



MARTIN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Reviewed and updated: autumn 2024
Reviewed every two years

“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. High quality early learning provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.” (EYFS Framework 2021)

Statement of Intent

At Martin Primary School we believe young children learn best through play. Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, think about problems and relate to others. Imaginative and spontaneous play, supported by high quality interactions with adults, helps children to understand experiences, situations, themselves and other people. The Nursery and Reception classes provide materials, time and space for children to play with a purpose. Early mathematical and linguistic skills are practised, developed and extended, alongside their personal, social and emotional development, physical development, creative development and their understanding of the world. Carefully planned and structured experiences, supported by teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants, give children the opportunity to consolidate learning experiences, practise skills and develop the ability to reason and solve problems.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children’s readiness for the next stage of their education and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parent/carers.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Links with the UN Rights of the Child

Article 15

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 28

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available for every child. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity.

Article 29

Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child’s respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents/carers, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 31

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2022) 'Early Years Foundation Stage profile: 2022 handbook'
- DfE (2021) 'Development Matters'
- Early Education (2021) 'Birth to 5 Matters'

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2024) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2015) 'The Prevent duty'

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The Governing Body is responsible for:

- ensuring there is a policy in place to safeguard children that includes an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child, the use of mobile phones and cameras, and staff safeguarding training requirements. These issues are addressed in part in this policy and in further detail in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Online Safety Policy
- ensuring there is a policy in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff (including supply staff) or a volunteer. These issues are addressed in the school's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

2.2 The Early Years leader is responsible for:

- providing INSET to staff on issues relating to this policy statement
- in collaboration with colleagues, producing an annual 'Action plan' that outlines plans for improvements and developments in the Foundation Stage
- implementing and reviewing the effectiveness of this policy and action plan (in conjunction with the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team).

2.3 The class teachers are responsible for:

- planning and providing for all aspects of the children's learning
- providing a rich and stimulating classroom environment both outdoors and indoors
- completing the Baseline assessment and Early Years Profile

- sharing and evaluating – samples of children's work and observations in term planning meetings, to agree a consistent approach in making these assessments.

3. Aims

3.1 Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning
- enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally
- encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere
- support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing
- work alongside parent/carers to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

3.1 Four guiding principles shape our practice:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between the school and parent/carers
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

3.2 To put these principles into practice, the school:

- provides a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account
- promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- works in partnership with parent/carers
- plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment
- implements a key person approach to develop close relationships with children
- provides a safe and secure learning environment.

4. Learning and development

In partnership with parents/carers, the school promotes the learning and development of pupils to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education. The EYFS provision and practice is based on an observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development. Learning and development in school will be planned to reflect these interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.

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4.1 Areas of learning

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two sections – prime and specific; however, all the sections are interconnected and important.

4.1.1 The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language
 - Listening, attention and understanding
 - Speaking
- Physical development
 - Gross motor skills
 - Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development
 - Self-regulation
 - Managing self
 - Building relationships

4.1.2 The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy
 - Comprehension
 - Word reading
 - Writing
- Mathematics
 - Numbers
 - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world
 - Past and present
 - People, culture and communities
 - The natural world
- Expressive arts and design
 - Creating with materials
 - Being imaginative and expressive

When children begin in Nursery, more emphasis is given to the three Prime Areas. It is expected that, as each child progresses, their development in the Prime Areas will underpin and enable their development in the four Specific Areas. There will therefore be a gradual shift in emphasis in planning. In Reception, the activities are planned to cover the Prime and Specific curriculum areas, to enable children to achieve specific learning goals.

4.2 Characteristics of Effective Learning

In organising and implementing educational programmes, the school will ensure that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, having regard to three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, use what they know in their play and are willing to try new things.
- Active learning – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and use what they already know to learn new things, and develop strategies for doing things.

4.3 The four principles that all EYFS staff follow.

4.3.1 A Unique Child

- Each child develops differently and we work with parents/carers and carers to ensure their needs are met.

- Each child is an active, capable learner from birth and our starting point is always with what the children “can do”.
- Every child needs opportunities to make choices and take risks in a safe and secure environment, supported by adults who know, understand and respect them.
- All children need clear and constant boundaries that help them feel safe.
- A child's emotional well-being goes hand in hand with their academic progress and cognitive development; we ensure that all children have the opportunities to explore their emotions and feelings, make lasting friendships and feel positive about themselves.

