

# St Martin's C of E Primary School

*'Inspiring children to be the best they can be'*

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Agreed: Spring 2024  
To be reviewed: Spring 2026

## **Definition and Rationale**

The Early Years Foundation Stage refers to the education a child receives from birth until the age of five, with Reception covering the final year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children join our Reception classes in the September of the academic year in which they turn five. We aim to prepare the children for learning in Key Stage 1 which is within the National Curriculum. The EYFS is the area of education upon which young children build the rest of their lives. It is a single framework for care, learning and development.

## **EYFS aims and principles**

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

### **1. A Unique Child**

In our school we believe that all our children matter and 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.

We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and treat all children fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations 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.

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe and we recognise that children learn best when they are happy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning experiences tailored to meet their needs
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

## 2. Positive Relationships

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At St Martin's, the EYFS teachers act as a 'key person' to all children in their class, supported by the Learning Support Assistants. We recognise that children learn to be independent through the formation of secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and positive relationships with the children and their families in order that children will feel secure and valued.

### *Parents as partners*

We recognise and value the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We aim to keep parents informed in order that they may work with us effectively for the benefit of their child.

- We run an induction meeting for parents in the June before their child starts school, where parents receive an information pack and are given key information about starting school.
- Parents are given information about preparing their children for school with some helpful tips, for example, practising opening and closing their lunch box, using a knife and fork, practising getting dressed.
- Parents are asked to complete admissions forms prior to their child starting school, including writing a synopsis about their child including their likes, dislikes and any concerns they may have.
- Teachers invite each child with their parent(s) into school prior to them starting. This is in order to give parents a 1:1 time slot to discuss anything they feel the school should know before their child starts school, as well as to ask any questions they might have. The visit will also allow the children to get to know their new teacher and Learning Support Assistant and to become familiar with the EYFS classrooms. The teachers take photos of the children with their family which are then displayed in the classroom.
- Parents are required to sign permission slips for local walks and photographic permission.

- Parents are given the opportunity to 'Meet the Teacher' in early October, to find out a little more about what the EYFS is about and procedures in their child's class.
- At the start of each term, parents receive an overview of what their child will be learning about in all areas of the curriculum.
- The school operates an 'open door policy'. Parents are encouraged to talk to the child's teacher if there are concerns.
- There is also an opportunity for parents to meet the teacher formally each term. Parents receive a formal written report once a year in the summer term.
- Reading record books are used as a means of communication as well as books on the gate for parents to write messages in.
- A weekly newsletter is written outlining the key learning undertaken that week. Activities are suggested for parents to partake in with their children to support their learning.
- The use of the online Tapestry system enables teachers and parents to share and comment upon the children's progress and achievements in school and at home.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to share the achievements of their children through the use of 'wow' certificates.
- Parents are invited into the school termly to share their child's Learning Journey and contribute with their own comments as well as hearing comments made by the child and class teacher.
- Parents are actively encouraged to participate in school life by sharing their skills and expertise to enhance the curriculum. Parents are also welcomed to volunteer in school with activities such as individual reading.

We liaise with outside agencies where appropriate to meet the needs of individual children.

### 3. Enabling Environments

At St Martin's we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We begin by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning. We aim to include children in the planning of their learning as much as possible, so that the children's interests and questions are explored and investigated.

EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas which cover all areas of the EYFS curriculum. The EYFS Unit has its own enclosed outdoor area as well as a Forest School on site. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children time to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. The environment is adapted as appropriate for children with SEN or physical disabilities.

### 4. Learning and Development

At St Martin's we aim to develop a lifelong love of learning amongst our pupils. We hope to give all children the opportunity to experience the best possible start to their education to develop solid

foundations, which will ensure that they flourish throughout their school years and on into adulthood. Our Teaching and Learning policy defines the key features of effective teaching and learning in our school.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and Development are set out in the 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' non-statutory guidance. These areas are outlined below:

<b>Characteristics of Effective Learning</b>	<b>Area of Learning and Development</b>	<b>Aspect</b>
<p><b>Playing and exploring</b></p> <p>Children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.</p>	<b>Prime Areas</b>	
<p><b>Active learning</b></p> <p>Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.</p>	<p><b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b></p>	Self-regulation
		Managing self
Building Relationships		
<p><b>Creating and thinking critically</b></p> <p>Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.</p>	<p><b>Physical Development</b></p>	Gross motor skills
	Fine motor skills	
	<p><b>Communication and Language</b></p>	Listening, attention & understanding
		Speaking
	<b>Specific Areas</b>	
	<p><b>Literacy</b></p>	Comprehension
		Word reading
		Writing
	<p><b>Mathematics</b></p>	Number
		Numerical patterns
	<p><b>Understanding the World</b></p>	Past & present
People, culture & communities		
The natural world		
<p><b>Expressive Arts and Design</b></p>	Creating with materials	
	Being imaginative & expressive	

The Prime areas are fundamental and work together to support development in all other areas. The Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

### Curriculum

- Teachers in the EYFS offer a carefully structured curriculum based on the Development Matters. Long and medium term plans outline themes, which each run over a 4-6 week

period. For each of these themes, opportunities for learning across the seven areas of learning and development are identified.

