



# St Martins School 3-16 Learning Community

## Early Years Policy

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”*

“Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage”,  
Department for Education, 2012

At St Martins School 3-16 Learning Community, we are committed to providing a high quality early years’ education, which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning. We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*

## Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to age 5. In our school children have the opportunity of joining our Nursery the term after their third birthday and can remain here for up to 5 terms before transferring into our Reception Class.

Key Stage One begins for our children at the beginning of Year One.

The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

The early years education we offer our children is based on principles which are grouped into 4 themes:

- **A Unique Child** – Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** – Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments** – Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.
- **Learning and Development** – Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. All areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

These four guiding themes work together to underpin effective practice in the delivery of the EYFS so that:

- 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.

## Objectives

**Our objectives of the EYFS policy, here at St Martins School, are: -**

- To provide a happy, caring, safe and secure environment for learning, which meets the individual needs and interests of the children.
- To develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults.
- To provide a high quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage documents and Every Child Matters.



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*

- To encourage active learning through first hand experiences both in indoor and outdoor play, and through both verbal and non-verbal communication.
- To encourage children to become self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline.
  - To foster positive home school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents.

Each Nursery group is assigned a Key Person and in the Reception Class the class-teacher is the key person supported by additional practitioners throughout the week.

### **Staffing and Organisation**

At St Martins School, we have a Nursery and one Reception class. The Nursery Class has the use of a large classroom base and a dedicated outdoor area.

The Reception base has a large classroom linked via double doors to the Nursery base. It has its own dedicated outdoor area but also has access to the Nursery outside area accessed via double gates.

In Nursery there is a teacher supported by two EYFS teaching assistants

In Reception there is a full time teacher, supported by a full time teaching assistant.

Other teaching assistants may be deployed in Nursery or Reception based on the needs of the children.

There is also an attached Children's Centre base which runs a Parent & Toddler group on a Monday morning and a joint Children's Centre/Nursery session on a Thursday afternoon. The Thursday session is run jointly with a Children's Centre support worker.

Staff are organised to support the children in a balance of adult led and child initiated experiences throughout the day. Most sessions include free flow access to the outdoor area. Practitioners are aware of the need to be flexible in order to respond to unplanned events that the children are interested in.

### **Planning**

The Early Learning Goals are the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the time they reach the age of five. There are three prime areas of learning:

Communication and Language  
Physical Development  
Personal, Social and Emotional Development

In addition, there are four core areas of learning:

Literacy  
Mathematics



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*

## Understanding the World Expressive Arts and Design

Our planning has a sharp focus on the children's needs, their interests and their stages of development. We recognise that the seven areas of learning cannot be delivered in isolation and seek opportunities to make links between them. We aim to deliver the curriculum through planned, purposeful play and present new concepts in meaningful contexts that enable the children to build on what they already know.

### **Long Term Planning**

Our long term planning briefly shows the topics that we may cover during the year. We try and base each topic on a specific question to allow for children's interests to be addressed. For instance we may ask 'What's in the box?' which allows us to think creatively about what the children may be interested in.

### **Medium Term Planning**

At St Martins School, we deliver a creative curriculum, which is based around a new topic each half term. Medium term planning shows the key learning experiences for each area of the curriculum. Practitioners use this flexibly, choosing learning experiences to meet the needs of the children. At the beginning of each topic, practitioners lead the children in discussion to identify areas that they are particularly interested in. These ideas are incorporated into the medium term plan.

These topics can be changed in light of the children's interests. Any changes are indicated on the planning grid.

### **Short Term Planning**

Short term planning shows the learning opportunities that will be available over the week. It includes differentiated adult led experiences for all curriculum areas, as well as showing how the learning environment will be enhanced in response to the previous week's observations and assessment of the children.

### **In the moment planning**

In the Nursery we work 'In the Moment' which means children select what they want to do from a range of resources and we, as skilled practitioners, support the children and help to move their learning forward.

### **Effective Teaching and Learning**

We encourage the children to play an active role in shaping their learning experiences. Adults engage in discussion with the children about what they are interested in, which



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*

skills they would like to develop further and which resources they need to support their learning.

