



Term One Newsletter

2025-26



Holy Family Primary & Nursery School

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Holy Family Vision and Motto

This term our pupils had a school vision assembly and later voted for a new school motto to represent the vision of Holy Family Primary and Nursery School. The children created a variety of mottos and then voted for their favourite via an online poll.

Be Your Best, Celebrate Others, Do the Right Thing

Appointments

In September we welcomed to Holy Family Primary and Nursery School, Miss Jenny Doherty P5, Mrs Clare Kelly P3, Miss Katie Herron P4, Miss Rachel Doherty nursery and Miss Dervla McSheffrey P3. We wish them every success and happiness as they become part of the Holy Family community.

This term Mrs Niamh Doherty has been appointed to the role of Art and Design/social media co-ordinator and Mrs McBride has been appointed to the role of RE/PDMU/RSE coordinator. We wish them every success and happiness in their new roles.

Super Car Event

A huge thank you to Stephen McCaul and his team for bringing their incredible fleet of supercars to Holy Family in September. This exciting visit was a real highlight of the term for our pupils, who were thrilled to see these amazing vehicles up close. It was a fantastic experience that sparked lots of smiles and cheers.

ParentlineNI Pilot Partnership

This year, Holy Family is taking part in a pilot programme with ParentlineNI aimed at sharing valuable information and providing support structures for our parents. We are excited about this initiative and hope to see lots of parental engagement with our link worker, Melanie McCullagh, during term two. This programme is a great opportunity to strengthen home-school partnerships and ensure families have access to helpful resources such as the Dunluce Family Centre and BHCP.

Department of Education Visits

This term, Holy Family welcomed officials from the Department of Education who visited our nurture accommodation and commended the work being done to support pupils' wellbeing. We also hosted the TransformED NI Independent Review of Assessment panel, providing an opportunity to present and discuss our assessment procedures. These visits were a valuable chance to showcase our commitment to high-quality provision and continuous improvement.

Nurture Training

In term one, all teaching staff completed three sessions of Nurture in 5 classroom-based training. In addition, all class-based staff achieved Level 3 Nurture training as part of our ongoing commitment to developing a whole-school approach to nurture provision. These steps strengthen our ability to support pupils' wellbeing and create a positive, caring learning environment.

External Awards and Quality Marks

In term one, we began the process of applying for a range of external awards and quality marks, including the Eco-Schools Award, Inclusion Quality Award, Digital Schools Award, Active Travel Gold Award, STEM Club Award, Compassionate Schools Award, and Nurture Quality Award. Achieving these awards will help us enhance educational opportunities for our pupils and reflects our commitment to continuous professional development for staff. We look forward to sharing our progress throughout the year.

International Visitors

In term one we hosted an Italian placement student Nadia in P3. Nadia was in Derry for four months as part of an exchange programme with Foyle International.

Mandarin Lessons

In association with the Confucius Institute at Ulster University we have been able to offer all our P4 - P6 pupils a weekly Mandarin lesson in term one. Thank you to Mandarin teacher, Yuija Song for her work with our pupils.

STEM Opportunities

Our P5 pupils recently enjoyed an exciting Engineers Ireland workshop. A big thank you to Miss Harkin for delivering our STEM Club sessions each week. These opportunities inspire creativity and problem-solving skills in our learners. We're proud to announce that we are working towards achieving an external STEM Club Award this year.

Educational Trips and Visitors

We have had several educational trips during term one, including trips to a UNICEF recognition and celebration event, the Ulster American Folk Park, the YES project and local post primary schools. We have also had educational visitors to the school such as the Fire and Rescue Service, the Dairy Council, local artist Rory Quigg, Jo Jingles and facilitators from Hope Northwest.

Sport in Term One

This term our school football team completed a round of twelve fixtures in the Derry Schools' Development League. Thank you to Miss McSheffrey and Mr Caolan for taking both the boys' and girls' teams to their games. Mr Caolan also took our P3 pupils for a block of after school football sessions as part of our IFA Schools quality mark and our partnership with local club Tristar FC.

The P5 - P7 cross-country team have been training hard on a Friday morning at 8.30am under the guidance of Mrs Gallagher and Miss Devlin. They performed very well at the first round of the schools' cross-country league.

