



# Holy Trinity C of E Primary School

*A church school community aspiring for all to live life to the full.*

## **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy**

Approved December 2024

Next Review September 2025

Committee Full Governing Body

## GENERIC PRINCIPLES

### Equalities

We are committed to delivering the content of this policy to meet the needs of all staff, pupils and other stakeholders where relevant, irrespective of race, gender and disability.

### Safeguarding

Our school recognises and promotes the responsibilities of all adults in protecting pupils. Specific responsibilities involved in ensuring child protection and wider safeguarding procedures are in place and must be adhered to: please refer to Child Protection & Procedures Policy; 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2024) and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018.)

**Cross-Referencing** - This policy should be read in conjunction with these other related policies and documents:

- Child Protection Policies and Procedures
- Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Curriculum subjects
- Assessment
- SEN Policy

### Vision

This vision for our school: *A church school community aspiring for all to live life to the full.*

- **Community** - where community means all those directly (ie children, staff, parents and governors) and indirectly (eg local schools and organisations) involved with the school.
- **Aspiring** - where aspiring means wanting the best for our children and families and supporting them to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to be their best.
- **Life to the full** - where 'life to the full' means providing a broad range of experiences and opportunities to apply the knowledge, skills and understanding we have to be able to participate in life and not be passive observers of it.

## **Contents**

- Early Years Foundation Stage
- Aims
- Staffing and Organisation
- Learning and Development
  - Prime Areas of Learning
  - Specific Areas of Learning
  - Characteristics of Effective Learning
- Planning
  - Long term planning
  - Medium term planning
  - Short term planning
- Continuous Provision
- Our Learning Environment
- Assessment, Recording and Monitoring
  - Formative assessment
  - Summative assessment
- Transitions
  - Nursery to School
  - Reception to Year 1
- Home/School Links
- Equal Opportunities
- Inclusion

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

'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, Department for Education, 2021).

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Holy Trinity we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age, with the final year of the EYFS is being the Reception year. At Holy Trinity we follow the guidance set out in the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' statutory framework for group and school settings (Department for Education, 2024).

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in Reception to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that Parents/carers, support staff and the Reception teachers work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

## **Aims**

We follow four guiding principles of the EYFS. These are:

- 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 overtime. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

(Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school settings, 2024, p6)

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually

to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

We aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment, which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence
- Work in partnership with Parents/carers and value their contributions

Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

### **Staffing and Organisation**

At Holy Trinity we have one Reception class, with a maximum intake of thirty children. We maintain an adult / pupil ratio of 1:15; this consists of a Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant. Throughout the school day the children have opportunities for free flow play between the classroom and Reception outdoor area; this time is supported by an adult, who acts as a facilitator to the child's learning. The teacher liaises with the teaching assistant, regularly involving them in planning, observations and assessment.

We continually aim to enhance our skills, knowledge and understanding; so all practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses, in-service and local cluster group training. Practitioners also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues. They also liaise with the local pre-school and nurseries.

### **Learning and Development**

The Early Learning Goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the Reception year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for group and school settings' document (Department for Education, 2024).

There are three 'prime' and four 'specific' areas of learning and development, which are broken down into 17 Early Learning Goals.

**Prime Areas** – “particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS for group and school settings, 2024)

- Communication and Language
  - o Listening, Attention and Understanding
  - o Speaking
- Physical Development
  - o Fine Motor Skills
  - o Gross Motor Skills
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
  - o Self – Regulation
  - o Managing Self
  - o Building Relationships

**Specific Areas** – through the four specific areas, the “prime areas are strengthened and applied” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for group and school settings)

- Literacy
  - o Comprehension
  - o Word Reading
  - o Writing
- Mathematics
  - o Number
  - o Number Patterns
- Understanding the World
  - o Past and Present
  - o People, Culture and Communities
  - o The Natural World
- Expressive Arts and Design
  - o Creating with Materials
  - o Being Imaginative and Expressive

At Holy Trinity we believe all these areas are important and inter-connected. The three prime areas of Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development are vital in supporting the children in building the stepping stones needed to become holistic learners and develop positive relationships with others. The skills developed in the above areas of learning allow the children to access the four specific areas of Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the world and Expressive Arts. We encourage the children to use their inquisitive nature explore the world and to ask questions to gain more information.