We aim to provide an attractive, challenging learning environment that offers high quality opportunities for the children to learn through play, both indoors and outdoors. There is a range of “continuous provision” available in the classroom, that is designed to offer open-ended, practical learning opportunities. Children are supported to think creatively and imaginatively and explore how resources can be adapted. Additional resources are added to enhance the environment and are shaped by the children’s interests.

Adult led activities are practical in nature and based on first hand experiences wherever possible. The children are supported to develop problem-solving skills through open-ended tasks and opportunities to share their thinking with others.

In the Reception class the number of adult led activities that the children take part in increases throughout the year, as their concentration develops.

### **Observation and Assessment**

At St Martins School, we use a range of strategies to gather information about the children’s learning and development and use this information to ensure that our planning meets the needs of all learners. During child initiated activities, staff make ‘snapshot’ observations on post it notes. These notes are then added to our online learning journey, Tapestry, which parents can access. At times the children will help to record an observation by taking a photograph and helping the adult to select their photograph and ‘sending’ it to their parents.

From the first half of the Autumn term onwards, children are assessed and decisions made as to which band of ‘Development Matters’ they are working on in each area of the curriculum. This allows learning opportunities to be pitched appropriately and also provides a baseline of the children’s attainment. This information is closely monitored to ensure that all children are making good progress.

In the Summer term, the Reception teacher, supported by the EYFS Manager, considers the 17 ELGS in the EYFS Profile to decide whether each child is working at the expected levels, exceeding the levels or have not yet met the levels. Judgements against the ELGs are based on ongoing observation; all relevant records; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

The results of the Profile are shared with parents and/or carers, and there are opportunities for them to meet their child’s class teacher to discuss this information.

At the end of the year, Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child’s skills and abilities in relation to the three key



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*

characteristics of effective learning. This helps to create a smooth transition and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

The EYFS profile results are reported to the local authority, who monitor and moderate the judgements made.

### **Working in Partnership**

We recognise that children may access EYFS provision through other providers throughout the week and that all providers have an equally important role to play in their early years experiences. We seek information about the other settings that our children attend so that we can establish communication about their learning and development.

### **Learning Environment**

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. Resources are clearly labelled enabling the children to access them with a high level of independence. Practitioners regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the resources and make adaptations as necessary.

### **Parent Partnerships**

We value the contribution that our parents and carers make to their child's learning and take every opportunity to work in collaboration with them. Each half term, we publish a newsletter to inform parents of what their child will be learning and how they can support them at home.

For children in Reception during the Autumn and Spring terms we hold parents' consultations and in the Summer term we send home detailed reports.

In the Nursery we meet with parents of children who are in their first term. We create a settling in review on Tapestry which includes a brief description of how their child operates within each area of learning and also their characteristics of effective learning.

This is then shared with parents during the meeting.

We welcome contributions from home and encourage parents to use the online learning journey, Tapestry, to share things their child has done and also to comment on any activities their child may have been involved in.

The children take reading books home to share and in Reception they take a book that is linked to the phonic phase they are working on.

### **Community Links and the Wider World**

Over the year, we arrange visits from members of the local community to support our topic work. Film clips, non-fiction texts and artefacts are also used to introduce new



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*

concepts in real-life contexts. We aim to develop the children's awareness of other cultures by exploring different countries and celebrations. We are also involved with Davies Development & Testing who are a bottle/package testing company.

### **Behaviour Management**

Please refer to the school's 'Behaviour Management' policy.

### **Safeguarding**

Please refer to the school's 'Safeguarding Children' policy. We use an online learning journey called Tapestry where staff upload photographs of the children and make written observations to accompany them. (Please see our EYFS Tapestry Policy)

### **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

We have a responsibility to ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference. We can support each child's needs by:

- removing or helping to overcome barriers where these already exist;
- being alert to the early signs of needs that could later lead to difficulties and responding quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as required;
  - stretching and challenging all children.

Please refer to the school's 'Equality of Opportunities', 'SEN' and 'A, G and T' policies.

