



HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Learn, Grow, Love, Live

Early Years – Foundation Stage Policy

Version	Date	Description of changes and person/organisation responsible
1.0	September 2014	New Policy
2.0	September 2016	Review – no significant changes
3.0	September 2018	Review – no significant changes
4.0	September 2020	Review – Removal of references to Romero and structural changes in the school
5.0	September 2021	Review – no significant changes
6.0	December 2023	Review – No significant Change

People Responsible:	Early Year Leader
Committee responsible:	School Improvement Committee
Reviewed date:	December 2023
Next review date:	December 2026

Mission Statement

Learn, Grow, Love, Live

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
we learn about ourselves and about the world,

We grow in faith,

we act with kindness, generosity and love
to ourselves and others.

We live life to the full and have a future full of hope.

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The first year in school is a very unique and exciting time in a child's life. 'A child's experiences in the early years have a major impact on their future life chances' (*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfES 2023*). Every child deserves the best possible support to fulfil their potential therefore this policy aims to clarify Holy Cross Catholic Primary School's approach to The Early Years Foundation Stage. This document should be read in conjunction with the school's Teaching and Learning, Behaviour Policy as well as the School Prospectus.

Aims

- to provide a safe and welcoming environment for children and their families
- to encourage responsibility, resilience, resourcefulness, reflectivity and reasoning
- to help children make links in their learning
- to foster a love of learning, enquiring minds and positive attitudes
- to ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued
- to establish positive, informed relationships with parents
- to help children build friendships and learn to co-operate with each other
- to provide a solid foundation in the seven areas of learning through well planned, rich and stimulating experiences
- to value children's interests, provide a balance of adult and child-initiated activities and prepare them for Key Stage One
- to ensure every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- to deliver quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind

Admissions

The criteria for admissions are located on our school Website.

Transition/Induction to school

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition

- Parents are invited to an Induction meeting to ensure they know about school procedures and to express any concerns they may have about their child starting school. Home visits from the class teacher are arranged for September.
- The children are invited to visits in June/July to their reception class. These first visits are with their parents, allowing the children to feel secure in the new environment. During the last few weeks of the summer term the whole school has a 'move up day' when the new children are invited into school for a morning without parents.
- Members of staff visit children in pre-school or nursery to meet key workers and gather information to support transition. The number of meetings/visits will depend on the child's needs.

Starting School In September - for the first week children attend school in small groups for 2 mornings including lunchtime. In the second week they attend for 3 mornings including lunchtime. All children start school full time in the third week. During the afternoon sessions of the first two weeks teachers will make home visits to meet pupils and their families.

Curriculum (Areas of Learning and Development)

The Early Years Foundation Stage is the distinct phase of education for children aged 0-5. This policy deals with the provision for our four / five year olds. Their curriculum is the fundamental basis for all their future learning and helps to develop their values, confidence and relationships with others. The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon **four themes**:

- **A Unique Child**

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

- **Positive Relationships**

We recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. Foundation Stage teachers visit children in their pre-schools and nurseries to liaise with key workers to discuss each individual child and their transition process into school. Foundation Stage teachers visit Parents at home in September to discuss their children starting school.

- **Enabling Environments**

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences. The Foundation Stage area is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. The Foundation Stage has its own outdoor classroom area. The free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children’s development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

- **Learning and Development**

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are “prime areas,” and four “specific areas”:

The prime areas	The specific areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication and language - Physical development - Personal, social and emotional Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literacy - Mathematics - Understanding of the world - Expressive arts and design

Planned and guided children’s activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn. We support children in using the three characteristics of effective learning as follows;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playing and Exploring - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’; - Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; - Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links and develop strategies for doing things.

Implementation of the Curriculum

Our Learning and Teaching Policy should be referred to for an outline of the whole school approach to curriculum delivery. A range of teaching and learning strategies are adopted in order to deliver The Foundation Stage Curriculum – activities are often planned around a topic or book. Combinations of adult- and child-initiated activities are offered throughout the year, all of which take in to account children’s interests, ability, learning style and their progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

Children will learn through play during The Foundation Stage; guided and independent play; individual and in groups; directed and self-chosen; indoor and outdoor. Their understanding is deepened during this play by talk, questioning, observation, experimenting and role play.

Learning Environment

We believe that both the physical and emotional environment in which the children enter each day is of utmost importance to their ability to learn. We aim to provide rich and varied environments, both indoor and outdoor, which allow children to feel safe and secure yet confident to try new things and take risks. All adults aim to ensure a welcoming and accepting environment where children know their feelings are accepted and their effort is valued. Both the indoor and outdoor areas provide suitable and well-maintained resources which are accessible to children as and when appropriate. We feel it is paramount that resources are organised and labelled in a way that develops and encourages children’s flexible and independent use of materials and resources. The classroom will often include defined areas for learning for example: role play area (often linked to a topic or theme within their learning); writing area; art area; reading corner; construction area. Areas are created for display providing the opportunity to stimulate, reflect and celebrate children’s achievements. Our outdoor area offers children the opportunity to use different materials on different scales than when indoors as well as experience the natural world, changing weather and develop physical exuberance.

