



Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Our Mission Statement

'Love Jesus, Love learning, Love each other'

We believe that every child is a unique creation of God.
Within a happy, inclusive and secure environment, following
Gospel Values, we will work together to inspire and
nurture every child.

We will strive to instill a lifelong love of God, of learning and of
each other and an aspiration towards high personal
achievement.

Policy Title	Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)		
Last Review date	08/09/26	Next Review Date	30/07/26
Responsibility	Headteacher – Mrs M Underhill EYFS Lead – Miss F Goldsmith		
Change history	Rewritten to reflect the changes made to teaching and planning.	05/07/25	

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- A loving, inclusive and stimulating environment rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the values of the Catholic faith.
- A broad and balanced curriculum that equips all children with the knowledge and skills they need to make good progress throughout school and in later life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning, ensuring that every child makes good progress and that no child is left behind.
- Strong and supportive partnerships between staff and parents and/or carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included, valued and supported.
- Strong foundations for lifelong learning, preparing children for their future educational journey and enabling them to become kind, responsible and faithful members of the wider community.

2. Legislation

The Early Years Foundation Stage - [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#) - is based upon four overarching principles:

- **Every child is a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.**
- **Children learn and develop well in enabling environments**, with teaching and support from adults who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- **The importance of learning and development.** Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

3. Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to equip children with the knowledge, self-belief and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. We carefully observe each child, taking account of their individual needs, interests and stage of development. This understanding informs the planning of a sequenced, engaging and appropriately challenging curriculum and learning experience across all areas of learning.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, which together provide the essential knowledge, skills and experiences that support every child as they grow, learn and flourish. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

Three areas, known as the prime areas, are particularly important for children's learning and for forming relationships. They provide the foundation for children to thrive and support learning across all areas of the curriculum.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are also supported in four specific areas of learning, which help to strengthen and develop the three prime areas and ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm. The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Woven throughout the EYFS curriculum at Holy Family are the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These describe the different ways in which children engage with their learning and provide an important foundation for their development.

- **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 between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

These characteristics underpin how we observe and reflect on each child's development and inform how we adapt our teaching and provision accordingly. Supporting children to develop positive learning behaviours and understanding the context of their play are essential in recognising and supporting their individual learning and development.

4. Planning

To ensure effective learning across all areas of the EYFS curriculum, activities and experiences are carefully planned to support each child's development, with particular attention to the three prime areas of learning.

We consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child, using this information, alongside regular observations and assessments, to plan challenging, enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences. Planning is responsive and continually adapted to reflect children's evolving interests, needs and developmental progress. Our long-term plan provides an overarching structure and progression, while remaining flexible and responsive to children's emerging needs.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability (SEND), we consider whether additional or specialist support is required and, where appropriate, liaise with relevant external agencies and services to ensure that appropriate provision is in place.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways in which children learn. We incorporate the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning into our practice to support each child's individual learning and development.

5. Teaching

Teaching in the Early Years at Holy Family is focused on providing a broad and balanced curriculum that supports each child's development. We provide a carefully planned balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning experiences within a language-rich environment that promotes curiosity, independence and a love of learning.

Phonics and Early Reading

We use the **Read Write Inc. (RWI)** phonics programme as our systematic, synthetic phonics programme. This structured approach supports children in developing the fundamental skills needed for reading and writing from the beginning of their school journey.

- Daily RWI sessions begin as soon as children are ready, usually from the second week of the first term.
- Teaching focuses on phoneme recognition, blending for reading, segmenting for spelling and developing fluency, building children's confidence and accuracy over time.
- Children's progress is regularly assessed so that teaching and support can be appropriately matched to their developing knowledge and skills.
- High-quality reading books are closely matched to children's phonic knowledge, enabling them to practise decoding independently and experience success and confidence as readers.
- Children also engage in storytelling, shared reading, discussion and a wide range of high-quality texts to develop vocabulary, comprehension, listening and communication skills, while fostering a lifelong love of books and reading.
- Additional support and targeted interventions are provided for children who require further support to make expected progress. These are carefully planned and reviewed to help children address gaps in their phonics knowledge and secure strong foundations in early reading.