### **Premises and Security**

We take security very seriously. Staff use key fobs to gain access to specific parts of the building. The main Reception office staff are responsible for verifying the identity of any visitors before they enter school. Visitors are asked to sign in to the school visitor's log and are given a visitor sticker to wear.

Staff are aware of their role in challenging anyone who is not recognized and asking for identification from anyone claiming to be from an outside agency.

The external doors are closely monitored by staff when children are entering or leaving the setting, to ensure that they cannot leave unaccompanied. All staff are aware of the need to monitor the external doors to ensure that they are secure during the session.

The register is used to check how many children are present. When moving from one area of the school to another, head counts are used to check that all children are present before leaving.



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*

## **Arrival and Collection of Children**

Reception children can enter school from 8:40. Parents are encouraged to stay with their child until the class-teacher indicates it is learning time at 8:50. Each child is marked in on the school's online register by the class teacher. Parents/carers use the external classroom doors when collecting their child(ren) at the end of the school day. If a child needs to be collected during the school day, parents report to the school office. In Nursery the children enter at 8.55 and parents stay with their child until 9.05. Once all parents have left the Nursery base the main external gates are locked.

Under no circumstances is a child allowed to leave with anyone other than those named on the child's registration form, unless the parent has given written permission. Parents write a list of people who are able to collect their child. In exceptional circumstances, a parent may give verbal permission, but a description will be required. If there are queries regarding a child's collection, the class teacher will contact the child's parent/guardian to discuss the situation with them.

If a child is not collected and the parent/guardian is uncontactable, the other names on the child's registration form will be called to collect the child. If no-one on the child's registration form is contactable, the head teacher should telephone the Social Services Duty Officer or Out of Hours Duty Point. Arrangements should then be made for the child to be removed to an appropriate place of protection agreed by the Social Services Department. It remains the responsibility of the Social Services Department in conjunction with the Police to contact the parents and if appropriate, to inform them of their child's whereabouts.

## **Missing Child**

If a child disappears during the school day, practitioners will; check with all members of staff when the child was last seen and that they have not been collected by a parent/carer, organize a thorough and systematic search of the building and surrounding playground etc, inform the head teacher of the situation and telephone the child's parents or other emergency contact to explain the situation and double check that the child is not there or their whereabouts known. If the child is still unable to be located, the school will notify the police of a missing person.

## **Outings**

Written parental permission to take the children into the local environment is sought upon admission to the school. Further permission is obtained for any other outings. Risk assessments are completed for each type of outing.

## **Key Person Approach**



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*



The class teacher is responsible for the well being of all of the children in the Reception class. In addition, each child is assigned a 'key person' who may be the teacher or a teaching assistant. Parents are informed of who their child's key person is and receive information about their role.

In Nursery the teacher and EYFS teaching assistants are assigned key children.

The key person's responsibilities include:

- helping the child to become familiar with the setting
- building a relationship with each child's parents, working in partnership with them to ensure that the child is being cared for appropriately for each family.
  - responding sensitively to the child's needs, feelings, ideas and behaviour.
  - ensuring that the learning opportunities on offer meet the needs of each child.
  - Keeping their key children's online learning journeys up to date and completing their assessment at the end of each term.

### **Risk Assessments**

In addition to the school's risk assessment, daily risk assessments are completed in Nursery & Reception to ensure that any hazards are identified and managed before the children enter the classroom.

### **Complaints**

Please refer to the school's 'Complaints' policy.

### **Information for Parents and Carers**

We provide a pack for new parents and carers that includes information about our daily routines, the types of activities provided, staffing and food and drink.

Home visits are carried out prior to the children starting in the Nursery. These are carried out by two members of staff and involve us visiting the child and parent/s in their home. We have found this time to be invaluable in establishing close links with both parents and children.

### **Transition from Nursery to Reception**

We hold a transition meeting for new parents in the Summer term, where we outline daily routines and expectations. Parents are invited to attend two 'taster' sessions with their child. In September, we hold parent interviews before the children start to gather information about them and answer any questions that parents may have.