- Teachers work collaboratively to plan themes and activities across all seven areas of learning. Weekly planning takes the form of a timetable showing the activities taking place each day and is displayed for and shared with all staff in the EYFS. Teachers also talk daily with Learning Support Assistants so that they are well informed about learning, activities and expectations.
- The EYFS Team meet weekly to share information, discuss vulnerable children and for staff CPD.
- The children will be given opportunities to explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world through structured play.
- The learning environment is planned for both indoors and outdoors to encourage a positive attitude to learning. The children make their own selection of the activities on offer as this encourages independent learning.

### *Play*

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

### *Active learning*

Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions and think creatively to solve problems. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning. We aim to promote this through well planned structured play and purposeful activities, both in and out of doors.

We also aim to provide children with opportunities to learn off site by providing trips that put learning into context, for example, farm and church trips.

### **Organisation of the EYFS at St Martin's**

Please refer to the school prospectus for our admissions policy.

At St Martin's we take in 45 Reception children, who are split into two classes. The Reception classes are located within the purpose built EYFS Unit, where there is indoor and outdoor provision.

Reception children attend school between 8:40am and 3:15pm. They have 3 teaching inputs during the day. These are followed by the opportunity to access adult led activities as well as child initiated play activities where they can access resources freely and are allowed to move around the

classrooms to extend their learning. Once a day the children participate in both a phonics session and a maths session.

## **Induction**

We aim to provide an induction programme that enables every child's first experiences of school to be happy, positive and fun.

- For children with SEND needs Reception teachers visit children in their pre-school setting before starting school.
- The majority of children are discussed at a Local Network meetings prior to starting where Nursery staff give us a formal handover. Where Nursery's do not attend we ensure we have a handover over the telephone.
- There is a staggered intake in September/October:

Week 1: Summer born children stay 8:40-1.00

Week 2: Summer born children stay all day  
Autumn born children stay 8:40-1.00

Week 3: All children full time

- The children are encouraged to visit their new class in the summer prior to starting school, as well as the Friday before they start in September.
- All children will be offered a full time place from September.
- For some children it may be appropriate for them to continue to attend school for half days even after the induction period is over. Teachers liaise carefully with feeder settings and parents to establish how to cater most successfully for such children.
- A gradual, well supported introduction to the various aspects of school life is catered for. The children are introduced to the routines of school which require more conforming, socialisation and directed learning situations than will have been experienced before.
- The routine of the school day is introduced slowly, especially those aspects which take the children away from their normal EYFS environment, for example, PE and Assembly.
- At the end of the induction process parents are invited to evaluate and make suggestions on how we can further improve our induction process. We pride ourselves on being reflective practitioners and constantly strive to improve the transition as well as all other aspects of our practice.

## **Transition to Year 1**

We recognise that children will continue to make good progress as they enter Year 1 from the outset if transition is effective.

- During the summer term the Reception teachers begin preparing the children for transition by gradually building up the time spent on adult initiated activities.

- The children have the opportunity to visit their new Year 1 class on 'moving up day' in July in order to familiarise themselves with the setting as well as the adults in the class.
- Children in the Year 1 classes will have planned access to child initiated learning opportunities for the early part of the autumn term and it is recognised that some children may require a longer period as they make the transition to Year 1.
- Class teachers in Reception and Year 1 will spend time in each other's settings to familiarise themselves with the children and routines, to further aid smooth transition.
- The children make their own transition booklet with photos of the new teachers and teaching assistants, as well as their new classroom, which they take home to share with parents.

### **Assessment**

- Teachers liaise with local nurseries and feeder settings with regard to each child's development before entry to St Martin's. Reports and records are passed from feeder settings to Reception class teachers where available.
- Ongoing assessments help to monitor and capture each child's progress and take place through regular observations, discussion, photographs, record keeping and planned assessments.
- The children are assessed and tracked using the 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' against 17 assessment scales.
- The EYFS Profile is used to summarise children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. The EYFS Profile outlines each child's attainment in relation to the 17 Early Learning Goals, as well as a short narrative describing the child's learning characteristics.
- Reception teachers attend termly moderation standardisation training in order to standardise our teacher assessment judgements with regard to the EYFS Profile.
- At the end of June, the LEA is given a summary of each child's achievement profile. This information is also used to report on the progress in each of the seven areas of learning to parents.
- An end of year report summarising the achievements from the EYFS Profile is sent to parents. This report will indicate whether your child has met the Good Level of Development or not. The profile data is discussed with the Year 1 teachers so that they can continue to help the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals if they have not done so before they can access the National Curriculum.
- Teachers monitor progress to ensure that all children develop well in all areas. Children are assessed in December and March to see if they have met the Milestones that progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goal at the end of the year. Where appropriate, action will be taken to provide additional support.
- Children are well supported in a variety of ways: attending Attention St Martin's Group time, participating in a literacy intervention program (NELI) , small focus group time and individual 1 to 1 planned activities.

### **Resources**



A wide variety of resources are available for the Reception classes. The EYFS budget, which is managed by the EYFS leader, enables necessary resources to be purchased throughout the year.

### **Outside agencies**

Teachers liaise with the Special Needs Co-ordinator to address the needs of specific children whose progress is not as expected or where children face particular problems. Where necessary, the expertise of outside agencies is called upon for extra assessment, support and advice. Identified areas of SEND are shared with parents (see the School's SEND Policy) and actively monitored throughout their time at St Martin's.

**Tracey Meredith Bass - Early Years Leader - Spring 2024**