



Part of the Minster Trust for Education



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to summarise the philosophy and ethos of the Early Years Education for children in Holy Trinity Infant School.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DCSF, 2024).

Aim

Our aim at Holy Trinity is to encourage each child to develop their full potential by gaining confidence and independence in a caring and stimulating environment. The school vision: *Together we grow to be the best that God created us to be*’ is embedded throughout our EYFS setting.

Every child deserved the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. In partnership with parents/carers we enable children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

Provision

Children of reception age are in the Foundation Stage and work towards Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in readiness for the Y1 curriculum. We cover all Prime and Specific Areas of learning weekly. We endeavour to make good use of our indoor and outdoor learning environments. We expect high standards of behaviour and encourage good relationships with children and adults. We follow the Rainbow Rules which are deeply embedded in our school values.

The four principles of EYFS

- **A Unique Child** – developing resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured individuals.
- **Positive Relationships** - supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- **Enabling Environments** - where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual interests and needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- **Learning and Development** - An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year’s provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

A Unique Child

At Holy Trinity we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. We understand that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates and join us on their own learning path. All children are included and valued equally. 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.

Development

At Holy Trinity, we constantly strive to create an educational experience that enables the ALL pupils to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their needs. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of children who are more able; children from all social and cultural backgrounds; children with special educational needs; children with disabilities; children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. It is our firm belief that all children should be given the opportunity and support to thrive and learn.

Inclusion

Each individual child's needs and qualities are recognised and valued at Holy Trinity. Specific needs are met appropriately, showing an awareness of the individual's stage of development. All our children are treated as individuals and have access to all provisions available, with appropriate adaptations as required.

Assessments consider contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Staff may be aware of children with additional needs through their own observations, parental information, or the involvement from outside agencies. We work with parents and preschool settings prior to entry, which helps us initially get to know each child and the provision we need to put in place. Children with additional needs may require careful monitoring and extra help. An Early Years Support Plan may need to be put in place. Parents will meet with staff to discuss how this will look and will always be part of this process. A child may need to access additional learning programmes, carry out some specific activities, or meet with one of our specialist outside agency staff. At all times we will work with the parents/carers and children to ensure good progress is being made. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and further support can be accessed through Mrs Thompson (Head Teacher and SENCo).

We meet the needs of all 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.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills.

- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- Planning lessons, wherever possible, in a multi-sensory way so that the various activities will cater for all pupils in the spirit of inclusion.

Settling In

At Holy Trinity, children may start on a part-time basis the term after they turn 4. They can attend the sessions that we offer and any extra that they may want/need. For children who are due to start school in September we offer taster sessions in the summer term so they can familiarise themselves with the setting and the teachers. The class teacher regularly visits the pre-schools which feed into the Reception class and will go to meet and get to know the children before they start school. We share relevant information before they enter school, this ensures parents/carers, support staff and the Reception teacher work effectively together to support children's learning and development and a smooth transition into school.

Pupil Premium

We ensure that we quickly identify children who are entitled to both Pupil Premium and Early Years Pupil Premium. Through our own baseline assessment, we ascertain in which areas children are attaining and how we can further support through resources, expertise, or intervention. Progress is rigorously monitored and tracked.

Safe-guarding and Welfare

"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."

(Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024).

At Holy Trinity, all children have the right to feel safe and well. The safety of our children is paramount. We aim to provide a high-quality environment which is welcoming, safe and stimulating; where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We encourage the children to take risks in their play and their learning, and we support them by helping them to recognise and negotiate any difficulties they may face. We aim to protect and nurture the wellbeing of all children.

Within the Early Years we ensure that our current practice and provision complies with the welfare requirements as stated in the Ofsted Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

Our team works collaboratively to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- Promote good 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.
- Ensure the legal ratios of children to adults is maintained.
- Ensure all adults who work with the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.

- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.

