**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

***Trusting in God – we love, believe & achieve***

The Foundation Stage effects a smooth transition from home to school and offers stability for the younger child. In class children are provided with an environment in which they are given opportunities to express themselves using a variety of mediums and suitable material to stimulate and extend imagination and understanding. Through planned play and talking, young children learn about themselves and the world around them, they are given opportunities to socialise, make friends and therefore develop personal, social and emotional skills and develop confidence.

In the Foundation Stage we acknowledge the potential for learning in every activity and situation that arises. Our aim is to provide a secure and stimulating environment in which children flourish and learn to make sense of the real world. We make the children feel valued and give them the confidence to become active learners. Our activities provide first hand experiences through play and discussion, children are encouraged to interact with others, to move about and explore a wide variety of learning situations. There are well-planned areas of provision in the wide range of activities, resources and materials available. Opportunities are provided for sustained activity and continuous provision, as well as spontaneous, self-chosen activities. It is important to us that children experience success, have fun and enjoy themselves whilst learning.

**The environment**

Children in Reception class have access to a learning area where provision is made to cover the different areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. Outdoor learning is actively encouraged and children have access to the outdoor learning area, which is resourced to meet each curriculum area. We have an outside learning space which children have access to each day. We have all weather clothing and footwear available so children are protected and there are no barriers to learning. The outside area is an extension of the classrooms and there is a variety of resources to facilitate learning. In this area EYFS staff provide planned activities for children as well as giving opportunities for them to make their own choices.

**The curriculum**

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the principle that:-

* Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning.
* Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
* Children learn and develop well in enabling environments.
* Children develop and learn in different ways.

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning and is based on ongoing observations and assessments in **three prime areas of learning**:-

* **Personal, social and emotional development -** The school fosters and develops relationships between home, school, children’s centres and places of worship in order to make links stronger for the good of the community as a whole. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self image.
* **Communication and language -** This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills. Children’s developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on. We aim to extend and enrich the children’s vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, role-play, participating in music sessions and saying rhymes and singing songs together.
* **Physical development -** Children are given opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This is done in both indoors and outdoors and by working with a wide range of resources. Children also participate in PE lessons which include Gym, games and dance.

**and four specific areas**:-

* **Literacy -** We have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas indoors and outdoors independently but they also take part in teacher-led activities. These activities include whole class shared reading, phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing. The pre-writing work encourages correct pencil control, left/right orientation and letter formation. Children have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence. We encourage children to treat books and other resources with respect and they are given many opportunities to listen to stories told by the staff.
* **Mathematics -** We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numeracy through practical activities and using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. Pre-number work is covered through nursery rhymes and number activities. Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement. Towards the end of the Foundation stage children start learning to tell the time and are given opportunities to learn about money and simple calculations.
* **Understanding the World -** All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They will learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. We follow the Catholic Religious Education Programme, Come and See and also study other religions. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.
* **Expressive arts and design -** We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, movement, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use basic musical instruments. Children also learn new songs and rhymes and enjoy singing them with each other. Colour recognition is taught, naming colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching through various times during the year children are given the opportunity to participate in the school nativity and assembly.

**The characteristics of effective learning**

The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically, underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. We know that:

* Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development
* Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods
* When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.

Weekly planning takes into account the needs of the individual or groups of children using ongoing observations and informal assessment.

**Approach to learning**

The general features of good practice in the education of the young children in our care are:

* the provision of a happy and welcoming setting where all children feel secure and valued;
* the provision of an exciting and stimulating environment where children will be motivated with a desire to learn;
* opportunities for the children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and skills and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities, enabling them to develop into confident and independent learners;
* encouragement of children to play an active role in their learning, to question, discuss and listen to other points of view, in the knowledge that their opinions are valued;
* the commitment to outdoor learning giving them the opportunity to learn through active play and exploration;
* encouragement for the children to develop creative thinking, curiosity and successful acquisition of skills;
* the development and support of the children’s social and emotional aspects of learning;
* recognition and celebration of the cultural diversity that makes our School and our community a rich and interesting place to work and play;
* the promotion of a personalised approach to learning, ensuring all children are supported at a level and pace that enables them to realise their full potential;
* the inclusion of all children and access to the whole curriculum;
* the adoption of a variety of teaching styles, appropriate to the needs of the children and the curriculum;
* involved in practical activity, enquiry and purposeful play;
* to build on what the children already know;
* partnership between parents/carers and teachers in supporting the education of the children, encouraging a team approach which involves home and school working together
* good relations between our School and the ‘settings’ that the children experience prior to joining our School.

**Quality of teaching**

Effective teaching takes place where:

* staff have a clear understanding of how children learn.
* staff plan, co-operate and work as a team.
* activities are purposeful and clearly planned.
* staff work directly with the children.
* children’s play is supported and extended sensitively.
* there is a good use of space, materials and equipment.
* staff are flexible and explore opportunities that occur spontaneously.
* staff have high expectations based on each child’s ability.

**Planning**

* To provide a broad and balanced curriculum;
* To plan according to the learning objectives for the Foundation Stage
* To have thorough planning as a guide while also being mindful to make the most of opportunities for learning as they arise.

**Assessment**

Regular assessments of the children’s learning ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment is mainly through observation and discussion carried out by the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Guided and focused activities are also considered in assessing the children.

In Reception class a record of the children’s progress towards the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage Profile is kept on 2Simple to build a profile.

**Home/School links**

We recognise that all parents/carers, as their child’s first educators, have a vital role to play in their child’s education. We aim to establish strong links with them.

We value the involvement of parents in school. Parental involvement with school begins even before children start Reception with an invitation to visit the school and meet their child’s teacher. Parent’s consultation meetings are held in the Autumn and Spring Term at which parents are invited to discuss their child’s progress. A report is sent out at the end of the Summer term and parents are invited into school to discuss this report if they wish. It is important to stress that if parents are concerned in any way about their child they should telephone or call into the school to make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the class teacher or the Head teacher. Parents are kept informed of all happenings in the school by regular newsletters. The Parents are informed via notices on the windows, text messages and by regular newsletters. Parents are invited to various assemblies and functions throughout the year.

**Review date: September 2017**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher**