



## ST MARTIN'S C OF E PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

### Our Policy for Learning to Read and Reading for Pleasure

*"To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark." -Victor Hugo, Les Miserables*

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Jesus said "I have come that you may have life, life in all its fullness". (John 10:10)

*"Books are the plane, and the train, and the road. They are the destination, and the journey. They are home." —Anna Quindlen*

## Intent

Upon visiting St. Martin's you will discover our library which lies at the heart of our school- this is because we believe reading is at the heart of our curriculum.

We want every pupil to be able to read confidently, fluently and with understanding and enjoyment. We strive for our pupils to leave our school successfully articulate, literate and with the experience of reading as a pleasurable activity rather than just a tool. This is the key to unlock a world of knowledge, skills and enjoyment from which they will benefit for a lifetime.

## Implement

At St Martin's we consider our Reading Curriculum to have two distinct components; Reading Instruction and Reading for Pleasure. We believe in both the importance of developing children's discrete word-reading skills and comprehension as well as the need to foster their love of books and reading. We recognise that these two elements are intertwined; each relies on the other if children are to become life-long readers.

*"The will influences the skill and vice versa" Cremin et al, 2009*

### Reading Instruction

The bulk of decoding instruction happens in Phase One of our school. In the Early Years we invest time in developing the whole host of vital pre-requisite skills needed for children to become successfully literate. [Please see the document 'Skills Progression in the EYFS' for more information.](#)

As you walk around our setting you will see how the activities and learning environment promote the prerequisite skills needed for reading and writing. Some of these include:-

**Listening and responding to spoken language.** Spoken language, and the ability to listen carefully and respond, underpins all teaching and learning, including phonics.

**Physical activity that supports sensory awareness and integration.** Physical development is integral to learning. Children need to develop a range of physical

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skills to be able to engage effectively in learning, including being able to sit still and focus. This includes, balance and proprioception, crossing the midline, and sensory awareness and integration. Our children have free access to the outdoors and daily LEAP sessions to promote motor skills and activities to help develop the vestibular system.

**Meta-linguistic awareness.** To access phonics teaching with success, children need to be able to think and talk about language. They need to become aware of language as an object that is composed of words and meanings that can be examined, discussed and manipulated. This is achieved through dissection and discussion of our '5 a day' key texts and poetry.

### **Visual Perception, Visual Processing and Visual Working memory**

There are many facets to this area and it is through seemingly simple yet vitally important activities that these skills are developed.

E.g.

- doing jigsaw puzzles,
- playing card games such as Pairs and snap
- playing memory games like Kim's game
- doing sorting and matching activities

### **Open Ended Play/ Deconstructed role play**

We intentionally provide lots of open ended play resources and materials that children can use in whichever way their imagination takes them. This means that language opportunities are also opened up and no ceiling or limitations are put on play and talk possibilities.

## Language acquisition and developing vocabulary

### *"Reading Floats on a Sea of Talk" James Britton*

At St. Martin's we believe that a child's language and literacy skills are the foundation from which they build their future learning. It is because of this we place great emphasis on securing confidence and competency in these skills particularly in the Early years but also throughout the school.

Recent research into children's vocabulary and the impact it has on their attainment has found that:-

- "Vocabulary at age 4 is the best predictor of achievement at age 16 out of all measures yet studied"

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- 49% of Year 1 children have limited vocabulary
- Children with low vocabulary at age 5 are 50% more likely to have literacy or mental health difficulties at age 34 and are twice as likely to be unemployed.
- If a child is in the lowest 20% of vocabulary knowledge at age 5 and you want them to move to an average level within 3 years, they would have to learn 20 new words a day every day for each of those 3 years.

We have found this to be the case at St. Martin's where a large proportion of children are entering our Foundation Unit with below age related skills in communication and language. We have invested in a range of diagnostic assessments such as 'TALC' and 'Speechlink' to help provide targeted support for children that need it. Staff have received training on how to support children to build their vocabulary and to skillfully interact with them during their play to develop these communication skills.

At St. Martin's we strive to provide the children with a rich and varied 'diet' of vocabulary. We invest time in professional development to understand how to help develop children's vocabulary and their oracy skills.

We do this through an approach we call '5 a day'. This approach aspires for each child in Phase 1 to experience a broad spectrum of language in a range of contexts every day.

This is achieved by every day...

1. hearing/telling a story,
2. hearing/telling a poem,
3. hearing/singing a song/rhyme,
4. having a chat/engaging in discussion
5. word of the week (key vocabulary explicitly taught).

Throughout the school, teachers are developing their teaching of vocabulary and carefully choosing vocabulary using the Three Tiers of Language Approach to plan and teach discrete vocabulary lessons.

This language focused approach starts in our nursery and also forms the basis of our early support offered to parents. At our home visits we give out excerpts of the book 'You Choose' to each child which is a fantastic resource for developing vocabulary through conversation. We also have leaflets that we offer to parents which outline the importance of chatting, playing and reading with their children at home and the impact it can have on their attainment.

