

Holy Cross RC Primary School



EYFS Policy

Signed _____ [Headteacher] Date October 2024

Signed _____ [Chair of Governors] Date October 2024

Next Review Date October 2027

Mission Statement

'The Mission of Catholic schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful.' (Pope Francis)

Our Ethos is:

God made us all unique

- To learn, live and grow
- To show good citizenship to all
- To be the best we can possibly be
- Showing Christ's love in all we do.

Our Core Values are:

- Here at Holy Cross we are a Catholic family rooted in Gospel values.
- Offering a safe, learning and nurturing environment within the community where all can grow.
- Leading the way in faith and prayer.
- "You are created in the image and likeness of God". We will celebrate your uniqueness, promoting inclusiveness and dignity.

- Celebrating cultural diversity and recognising religious diversity through...
- Respect, tolerance, love, justice, compassion, kindness forgiveness, honesty, charity, encouraging happiness, peace and hope.
- Our curriculum will equip our children to grow and develop fully into the young adults of the future.
- Striving for continuous improvement, success and achievement for all.
- Strengthening our local, wider and global family through good citizenship.

Vision Statement

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School we live by the gospel value of treating others as you would like to be treated.

Our vision is to strive to:

- *Provide the best education possible for all children in a warm and caring environment that enables every child to reach their full potential;*
- *Enable children to become positive citizens, independent, resilient, tolerant and respectful of others, ready to play their part in the local community and wider society;*
- *Ensure that every child feels safe, happy and valued.*

At Holy Cross we put children at the heart of everything we do.

Rationale

A child's first years in school provide the foundation for lifelong learning. Good learning habits and positive attitudes are fostered from the earliest stage, building on home-life experiences and the work of any pre-school settings. At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School we believe that we need to work together, alongside the children, their families and a range of other professionals to support the children in their learning. We also recognise that our children will begin school with a wide range of knowledge and experience, and we aim to draw upon and develop these skills throughout school.

We are committed to nourishing each child's self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence as well as developing children's knowledge and skills. We achieve this through a carefully planned environment, and range of learning opportunities that are both child initiated and adult led. As a team we place high importance on providing the children with a range of real-life, fun and challenging activities to develop their independence, and provide them with a sound knowledge and skills base across the seven areas of learning as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Aims

The early year's education we offer the children in our care is based upon the EYFS guidance and takes into account the following principles:

- To learn and develop a joy and enthusiasm for learning. This includes the skills to stay safe, be happy and healthy, to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution to society, and begin to understand the drive to achieve a well rounded education.
- To provide safe, happy and challenging learning environments, both inside and outside, where children can develop the skills and knowledge needed to become successful, confident and independent learners
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of the children in our care and opportunities that reflect the importance of all children
- To ensure rich and stimulating provision that enables children to develop their minds and bodies, and from which no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- To build upon what our children already know and can do, supporting and extending the development of all
- To prepare the children for a successful transition to Key Stage One, through effective partnership with KS1 teachers, and through the use of effective interactions with children and planning to support need and challenge.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- 1. A Unique Child**
- 2. Positive Relationships**
- 3. Enabling Environments**
- 4. Learning and Development**

1. A Unique Child

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School 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 and the environment that we create to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. Our teaching aims to build upon previous knowledge, and support, to enhance and develop the children's varying skills, knowledge and backgrounds.

Equal Opportunities

This policy is to be considered in line with our Equalities policy (published separately) and we will ensure that at all times we will seek to promote equal opportunities and good race relations, avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of ethnicity, disability or gender. Appropriate action will be taken in cases of harassment and discrimination.

We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all 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.

We meet the needs of our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support and extension as necessary;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children and their parents/carers are valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Further information is available within our Special Educational Needs/Inclusion and Gifted and Talented policies.

