

Early Years

Reception

At Holy Cross we follow the national Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

The EYFS is a very important stage in a child's life. Children's early years' experience should be happy, active, exciting, fun and secure; and support their development, care and learning needs.

The EYFS framework explains how and what children will be learning to support their healthy development and provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

Children will learn skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through **7 areas of learning and development**.

Children should mostly develop the **3 prime areas** first. These are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

These prime areas are those most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning. As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in **4 specific areas**. These are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design.

Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. It is very important that they develop social skills, such as turn-taking, sharing and independence, which help them greatly in the next stages of their learning. The guiding principles that shape our practice in the Early Years are that children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.

Regular phonics teaching and learning are a key part of the Foundation Stage and help to develop early reading and writing skills. The EYFS curriculum is delivered through cross-curricular topics related to role play experiences such as 'The Post Office,' 'The Vets', 'The Cafe', 'Down in the Jungle', 'Jack and the Giant's Castle'. If you visited a Reception class, you would see a range of activities taking place such as role-play, practical games, ICT activities, painting, cutting and sticking, writing and reading in the book corner. You would also see the outdoor classroom in operation, with equipment such as bikes, cars, sand and water, mud kitchen, singing and dancing on the stage and the builder's yard.

Children work and play independently, with a strong emphasis on choice and being able to sustain concentration on projects, as well as joining a variety of teacher-led activities. We encourage a partnership with parents so they are actively involved in their children's learning.

Curriculum Information

Information about what is taught in the curriculum each week is sent home each week and accessible on the school website.

Assessment in Reception

Continuous assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. It involves all practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, we then use these observations and assessments to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences.

Each child's level of development is assessed against Early Learning Goals within the Prime and Specific areas discussed above. At the end of the year teachers complete a profile which will indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development:

- Emerging, not yet reaching expected levels of development for age
- Expected
- Exceeding, beyond expected levels of development for age

Year 1 teachers will have access to the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. These will inform transition meetings between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities at the start of Year 1. Parents and carers will also receive a copy of the report.