We deliver all the areas of learning through planned continuous provision, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

“To learn well, children must approach opportunities with curiosity, energy and enthusiasm. Effective learning must be meaningful to a child, so that they are able to use what they have learned and apply it in new situations. These abilities and attitudes of strong learners

will support them to learning well and make good progress in all the Areas of Learning and Development"

(Birth to 5 Matters, 2021, p42)

The Characteristics of Effective learning (COEL) are:

- Playing and Exploring
  - Finding out and exploring, playing with what they know and being willing to 'have a go'
- Active Learning
  - Being involved and concentrating, persevering and enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- Creating and thinking critically
  - Having their own ideas, making links and choosing ways to do things

At Holy Trinity we value the importance the Characteristics of Effective Learning have on a child's whole being. When planning and assessing the children, we take the COEL into account to ensure that we provide them with activities of comfort and develop additional challenge to allow their minds to think further.

## **Planning**

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All practitioners who work in Reception at Holy Trinity are involved in this process.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

### Long Term Planning

Throughout their Reception year the children must acquire the skills and knowledge contained within the Early Learning Goals for each Area of Learning. Using this information, a coherent framework is created to ensure that all children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Our Reception Team use their extensive knowledge to build upon information gained through baseline assessments to structure our yearly EYFS Curriculum.

### Medium Term Planning

Across the year all Areas of Learning are covered through a cross - curricular approach to early development; with particular emphasis on certain areas at different times. In the EYFS we identify learning objectives, assessment opportunities and plan for additional enriching experiences to allow the children to develop holistically. At the beginning of each term the focus areas are shared with parents and understanding of the children's current interests are gained through conversations. This information is then used to plan activities and

experiences that will engage the children in their learning. Our medium-term planning is flexible and is used as a guide to ensure curriculum coverage is achieved.

### Short Term Planning

We use the Observation, Assessment and Planning cycle to ensure that we provide the children with learning opportunities that meet their specific needs, on a weekly and day to day basis. The EYFS allows for children's interests to be followed in a cross – curricular approach to learning, which is supported by ongoing observational assessments. The children will access adult led activities with more specific learning or teaching focus throughout the week; in addition to planned continuous provision to support the children in securing and improving skills that they are learning within school. The children start Phonics and Maths during their first term at school, through short carpet-based teaching inputs. As the year progresses, they will have Literacy lesson which focus on applying their phonics knowledge.

### **Continuous Provision**

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.” (Fred Rodgers)

At Holy Trinity we support children's learning through planned play activities called Continuous Provision. Continuous provision is the resources and activities set up within the classroom to allow children to explore and develop in a safe and enabling environment. This allows the children to consolidate and challenge their learning with more freedom. When planning Reception staff decide whether a child-initiated or an adult-led play activity would provide the most effective learning. We believe that it is important for children to learn how to successfully play with and alongside their peers, and as staff we model this by scaffolding the children while learning through play. We encourage the children to engage with these activities with growing independence throughout their Reception year, in preparation for Year One.

### **Our Learning Environment**

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas including: role play, book corner, writing area, maths area and creative area. These areas are carefully arranged to distinguish between quiet space and more active areas within the learning environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. Children are given the opportunity to select focussed play activities throughout the week which allow them independence and flexibility.



## **Assessment, Recording and Monitoring**

At Holy Trinity we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

### Formative Assessment

Formative assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment begins when the children start school by completing a baseline assessment in all areas of learning, including the DfE Reception Baseline Assessment for Communication, Literacy and Mathematics. At Holy Trinity we use Tapestry (Online Learning Journal) to record observations of the children throughout the day, we link these to the Areas of Learning in the EYFS. All staff working in Reception as well as Parents and Carers are able to upload observations (photographs, videos or written observations) to help create a picture of the whole child. We also undertake more specific formative assessment such as letter-sound correspondence in Phonics or number composition in Maths. The Reception Teacher plans for observational assessment when undertaking short term planning.

### Summative assessment

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements at the end of Reception. The class teacher will record progress made towards the Early Learning Goals each term and completes the end of year EYFSP in June. The teacher also undertakes moderation in-house and with other local schools. (for further information see the Assessment Policy).

Teaching and learning in Literacy and Mathematics is regularly monitored by the Literacy and Mathematics coordinators in each class, through lesson observations, pupil interviews and whole school work sampling. Other areas of learning and development in the foundation stage are monitored in this way by the respective co-ordinators on a rolling programme as outlined in the School Development Plan. The senior management team monitors teaching and learning across the Foundation Stage each year and analyses the EYFSP data in conjunction with the class teacher.

## **Transition – Nursery to School**

At Holy Trinity we have a large range of feeder nurseries and we work to develop positive relationships with them during the transition process. Through conversations we aim to replicate activities which the new Reception children have enjoyed previously.

At the start of the Summer Term Parents/carers will be invited to attend an induction meeting where they will learn more about what to expect from our school, as well as how they can best support their child in being school ready. At this meeting Parents/carers are given a Reception Information Pack which outlines the curriculum and school routines, along with information to be completed and returned to school.

