

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Foundation Stage is for children aged three to five years old. In Foundation 1 we have a maximum cohort of 52 children – up to 26 children in both the morning and afternoon sessions that join us at the age of three (beginning the school year in which they are four). In Foundation 2 we have a cohort of 60 children – 30 children in both classes who join us at the age of four (compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday.)

Like all Foundation Stages our curriculum is based upon the Government's practice guidance document *Early Years Outcomes* (September 2013). Throughout their time in our Foundation Stage every child's attainment is tracked and monitored to ascertain levels of progress being made. At the end of their time in the Foundation Stage every child is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) to determine whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development'. We recognise that building a secure foundation of learning in our Foundation Stage is crucial to children's future success throughout their school years and beyond.

1.2 Children joining our Foundation Stage have already learnt a great deal. Many of those joining us at the beginning of Foundation 2 have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our community. The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what our children already know and can do;
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- it provides a rich and stimulating environment.

## 2. Aims of the Foundation Stage

2.1 The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- personal, social and emotional well-being;



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- positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning;
- social skills;
- active participation and enjoyment in learning;
- attention skills and persistence;
- language and communication;
- phonics, reading and writing;
- problem solving and reasoning;
- number and calculation skills;
- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- physical development;
- creative development.

### **3. Teaching and learning style**

3.1 As a Christian community the Gospel teaching forms the basis upon which all of what we teach is built upon. We believe that each child is unique and built in the image of God.

3.2 Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2. We aim to ensure that the children at our school are provided with high quality learning experiences which lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement. Children learn through their total experience. This policy guides what children do, what teachers do, how time is managed, the organisation of the classroom and what the school as an organisation does to create an effective and well-managed learning environment in which the individual needs of each child can be met.

3.3 The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the strong catholic faith which leads our school and embodies all that we do;

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

## 4. Play in the Foundation Stage

4.1 Our provision acknowledges that play is a tool for learning. The 2012 *Statutory Framework for the Early Years* states that '*Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about*

*problems, and relate to others* (1.9 pg 6 ). We guide our children's play through interaction and intervention and in this way we ensure progression, differentiation and relevance to the curriculum.

4.2 Some features of how play in our Foundation Stage enhance the curriculum are:

- the children practise and build up ideas;
- the children learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules;
- the children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own;
- the children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems;
- the children have a venue to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situation;

### 5. Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

5.1 In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning (see our policy on school inclusion).

5.2 In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children so that most of them achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the key stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

5.3 We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;



- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This involves speech therapy for some of our children.

### 6. The Foundation Stage curriculum

6.1 Our Foundation Stage curriculum reflects the three prime areas and four specific areas of learning identified in the Government's practice guidance document *Early Years Outcomes* (September 2013). These areas are enhanced by our strong Catholic faith ensuring that relevant quality learning takes place. As none of these areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others and all are of equal importance we utilise opportunities for linking their learning experiences wherever possible. In doing so we enable our children to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning. All the areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities.

6.2 In accordance with the Government's directive that all school's deliver a synthetic phonics program we teach Read, Write, Inc. phonics in our school, beginning in our Foundation Stage.

### 7. Assessment

7.1 Throughout the foundation stage, as part of the learning and teaching process, we assess each child's development in relation to the Early Years Outcomes and Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that form part of the curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. These assessments are made on the basis of our accumulating observations and knowledge of the whole child and are recorded in each child's e-learning journey on an on-going basis. Baseline, end of Autumn, end of Spring 1, end of Spring 2, end of Summer 1 and end of Summer 1 assessments are recorded



on O-track to record progress and facilitate analysis of that progress as well as attainment

7.2 A baseline assessment is undertaken within the first few weeks of both the Foundation 1 and Foundation 2 year and is recorded on a progress tracker. The baseline provides a clear 'picture' of each child's current levels of understanding and knowledge. This information is then used to guide the specific provision for individual children's learning and whether that child needs targeted support and to what degree that need is.

7.3 In accordance with the Statutory Framework March 2014 by June 30 of their Foundation 2 year the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals and their teacher indicates whether that child has not yet reached the expected level (emerging), they are meeting the expected level (expected) or if they are exceeding the expected level (exceeding). The EYFS Profile data is reported to the Local Authority upon request.

7.4 Year 1 teachers are given a copy of each child's profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three characteristics of effective learning; engagement, motivation and thinking.

7.5 The completed profile is shared with parents by providing them with an end of year report. A follow-up one to one meeting between teachers and parents are also available upon request.

### 8. The role of parents

8.1 We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- induction meetings between the teacher and parent prior to their starting school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class;
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;

- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private.
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging for children to start school over the first half of term. We stagger the starting time of each child over this period, so that the teacher can welcome each child individually into our school. We encourage parents to stay if there are problems with the child's admission;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through the child's contact book. We invite parents to curriculum evenings to discuss the kind of work that the children undertake in the reception class.
- enabling the parents to share their child's learning journey with them on a regular basis.
- encouraging the parents to use the 'news leaves' to share their child's wow moments such as; swimming across a pool unaided, riding a bicycle without stabilisers, questioning something that demonstrates a higher level of understanding, helping by setting the table.

### 9. Resources

9.1 We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

9.2 We encourage the children to approach their use of resources in terms of 'what am I learning (while I use this)?'

9.3 We foster a respect for the environment by demonstrating the care and consideration needed when using resources.

## 10. Safeguarding Children

10.1 Changes to welfare requirements emphasise that the use of cameras and mobile phones in an Early Years setting be detailed.

10.2 Private mobile phones that have inbuilt cameras may not be used in the setting while the children are present.

10.3 Only children whose parents given signed consent may be videoed or photographed.

10.4 Only school ICT equipment may be used to video or photograph children either on site or on an educational visit.

10.5 Photographs and video of the children engaged in their learning may only be used within the school environment; in learning journeys, for displays, and 'sharing learning' slideshows.

10.6 Staff who have access to these photographs may not take personal copies.

10.7 Staff who take photographs off school premises to continue their work elsewhere are responsible for ensuring that they are secure at all times and may never share these with anyone other than another member of staff.

10.8 Permission must be granted by a member of the Senior Leadership Team before a parent may photograph their child whilst at school.

10.9 During an educational visit the use of private mobile phones, either of staff or parent helpers, will be discouraged unless in an emergency situation. All adults taking part in such a visit will sign a code of conduct agreement stating that they will not use the camera to video or photograph the children from the time they leave the school until their return to school.