



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

At Holy Cross we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum to inspire children through an imaginative and immersive approach, ensuring that the children are happy and enthusiastic to learn. We foster and nurture the children’s interests and curiosities by giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. Our school Mission Statement plays an important part in our hope and expectations for the children in the Foundation Stage.

“Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly with your God.” (Micah 6)

Curriculum

In Foundation, we follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Document. There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational provision in our early years setting. All seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children’s learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. The EYFS curriculum is founded on learning and development and is best achieved through valuing the unique child, positive relationships and enabling environments. The prime areas are crucial for learning and development, igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive in their learning. We also support children in the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Area of Learning and Development	Aspect
Prime Areas	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Making relationships
	Self-confidence and self-awareness
	Managing feelings and behaviour
Physical Development	Moving and Handling
	Health and self-care
Communication and Language	Listening and attention
	Understanding
	Speaking
Specific areas	
Literacy	Reading
	Writing
Mathematics	Numbers
	Shape, space and measure
Understanding the World	People and communities
	The world



	Technology
Expressive Arts and Design	Exploring and using media and materials
	Being imaginative

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage Document also includes the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The three characteristics are:

- Playing and Exploring – Children investigate and experience things and events around them and ‘have a go’.
- Active Learning – Children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.
- Creating and Thinking Critically – Children have and develop their own ideas, making links through experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are regularly assessed through observations and planned for throughout our Foundation Unit. In our Foundation Unit, the Characteristics of Effective Learning are shown and celebrated using dinosaurs. This is in keeping with the whole schools 5 Rs of Learning (Reasoned, Resilient, Reflective, Responsible and Relational learners), which celebrates children’s attitudes towards learning.

Learning through play

“Play is the highest form of research” –Albert Einstein

Learning through play is an important and integral part of the Early Years Curriculum and our Foundation Unit. We believe that children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. We use prior assessment of the children’s skills and knowledge as the starting points for these experiences. We carefully plan the environment and opportunities for learning based on the children’s interests. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Achieving and maintaining the balance between child-initiated and adult led activities is very important to us.

Child-initiated activities

We follow children’s interests and develop their learning and skills through setting 5 Weekly WOW’s which the children are encouraged to achieve through child-initiated activities. During ‘learning talk’ children discuss what they are going to choose to learn to do in their COOL (Choose Our Own Learning) time. They talk with partners and then as a class. We encourage the children to think about how to achieve WOWs and further their learning through high-end questioning. This is continued and encouraged by all adults supporting and observing the children’s learning throughout COOL time. Learning evaluations take place at the end of COOL time. This is where we display photos on the IWB that show the children’s learning that has taken place that morning or afternoon. Children are encouraged to talk about what they learnt, how they achieved it and what they think they could do better next time. We encourage peer assessment at this time. Children really take control of their own learning and become more confident to learn and grow through independence.



Adult led teaching

All adult led teaching supports children's learning on their journey towards independence. We start every day with a phonics session, helping children to read and write competently. We have a daily guided reading carousel which is used to further develop and apply the skills taught in phonics.

We have daily literacy sessions based on Talk for Writing, where we allow children to imitate a piece of text and innovate it. In Foundation, story time is very important to us, as we promote reading for pleasure in our classroom through a variety of text types. Children also have daily number time, allowing the children to experience number, shape, space and measure.

PE is used to develop children's fundamental movement skills, as we teach children to learn to move and move to learn, valuing the development of the whole child. We also have weekly RE sessions that we incorporate into our play led activities and encourage children to be a part of our worshipping community.

All adult led teaching is carefully planned and tailored for each group using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills and ability. Planning is changed and tailored daily and in response to the result of taught sessions, ensuring all teaching and learning is relevant and challenging for each child.

Relationship with Parents and Carers

We endeavor to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we have a significant impact on a child's learning. We warmly welcome and actively encourage parents to participate in their child's education and care in numerous ways. We start with an open door policy, which allows parents to come and speak to a member of the Foundation team every morning and evening. We have regular open evenings, where we invite parents into school to explore our learning environment and share their child's learning journey with them. We regularly invite parents into the classroom to allow the parents to observe phonics and number time sessions, which help in the understanding of how we, as a school, teach these particular skills, with the aim of this being continued when they go home.

We have been developing Stay and Play sessions, which have provided the parents with the opportunity to take part in a variety of adult-led activities.

Transitions

Transitions are very important to us and are carefully planned for. The first transition from Nursery to Foundation, is a big jump and can be very daunting for both parents and their children. We aim, as a school, to ensure that any transition is as smooth and as comfortable as possible. In order to do this we invite the parents into a transition meeting during the summer term, we also invite the children to three transition afternoons, which provides an opportunity to get to know the children and for them to get to know us. We send 'All About Me' booklets home for the parents or carers and children to fill out and hand in on the last transition afternoon. Over the summer break we send a post card to each child and say what we have in class ready for them in September, based on each individual child's interests. In the summer term, the Year 1 teachers meet with the Foundation teachers to discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition in to Year 1.



This discussion helps to support the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate personalized curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. During this transition, the children are invited to attend a transition afternoon to spend more time getting to know their new class teacher.

Safeguarding

Children learn best when they are happy, safe and feel secure. We aim to facilitate this through the continuous development of positive relationships between children and staff as well as relationships with their peers. We follow the Safeguarding and Welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance (2014). We have a very clear Safeguarding Policy, which is available on our website. Our Safeguarding officers are Mr Paul Cotter (Head teacher), Mrs Potterton (Head of Learning) and Mrs Sperring (Foundation Governor).

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