During the second half of the summer term, the new Reception children will be invited into Holy Trinity to undertake 'School Start Sessions'; this allows both parents and children to meet the Reception team and visit their child's new classroom. In their subsequent visits to school the new children will complete art work to be displayed in September, this helps them feel secure in their new classroom.

Once parents/carers have accepted their child's school place, the EYFS leader will contact the feeder nurseries and playgroups to talk about the children starting school. This allows for the nursery to share the child's interests, personality and any concerns they have with the Reception teacher (and SENCo where appropriate). The preschool settings will also send a copy of the child's EYFS Transfer report to the school; the combination of all this information helps the Reception Team in supporting the children when they start school.

Once the children are settled into school a meeting is held by the EYFS leader to introduce Parents/carers to the EYFS curriculum and Profile, Forest School, Phonics and Reading.

### September School Induction

Where possible the EYFS leader will complete home visits – in person, virtually or via a telephone call. A home visit is a short meeting that takes place in the child's home and is an opportunity for the Class teacher and Teaching Assistant to gain a better, fuller understanding of the child as well as allow Parents/carers to raise any questions or concerns they have.

The children will start school on a part time basis for the first two or three weeks. During the initial induction period, children are split into two groups based upon age. The children either attend a morning or afternoon session during the first week and all thirty children are combined from week two for a morning session, including staying for lunch. In week three the children will start full time school - adaptation will be made this to support any children who have additional needs or have found the transition to school particularly challenging.

This staggered induction allows:

- Children to feel secure in their new environment and gradually build up to full-time attendance
- The practitioners to get to know the children individually and establish good relationships
- The Reception teacher to begin baseline assessments.

A child reaches statutory school age at the beginning of the term following his/her fifth birthday.

### **Transition – Reception to Year 1**

The Reception and Year 1 teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible. At Holy Trinity we support the children in their preparation for Year 1 in the following ways:

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when organising their personal belongings (including clothing) throughout the Reception
- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities during the summer terms, encouraging to the children to work with less adult support
- Literacy lessons are introduced from the Spring term, to give the children opportunities to apply their phonics knowledge more widely
- Reception children will informally meet the Year 1 teacher whilst in Reception, through day-to-day activities such as playtime and assembly.
- KS1 children, including Reception, take part in Fun Time Friday activities from the Spring Term, which allows them to visit the other KS1 classrooms.
- Individual EYFS Profile attainment information is passed onto the Year 1 teacher. The profile provides the Year 1 teacher with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1
- 'In-house' EYFSP moderation between the EYFS Leader and Year 1 teacher
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July
- In the Summer term, we have a whole school 'change over' morning when all children go up to their new class. In addition to this the Reception children will have more formal transition afternoons up to Year 1
- Floppy Phonics is used throughout the whole of KS1 allowing for continuity in approach, when the children move year group
- In the Autumn term of Year 1 there is still a big emphasis on learning through play, which supports to children in feeling safe and confident in a new environment
- Many school routines will have similar approach e.g. snack time, behaviour systems, timetables, etc

## **Home/School Links**

We recognise that Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining the Reception curriculum to Parents/carers during the New Parents' Meeting, in May, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- Encouraging Parents/carers to complete the home/school/child agreement
- Visiting children who are starting in the Reception at their home
- Termly Overviews are published on our school website to keep parents informed of their child's current curriculum
- Operating an 'open door' policy, whereby Parents/carers voice any concerns they have in an informal manner
- Holding 'Stay and Play' sessions throughout the year, to enable Parents/carers to come into the classroom, play with their child and explore the environment.
- Sharing children's daily achievements on Tapestry for the parent/carer to view. They are then able to add their own comments to these observations. Parents/carers are

also encouraged to record their child's special moments or achievements on Tapestry from home.

- Discussing individual targets with Parents/carers at Parents' Evening in Autumn and Spring terms (informed by the EYFS Profile)
- Encouraging Parents/carers to listen to their child read each night, making use of any sound cards and high frequency word lists. They can then comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary
- Encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home e.g. maths challenges/games and library books, and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school
- Inviting Parents/carers to help in the Reception class or other classes in the school and to accompany children on school visits
- Providing an annual written report to Parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and EYFS assessment scales

### **Equal Opportunities**

At Holy Trinity we provide for all pupils regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability. All pupils have equal access to all aspects of school life and as a school we 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. During conversations with a child's preschool settings any known specific learning or medical needs will be discussed and where necessary a meeting will be held prior to the child starting school.

Individual 'My 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. The EYFS leader and SEND co-ordinator would discuss these targets with the child and his/her Parents/carers. Progress is monitored and reviewed every term. The school's SEND co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

For further information see Special Educational Needs Policy.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher and EYFS leader, and will be reviewed on an annual basis.