Welfare

In our Reception class teaching, learning and social development takes place through play and active learning in a secure environment in which children feel included, protected and valued. We believe that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist (see Behaviour Policy). We provide children with choices to help them develop these important life skills. Children should be allowed to take managed risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of all children;
- Promote good health, including oral health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs (see Good Behaviour Policy);
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have access to them are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose;
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

2. Positive Relationships

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent learners through warm, trusting relationships. Through holistic relationships children will respond positively to challenge and feel confident to try things out without fear of failure. All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop respectful, secure relationships with all children and their parents/carers, interacting positively and taking time to listen and communicate with them.

Positive Interactions

Effective teaching means systematically helping children to learn so that they make connections in their learning, are actively led forward, and can reflect on their learning. Practitioners observe children sensitively and respond appropriately to encourage and extend curiosity and learning. Through observation they discover what children like to do, and when they feel confident, scared or frustrated, and use this knowledge to support children taking their lead and direction from what children say or do. Children are taught about respecting themselves and each other, this includes understanding and recognising feelings and supporting children in developing their self regulation skills and techniques. Practitioners set an example through open and friendly professional relationships and by developing a good relationship with parents/carers.

Parents/Carers as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we highly value the contribution that they make. We welcome and value parent/carer contributions and aim to promote effective home/school links. All staff aim to be approachable and welcoming, developing good lines of communication, and reflecting on practice with parents and carers. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- Meeting and talking to parents/carers about their child before their child starts in our school
- Offering parents/carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and development, and sharing their child's "Learning Diary" on Tapestry
- Encouraging parents/carers to talk to their child's teachers about any concerns they may have as soon as they arise
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers. For example, fund raising days, themed activity days, assemblies and 'wow moments'
- Sending home a termly topic note detailing key learning for the term ahead
- Encouraging parents to complete tapestry observations relating to their child's achievements, which will be read out in class.

3. Enabling Environments

We recognise that the school environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. We aim to create and develop a learning environment which is rich and stimulating, providing a structure for teaching within which the children will learn through experimentation, exploration, and planning. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Planning

We aim to plan a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that incorporates children's different learning styles and is adapted to the individual's needs and interests, with a real balance between child initiated and adult directed tasks both indoors and outdoors. Planning should reflect that all areas (personal, social, emotional, physical and intellectual) are interrelated and learning activities should be planned and purposeful and may have outcomes drawn from across the seven curriculum areas.

We provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are planned, and activities that they plan or initiate themselves, building in opportunities for interventions by adults, which will engage children in the learning process and support them in making progress. We recognise that planning will need to be adapted and altered to reflect the children's needs and interests as identified through observations and monitoring, and will build upon the learning, dispositions and attitudes shown. The planning formats we use have been designed to reflect this and to allow for flexibility and spontaneity. Planning for each curriculum area is displayed in the classrooms to enable access by all practitioners working in the setting.

Assessment

The monitoring of each child's progress throughout the Foundation Stage is essential to ensure that they are making good progress and that issues in any areas of learning, whatever the cause, are identified. Each child will be assessed against the Foundation Stage Profile (using the e-profile) and individual information recorded in a 'Learning Diary'. Children are assessed regularly through:

- observations carried out while children are engaged in classroom activities, in order to gain an insight into children's interests, dispositions and what they can do
- observations carried out during focused group work/whole class teaching in order to assess children's level of understanding related to specific skills and concepts.
- Through quality interactions with adult and child in order to know if the children have met or have not met the milestones for their age range.

All observations, assessments and recordings are an integral part of teaching, as they inform future planning for children's needs, learning dispositions and interests, and form a basis for parent consultations three times a year (including parents' evenings and an end of year report). They are also used to set next steps and aid early identification of special needs, etc. On transfer to Key Stage 1 assessments against the Foundation Stage Profile will be passed on to each teacher and the Reception Teacher will liaise closely with the Year 1 teacher in order to give a clear picture of where each child is.