Positive Relationships

Parents 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/carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We encourage parents through: -

- An effective and comprehensive transition period to support children and their families.
- An induction meeting for new parents/carers.
- Parent workshops to help parents understand how they can support their child's learning.
- Providing an open-door policy for parents/carers to keep informed.
- Parents' Evenings each term.
- Half termly class newsletter about what the children are learning and how they can help.
- Receiving a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Providing each child with a reading log that goes home with them every day and parents are encouraged to make positive comments on their child's reading at home.
- Support for bilingual families.
- Support and advice for parents/carers including those with children with SEND.
- Helping links to other agencies e.g. health, faith groups, speech therapists, social services, housing, Springboard meetings;
- Parent Teacher Association (PTFA) and fundraising/social events.

'Key Person'

In our Foundation Stage the teacher is the "key person" for all children, supported by the teaching assistant. 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. The 'Key Person' is for the personal and emotional needs for each child, particularly during the settling in period. Both the classroom teacher and teaching assistant are equally aware of the child's learning, development, and care. At Holy Trinity, the whole school ethos of building on positive relationships is developed, not only between the child, parents/carers, and staff, but also between the pupils themselves. This is promoted through: -

- PSED activities and dedicated circle time sessions.
- Collaborative working on class activities.
- Small group activities
- Playing and learning together

Parents are very welcome in our school. They are encouraged to volunteer to support activities and reading tasks throughout the school day, in line with our safeguarding procedures. Staff members are available to discuss any concerns at the end of the school day. Appointments may be required if an extended discussion is required.

Enabling Environments

At Holy Trinity Infant School, we aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure, and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor environment, that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision and enhanced provision, and the outdoor environment, which has a variety of resources for the children to engage with. The children become confident working within the different areas and accessing a wide variety of resources.

Play-based learning is paramount, and children direct their own learning, within the environment, from carefully planned opportunities. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further learning.

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow the children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children can find and locate equipment and resources independently. This allows them to develop as independent learners by following their own schemas and fascinations. Children can access a range of self-directed challenges and activities alongside structured adult-led learning experiences.

We recognise the importance of open-ended experiences to promote purposeful and challenging play. The teacher and teaching assistant may become involved and extend this play as appropriate using inspiring language, and scaffolding. They further use these observations and interactions to enhance provision and extend individual learning.

The environment is divided into these areas:

- home corner/role-play
- quiet reading area
- writing area
- maths area
- creative workshop
- malleable/messy area
- sand
- water
- construction
- small world
- blocks and loose parts
- table-top activities
- funky fingers

Learning and Development

At Holy Trinity we recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. We understand that young children achieve well when learning is engaging and well matched to their interests and previous learning. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected. Our long-term planning provides opportunities for all children to achieve all the Early Learning Goals.

Our EYFS provision seeks to provide a full and varied curriculum that:

- Is of a high quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- Has a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and through assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Values partnership working between practitioners and with parents/carers.
- Supports equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Curriculum

Our curriculum builds on prior knowledge and moves at pace to ensure all children achieve the most they can from their time in Reception. There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are “prime areas” and four “specific areas”.

The prime areas are:

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

The specific areas are:

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

The prime areas are essential for fostering early learning skills and are promoted heavily through our planning and provision. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in specific areas of learning.

Read Write Inc.

Reading is the key that opens the door for our children to succeed in all areas of the curriculum and it is with this in mind we prioritise the teaching of phonics through a systematic Read Write Inc programme. All children are heard to read individually and participate in Shared Reading and Guided Reading groups too. Children take books home from our reading scheme which are changed on a weekly basis.

Children learn letter sounds, grapheme-phoneme correspondence, blending - to read words and segmenting - to spell through daily interactive sessions. They begin with Set 1 and progress through Set 2 throughout the Foundation Stage.

Planning

Effective planning is the key to making children’s learning valuable, exciting, varied, and progressive. Staff’s knowledge of the EYFS, the objectives, children’ interests and challenges feeds into providing rich and

rewarding learning experiences. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice, always being informed by observations of the children in which all staff are involved.

Throughout the EYFS we plan activities to give children learning experiences and opportunities to work towards the Early Learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum. Teaching and learning will take place within the classroom and outside area. Within these areas, children will participate in a variety of activities, both with an adult and independently.

Long Term Planning

At Holy Trinity we have created a three-year cycle which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. This consists of topics which provide the vehicle for delivering the EYFS. These topics are relevant to the needs of our children and enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum. The planning provides:

- A structure to ensure the seven areas of learning and development are covered in breadth and depth.
- Popular and previously covered themes, units of work, existing resources, knowledge of child development outlined in the "Development Matters" document to ensure the curriculum is truly inclusive and responsive to the needs of the children in school.

Medium Term Planning

Our medium-term planning covers a half-term and provides further detail of each area of learning. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, activities, and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified. The planning provides:

- Descriptions of types of experiences and possible lines of development appropriate of the child, based upon previous observations and assessments.
- Ensures routines provide a sense of security, while being flexible enough to be prepared for the "unexpected".
- Identifies resources needed, ICT, outings, SMSC, visitors and staff roles.
- Identifies children with SEND/special requirements and how their learning will be differentiated.

Short Term Planning

Our short-term planning identifies specific learning objectives, differentiated activities, deployment of adults and resources to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day to day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests.

The weekly planning includes:

- Objectives that we want the children to learn.
- Specific resources for indoor/outdoor provision.
- Times for adult-led and independent learning activities.
- Specific vocabulary to extend children's language.
- Flexibility to change planning to nurture, refresh and extend play.

- Focused times for adults to be active participants in continuous/enhanced provision and assessments.
- A brief evaluation of how effective provision was, to ensure good rate of progress.

Across all of these we promote “Characteristics of Effective Learning” where the children develop their abilities to play and explore, take an active role in their learning, and think creatively. We observe and monitor progress with these skills and report these to parents.

Learning through Play

Play underpins the delivery of the EYFS curriculum. At Holy Trinity we support children’s learning through planned play activities and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play would provide the most effective learning opportunities. Adults also get actively involved with play. Learning through play gives us the opportunity to:

- Explore/develop learning experiences which help them to make sense of the world.
- Practise and build up ideas, to develop self- control and understand the need for rules.
- Think creatively both alone and alongside others.
- Communicate/develop language as they investigate and solve problems.
- Express fears and re-live anxious experiences in a safe environment.
- Become active learners, learn from themselves and others whilst working with a range of resources.

Children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially, and emotionally. At Holy Trinity it is also our mission to develop the child spiritually through Bible stories, awe and wonder, prayer and reflection which confirm our Christian Values from entry into school.

Assessment

The Development Matters guidance and Early Learning Goals provide the basis for assessment throughout the Foundation Stage. Children are quickly assessed at their entry point to the Foundation Stage to establish a baseline. Progress is monitored and tracked consistently through daily/weekly teacher formative assessment and through our electronic tracking system at four checkpoints in the year: Baseline (within the first 4 weeks), Autumn 2, Spring 2, and Summer 2.

Transition from Reception to Year 1

We have a well-established transition process in place, that includes:

- Children being encouraged to become independent during the Reception Year.
- Knowing the teacher in Year 1 through collective worship, story times etc.
- All records being completed and sent on to the next class.
- All staff have analysed the EYFS profile data.
- Practises continue throughout the school e.g. Read Write Inc.
- Year 1 continue to enjoy practical learning experiences, through continuous and enhanced provision opportunities.

Home Learning

At Holy Trinity, we understand the impact of high-quality liaison between home and school and strive to ensure that our pupils are keen to learn at every opportunity. For this reason, we believe that the extension of learning out of the classroom is a useful addition to a child's learning.

The teacher may suggest ways to help parents support their children at home. Learning intentions for the week go home via Class Dojo to inform parents of what we are learning in the classroom and therefore ideas to continue learning at home.

Children may be asked to practice letter sounds and letter writing, are given weekly key words to practise as the year progresses. Regular reading is encouraged at home, and this should be recorded in the reading diary provided.

British Values

The fundamental British Values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance for those with different faiths are embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We actively seek to promote these values through modelling behaviour, challenging stereotypes, and ensuring that our children receive a rich and varied curriculum.

When appropriate we demonstrate democracy in action and support the decisions that children make and ensure they are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued. We provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities.

We allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions.

Monitoring EYFS

The quality of our EYFS provision is monitored through:

- Termly observations
- Learning Walks
- Governor monitoring visits – link Governor is Christine Cross.
- Mitre Reviews
- Work scrutiny
- Coordinator deep dives