updated with school news via the school website and regular newsletters.



Arif and Claire are happy that their children are thriving in the welcoming climate of St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

Arif and Claire live in Balby with their son, Rafi, aged eight, and daughter Jenna, aged six.

School choice

Both parents chose St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School for their children because they believe a faith school does instill a good level of discipline in its pupils. Arif says: "Having a non-Catholic faith didn't deter me from the school's Catholic ethos, in fact the opposite, because we believe the environment is conducive to promoting well-balanced children and we haven't been disappointed. Despite living very close to St Francis Xavier this was not a determining factor when choosing our children's first school."

Rafi's thoughts

Rafi started in the reception class at the age of four and has thoroughly enjoyed his time at the school. Arif says: "Rafi loves everything about the school; he enjoys the friendly environment and time with all his friends and teachers. He likes all subjects but particularly enjoys reading, Maths, Science and art lessons. He particularly enjoys learning to play the guitar."

Jenna's thoughts

Jenna also started at the school at the age of four in the reception class and has settled in well and been happy at the school. Arif says: "Jenna is really coming on with her reading and enjoys her Maths lessons. She has made some fantastic friends that she loves to play with at break and lunchtime."

Respect for diversity

Arif feels that all faiths are welcomed by the school. He says: "St Francis Xavier have a strong policy of respecting diversity. The children are encouraged to embrace, respect and accept the diversity of all their fellow pupils. I was invited in by the Headteacher, Mr Collins, to talk about the Islamic faith and I was very positively received."

Variety of faiths

"The school has shown that they believe that everyone has a right to their personal faith and value and share it", Arif says. "I had discussed what I was going to talk about with Mr Collins beforehand because I knew he wanted the children to learn about a variety of faiths. I went round all the classrooms talking to the different classes about my faith and was pleased that the children listened with interest and were genuinely eager to learn and understand, again reflective of the positive environment the school promotes."

Mixing well

Claire says: "There are children from many different nationalities and faiths who attend the school and everyone mixes well. The school has a fantastic atmosphere. The teachers are familiar with all the school's children, not just the ones they teach. There are events for parents as well as for the children during the year and the main occasions, such as sports day, the summer fair and festivals, are always well attended."

Right direction

Arif says: "I would definitely recommend St Francis Xavier to any parent as my children are thoroughly happy here and I feel it is a school that is progressing quickly."

Children say

Rafi says: "I love St Francis Xavier. It's awesome."

Jenna says: "I like going to school for reading and learning different things."

Inclusion: a curriculum for all



Special Educational Needs

We are committed to a broad and balanced curriculum for all our pupils. Our Special Needs Co-ordinator ensures that the school provides the best support possible for children identified as having special needs. We discuss any support plans with parents and provide regular feedback on progress. External agencies may need to be consulted on some occasions, but only with prior consent from parents.

Access

Children with a physical disability are fully supported in accessing all parts of the school.

Gifted and talented children

We recognise that all children are individuals with their own specific needs, gifts and talents. Children who are identified as being exceptionally able or talented, are monitored and provided with stimulating and enriching lessons appropriate to their needs.



Daniel has benefitted from all the special care and support given during his time at St Francis Xavier Primary School

Lidija and Hamzeh live with their son, Daniel, aged six, and daughter, Emily, aged five, in Bessacarr.

Help and advice

Lidija and Hamzeh are grateful for all the help Daniel has been given since he started attending the nursery at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School at the age of three. Shortly after he joined the school Daniel was diagnosed with severe autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). His Mum Lidija says: "It was a big shock to us at the time but the school have supported us in every way that they could. Daniel could not speak and was struggling to understand what people said to him. The school were very helpful identifying what Daniel's barriers to learning were. They also provided us with advice and information on autism."

One to one care

"We did not expect Daniel to be diagnosed with this but we found it was helpful to be able to talk to the teachers about his condition," Lidija says. "Daniel has one to one support in school to help him develop the skills he needs to do things for himself. The school keep us informed any time there is a change in Daniel's behaviour and we do the same. He has speech therapy at the school and now he has started putting a few words together, which is encouraging. The school have also made changes to the building in order to accommodate Daniel."

Special facilities

"Daniel does not like to speak and it seems as though he does not understand why he needs to speak. Usually Daniel will hold your hand and take you to see what he is asking for, such as a drink or to watch television. He will show you what he wants because he can't tell you. The school shows Daniel pictures so he can point to what he wants and now he sometimes adds a word as well. They have done everything they can to look after Daniel and us. If they could have continued, I know that they would have, but they are now supporting us by helping us move Daniel to another school where his developing needs will be able to be met more appropriately."

advise us what we can do," Lidija says.

Safe place

"We have regular meetings with the school to discuss the situation and they invite specialists in to help us, too. Daniel loves opening and closing doors and he likes to run and he is very fast. When Daniel runs around he will not stop. He has no danger awareness and if he sees a locked door he tries to figure out how it opens and closes. The school have done everything they can to make the place safe for him and have put in a special gate which is kept locked to keep him safe," Lidija says. "Daniel likes doing puzzles and there is a special corner in the classroom where he can play. He likes games and building things out of Lego. He will not choose to draw, but if I ask him to draw something for Mummy and give him paper and pencils, he will do it."

