



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Date Adopted	September 2023	Owner	SLT
Last reviewed	September 2023	Review cycle	July 2025

We believe every child is precious and welcome all in unconditional love. We serve our community with respect, so all may enjoy life's fullness. Together, we learn to strive, aspire and succeed as unique individuals, as members of a global society and as stewards of the Earth gifted to us.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2021.

Structure of the EYFS at St Martin's

Early Years provision at St Martin's comprises of three Reception class with 30 places. There are three classrooms and a shared outside area. Reception classes also access the library, Forest School area and Music room.

Intent

At St Martin's School, we believe that the experiences gained in the Early Years provide the essential foundation for all future learning. We believe our pupils must develop a love of learning and the life-skills that will enable them to thrive, later in primary school, at secondary school, and beyond. Early childhood is the foundation on which individuals build the rest of their lives.

We provide:

- A secure environment where all children feel safe, have positive relationship with adults and peers and are able to express themselves.
- Equal opportunities for all children to develop to their full potential, regardless of their background or any additional barriers they may have. We encourage our pupils to be respectful and appreciative of others, whilst developing a healthy regard for themselves as individuals.
- A well-balanced curriculum for each pupil to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. We also support our pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- A stimulating and engaging environment where learning is enjoyable and purposeful.
- An environment which enables our pupils to develop as independent learners.
- Early assessment and identification of any additional education needs to ensure that all our pupils get the support they need to fulfil their potential.
- Support for our pupils by forming strong and supportive relationships with parents.
- We work in partnership with our families to ensure that our pupils get the best possible start to their educational journey.
- A stable base for smooth transitions; both from nurseries and home to Reception, and from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Key Stage 1.
- Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS Statutory Framework that applies from September 2021.

Four principles which underpin the EYFS at St Martin's;

- Every child is a **unique child**, our aspirational curriculum is designed to ensure all our children learn in our nurturing school.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time.
- Importance of **learning and development** with an aspirational curriculum.

A Unique Child

Our children;

- Access a curriculum designed to extend their knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Benefit from a wide range of teaching strategies based on pupils' individual learning needs.
- Learn through teacher input and planned purposeful play which is carefully designed to meet the needs of all of our pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity, linguistic background, SEND, attainment, or their social or cultural background.
- Have their progress monitored closely so that interventions and support can be put in place as necessary.
- Benefit from a close working relationship with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all our pupils' needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and fulfil their potential.

Positive Relationships

All our staff work hard to develop positive relationships with every pupil and their families; interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them so that they feel heard and understood. We use positive behaviour management strategies as much as possible to ensure that our pupils are motivated to behave in a way that promotes our vision and values. See school Behaviour Policy.

Christian Values

Our Christian values underpin our curriculum, enhance each curriculum area and are evident throughout the school.

- **Friendship** - We appreciate each precious individual and so good friendships flourish. We welcome everyone into our harmonious, happy school where we have fostered strong relationships with our whole community. Through developing a greater understanding of each other and our world we are preparing for and growing our understanding of our role in our wider community.
- **Love** - We create a happy, nurturing, inclusive school community where we are kind and gentle. We are embraced as precious individuals and all of us are valued and encouraged to develop a love of learning. Through our restorative approach we are taught to be caring and develop empathy. We provide opportunities to experience the fullness of life and wonder at God's magnificent world.
- **Responsibility** - We learn to take responsibility. We are independent learners who are taught to take responsibility for our own learning and so become the best we can be. We are

reliable and cooperative which means we are depended on to support others and serve an active part in our school community. We take responsibility for our own behaviour and are thoughtful of other's feelings, values and beliefs. Our restorative approach to behaviour teaches us the importance of telling the truth and helps us learn to be accountable for our own actions.

- **Courage** - We foster self-belief. We embrace and learn from new challenges even if this means we need to be brave. Because we learn about important issues, we know we sometimes need to be bold to stand up for what is right; we develop inner strength to deal with real-life situations.
- **Honesty** - We are honest about what we can do and open about where we need support so all can succeed. We have strong morals that guide us to do the right thing, even when no one is watching. We are truthful with ourselves and others. We have strong and sincere relationships with one another and value faithful friends.
- **Respect** - We are inclusive and respect everyone's right to learn and develop their good learning behaviours. We are courteous and polite to everyone and demonstrate good manners. We respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society and, although we may not share the same beliefs and values, we show tolerance.

