



*Jesus is the centre of our lives,  
Our learning and friendships,  
In a safe, happy and caring community,  
Where all are welcome.*

## **HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY**

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION POLICY September 2024**

**TO BE REVIEWED September 2026**

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

*'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'*

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year. In our school children join us in this final year, in the September of the academic year of which they turn five.

## INTENT

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, 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 and we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential.

The curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning and to provide first hand learning experiences, whilst allowing children to build resilience, ambition and a lifelong love of learning. Throughout their time in EYFS, the children develop a sense of belonging to our school community, ready to transition to year one in the following academic year.

We *intend* to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing indoor and outdoor environment which supports learning and is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.
- Plan opportunities for children to learn through planned first hand, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.
- Plan for our children's interests and provide opportunities throughout our EYFS curriculum to support learning, consolidate and deepen knowledge and ensure children meet their next steps.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers, and value their contributions, to encourage independent, happy learners who thrive in school and reach their full potential from their various starting points.
- Ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into year one.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Throughout the EYFS at Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, we follow the Early Years statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. This framework specifies the requirement for learning and development in the Early Years and provides prime and specific areas of learning that we must cover in our curriculum.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of seven areas of learning:

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

These seven areas are divided into the prime areas and the specific areas. The prime areas are 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development', 'Communication and Language' and 'Physical development.' These areas are fundamental throughout the EYFS, work together, and move through to support development in all other areas. The specific areas are 'Literacy', 'Mathematics', 'Understanding the World' and 'Expressive Arts and Design.' These areas develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS (reception year).

Children in EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active and through creative and critical thinking. We ensure that activities support these characteristics of effective learning.

We have a half termly topic-based curriculum, delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. All areas of the EYFS curriculum are followed and planned for to ensure that there is a broad, balanced and progressive learning environment and curriculum. We promote a love of learning through real-life experiences and plan for opportunities to build on prior learning.

In order to **implement** our intent, we have:

- A curriculum which is broad and balanced and which builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills of all pupils from individual starting points.
- Quality first teaching across all areas of the curriculum, meeting the needs of all pupils.
- Meaningful learning experiences, developing each pupil's characteristics of learning.
- High quality interactions with adults that demonstrate and impact on the progress of all pupils.
- Careful assessment opportunities through observations, which are recorded on 'Tapestry' and shared with parents.
- Developed an effective, stimulating and engaging learning environment that is set up so that pupils can access all areas of learning both indoors and outdoors.
- Systematic approaches to teaching reading to ensure all children learn to read. High quality phonics teaching using a systematic Synthetic phonics programme is started as soon as children begin reception.

- Effective and focused intervention provided for those children who are finding learning challenging, and are not on track to meet expectations.
- An early years lead who monitors teaching and learning to improve standards and outcomes.
- Close links with local pre-schools which support a smooth and settled transition into school.
- Strong parental partnerships, empowering parents to support learning at home, share their learning and celebrate successes, and be involved in school life.
- Planned opportunities for outdoor learning through Forest schools and use of the outdoor school environment.

## **Planning**

### **Long Term Planning**

The planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. The early learning Goals, development matters statements and educational programmes are distributed over the terms to determine a broad and balanced coverage. At the beginning of each term, parents receive a newsletter outlining the theme and the objectives which will be covered.

### **Medium Term Planning**

In medium term planning we address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for that term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities and activities and experiences for each area of learning are identified.

### **Short Term Planning**

Within short term planning we identify specific learning objectives, activities, adaptations, deployment of adults and resources to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. This allows for flexibility in response to individual needs.

## **Assessment, Recording and Monitoring**

### **Formative Assessment**

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements. This may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, baseline assessment, annotated examples of work, photo's, videos and information from parents. Children have an online 'learning journey' in which this evidence is stored. These learning journeys are shared with parents and are updated regularly. Parents are also able to contribute to these learning journeys, sharing their child's achievements with school staff.

### **Summative Assessment**

Each child has an online 'learning journey' and individual record which contains all of the formative assessment undertaken and demonstrates progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Progress is tracked throughout the year by the class teacher for each child. The class teacher also undertakes in-house and local cluster group moderation.

### **Baseline Assessment**

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception.

### Assessment at the end of the EYFS

In the final term of the year, the EYFS profile must be completed for each child. Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals.

### Staffing and Organisation

There are two reception classes at Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, with a maximum intake of sixty children. We maintain an adult/pupil ratio of 1:15 within the reception year as there is a teaching assistant in each class throughout the school day.

In both classes, the children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play both in the classrooms and in the custom built shared outdoor area. This time is supported by an adult, who acts as a facilitator to the child's learning.

### The Learning Environment

We aim to provide an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn. The learning environment is organised to allow children to learn securely and safely. Activities are planned for both the indoor and the enclosed outdoor area, enabling the children to develop in all areas of learning.

The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. These areas are arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment

### Liaison with pre-school settings and Induction

- During the summer term 2, pre-school children who will be starting school in September are invited to make at least two one hour visits to the reception class.
- During the summer term 2, there is an induction meeting where parents/carers have the opportunity to meet the class teacher, head teacher, governors and school PTA. In this meeting parents/carers receive information regarding the early year's curriculum and school routines. Parents/carers are given a pack containing documents to be returned to school. Uniform, reading folders and PE bags are available for purchase at this meeting.
- In September a starting school meeting/home visit is held by the reception class teachers to introduce parents/carers to the school, discuss reception procedures and discuss any specific requirements a child may need.