Our P6 and P7 pupils have completed a block of netball training, improved their shooting and passing skills, many thanks to Miss Amanda and Miss Johanna for leading this club. We look forward to their blitz events in term two.

Our P4 and P5 pupils have completed a block of after school athletics training with Mrs Clare Mellon and Miss Claire Devlin. The pupils have enjoyed their introduction to athletics in a fun environment.

Our P6 pupils have completed a ten-week swimming programme at the City Baths where they have improved their swimming stroke and water confidence.

P5 - P7 pupils completed the Holy Family version of Marty's Run during term one. Thank you to Martin Gallagher senior for attending the event.

Mr Lagan has been preparing our school gaelic teams for upcoming indoor tournaments. Our boys' and girls' teams are playing in January. We look forward to hearing about their future successes.

Student Council

The student council have been very busy this term attending a child friendly city and community event in the Guildhall, organising a Hallowe'en disco, a Christmas jumper day and Christmas shoe box appeal. Thank you to Miss Strathern and her team for their important work and enhancing our student voice.

Sacramental Preparation

In term one we welcomed staff from the Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre to an evening Sacramental session for parents and children. Parents of P4 and P7 pupils who are preparing for the Sacraments of Penance, First Communion and Confirmation were invited to take part in a workshop and discussed how they can help support their children in this important year of their faith journeys. Thank you to our staff and parents for their support in attending this important event.

School Music

The P4 - P7 choir have had large numbers at their weekly rehearsals. The choir have already performed very well at school masses, open day, Nativity performances and at the BHCP residents Christmas lunch. Thank you to Mrs Barr, Mr Gill and Miss Herron for their ongoing support in nurturing our musical talent.

This term, our pupils enjoyed some incredible musical experiences.

P4-P7 took part in an inspiring workshop delivered by the Ulster Orchestra. Our P6 pupils attended a concert by the Ulster Orchestra, experiencing world-class music in a professional setting.

P4 pupils had the wonderful opportunity to attend the City of Derry International Choral Festival, celebrating the joy of singing and choral music.

These events were a fantastic way to deepen pupils' appreciation of music and the arts.

Families Connect

During term one we have facilitated the Families Connect programme for our nursery and P1 parents. The programme is aimed at building relationships and developing support structures between the school and parents. It provides opportunities for our parents to share their experiences and engage in workshops to support their children's social and emotional development, literacy and numeracy. Thank you to Miss Strathern and her team.

Quality Awards

The Holy Family Quality Awards are rooted in the Gospel values and reflect our school motto of Be Your Best, Celebrate Others, Do the Right Thing.

Each month we select and celebrate one of our values which include courtesy, helpfulness, patience, kindness, understanding, generosity, resilience, wisdom, gentleness and self-control.

We are very proud of our award winners for September (courtesy) October (helpfulness) November (patience) and December (kindness). We hope that they enjoyed their extended break and treat with Mrs Parke in the nurture centre.

Preventative Curriculum

As part of our preventative curriculum, we have had classroom activities, workshops and assemblies on the areas of stranger danger and antibullying during term one. Thank you to Mrs Parke, our designated teacher for organising events on these important topics.

Active Travel

During term one we have held two active travel days and our annual cycle, walk scoot to Santa event. Thank you to Miss Deery and our active travel team and parents for supporting our pupils on their active journeys.

Our P3 pupils have started a three-year programme with Road Safe NI to promote safety on the roads in our community.

Admissions for P1 and Nursery 2026/27

Applications for pupils wishing to start Holy Family in September 2026, will open on Friday 7th January 2026 at 12noon. The application forms will be available on the Education Authority website. If parents require any assistance with completion of applications, it is available from the school office.

The application process for Nursery and P1 will close on Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 12 noon.

Christmas Nativity Performances

Congratulations to all our pupils on their wonderful Christmas Nativity performances. Each performance was filled with joy, creativity, and festive spirit, making this a truly special time for our school community. Thank you to our parents, family members, and staff for their support in helping to make these experiences so memorable.

We hope that you enjoy a happy and peaceful Christmas.