Writing and early mark making

Children are given time, space and attention to explore mark-making, mathematical graphics, drawing and writing across both indoor and outdoor environments. Carefully chosen, engaging resources support children to make independent choices, enabling them to represent their ideas using the medium that best suits their purpose. Children's imagination, self-expression and ideas are highly valued and provide important starting points for practitioners when planning learning experiences.

One of our key drivers for early literacy is **Drawing Club**, which captivates children's imagination through storytelling, illustration and shared narratives. It brings together vocabulary, creativity, mark-making and oracy in a joyful and inclusive experience. Drawing Club supports children in developing a

love of stories, confidence in language and early writing skills in a way that is accessible, engaging and inspiring.

At Holy Family, we use the rich narratives explored through Drawing Club as a foundation for developing children's emerging writing skills. Through modelled teaching, guided dictation and targeted adult support, children learn to communicate their ideas through marks, words, phrases and sentences, with increasing confidence and independence. These opportunities build on children's developing phonics knowledge, vocabulary and oral language, enabling them to apply their learning purposefully and meaningfully.

Mathematics

In mathematics, we follow the **White Rose Maths** and **Mastering Number** programmes to support a clear and well-structured progression in mathematical knowledge and understanding. Daily adult-led sessions provide focused teaching, while carefully planned activities and continuous provision enable children to consolidate, apply and deepen their understanding. Our mathematics provision is practical, engaging and embedded within meaningful contexts, enabling children to explore key concepts through both structured sessions and purposeful play. Continuous provision further develops mathematical thinking through everyday routines, hands-on problem-solving and purposeful adult interactions and questioning.

The Wider Curriculum

At Holy Family, we provide a rich and varied curriculum that supports children's development across all seven areas of learning set out in the EYFS framework. Alongside early reading, writing and mathematics, our curriculum provides rich opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, curiosity, creativity and compassion.

Learning experiences are planned through high-quality continuous provision, enhancements and adult-guided interactions, allowing children to make meaningful connections in their learning and explore their interests in depth. Carefully designed indoor and outdoor environments promote exploration, independence and problem-solving. At Holy Family, we prioritise children's spiritual and moral development in line with our Catholic ethos, providing regular opportunities for prayer, reflection and developing an understanding of their relationship with God and with others.

6. Assessment

At Holy Family, ongoing assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. We observe children to develop a clear understanding of their knowledge, skills, interests and developmental needs. These observations, alongside interactions with children and information shared by parents and/or carers, are used to inform teaching, provision and future planning.

Within the first six weeks of starting Reception, all eligible children complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The RBA provides a baseline assessment of children's starting points in communication and language, literacy and mathematics. It is a statutory assessment and is distinct from the EYFS Profile.

At the end of the Reception year, we complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) for each child. The EYFS Profile assesses children against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) across the seven areas of learning. For each ELG, teachers make a professional judgement about whether the child is:

- Meeting the expected level of development ('expected')
- Not yet reaching the expected level of development ('emerging')

The EYFS Profile is a summative assessment based on practitioners' ongoing knowledge, observations and interactions with each child throughout the Reception year. It is not a test and the ELGs do not form the curriculum; rather, they provide an assessment of children's development at the end of the EYFS.

Assessment judgements are informed by the professional knowledge of the child and, where appropriate, discussions with parents and/or carers. Results are shared with families to ensure they remain informed about their child's development and progress.

EYFS Profile judgements are moderated internally to promote consistency and confidence in assessment. We may refer to Development Matters, which is non-statutory guidance supporting practitioners in delivering the EYFS curriculum. EYFS Profile data is submitted to the local authority in accordance with statutory requirements.

7. Working with parents and carers

Recognising the essential role that parents and/or carers play as their child's first and most enduring educators, we are committed to working in partnership with families and involving them throughout their child's school journey. We foster these positive partnerships through a variety of approaches, including:

- Introductory sessions to welcome families into the school community and provide information about starting school.
- Home visits to build positive relationships and support a smooth transition into school.
- 'Look in and Learn' sessions, where parents and/or carers can join and participate in learning experiences.
- Reading books and phonics materials shared between home and school to support continuity of learning and encourage regular reading at home.
- Talking Homework, providing prompts to encourage meaningful discussion between children and their families about their learning and experiences.
- Parent workshops, including sessions on phonics and mathematics, to develop parents' and carers' understanding and confidence in supporting learning at home.
- Parent consultations twice a year, alongside mid-year and end-of-year reports, to share information about children's development, progress and next steps.