Enabling Environments

Our Reception space is organised to allow the pupils to lead their own learning, exploring and learning securely and safely. There are specific areas to allow the pupils to develop across all aspects of learning within the EYFS curriculum. Provision is progressive throughout the year to allow children's skills and understanding to develop. Play-based learning is paramount, and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned purposeful play opportunities provided by staff.

Our pupils have access to both inside and outside areas across the day giving them opportunities to learn in a variety of environments and develop a wide range of skills. Reception children will also spend two hours a week exploring the on-site Forest area lead by our qualified Forest School lead.

Learning and Developing

Learning is underpinned on the prime areas; Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional development while strengthened through four specific areas, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. We understand the importance of early language development and make sure that our learning environment is language rich.

Our children learn through a balance of adult led direct teaching and child-initiated activities. We call this free-flow play 'Adventure Time' and during this time the pupils are supported by high quality interaction with staff ensure that the pupils are stretched and supported on their individual learning journeys. This all contributes to children developing on the characteristics of effective learning: **Playing and exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking.**

Curriculum

Our curriculum extends and enriches the **Early Years Statutory Framework 2021** and the **September 2021 Development Matters** curriculum guidance leading to great pupil outcomes.

- Our vision is that every child experiences a curriculum which develops spiritual, academic, social and emotional growth.

- Our curriculum is exciting, engaging, enriching and challenging; allowing children to experience learning in a wide range of contexts.
- We believe children learn best when they have first - hand experiences and so our children can be seen busy learning, through many different exciting experiences, in the classrooms, around our school and in our locality.
- We prioritise teaching our children to read and believe that the acquisition of synthetic phonics knowledge and skills is vital to begin a successful journey as a reader and that reading is the gateway to learning. We use the Read Write Inc. phonics scheme and this starts as soon as the pupils are settled in Reception.
- Talk for Writing is the underpinning of our Literacy curriculum and children will learn 6 key texts over the year.
- We also follow the White Rose school mastery approach to Maths. Jigsaw supports the curriculum of Personal, Social and Emotional development.
- Our children have a variety of learning experiences in our extensive, well-appointed grounds. This provision is enhanced through our Forest Schools programme.
- Music, led and taught passionately by our music specialist, flows through our school, enhancing our curriculum.

Assessment

Assessment is essential to ensure that we are able to accurately plan for the pupils' next steps in their learning and to ensure that we are able to address any gaps in their learning.

The statutory Reception Baseline is completed within 6 weeks of entering Reception. This is done 1:1 with each child and their teacher or a senior teacher. This information adds to our wider baseline assessment picture.

Our school baseline assessment is done within the first four weeks of pupils starting Reception and we use a variety of tools to support our judgements.

These are:

- A Read Write Inc assessment baseline
- Red Word Assessment
- A Number and Numerical Patterns assessment
- Practitioner observations

Our assessment is done in an age-appropriate way and in a way that encourages the pupils to feel positively about the progress they are making.

We use the band descriptors from the updated 'Development Matters' as a best fit guide and use practitioner judgement to assess what level the pupils are working at.

Throughout the year we use the assessment to check progress at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer Term.

Our judgements are moderated within the EYFS team, and at cluster moderations with other local or trust schools. Our end of year judgements also include moderation with Year 1 to ensure our assessment levels are consistent going into Key Stage 1.

Parental Engagement

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and longest-term educators and we value the vital part that they play in their child's education.

We develop our relationships with families through:

- Welcome Meetings- opportunities to meet the Early Years teaching staff, explore environment and key figures from the wider school community.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns.

- Inviting parents to a range of activities throughout the school year such as curriculum activities, trips, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Inviting parents to Open Morning/Afternoons to see their child's learning in action.
- Publishing weekly curriculum topic maps detailing the areas of learning and the theme on the school website.
- Offering parent/teacher consultation meetings to discuss pupils' progress and their next steps including a Mid- Year report in the Spring term.
- Inviting parents to attend meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Reception.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and the welfare of our pupils is at the heart of our job as teachers and our school community in general. We follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and we use CPOMS to log all of our concerns. We also have a separate Intimate Care Policy.