

# Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

*“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, March 2014)*

At Holy Trinity, children join our Foundation Stage from the age of 3. Nursery children attend either a morning or afternoon session and start full time school in the Reception class, in the academic cycle of their fifth year. At Holy Trinity, we have a mixed aged Foundation Unit where the children engage in a mixture of child initiated and adult directed learning experiences.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is based on four key principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### A Unique Child

At Holy Trinity we recognise that each child is an individual with their own qualities, skills, aspirations and unknown potential. We acknowledge what each individual can do and tailor a curriculum that meets their needs and the next steps in their learning journey. We strive to ensure that each child is treated fairly and as an equal with personalised achievable targets involving an appropriate degree of challenge. As Early Years practitioners, we recognise our responsibilities regarding the welfare requirements of the children in our setting as set out in the EYFS document 2014. We acknowledge all children as competent learners and accept the challenge to harness children's interests into valuable, exciting and stimulating learning experiences. Staff and children aim to be skilful communicators, treating one another with the respect all should expect to receive. It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children about boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill in a safe environment. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all members of our school community.

## Positive Relationships

At Holy Trinity we understand that children can only benefit from strong, secure and healthy relationships. We recognise parents and carers as their child's first and most enduring educators. We aim to involve parents/carers in all aspects of their child's journey through the Foundation Stage through home visits, newsletters, open evenings, formal reports on an annual basis, parental input into their child's learning experiences, alongside informal discussions at the beginning and end of each school day. Currently we have two teachers deployed in our Foundation Stage Unit, two Nursery Nurses and two Teaching Assistants. The staff are timetabled to provide a balance between observing and enhancing the children's play, by introducing a variety of resources, developing vocabulary and asking questions to stimulate the children's learning experiences. At Holy Trinity we have strong links with outside agencies and professionals involved with the children in our setting. Our Learning Mentor and Senco are fundamental members of our Early Years Team, linking with children and their families, right from the beginning of their journey through the school.

## Enabling Environments

We appreciate that the environment has a vital impact on a child's learning and must be addressed with the upmost importance. Carefully considered planning takes place with input from all practitioners regarding how the children are engaging with the resources and provision in all areas of their development and how their learning could be extended. Our very recently refurbished and designed Early Years Foundation Stage Unit which fully integrates both Nursery and Reception children, both within the indoor and outdoor environment, provides high quality provision in creativity, exploration and independent thinking and learning. Our planning is responsive, always starting with the needs of the children. We observe their play and learning before planning activities and classroom enhancements, allowing us to develop each individual and the next steps of their learning journey. The children in Nursery are assessed according to the month bands in the 'Development Matters' section of the EYFS Practice Guidance. The children in Reception are assessed according to the Early Learning Goals and an ongoing record is kept of what month band they are working within. The Children all have a 'Learning Journey' which includes photographs and observations, samples of their work and other relevant evidence to support their EYFS Profile. Thorough assessment, both ongoing and more formally at the end of each term, ensure practitioners are acutely aware of the children's needs and the next steps in their learning journey. We encourage strong home/school links to support the children in their learning both in and outside of the classroom. We recognise and value the partnership of parents and teachers in the care and education of our children. With an open door policy, we encourage a high level of communication and involvement.

The Foundation Stage Classroom is organised into areas of learning and interest with specific input areas for more formal teaching activities and group gathering times. The children in the Foundation Stage also benefit from a well resourced, enclosed outdoor area. During child initiated choosing time, known as 'free flow', the children can access resources independently and move freely between the indoor and outdoor classrooms. We encourage independence through various motivational techniques and the use of praise when children dress themselves

appropriately for outdoor play and wet weather. Holy Trinity Foundation Stage have a defined snack area from which both Nursery and Reception children can independently access milk, water, fruit and a healthy snack continuously during the free flow session each day.

In a wider context, we ensure there are smooth transitions from the Foundation Stage into Key Stage One through visits from and to their Year One teacher and classroom staff. We also conduct home visits prior to the children's first visit to the Nursery. This is to ensure that the children have a 'familiar face' to greet them on their very first day. We view home visits as an invaluable opportunity to build relationships with both the children and their parents in their own environments. Children who are attending Nursery for the first time are encouraged to phase into school during the first week by shorter sessions which are increased daily to extend finally to a full session.

To ensure a smooth transition for new reception children, a meeting is held in the summer term prior to their start date. Parents are invited to meet all of the staff who will be involved in their child's education.

### Learning and Development

At Holy Trinity we aim to provide a wealth of new experiences alongside some familiar ones in order for the children to learn new skills, consolidate existing ones and respond to experiences first hand. Our Foundation Stage staff are involved in the children's play, both observing and enhancing where appropriate. Alongside planning for learning opportunities in continuous provision, both indoors and outdoors, we plan specific learning experiences, whole class inputs and group gathering times. The staff provide a language rich environment in which we model correct speech patterns and a widening vocabulary. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

The EYFS is currently made up of 7 areas of learning, 3 Prime areas and 4 Specific areas:

#### Prime Areas

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

#### Specific Areas

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

All areas are equally important and are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

## Monitoring of the Foundation Stage

At Holy Trinity our Foundation Stage is monitored by both the Foundation Stage Team and the Senior Leadership Team in a variety of ways. Regular learning walks alongside monitoring of the children's achievements and progress. As a Foundation Stage Team we have regular meetings to discuss children's needs and moderate observations and assessments which inform the children's learning journey.

If children require additional support and are placed on the school's SEN register they will have a play plan to focus their learning towards specific targets. These alongside progress made, are monitored by the SENCO and agreed by parents.

There is a Governor assigned to the Foundation Stage who has regular contact with both staff and children.

At Holy Trinity we believe that strong foundations are the key to a successful school career. We build on the children's abilities to enable them to become independent and confident learners whilst living out our school's mission statement in everything we do.

"Walking in the footsteps of Jesus: we care, we share, we love, we learn"