4.3.2 Positive Relationships

- Parents/carers and carers are of paramount importance and are each child's first and most significant educators.
- We talk to parents/carers about their child and endeavour to meet them before they start at our school, in order to establish a relationship between home and school.
- We allocate a key person to build a close relationship with each child and their family.
- Parent/carers' views, concerns and insights are valued and respected.
- Communication between home and school is crucial for children's success and we foster this through – regular daily informal contact, weekly focus children, profile books, parent workshops, open sessions, formal parent consultations and written reports.
- At parent consultations, we discuss the child's next steps and suggest activities to enhance learning at home. We incorporate the opinions and experience of parents/carers in the EYFS profile.
- Parents/carers and carers want to take an active role in supporting children's learning, and play a part in the life of the school through sharing news from home, reading regularly, celebrating special events, supporting trips, helping the school, joining the PTA , becoming a school governor.

4.3.3 Enabling Environments

- Every child is entitled to a learning environment that is well planned, stimulating and exciting.
- Each child has the opportunity to direct their own learning and become engrossed in experiences and activities, both indoors and outdoors, which inspire and excite them.
- Every child is appropriately challenged: we use careful observations and assessment of each child's needs and interests to plan for the next steps in their learning.
- Children, parents/carers, teachers and other professionals (school nurse, health visitors, GP, speech and language therapist etc) work together to ensure the children have the best possible start at school.

4.3.4 Learning and Development

- Play is natural to children and is the best medium for developing their emotional, social and cognitive skills
- Each child is entitled to the highest quality Early Years' experience that provides them with the time and space to investigate and explore
- Every child needs the opportunity to master new ideas - we offer all children good quality direct teaching of skills and concepts, enabling them to learn new things and gain a positive sense of themselves as learners

5. Teaching and Learning

5.1 Nursery

The Nursery is organised into clear areas to encourage development of each curriculum area with all relevant equipment to hand. Resources are clearly labelled and accessible to the children in order to encourage independence. Before the beginning of each session, activities are set up based on the curriculum learning goals and individual children's observation outcomes. Some activities are led by Nursery staff as part of a curriculum focus, whereas others aim to encourage children to investigate independently. Equal emphasis is given to the outdoor classroom at all times. This area is planned for, to develop language, literacy, maths, science and creative skills, as well as the personal, social and physical skills.

During the session, staff observe individual children and record their interests and progress. These observations feed into our weekly planning in order to ensure that the needs of the children are met. At this stage, the process of the activity is important. Children learn new skills and develop those already learnt, e.g. moulding and manipulating playdough to develop the fine motor skills essential for pencil control, or playing with sand and water to learn about capacity.

5.2 Reception

As in the Nursery, each classroom is organised into specific areas with relevant resources and equipment.

For part of the day, the children participate in activities with a specific focus, led by the teacher or another adult. These activities are differentiated for individuals or small groups in order to develop a range of skills according to ability. At other times, the children participate in activities with the focus on independent learning.

Much of what the children do is of a practical nature. As in the Nursery, the process of learning is vitally important in the Reception year.

5.3 Indoor and outdoor classrooms

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or quiet, be creative, look at books, help themselves to snacks etc. The Foundation Stage has its own outdoor classroom area. The free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways, on a bigger scale than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

5.4 Forest School

Every week the children in Early Years are given the opportunity to access the school's Forest School. The purpose of these activities is to encourage and inspire children through positive outdoor experiences. Children will have the opportunity to learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and most importantly to use their own initiative to solve problems and cooperate with others. The children may at times use tools, play, learn boundaries of behaviour; both physical and social, establish and grow in confidence, self-esteem and become self-motivated. At Martin School we believe children are stimulated by the outdoors and typically experience, over time, an increase in their self-belief, confidence, learning capacity, enthusiasm, communication and problem-solving skills and emotional well-being.

During some sessions children may take part in some specific (higher risk) Forest School activities delivered by trained Forest school practitioners (please see the school's Forest School Handbook for more details)

Parents/carers should provide appropriate clothing for the weather so children can fully access this activity.

- ✓ Sun hat*/woolly hat*
- ✓ Sun block*/scarf
- ✓ A long-sleeved top / warm jumpers*
- ✓ Sturdy shoes/walking boots and wellingtons.
- ✓ A spare pair of trousers and socks (if possible)
- ✓ A waterproof coat and waterproof trousers

The sessions will continue regardless of the weather unless specific risks are identified i.e. high winds, low temperatures, floods or thunderstorms.

6. Planning

6.1 Long Term Planning

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum identifies learning goals which most children are expected to achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage. All class teachers have a curriculum folder that includes the learning goals to be focussed on each term.

6.2 Medium Term Planning

Medium Term plans are developed from knowledge of children's interests, needs and evidence taken from observations and evaluations. They are also chosen to ensure a balanced curriculum over the year. These plans will include the development matters statements, early learning goals, teaching objectives and activities and experiences covering all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

6.3 Short Term Planning

This is informed by observation and assessment and is carried out on a weekly and daily basis. Staff meet on a weekly basis to evaluate the previous week's learning and to plan the learning goals and identify differentiated activities/experiences for the following week. Class teachers produce weekly planning to share with Nursery Nurses and class assistants. These indicate where/when activities will happen and which activities will be adult focused. They also show how activities will be differentiated to meet the needs of children. In addition, class teachers also plan for daily whole class teaching sessions.

Copies of all planning are kept in the teachers' planning folder or on the server. Planning is monitored on a regular basis by curriculum leaders.

7. Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is constructive and always used to inform planning. Assessment is carried out through observations of the children's spontaneous, independent learning as well as activities they carry out with adult support. The information obtained from assessment informs our planning and the compilation of the Foundation Stage Profile at the end of Reception.

7.1 Baseline Assessment

This is a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting in the Nursery and Reception.

The Reception baseline assessment is a statutory requirement and assesses the children's starting points in language, communication and literacy and mathematics. The children are given practical resources to complete these tasks and teachers will record the results on a laptop, computer or tablet. No numerical score will be shared and the data will only be used at the end of year 6 to form the school-level progress measure. However, teachers receive a series of short, narrative statements that tell them how their pupils performed in the assessment and help them inform teaching within the first term.

7.2 End of year assessment

All children are regularly assessed at points throughout their time in the Nursery and Reception including at the end of the year. The end of year assessments for the Reception children feed into their EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1.

7.3 Online Learning Journals

Spontaneous and planned observations and assessments of all children are made and recorded using the Tapestry programme and uploaded to the <https://tapestryjournal.com> website. This is a secure site where only certain staff and parents/carers/carers can view the information. Parents/carers are asked to give their permission for us to place information and images of their child on this site. They are then given a password to access it.

They can share it with their child, family and friends at home and also post any comments and photographs of their own, helping to create a fully holistic view of the child and strengthen the parent partnership.

7.4 Adult Focused Activities

Weekly adult focused activities in Reception are recorded on differentiated slips and collated in Maths and Literacy folders to track progress. On occasion focused activities may be recorded on Tapestry.

7.5 Summative Reports

Parents/carers/Carers receive an annual report at the end of Nursery and Reception. This indicates the child's achievements in all seven areas of learning as well as a narrative on the Characteristics of Learning. Areas for development are also identified.

8. Staffing

The school provides a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'.

8.1 Ratios

Children aged three and over

Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, there will be one member of staff for every 13 children, and at least one other member of staff will hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is not working directly with the children, there will be one member of staff for every 8 children, and at least one other member of staff will hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

Children in Reception classes:

Class sizes will be limited to 30 children per school teacher.

8.2 First Aid

There will be at least one member of staff on the school premises at all times who has a current paediatric first-aid (PFA) certificate. Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will also hold a PFA certificate.

9. Parental involvement

We firmly believe that the EYFS cannot function without the enduring support of parent/carers and we are committed to developing effective partnership with all parent/carers as we believe good communication between home and school is fundamental to children's learning.

9.1 Communication about children's development

Once a term, staff meet with parents/carers to discuss their child's progress and next steps for the child's future learning. At these parental consultations, staff also suggest activities which can be done at home to support the child's learning.

In Autumn and Spring terms, parents/carers receive a focus week observation for their child. This provides them with information about their progress and next steps. Parents are encouraged to add information about their child's interests and learning at home.

At the end of the summer term a written report is sent home to parents and carers. This assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of Effective Learning. There is an opportunity to discuss this with staff afterwards.

9.2 Communication about the curriculum

Termly information letters are sent home, giving details of what the children will be learning. Accompanying this is a Home Learning suggestions sheet, with ideas for activities which support their development.

Regular weekly/fortnightly updates are put on Tapestry to inform parents and careers what we have been learning about in Nursery and Reception and they are given ideas of how to help at home.