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*

## **Transition from Reception to Year One**

In the Summer term, we begin a programme of transition to support the children with their move to Year One. This involves visits to the Year One classroom, discussion with current Year One children, walks to look at where they will enter school and opportunities to ask any questions about the next year. The school holds a 'Move Up' morning, giving the children a taste of their new class and also arrange a transition meeting for parents.

## **Food and Drink**

We provide a 'free flow' snack area in the Nursery base. The Reception class have a set snack time after break-time. A range of healthy snacks are available, supplied by "The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme". Children are supported to wash their hands with soap before selecting a snack and pouring their own drink. The snack bar is accessible throughout the day, allowing the children to make decisions about when they are hungry and thirsty. Practitioners monitor who has accessed the snack table and remind the children to remain seated when eating and drinking. Fresh drinking water is available at all times and in hot weather, it is also provided in a seated location in the outdoor area.

The snack table is cleaned at the beginning of each session with an antibacterial wipe and is regularly checked throughout the session. A procedure for maintaining hygiene in the snack area is displayed for all staff to refer to. All food is stored according to manufacturer's recommendations and in line with food hygiene legislation.

Information about the children's dietary needs is sought when they enter the setting. A list of the children's dietary needs is available in the classroom and all practitioners have regard to this when putting out food and drink in the snack area or when leading a cooking or food tasting activity.

Parents are provided with information about what can be stored safely in a packed lunch, including how to keep lunchboxes cool, as they are not refrigerated. The packed lunch sheet also provides advice about appropriate food content. The school dinner menus are displayed in the Reception classroom so that parents and carers can support their children to choose their food.

## **Illnesses and Injuries**

Parents and carers are asked not to send their child to school if they are unwell and to inform the school office of their absence. Parents/carers are asked to inform staff if their child is suffering from a minor ailment so that appropriate care can be given. Children must not return to school within 48 hours of a bout of sickness or diarrhea.

If a child becomes unwell whilst at school, a member of staff will:



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*

- phone the parents/carers, explain that their child is unwell, explain the symptoms noted and ask them to collect their child.
- sit with the child in a quiet place away from other children, if possible, until the parents arrive.
- if the child has had sickness or diarrhoea, explain the policy of at least a 48 hour clearance of either symptom before the child may return.

Advice relating to notifiable diseases is displayed in the school office.

In the case of an injury, appropriate first aid will be administered by a qualified first aider. A first aid kit is kept in the Reception & Nursery classroom bases and their contents are in accordance with advice from the Health and Safety Executive and the Community Health Physician. First aid cover is provided at playtimes and lunchtimes. All accidents are recorded in one of the school's accident books and signed by the member of staff who dealt with the incident. Parents/carers may be contacted by telephone to inform them of an injury if deemed necessary.

We ask for written parental consent to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future when the children are admitted to school. In the case of a more serious accident to a child, the practitioner/school will contact the parent/guardian to agree a course of action if time permits. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted the practitioner/school will seek appropriate medical attention or treatment for the child. The child should not be given anything to eat or drink. If a child or adult needs to be transported to hospital, every effort should be made to use a car with fully comprehensive insurance including business use. Two adults must accompany the child, and one adult must accompany a member of staff. Should an ambulance be required, one adult must accompany the child or adult. The child's registration form must be taken to the hospital with the child.

### **Medicines**

Only drugs/medicines prescribed by a registered Medical Practitioner will be administered to children. Parents should complete and hand in a Medication Consent Form, along with medicine, to a member of staff. Drugs/medicines must only be administered to the child for whom they are prescribed and all drugs/medicines must be kept in the original container stating whom they are prescribed for and dosage information. Unwanted or unused medicines must be returned to the parent for disposal. A record of the drugs given should be made indicating the time, dosage and signed by the person administering the dose. The child's parent should sign this each day that medicine is given.



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*

Training for prescribed medication that is invasive i.e. EPIPENS etc is available via the school nurse. If an individual child requires a care plan, this will be drawn up in partnership with parents and the school nurse.



*Selfless, self-assured, successful*