Religious Education

In line with other Catholic schools in the diocese we will centre our teaching and learning on the New Religious Education Directory (Clifton, Sept 2023) as well as incorporating other aspects of the liturgical year and prayer. In addition, there are school and class assemblies, morning and afternoon prayers, hymn practices and Masses.

Special Needs

Our Special Needs Policy gives details of the identification and provision made for those children who have special educational needs.

Children Looked After (CLA)

All staff at Holy Cross are aware of Children Looked After (CLA) in their classes. We ensure that they receive all possible support and encouragement as pupils who need special provision and positive discrimination, whilst preserving confidentiality and showing sensitivity and understanding.

Equal Opportunities

It is essential to our school ethos that all children should be given equal opportunities irrespective of the difference in culture or religion, ethnicity, family background, learning difficulties, ability, disabilities or gender. Please refer to our school Equal Opportunities Policy for further information.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Foundation Stage staff use pupil observations to inform assessment and planning. Observations help to identify children’s achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. This fostering of the children’s interests develops a high level of motivation for the children’s learning. When planning objectives within the Foundation Stage we use the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. We make regular assessments of children’s learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Observations are uploaded to target tracker and teachers assess children across the 6 terms against the statements for Nursery and Reception.

At the end of their Reception year in school the children's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals. Observations are also made on each child's characteristics of learning. These assessments are shared with parents and the Year 1 teachers at the end of the year. This ensures a smooth transition into Key Stage 1 for every child.

Recording and Reporting

Observation of children's learning in all seven areas of the curriculum is uploaded to target tracker. Children's own written work is recorded in their own Writing Journey. Each child's Writing Journey is in the form of a book. Parents are invited to share their child's Writing Journey in school throughout the year. Parents are also formally invited to a parents' evening each term. Reports, which are completed by teachers at the end of the year, are sent home to parents and passed on to the next teacher with summative assessments of all seven areas of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. A home/school reading record is kept to enable adults in the classroom and parents to communicate reading progress.

Parents/Carers as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- An information event for parents/carers in June where they receive information which highlights school start and finish times, uniform and informs the parents/carers of the schools vision and aims.
- An opportunity at the information event to talk to the Reception team and representatives from other areas of school life such as governors, SENCO, friends of the school, senior leaders.
- Asking parents/carers to sign permission slips for visits out of school, photographs of their child for assessment purposes and using the internet at school.
- Encouraging parents/carers to talk to their child's teacher if there are concerns.
- Inviting parents/carers to attend informal meetings providing information about areas of the curriculum e.g. Early Reading, Maths and Phonics.
- Ensuring children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during taster sessions.
- There is a formal meeting for parents/carers twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents / carers: topic related activities, class assemblies, Sports Day, family events etc.
- Informing parents/carers about the weekly learning intentions and activities and suggest ways to support children's learning at home.
- Written contact through reading diaries.
- Offering parents/carers opportunities to share in their child's learning through termly sessions spent in class with their child through Stay and Play.

Staffing

The staffing ratio is at least one teacher to every 30 children. Additional teaching and learning staff work with children to support their learning in the Foundation Stage.

Staff Training

The school has a commitment to sharing good practice at staff meetings and on school INSET days. All staff involved in The Foundation Stage is encouraged to attend courses to develop their knowledge and understanding as well as keep up to date with new initiatives. Staff performance management includes discussions and targets for developing provision.

The Role of the Phase Leader

The role of the Foundation Phase Leader is to:

- Take the lead in policy development and to monitor the implementation of the Statutory Framework for Early Years as the guidance for planning and assessment.
- Provide guidance and support to colleagues in the implementation of policies, planning, assessment and record keeping by means of meetings and by working alongside individual teachers.
- Monitor progress of children by observation of lessons, monitoring data, internal moderation and by informing the head teacher on action needed to improve the teaching and learning in the foundation stage.
- Prepare the Early Years Policy for the school in conjunction and consultation with the staff to ensure continuity and progression.
- Take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of Early Years resources
- Keep up to date with developments in Early Years and disseminate to colleagues.
- Deliver INSET training.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring will follow the school policy and timetable outlined in the S.D.P. The Foundation Stage Leader and the head teacher take responsibility for the monitoring of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the standards achieved by the children. Monitoring takes the form of:

- Lesson observation
- Subject lead monitoring
- Reviewing term plans
- Reviewing weekly plans
- Internal moderation
- Monitoring data from Target Tracker. Comparing school data with LEA and National results
- Discussion with pupils

Health and Safety

Regular inspections of the setting are carried out in line with the school's Health and Safety Policy. An annual risk assessment is carried out by the coordinator.

Review and Evaluation of the Policy

This policy was drawn up by the Foundation Phase Leader, working in consultation with the whole staff. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Early Years team. Its use and effectiveness will be supported and monitored by the Foundation Phase Leader, on behalf of the Headteacher, Head of School and Governors.