Moving on

"We are now waiting for Daniel to move to a special school because St Francis Xavier cannot continue to meet Daniel's growing educational and safety needs as he gets older. They have done a brilliant job but they cannot do any more and the time has now come for Daniel to move on to a new school with specialist provision," Lidija explains.

Continued support

"The school have done everything they could for Daniel. At the beginning we didn't know anything about Daniel's condition and the school have helped us a lot and provided us with information so we can understand it," Lidija says. "I would definitely recommend St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School to other parents. They have done a brilliant job for Daniel and us. If they could have continued, I know that they would have, but they are now supporting us by helping us move Daniel to another school where his developing needs will be able to be met more appropriately."

Clubs



There are a wide variety of afterschool clubs that children can enjoy. These include:

- multi sports
- craft
- hand chimes
- football
- reading for pleasure
- Zumba
- baking
- art
- cricket
- rugby



Ambrose and Natalie are pleased with the way their children's lifestyle has been embraced by St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

Ambrose and Natalie King live in Balby with their daughter, Alisha, aged nine, and son, Ambrose, aged six.

Staying in touch

Ambrose and Natalie are pleased with the understanding shown by staff at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School about the way they live their lives. Ambrose says: "We are Romany gypsies and take the children with us when we travel to other places to work but the school have always been really good about it. The year before last we went to Australia for six months and the school kept us updated by email and sent homework. Alisha and Ambrose were able to catch up with their classmates by Skyping them at the beginning and end of classes."

Keeping up with work

"Last year we worked away for a large part of the summer in the London area and the children were able to take their school work with them to do. We have to fill forms in and get permission to take the children out of school but the staff realise it isn't just for a holiday, it is our way of life, and they are always very understanding about it," Ambrose says.

Memories of school

Ambrose started in the nursery at St Francis Xavier and Alisha joined the school in Year Two at the age of six. "We had been living on the East Coast but we moved back to Doncaster to be near my wife's parents. My wife and her family are Catholic and wanted the children to attend a Catholic school. She attended St Francis Xavier herself and has happy memories of it."

Good mix of families

"The school is a very friendly place attended by children from many nationalities," Ambrose says. "We are the only Romany gypsy family in the school but it's never been a problem. We are very open with the

school about our lifestyle. They communicate well with us and will always ask us about things rather than just assume something. When it comes to homework, if we have a problem with it, we only have to ask and the teachers will help us with it from start to finish."

Making friends

"We like our children to mix with everyone and they both have a nice circle of friends that they play with regularly. They also enjoy going to the after school clubs. Alisha is starting crafts soon and has done baking and fun with food. Ambrose is now doing mixed sport after school. The school has a big playground for the children to play in and there is a large playing field for sports just a short walk away. Ambrose has always been very sporty and also plays golf, cricket and football in the evenings and at the weekends outside school."

Open to all

"I am not a Catholic myself, but I would recommend St Francis Xavier to both Catholic and non-Catholic families because it is such a good school," Ambrose says.

Children say

Alisha says: "I like going to school and enjoy swimming and seeing my friends."

Ambrose says: "I like learning new things and playing football."

Admissions

Getting involved



Parents who are thinking of applying for a place at our nursery or school are invited to visit and look around at any time.

School

Children start at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School in the autumn term of the academic year in which they will have their fifth birthday.

Applications

Doncaster Council deals with all new admissions to St. Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School. Contact details for the School Admissions Team:

Tel: 01302737204

Email: admissions@doncaster.gov.uk

Web: www.doncaster.gov.uk/admissions



Parental Involvement

Parent and Teachers Association (PTA)

Parents and the school enjoy working together through our PTA to raise funds for school. Fundraising helps the school buy items and activities that the school does not have sufficient budget to pay for from schools funds. Taking part in the PTA also gives parents and teachers a chance to get to know each other.

The PTA is always looking out for new members. If you would like to join, please see Mrs Cashmore at the Parents' Reception Office between 8.30am and 9.15am or simply come along to a meeting to find out what the PTA does.

Voluntary helpers

The school uses voluntary helpers to enhance the curriculum, to provide support for children and staff in a range of ways and to support out-of-school activities.

Positive Parenting courses

Throughout the year we run parenting courses to help support parents with some of the difficulties the role brings. These are a great way of meeting other parents and praising the great work that all parents do. If you feel that you would like to attend one of these courses please see the office and ask for further information.

Governorship

Our school governors manage the school with the Headteacher. Our Governing Body are made up of elected parents, members appointed by the Local Education Authority (LEA), co-opted governors, teacher representatives and the Headteacher who has the option of being a governor. Members are elected for period of four years.

Do you want to be a Governor?

Our parent governors give parents a voice in decision making. They are elected by parents through a ballot. If you are interested in becoming a school governor, please contact the school office.



How to find us



St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School
Roberts Road, Balby
DN4 0JN

Tel: 01302 344678
Email: office@xavier.doncaster.sch.uk
www.xavier.doncaster.sch.uk

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Let God's love shine in our lives as we care share and learn together