The Learning Environment

We strive to create an environment of trust, security and inclusion, which allows learning to take place through play, discovery, choice, decision making and the freedom to learn from mistakes. We have developed a clear classroom ethos which is:

- To provide an inclusive and diverse curriculum which every child can access whatever their gender, racial origin, culture, language or ability by using their skills, knowledge and experience to enrich their learning
- To nurture the whole child in all areas of development- social, emotional, physical, intellectual, moral, cultural and spiritual
- To establish a well organised, well-resourced classroom that encourages children to become increasingly independent
- To provide a challenging, stimulating, nurturing and positive environment within which every child feels secure, valued and happy enabling them to take risks in order to extend their learning
- To encourage children to be reflective and self-evaluating learners by providing them with opportunities to experiment and discover
- To encourage children to see themselves as successful through understanding, praise and encouragement from adults and each other
- To encourage children to be active learners through first-hand experience in meaningful contexts both indoors and outdoors
- To provide opportunities for the children to learn to co-operate, negotiate and work alongside each other.

The learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The environment is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as this encourages independent learning.

There is also a well-resourced outdoor area in the Foundation Stage. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant, and encourages development in all seven areas of learning.

4. Learning and Development

Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are all interconnected. We endeavour to provide opportunities to enhance each child's curiosity, motivation, persistence and independence through a challenging, enjoyable, meaningful and relevant curriculum with provision to incorporate the skills and knowledge that our children come to Holy Cross with. All children are encouraged to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence, self-management and self-regulation.

Curriculum

The Early Years Curriculum for the Foundation Stage is organised into seven areas of learning all of which are interrelated. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities.

1) Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This area of learning is about emotional well-being, knowing who you are and where you fit in and feeling good about yourself. It is also about developing respect for others, social competence and a positive disposition to learning. PSE development feeds into all subjects of the national curriculum.

2) Physical Development

This area of learning includes fine and gross motor activity which develops an awareness and increased control of children's own bodies. Physical Development leads into the National Curriculum for Physical Education. It is closely connected to the Literacy outcomes.

3) Communication and Language

This area of learning includes listening, attention and understanding and speaking. Communication and Language links directly into the English National Curriculum and It includes a big focus on adult-child interactions.

4) Literacy

This area of learning includes Reading and Writing, linking sounds to letters, simple words and sentences. It contains a strong emphasis on pre-reception Literacy learning, and the link between language comprehension and later reading and writing.

5) Mathematics

This area focuses strongly on the importance of embedding a deep understanding of number to 10, including the patterns and relationships between these numbers and

developing spatial reasoning skills. Children should be encouraged to develop a positive attitude to and interest in Maths, not being afraid to make mistakes

6) Understanding the World

This area provides examples of ways in which children make sense of their physical world and their community, such as by visiting parks, libraries and museums, and meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. The importance of experiencing a broad selection of books and rhymes to foster the understanding of 'our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world' and associated vocabulary is included.

7) Expressive Arts and Design

This area of learning provides regular opportunities for children to engage with the arts and develop a cultural awareness, as well as hands on creative experiences.

Teaching and Learning Style

Teaching and learning is undertaken indoors and outdoors and should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Positive attitudes and disposition towards their learning, in particular an enthusiasm for knowledge and learning and a confidence in their ability to become successful learners;
- Social skills by providing opportunities that enable them to learn how to co-operate and work harmoniously alongside and with each other and to listen to each other;
- Attention skills, self regulation and persistence, in particular their capacity to concentrate on their own play or on group tasks;
- Reading and writing by providing opportunities for all children to explore, enjoy, learn about and use words and numbers;
- Physical development by providing opportunities for all children to develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills and to increase their understanding of how their bodies work and what they need to do to be healthy and safe.

Play and active learning in the Foundation Stage

A balance of explorative and structured activity is a key to children's social, emotional and educational development. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

They are encouraged to select and undertake free exploration of equipment and materials, thus developing creativity and imagination. Adults encourage children to talk about their learning and extend and support their understanding.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas

and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the setting to extend their learning.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the governing body, and will be reviewed regularly.

Conclusion

Through this we aim to develop children who are happy, confident, curious individuals, interested in life and enthusiastic about the challenges they encounter.

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