Holy Cross Boys'

Prospectus

Graded an OUTSTANDING school in all areas by the ETI

"The drive for improvement in this school at all levels is continuous and unrelenting." [ETI]
**ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR SEPTEMBER 2018**

The following criteria will be applied in the order set down 1-5 by the Board of Governors of Holy Cross Boys' Primary School in selecting boys for admission in September 2018.

1. Boys of compulsory school age who normally reside in the parish of Holy Cross, Ardoyne.

2. Boys of compulsory school age who have brothers or half-brothers presently at Holy Cross Boys’ Primary School. (Indicate name and year group)

3. Boys of compulsory school age whose father/ guardian, or brother/ half-brother are prior pupils of Holy Cross Boys’ Primary School (Indicate names and dates of attendance.)

4. Boys of compulsory school age whose parent/ guardian is presently a member of the teaching/ ancillary/ auxiliary staff of Holy Cross Boys’ Primary School.

5. Boys of compulsory school age from other areas.

In the event of over subscription in any one of the above criteria, taken in order, final selection will be on the basis of closeness of the home to the school (in a straight line) as measured by the Ordnance Survey Map from the gate of Holy Cross Boys’ Primary School to the front door of the applicant’s normal residence.

In the event of two or more children’s permanent residences being measured equal distance for the final place, children will be selected by lot.

Should a vacancy arise after Thursday 26 April 2018 all applications for admission to P1 that were initially refused- new applications, late applications and applications where new information has been provided- will be treated equally and the published criteria applied. The waiting list will be in place until 30 June 2019.

The school will contact you in writing if your child gains a place in the school by this method.

Your child’s name will be automatically added to the list. Please contact the school if you wish for your child’s name to be removed from the list.

When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on, or attached to, the application form. Parents should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the school’s admissions criteria is stated on the application form or attached to it. Examples of such information include whether the child is the eldest child/ has brothers or sisters attending the school.

**Duty to Verify**

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any Application Form. The provision of false or incorrect information or the failure to provide information within the deadlines set by primary schools can result in the withdrawal of a place and the inability to offer a place on the part of any school nominated on the applicant’s Application Form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of applications received</th>
<th>No of pupils admitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VISION

‘Holy Cross Boys’ strives to promote high self-esteem, a love of life-long learning and responsible citizenship within our school community where everyone is valued.’

In Holy Cross Boys’ PS, we are very proud of the strong academic performance and reputation of the school in the local and wider community, something that has been acknowledged by reports in the media. This was further recognised in the most recent Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) report which found the school to be Outstanding in all areas (April 2017).

The sporting and creative talents of our pupils have long been a source of pride and celebration.

Uniquely amongst primary schools, we have a full-time music teacher who works to ensure that every child who leaves Holy Cross Boys’ is able to read music and play a range of instruments. Our pupils have performed on various stages including the Waterfront Hall, St Anne’s Cathedral and the National Concert Hall in Dublin.

We annually compete and are amongst the winners in sporting competition for a range of sports including football, Gaelic football, handball, table tennis and athletics.

We relentlessly strive to live up to our motto of nurturing the talent of each individual pupil so that they may fulfil their full potential.

Nurturing Talent, Fulfilling Potential
AREAS OF LEARNING

Art and Design

At Holy Cross Boys’ Primary School, we place a particular emphasis on the children learning and celebrating the Arts in all its dimensions.

Children’s success in Art is acknowledged and celebrated appropriately in Holy Cross Boys’ through display in classrooms and around school. Each class learns about famous painters and their work alongside a study of Classical music compositions.

Music

The aim of music in our school is to develop each pupil’s musical ability and encourage each child to realise his musical potential. A sense of enjoyment will be fostered, along with the development of social skills and confidence in their music-making.

Within the school, music is taught to all classes by Mrs Martin, a music specialist.

Each class receives music lessons on a weekly basis, as well as Key Stage Music practice in the hall. In addition, P5, P6 and P7 pupils also receive extra tuition to help them learn how to play the tin whistle.

The school offers tuition (with assistance from School of Music peripatetic teachers) for violin, trumpet, trombone, tuba, cello, guitar and Djembe (African drum) to pupils in Key Stage 2 and there are regular group activities for string ensemble, traditional music and choir. Many boys will also be tutored for Grade-level examinations.

Mrs Martin has also received the prestigious Classic FM’s ‘Primary School Music Teacher Of The Year’ award. She organises and enters Holy Cross Boys’ school choirs into competitions, providing our boys with the opportunity to perform in many venues, including The National Concert Hall in Dublin.

Philosophy

Philosophy is taught from Primary 1 to Primary 7. Children are taught to reflect, reason, respond and re-evaluate. All members of staff are trained by The Philosophy Foundation. We believe that one hour of philosophy education per week effectively promotes emotional and social development as well as increasing cognitive ability, critical reasoning and dialogue skills.
COMMUNICATION

Communication is a life-long process. Through Communication our aim is to develop the children’s knowledge and understanding, concepts and skills in all four modes of language: talking, listening, reading and writing. In doing so, we will enable children to interact effectively in the world around them, to express themselves creatively and to communicate confidently.

We ensure the children have numerous platforms to experience and put their skills into practice throughout the school year.

All classes perform a class assembly every year and take part in Singing Practice every week. Primary 1 - Primary 3 children perform the Christmas production every year where every child has a part on the stage. We annually celebrate World Philosophy Day by having classes from throughout the school perform on stage. The Book Fair is always a big success during the school year. There are competitions during this week for the best bookmark and fun home-works related to the fair. Pupils from Primary 4 - Primary 7 take part in the Accelerated Reader programme, with many incentives and rewards on offer to help cultivate and develop our children’s love of reading.

MATHEMATICS

Our Using Mathematics Policy reflects a practice which strives to develop mathematical skills alongside the knowledge and understanding of Maths facts across the breadth of attainment target areas consistent with the requirements of the revised curriculum and new Levels of Progression.

In order to develop our pupils Mathematics/ Numeracy skills, it is important that our pupils meet a range of experiences including investigations, problem solving, recording, discussions, games, practical learning experiences, structured play and mental maths.

Teachers strive to promote accelerated learning techniques in all lessons through practical activities, ICT, games etc.

Pupils complete termly activities emphasising the real life dimension of Maths through our Using and Applying Maths and Functional Maths schemes of work, as well as making use of the thermoplastic playground markings to explore maths in a fun-filled way.
The World Around Us focuses on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in Geography, History, Science and Technology. Holy Cross Boys’ P.S. aims to retain the best of practice within the three subjects, developing topic/theme based approaches to this area of learning, making relevant connections across all areas of learning.

We use our Nature Garden extensively to provide practical learning opportunities, while all classes undertake a series of practical Science investigations throughout the year.

**Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)**

Every aspect of a child's experience at home, school and as members of their community contribute to Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU). Children are greatly influenced by society's values; the values held by their peers, the values which are communicated explicitly or implicitly in school, and by the values of the home. Maintaining a close partnership with parents is fundamental to the task of promoting PDMU values such as honesty, justice, fairness and respect for self and others always remain at the forefront of all teaching and learning in Holy Cross Boys’ Primary School.

We strive to develop life skills which enable children to participate effectively and safely in society. We want children to identify, review and evaluate the values they and society hold so that they can take increasing responsibility for their own lives.

**ICT**

ICT can be a tool to enable children to access information they don’t know and to present information they do know. Our hope is that they will be able to do both of these things in a variety of imaginative and interesting ways. Our teachers see ICT as a tool for engaging and motivating children, making lessons interesting and making administrative tasks easy.

Holy Cross Boys’ PS boasts 2 computer suites. We are a multi-award winning school, being the proud recipients of the NAACE ICT Award & the Third Millennium Teaching Award for ICT.

All of our classrooms have an interactive whiteboard and Apple TV to ensure the 200+ iPads we currently have can be used to maximum effect on teaching and learning in the school. We also offer Parent & Community iPad classes to help families extend their child’s learning from school to home through the use of an iPad.

The school website [www.holycrossboys.com](http://www.holycrossboys.com) is maintained by the ICT Co-ordinator.
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The school believes that physical education, experienced in a safe and supportive environment, is vital and unique in its contribution to a pupil’s physical and emotional development and health. The physical education curriculum aims to provide for pupils’ increasing self-confidence through an ability to manage themselves successfully in a variety of situations.

Our PE programme is a broad and balanced one, catering for all five areas of the PE curriculum: Games, Dance, Gymnastics, Athletics and Swimming (P5, P6 & P7.)

We at Holy Cross Boys’ take great pride in our teams and their accomplishments. We have an unparalleled reputation for success on the football field at Belfast level, and we are very supportive and proud of the endeavours of all our boys who represent the school in sporting competitions from across a broad range of disciplines including soccer, Gaelic football, handball, table tennis and athletics.

RELIGION

Holy Cross Boys’ is a Catholic school where our overall aim is to foster in each child a love of God and a Christian approach to life. The school is committed to the holistic development of each pupil particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalized.

As Catholic teachers we try to cultivate and enhance human values. Through the celebration of the sacraments and the partnership between staff, pupils, home and the local Church, our aim is to prepare our children for their relationship with the wider community and society. Through The Grow In Love and The Wonder of my Being Education Programme, we aim to develop pupils’ awareness of the dignity and sacredness of life, and that we are all unique and one with God the Father.

The Grow in Love religious education programme covers all of the theological, dogmatic and doctrinal material deemed appropriate for children of primary school age.
PASTORAL CARE & SAFEGUARDING

At Holy Cross Boys’ Primary School, the Pastoral Care policy directs the action of every member of the school to act in a manner promoting the sense of self-esteem and self-respect of pupils and this is underlined by the promotion of positive behaviour throughout the school’s merit system.