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We have made a deliberate choice to have seated lunches, requiring children to remain seated for 30 minutes, to specifically influence the development of talk, and this is supported by year 6 buddies who serve at the younger children's tables.

Across the school we use a range of approaches to develop Oracy which can be described as "learning to talk and talking to learn". These include Philosophy for Children which provides children with the skills to listen and respond to other people's opinions and ideas, and to contribute their own.

We work very hard to support parents to understand the value of talking and reading with their children at home. In Phase one our first parent workshop which happens in the Autumn term places a lot of emphasis on the importance of having conversation around the dinner table and also the power and impact of sharing a bedtime story. The next workshop for parents outlines our phonics curriculum and how children learn to read.

## Phonics Instruction

[See St Martin's Phonics Policy for more info.](#)

At St Martin's, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery and follow the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression](#), which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

- We start in Nursery with Phase 1 to secure Phonological Awareness. The acquisition of phonological awareness marks a child's earliest move into more formal aspects of learning phonics. Phonological awareness begins and flows from the ability to hear, recognise and label environmental sounds. It becomes the ability to identify and orally manipulate units of language, such as identifying oral rhymes, and an awareness of aspects of language such as words, syllables and onset-rime. The final stage of phonological awareness is phonemic awareness. This is the ability to hear, identify and orally manipulate phonemes. This requires adults to weave learning into activities,

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experiences and routines by being aware of, and exploiting, opportunities to develop these skills within meaningful contexts.

- As children move into Reception they will be introduced to the GPC's and related learning in Phases 2-4
- In Year 1 they build on this knowledge by learning alternative graphemes and phonemes in Phase 5.
- Year 1 Children have a phonics screening in the Summer Term to assess decoding and blending skills.

Our phonics lessons follow a clear structure building on prior knowledge, teaching new content and then practising, applying and consolidating this learning. This teaching is informed and underpinned by continuous assessment of the children's progress and skilful differentiation during lessons.

### Guided Reading and Accelerated Reader

Alongside teaching children to acquire the skills they need in order to be able to read, the school also develops children's understanding of what they are reading through:-

- Recall and literal understanding
- Developing inference skills
- Ensuring children can make connections when reading
- Encouraging reading in order to learn

In Reception and Year 1 we teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These:

- are taught by a fully trained adult to small groups of approximately six children
- use books matched to the children's secure phonic knowledge using the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments and book matching grids on pages 11–20 of ['Application of phonics to reading'](#)
- are monitored by the class teacher, who rotates and works with each group on a regular basis.
- Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children's working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:
  - decoding
  - prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
  - comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

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- In Reception these sessions start in Week 4. Children who are not yet decoding have daily additional blending practice in small groups, so that they quickly learn to blend and can begin to read books.

When children reach the end of the Little Wandle books they move onto Bug Club decodable readers, again matched to their reading level. This is usually around Purple band. When they have progressed through the bug club scheme and are reading confidently they move onto Accelerated Reader.

When children are confident readers they start on the Accelerated Reader Scheme which straddles the two areas of learning to read. The books are levelled according to each child's reading ability and children complete a quiz at the end of each book which assesses their comprehension of the text. Alongside this, children develop autonomy when choosing books that appeal to their interests.

### Storytelling Curriculum

Our whole school has adopted a storytelling (also known as talk 4 writing) approach which underpins our literacy curriculum. This is based on the belief that a child needs to be able to 'talk it before they can write it'. There are a range of benefits which stem from learning in this way and it especially has an impact on the promotion of language acquisition. Through careful text choices children are exposed to new vocabulary. Understanding of this vocabulary is secured through explicit teaching. Children then internalise and embed this language during the imitate phase and then explore it and apply it independently in the innovate and invent stages. Because the children are learning texts by heart, they are being familiarised and internalising a range of vocabulary, grammatical features and patterns of narrative.

You should see in each classroom evidence of this approach in the way of storymaps, story telling/ puppet areas and learning which evidences the progression through each stage of the process.

#### **'Helicopter Stories' (Used in Phase 1)-**

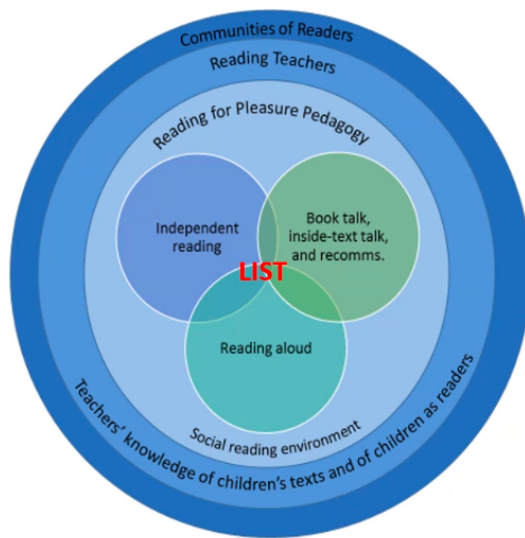
This storytelling approach combined with a focus on teaching vocabulary teaches children the narrative patterns of stories and also equips them with the language needed to bring these patterns to life. Children are able to showcase their creative story inventions through a process called Helicopter stories, inspired by the work of Vivian Gusein-Paley. Helicopter stories allow children to tell their

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own story inventions and have them celebrated during a special class storytelling session. As these stories are written down verbatim they also offer valuable examples of spoken language which is used for assessment and to track progress in areas such as sentence length, confidence with using a range of tenses and use of a range of connectives.

