

Holy Family NS

Catholic Ethos

Holy Family NS is a Catholic Primary School located in the Diocese of Achonry. The school was developed by the Marist Sisters and it remains a Marist School.

The school depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Science and it operates within the regulations laid down, from time to time, by the Department. School policy has regard to the resources and funding available. The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Science, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

We follow the National Curriculum as outlined by the Department of Education and Science.

Religious Education and Sacramental Preparation

As a Catholic School we aim at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. The Catholic school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

The teachers use the Alive O and Grow in Love Programme.

First Confession and First Communion Preparation take place in 2nd Class. Confirmation takes place every second year and preparation is in 5th and 6th class.

Children of different faiths and no faiths are welcome in our school but families are aware that a Religious Programme is taught in the school.



Literacy

Our staff work diligently to promote literacy throughout the school. Our aim is that children will be able to communicate with confidence and fluency in reading, writing, speaking and listening. While following the National Curriculum our school is also involved in a number of initiatives to promote literacy.

Literacy Lift Off: Literacy Lift Off is an intensive reading programme that takes place in Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd Class. The programme runs for 8 weeks per class. 4 staff will work with the class for a "Power Hour" that focuses on reading new books, familiar books, word and phonic skills and writing skills. The children love this activity and benefit greatly from it

Reading Recovery: For children who may struggle to start reading, Ms McDonagh is a trained Reading Recovery teacher. Children are selected each year for the intensive learning programme. It is a fantastic way to help the young reader.

First Steps Literacy: Our staff have been trained in the First Steps Literacy Programme. This programme focuses on oral language, reading and writing. The staff use the methodologies to help children learn and prepare for secondary school from a young age.

Buddy Reading: Children from senior classes are paired with children in the infant classes to read together. The children get opportunities to read to each other developing reading and listening skills.

Numeracy

We aim to promote Numeracy as an essential life skill. In the infant classes there is a focus on the language of maths using the Ready, Set Go Maths Programme. This programme teaches children early maths skills such as sorting, ordering, counting, early addition and take away. Children get a lot of experience playing with maths materials to help learn the language of maths.

Maths Recovery Programme: Ms Brennan is trained in Maths Recovery. This is an intensive Maths Programme focussed on individual children in the early years of school.

IZAK9 Maths: We have invested in a set of Izak9 cubes. These cubes are for use in the senior classes and help develop mathematical thinking, number work, skills, knowledge and team work. The cubes are used in conjunction with the interactive white board.

IPADS: We also use a wide range of maths apps to further develop maths skills throughout the school. We have a class set of 16 Ipads which are timetabled for every class.

Maths Week: Every year we take part in Maths Week. Ms Gordon co-ordinates this activity. During the week we try out new maths games and internet activities. We also go on Maths trails. This year 5th class developed Maths Eyes Posters which are on display on the main corridor.



Staff Training: Staff are facilitated to engage in continuous professional development. In 2017 and 2018 we hosted a teacher training course in IPADS in our school in July. This year we hope to host another ICT Staff training week plus a Restorative Practice Course. Our school is one of 15 Primary Schools selected to be part of Restorative Practice Training. We have been working on this programme for this school year.

ICT: We are very aware that our children are growing up in a technological age. All of our classrooms have interactive whiteboards to bring the wider world and interactive education to the children's classroom.

We have also invested in 16 Ipads for class use. All classes have time to use the Ipads for learning each week. The children love working on them - and sometimes even helping teacher's learning!!!

We also invite a guest speaker in to talk to our senior classes about Internet Safety. We hope that the visit of our guest speaker helps to promote safer internet usage.

Last year we introduced Beebots to the infant classroom to further engage the pupils in Programming and this year we purchased Blue Bots.



Green Schools Committee

To date we have been awarded with 6 Green Flags. At present we are working on our 7th Green Flag for Global Citizenship Energy. Every year we pick a Green School Committee. The committee is mostly children with Ms Gordon and Mr Cawley helping out! As part of our Green Schools Application we also have had guest speakers into the school from Heritage Ireland. The Green School Committee have also had fund raising activities - which included raising money for Cancer Support, Concern and St Vincent De Paul. We also have worked on transport and travel. The Road Safety Authority visited our school for a week to give practical activities to children to keep them safe on the road. We are also running a Safer Cycling Programme for children.



Health Promoting Schools

Holy Family NS was the first school in Sligo to be presented with a Health Promoting Flag. Ms Cooney co-ordinates the Health Promoting School Project. We have a committee of children who work to promote health in our school. Our themes are "Eating Healthy" and "Being Active". We also have started Mindfulness to promote healthy minds! We have had workshops for teachers to teach them more about Mindfulness. Our Health Promoting Committee gives us weekly updates on how to make small changes to make our lives healthier. This year the staff are also involved in a pilot project for Restorative Practice.

Active School Committee

As our school is a busy school we got involved in Active Flag Committee. Ms Ryan and Ms Tuohy went to training to learn more about the Active School Award. We have an Active Flag Committee and their job is to organise the activities for the school. We have had a slogan and logo competition, Line leaders on the yard. We aim to get children (and adults) active. We have many activities that children can get involved in to keep them active - athletics, tennis, cycling, dance, football, gymnastics, swimming, soccer, hurling. Children also organise Sports Day and active lines!



Mindfulness:

Because we live in a busy world we started doing little moments of Mindfulness in School. Our aim is that in a busy world we will all learn how to have calm time. We had visits from tutors who worked with the teachers and the children to get us started. Some of the teachers have also gone on to do other courses. If you see a sign on the door saying - Don't disturb being Mindful - you know we are having a quiet time!