Through these initiatives, we aim to build strong, collaborative relationships with families that support each child's learning, development and well-being. We value the knowledge and expertise that parents and/or carers bring and recognise that effective communication and partnership are essential in supporting each child to flourish.

8. Inclusion and SEND

At Holy Family, we are committed to providing an inclusive learning environment where every child is valued, respected and supported to reach their full potential. We recognise that children develop at different rates and that their needs may vary throughout their early years.

We are proactive in identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), ensuring that appropriate adaptations, strategies, interventions and resources are put in place to meet individual needs. Our approach is guided by the **SEND Code of Practice (2015)** and the principles of early identification, early support and inclusive practice.

We work closely with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, external agencies and professionals to understand each child's needs and to plan, implement and review appropriate

support. Where additional provision is required, this may include personalised targets or support plans as part of the graduated approach to meeting children's needs.

Through careful planning, appropriate scaffolding, reasonable adjustments and a nurturing environment, we seek to enable all children to access and engage with the EYFS curriculum to the greatest extent possible. Where a child requires a more personalised approach, we adapt the curriculum, provision and learning experiences to reflect their individual needs and abilities. We support all children to participate meaningfully in school life and to thrive as valued members of our school community.

9. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise 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 follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework**, alongside **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)** and our school's safeguarding and child protection policy. We provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We ensure that the appropriate statutory staff ratios are maintained in accordance with the EYFS framework, taking account of the needs of all children and ensuring their safety and well-being.

Safer recruitment and suitability

When recruiting staff, we follow the procedures set out in the current EYFS framework and KCSIE regarding the suitability of adults working with children. This includes appropriate identity checks, references, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and other required vetting processes. Records relating to staff qualifications, suitability and checks are maintained in accordance with statutory requirements and our school policies.

Paediatric first aid

We ensure that at least one person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) qualification is on the premises and available at all times when children are present. A person with an appropriate PFA qualification also accompanies children on outings, in accordance with EYFS requirements. Staff who are required to hold PFA qualifications to meet the relevant EYFS requirements are supported to maintain these qualifications as necessary.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is responsible for safeguarding and child protection. The DSL works in accordance with the EYFS safeguarding requirements, KCSIE and local safeguarding procedures.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Liaising with local authority children's social care services, the police and other relevant agencies, and with the local safeguarding partners where appropriate.
- Providing support, advice and guidance to staff on safeguarding matters and responding to concerns about children.
- Ensuring that safeguarding concerns are appropriately recorded, reported and followed up.
- Ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively and kept under review.

- Ensuring that staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and understand how to recognise, respond to and report concerns about children.
- Maintaining a strong safeguarding culture in which the safety and welfare of children are prioritised.

All practitioners have a responsibility to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm or may be experiencing difficulties in their life at home, in school or elsewhere. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and follow the school's procedures for recording and reporting concerns.

10. Transition

At Holy Family, we recognise that transitions are significant events in a child's early life and can have an important impact on their well-being, development and sense of security. We are committed to ensuring that all transitions—whether into Reception, within the EYFS or on to Year 1—are carefully planned and sensitively managed to support every child's individual needs and readiness for change.

When children join our Reception class, we provide a range of opportunities to help them and their families become familiar with the school and settle confidently. These may include introductory sessions, home visits, opportunities to meet staff and other children, and phased starts where appropriate. We work closely with parents and/or carers and, where relevant, children's previous early years settings to develop an understanding of each child's background, interests, strengths, development and individual needs. This information helps us to plan an appropriate and supportive transition into school.

Transitions within the EYFS are also carefully managed to ensure continuity and emotional security. Staff share relevant information about children's learning, development and needs and work together to ensure that children experience consistency in relationships, routines and provision.

As children prepare to move into Year 1, Reception and Year 1 staff work closely together to support continuity and progression in learning. This includes professional dialogue, sharing information about each child's development and learning needs, and providing opportunities for children to become familiar with their new routines, environment and staff. Where appropriate, transitional activities and shared experiences are used to help children make a smooth, positive and confident transition to the next stage of their education.

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes to the EYFS framework or statutory guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

Last reviewed: September 2026

Next review due: September 2027

Approved by: Mrs M Underhill/LGC