The arrangements for Pastoral Care and Safeguarding reflect the guidance from the Department of Education, and this has been verified in our recent ETI inspection.

The Nurture Room and Sensory Room facilities have been developed by our staff under the guidance of school leadership to increase our ability to nurture and cater for the needs of all pupils.

EXTENDED SCHOOLS

Holy Cross Boys’ Primary School is at the hub of our local community, offering a wide range of activities before, during and beyond the traditional school day. We work alongside a range of external agencies to provide an extensive variety of activities for all year groups.

Our range of activities and classes include Nature Studies, Soccer, ICT, Spanish, Guitar, Science Investigations, Gaelic Football, Irish, Arts and Craft, French, Table Tennis, Multi Sports, Handball and Drum kit.

A range of other activities organised in the school, open to parents and the broader community, including Philosophy for Parents Class, First Aid-Parent Class, NVQ Level 3 Child Care Course, GCSE English Class, Combat Obesity programme for parents & and an Irish Parents Class.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Special Educational Needs is given high priority in Holy Cross Boys’ Primary School. We are committed to the removal of any barriers that may inhibit learning or achievement. We liaise closely with all our pre-school settings to ensure the early identification of children with special educational needs. We provide a continuum of provision to assist us in meeting the diverse needs of all our pupils. This includes working closely with the Educational Psychology Service, Rise NI (previously CIDS) Team and EA outreach services to maximise and secure high quality provision.

CHILD PROTECTION

We aim to provide a safe, caring and supportive environment where our pupils can learn and develop confidence they need to protect themselves from unwelcome behaviour or abuse from others, and to keep themselves safe.
A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

We are proud of our strong roots within the local Ardoyne community. We have fostered enduring relationships with local residents, youth and community groups, as well as Cliftonville FC, meaning our monthly Accelerated Reader winners spend an afternoon on the hallowed turf of Solitude playing football.

We have pro-actively moved to form partnerships with other schools to promote mutual understanding and to celebrate the arts, something that has been widely acknowledged, including by the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins.

In Holy Cross Boys’ PS, we embrace innovation. Our staff constantly strive to devise new ways to consolidate learning and motivate our pupils.

Careers’ Week

During this week the pupils will be inspired by learning about various professions and what they entail and the many skills that are required for each job. Each year group will listen to talks given by visitors from different careers and devise and ask questions including; fire-fighters, politicians, dentists, chefs, doctors, archaeologists, postmen, businessmen, solicitors, musicians etc. and will also meet some local celebrities and media stars including comedians, DJs, sport-stars, writers etc. Recent visitors have included; Paddy Barnes, Tim McGarry, Niall McGinn, Johnny Hero, Dan Gordon, Michael McHale and Gerard Carlisle. The week culminates in a Fancy Dress parade of the pupil’s favourite careers.

Transition Week

The move from primary to secondary or grammar school can prove particularly daunting for a number of pupils hence we devised a mock transition week to help prepare our Primary 7 pupils for this change. The pupils are divided into tutor groups and are given a timetable to follow packed with a diverse range of subjects similar to secondary school. We also involve the local secondary and grammar schools in delivering some of these subjects. The pupils practice following the timetable and are required to move around the school to different teachers and rooms.
**Nature Garden**

One of our most recent innovations is the development of our Nature Garden. It has not only proved a wonderful resource for teaching our pupils about gardening but has also developed into a beautiful cross curricular learning space for many other subjects. Under the superb guidance of Mr Diamond the pupils have successfully planted and grown many vegetables, herbs and flowers including their own potatoes, carrots, beetroot, sprouts, onions. lettuce, lavender, sage, rosemary, mint, heather, daffodils, sunflowers, tulips and chrysanthemums to name but a few.

**Functional Maths**

Functional skills are core elements of Mathematics that provide an individual with essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and work. Employers and educators have identified these skills as vital for enabling young people and adults to succeed in further learning, work and life in modern society. The new curriculum states that the teaching of Mathematics and Numeracy should ensure the development and application of mathematics across the curriculum and in real life situations. Skills in numeracy should help children to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

In Holy Cross Boys’ the functional maths scheme incorporates a series of investigative, real-life, practical lessons which will give pupils the opportunity to present their findings in a variety of ways. The pupils will be able to use the skills gained through these lessons to solve problems in familiar and unfamiliar situations, apply understanding to everyday life, engage competently and confidently with others and develop personally and professionally as positive citizens.

**Halloween**

The annual celebration of Halloween in Holy Cross Boys’ is a fun time for pupils, teachers and parents alike. The pupils learn about the history of Halloween and how it is celebrated in different countries. Classes throughout the Key Stages prepare assemblies, learn songs and participate in games and activities. Our celebrations culminate in our Fancy Dress Halloween Hooley. Our creative parents never cease to amaze us with their wonderful costumes and designs.