We also have a Play Therapist who visits to work with children with particular needs.

School Lunches

School lunches are provided in the school by Fresh Today. This is funded by the Department of Social Protection. Each child is given a password and can order lunches on Thursday for the next week. We promote healthy eating and healthy lunches in school - to help us all become healthy adults. www.freshtoday.ie

Music in the Classroom

We are lucky to have a lot of talented music teachers in our school. We have school choirs who sing for visitors and also sing at communion and confirmation ceremonies. We have also sang for Michael D Higgins (President of Ireland).

Children learn tin whistle while in Holy Family NS and it is lovely to hear the music on the corridors.

We have got involved with Music Generation. Children in 3rd and 4th classes take keyboard lessons and children in 5th and 6th take guitar lessons.



PE and Extra Curricular

We are a busy and active school. We like to give the children lots of opportunities to try out different sports and activities. Apart from classroom work here are some of the activities we are involved in

Athletics: Every year we take part in the Supervalu Athletics Festival in Sligo IT. We have had a lot of success in this event bringing many medals back to Tubbercurry

Soccer: We take part in the FAI 5 a Side blitz every year. It is great fun and our girls' team were runners up in Sligo for the last two years. Our 4th class have also participated in the Futsal competition



Dance: Victoria Walker Dance takes dance classes with all classes each year. At the end of each dance term parents are invited into view the dances.

GAA: Our principal is the National Chair of Cumann na mBunscol and is also involved in the Sligo Cumann na mBunscol. Cumann na mBunscol is a group of volunteer teachers who organise all Gaelic Games activities in Primary Schools. Holy Family NS has a long history of success and participation in Cumann na mBunscol. Our school participates in boys and girls' football, Mini 7's competitions, hurling and camogie. We also participate in Indoor Hurling and Camogie and in rounders.

Holy Family NS also encourages Fair Play on and off the pitch and we encourage all our parents and supporters to support this idea. This has been recognised with a Finals Day Fair Play Award in 2015, 2017 and the Overall County Winners in Fair Play in 2016. The children's excellent behaviour makes them a pleasure to bring to games.



Exhibition Games: Due to our success on the pitch we have had children participate in the half time Exhibition Games during Championship Games. We also have had a number of children take part in Exhibition Games in Croke Park. Some pictures can be seen on the school walls. We are very proud of these achievements by our pupils.

Swimming: 4th class go for swimming lessons every year in Claremorris Swimming Pool in the summer term. The lessons last for 8 weeks and we have been very happy with them.

Gymnastics: Kate Frahill visits our school from YSW. She does gymnastic classes for all classes and also lunch time clubs. We are very lucky to have a lovely school hall so our PE is not reliant on the Irish weather.



Comenius/Erasmus Project : Holy Family NS has been involved in the Comenius Programme for a number of years. This involves making links with Partner Schools throughout Europe on an Educational topic. Staff and pupils have visited other countries to learn about education across Europe. For the last two years we are involved with partner schools in Ireland, Hungary and Germany. The project is called - Cool Science for Young Scientists. Children from senior classes have visited some of our partner schools.



Discover Primary Science: Each year our school takes part in the Discover Primary Science Awards Scheme. Children are involved in early science activities, Maths, Science and Engineering Week and also display the great work that goes on in our classrooms. We also arrange for guest speakers to visit our school as part of this award. Recently we have had a visiting Planetarium, Aquarium in the Classroom (Galway Atlantaquarium), Explorers Programme, Incredible Edibles Programme, Astronomy Ireland, Heritage in Schools, Farmyard in the Classroom to name but a few. The children love the variety of visiting speakers. We have a number of awards which are on display in the school.



School tours and trips: Class teachers organise trips in the summer term. These trips are both Educational and fun. We also have regular visits to Tubbercurry library.

We also pay visits to The Hawks Well Theatre to see Educational Plays and we visit Sligo IT for Science and Engineers Week shows.

Classes also learn about local historical sites on field trips.



Book Rental and Book Orders: Holy Family NS operate a book rental scheme for the majority of books. A book list is sent home prior to the summer holidays. Workbooks can be purchased through the school.

Junior Entrepreneur Programme: Our 6th class have been busy this year making and selling soaps as part of the JE Programme.

Cooking All Stars: This year 5th class have been taking part in the Cooking All Stars Programme. They have done a lot of work preparing recipes and using procedural writing to record the menu. Ms Regan got the ingredients and there was great fun cooking and eating.

Restorative Practice: Our school is one of 12 schools that was selected in Ireland to take part in the Restorative Practice Programme. As part of this programme all of the staff were trained in Restorative Practices and Circle Time. Our next step is to train the children in Restorative Practices. These are excellent life skills which are used throughout the world.

Parents Association: Holy Family has an active Parents Association who work positively with the school to enhance our work. Parents help out at our celebrations by helping with sound systems and tea and coffees. They organise the First Communion Party in the school and help us with our Leavers Assembly, Enrolment Days, Green Flag and Health Promoting Flag Awards. The Parent Association also run a hugely successful Christmas Choral Festival - with our school choirs also performing. The PA also invite Santa to the school at Christmas - and the Easter Bunny at Easter time!

The PA organise fund raising activities and in recent years have given the school money to purchase a new front door, reading materials for the Literacy Lift Off Programme and computers for the senior classes.



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