In Reception, phonics letters are sent home regularly informing parent/carers/careers of the sounds and words of the week which the children are encouraged to practise at home.

The school organises talks specific to the EYFS in order to keep parents/carers informed. Many of the coffee mornings are also relevant to parents/carers with children in the Early Years.

9.3 General information

The school website provides information about how parents/carers can support the development of early reading, writing and mathematical skills.

Should parent/carers/carers require advice on parenting, the child's class teacher can put them in touch with the school's learning mentors and Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

10. Transition

10.1 Nursery

10.1.1 Open Afternoon

Children and their parent/carers/carers are initially invited to an open afternoon in the Nursery, where they get a chance to experience the setting and meet the staff who will be working with their child. At this meeting, parent/carers/carers are given a time for a home visit and are allocated either a morning place (8.40-11.40) or an afternoon place (12.40-3.40). 30 hour places are also available as well as a small number of full time places (8.40am-3.40pm).

10.1.2 Home Visits

These allow the children to meet members of the Nursery team in their own home environment. It allows parents/carers to ask questions and clarify any concerns they may have. The child will be allocated a starting date at this point.

10.1.3 Settling In

When a child starts, the separation from their parent/carer is gradual, usually over a period of one week. However, it can be longer, depending on the needs of the child. The Nursery staff observe each child and decide when and for how long the parent/carer may leave the child, until the child is settled fully into the Nursery day. We have a parent/carers' room to enable parent/carers and carers to stay nearby and make separation as gradual and smooth as possible.

10.1.4 Educational Visits

Children must have attended Nursery for at least 1 term before attending an educational visit. Certain parents/carers/carers may be asked to attend a trip to supervise their own child if the Nursery team feels that 'personal' support is needed at that time for the safety of their child and the other children attending the trip. Other arrangements will be made for any child not attending the educational visit.

10.1.5 Intimate Care (Also see Intimate Care Policy)

Parents/carers sign a consent form during home visits to give permission for Nursery Staff to change a child. Children are always changed in the 'open' changing area in the Nursery toilets by at least 1 adult (2 if the child has an IHCP or needs to be showered). Although children cannot be excluded from Nursery, parents/carers are encouraged to ensure children are out of nappies before they start Nursery unless there is an identified need. Nursery staff will provide information on potty/toilet training and parent/carers/carers are asked to support this at home. The Nursery staff may refer parent/carers/carers to outside agencies if they feel parent/carers/carers need support with toilet training.

10.2 Reception

10.2.1 Drop in session/Home visit

Children who are new to the school are invited to a drop-in session in the summer term before they start Reception and are offered a 'Home visit'. Children who attend the school nursery are taken in small groups to experience the Reception setting and meet the staff at the end of the summer term before they start.

At the start of the Autumn term parents/carers and children are invited to a 'stay and play' session.

10.2.2 Settling in

Children start Reception in September in a staggered intake. An important part of our work at this stage is settling the children into new routines and a new environment and to assess their development so we can establish relevant next steps. This is vital to ensure future success. Teachers will consider each child individually, and, in consultation with parents/carers, will decide whether it is appropriate for a child to stay for the whole day.

10.3 Transition to Year 1

- If the Reception team feels there is an imbalance in the year group, all children may be allocated to new classes for the start of Year 1.
- Transition is carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning.
- In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teachers will meet with the Early Years staff to discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.
- A transition day is organised for children to visit their new classroom and meet their new teacher.

11. Resources

11.1 A budget is designated for the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that the children have adequate appropriate resources. Resources in the indoor and outdoor classrooms are well ordered, clearly visible and accessible to all children, helping develop independence so that the children take responsibility for their own learning.

11.2 Parents/carers are asked for a voluntary contribution of 50p per week to help buy resources such as cooking ingredients, playdough ingredients and craft materials.

12. Attendance

12.1 Attendance expectations

Attendance at school is statutory from the child's fifth birthday. From this time onwards, every child is subject to the school's attendance policy. It is expected that all children in Reception year attend from the day they start, in order to access the whole curriculum and be fully integrated into school life.

In the Nursery, it is also important to get into good habits for future school life. If a child is absent for more than 2 weeks at a time, the Nursery place may be withdrawn.

12.1 Requests for absence

If a parent/carer wishes to apply for permission for a child to be absent from Nursery or Reception, a letter must be sent to the Headteacher.

13. Inclusion

All children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The EYFS curriculum is planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the school's SENCO.