During the induction period in September, children are split into two groups within each class. On the first day group 1 attends the morning session and group 2 attends the afternoon session. On the second day group 2 attends the morning session and group 1 attends the afternoon session. On the third day all children attend full time, unless it is mutually agreed with the head teacher and reception class teacher that the child will benefit from a continuation of the part time arrangement.

When the children begin school they spend the majority of time in their own outdoor area and classrooms. When the class teachers feel that the children are ready, they join the rest of school for playtimes, lunchtimes, assemblies and Mass.

## Reception to Year 1 transition

The reception and the year 1 class teachers work together to ensure that the transition from the early year's foundation stage to Key Stage 1 is as smooth as possible. Continuous provision is continued throughout the first two terms of year one.

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and un-dressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year.
- The reception teachers plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
- Reception children meet the year one teachers during assembly, playtime and during other whole school activities throughout the year.
- Reception children visit their new classes and teachers for an hour session in July.
- Individual early years profiles are passed on to the year 1 teachers.
- The reception and year one teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July. Year one teachers are given a copy of the profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. These inform a dialogue about each child's stage of development and learning needs.
- Where possible, the children in year one continue to enjoy practical learning experiences which gradually become more formalised towards the end of the academic year.
- The 'Little Wandle' approach to phonics and spelling is continued into year one.

## Home/School Links

We recognise that when parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. We aim to develop a successful partnership by:

- Outlining the reception curriculum to parents/carers, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their children's learning at home.
- Sending home termly newsletters to outline the curriculum coverage and activities that will take place.
- Providing parents/carers with an information booklet before their child begins school. This contains information about the school procedures, routines, curriculum, lunches and activities that parents can undertake at home to support their children.
- Sharing their children's progress and work at two parent consultation evenings throughout the year. Short reports are sent home prior to these meetings, sharing some simple attainment information.
- Giving parents the opportunity to share their children's progress by looking at and contributing to their child's learning journey.
- Organising a home visit the week before the children begin school. These have proven to be invaluable and support children to settle and form relationships with staff quickly.
- Inviting parents/carers to help in the reception classes or other classes in the school and to accompany children on school visits.
- Encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night, to help their child learn words sent home and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.
- Providing a short summary of learning that has taken place each week, in order to support parents to help their children at home.
- Providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the EYFS Early Learning Goals.

## **Equality**

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, equality considerations are central to all that we do. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to preventing all unlawful discrimination whether against individuals or groups on grounds of age, race, gender, physical or learning disability. Equality is simply not a minority issue. It is important to everyone.

At Holy Cross Catholic primary Academy we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

## **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. Additional adult support may be provided for children with special medical needs, thus increasing the adult/pupil ratio.

One plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's special educational needs policy.

## **Welfare**

In order to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the statutory framework for early year's foundation stage 2021 we:

- Create high quality settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.
- Train all staff to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, and ensure that all staff have an up to date knowledge of safe guarding issues.
- Ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles.
- Ensure that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. We ensure that children are adequately supervised and deploy staff to ensure children's needs are met.
- Promote the good health of children attending the setting, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Provide the children with meals, snacks and drinks which are healthy, balanced and nutritious. Fresh drinking water is available and accessible at all times.
- Have and implement a behaviour management policy, and procedures.
- Ensure that the premises, including outdoor spaces are fit for purpose and secure.
- Ensure that spaces, furniture, equipment and toys are safe for purpose and kept clean.
- Maintain records and obtain and share information to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and to help ensure the needs of all children are met.
- Keep children safe while on outings, and obtain written parental permission for children to take part.

## **Safeguarding**

Our school takes its responsibilities of safeguarding children very seriously. All staff will ensure at all times that the safety and well-being of children is the first consideration. Staff will consider the health and safety aspects of any activities offered to children and check the suitability of any visitors engaged to work with the children.

### **IMPACT**

The impact of the EYFS curriculum is reflected in having well rounded, happy and confident children transitioning into Year 1. We measure progress and children's learning across the year through formative and summative assessment which are based on the teacher's knowledge of the child, their learning journeys and exercise books and observations uploaded on to Tapestry, and judgements are moderated both internally and externally with local schools.

Through our implementation, the ***impact*** is that:

- Children demonstrate high levels of engagement and motivation, which supports them to become lifelong learners.
- Children feel happy and safe and enjoy coming to school.
- All children access a balanced and challenging curriculum, regardless of their background, needs or abilities.
- Children demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Children are supported by adults that are well trained and passionate about providing the best education for every child.
- Evidence of children's achievements are recorded in Online Learning Journeys (Tapestry)
- Formative assessments inform future planning and ensure that all pupils build on their current knowledge and skills.
- There is evidence of strong links with parents.
- Children make strong progress from their starting points and are offered a broad curriculum which meets their unique needs.
- The percentage of children achieving the GLD within the EYFSP is in line with or above the National Average.
- Children are ready to transition from the EYFS to the National Curriculum in Year One.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the head teacher and EYFS leader, and will be reviewed in two years.

**EYFS co-ordinator:** Mrs Katy Peters