## Reading for Pleasure

*"Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's future success." OECD 2002*



A child learning to read is embarking on a journey of discovery, complete with challenges, pitfalls and rewards along the way. While the careful teaching of systematic synthetic phonics is vital to showing children how to read the words on the page, we have to acknowledge that this doesn't necessarily give them everything they need to succeed on their reading journey.

More than giving children skills for comprehension and prosody, we also have to show them the majesty of literature.

As you can see from the image above there are many different facets to developing a reading for pleasure pedagogy and at St Martin's we are committed to continuing to develop this so that our school has an embedded culture of reading for enjoyment. Our aim is for children to be so excited about reading that they are wanting to read under the covers with a torch after lights out!

Here are some of the ways we promote a love of reading-

- All children have a library slot and take home a book which they have chosen to read for enjoyment.
- All classes have a Book Nook space to read and books that are within these spaces are carefully chosen so that children can re-read old favourites, learn more about their current interests and be enticed to try something new.

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- We strive to create a community of readers which includes staff and parents. There is a reciprocal system of book recommendations and book chats.
- Every child has a daily story time where they are read aloud to.
- All children have independent reading time.
- We have a buddy system where year 6 pupils are linked with Reception pupils to read together.
- Children take responsibility for taking care of their library

## Windows, Mirrors and Doors

*"Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of a larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books." Rudine Sims-Bishop*

The 2018 Reflecting Realities report found that only 4% of children's books had a Black or Minority Ethnic (BAME) main character. This is significantly disproportionate considering that 33.1% of school age children are from BAME backgrounds. We have invested in the purchase of books for our library which ensures that the books and the authors and illustrators that children have access to reflect more accurately the diversity of the families in our school community and the wider population. We also want to represent the wide range of family and home situations that our children come from. We are committed to continually review our reading provision and teaching materials to ensure that we offer a mirror to a wider proportion of our community and also give all children a chance to step through a glass door and learn more about the experiences of others.

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*"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island."*

*Walt Disney*

## Assessment

- The Little Wandle and Accelerated Reader assessments are used to track children's progress on a regular basis.
- Phase 1 conduct at least half termly phonics assessments to ensure knowledge is secured.
- NFER reading comprehensions are conducted from year 3 to year 5, with SATs papers providing as clear identification of next steps in Year 6
- Teachers use assessment criteria to plan reading sessions and to provide evidence to make judgements of attainment.
- Assessment Tracking (FFT) is used to record progress and to carry out an analysis of strengths and areas for development across the school.
- Pupil conferencing is carried out to discuss with pupils their progress and next steps on their reading learning journey.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Governors will talk with children about their reading and ask questions of the HT and subject lead to ensure that the school is providing the best possible reading curriculum for the success of our children. They review the policy annually.

Head teacher, with the Senior Leadership Team, is responsible for monitoring the progress of reading across the school.

Headteacher and senior leaders regularly listen to readers across the school.

Subject Lead maintains an up to date knowledge of teaching reading and provides CPD for all staff.

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring reading is highly valued within their class, and time is planned for reading and listening to stories. They are also responsible for liaising with parents and providing support to parents who

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struggle to read with their child.

Class teachers are responsible for modelling the teaching of reading for support staff in school.

Support staff are responsible for ensuring consistency in their teaching and support of children with their reading.

Children are responsible for reading daily in school and at home; taking their AR quizzes, changing their books and challenging themselves to read a range of genres.

Parents sign a home school agreement on entry to St Martins where they agree to be responsible for encouraging children to read daily at home and listen to their children read as appropriate.

## Impact

Through a clear and rigorous focus on the development of reading as a skill, and reading as a choice, we will successfully develop learners who are articulate and literate and read with understanding, fluency and enjoyment.

### POLICY REVIEW

<b>Review Term:</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Lead Member of Staff responsible for review:</b>	<b>Headteacher</b>
<b>Lead Governor responsible for review:</b>	<b>Lead for Data &amp; Curriculum</b>
<b>Policy created:</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> November 2012</b>
<b>Dates Policy Reviewed:</b>	<b>November 2013</b>
	<b>January 2015</b>
	<b>15<sup>th</sup> November 2016</b>
	<b>6<sup>th</sup> November 2017</b>
	<b>12<sup>th</sup> November 2018</b>
	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 (amended to reflect new curriculum)</b>
	<b>20<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (amended)</b>

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