

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



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

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.

By the time they leave us we want every pupil to be able to:

- Develop a lifelong love for books
- Read for meaning with accuracy, fluency and expression
- Be able to read as writers and to demonstrate their awareness of the link between reading and writing.
- Develop and apply reading strategies appropriate for a range of reading activities.
- Develop the ability to read a variety of texts and genres for a range of purposes.

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 unlocking a world of knowledge, skills and enjoyment from which they will benefit for a lifetime.

Implementation

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

Being the best we can be for ourselves, each other and God's world.

Reading Instruction

The bulk of decoding instruction happens in Foundation Stage and Year 1 of our school. In the Early Years we invest time in developing the whole host of vital prerequisite 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 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 opportunities 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

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.

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 EYFS 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.

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 outline the importance of chatting, playing, and reading with their children at home and the impact it can have on their attainment.

We have made a deliberate choice to have seated lunches, requiring children to remain seated for 25 minutes, to specifically influence the development of talk.

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 our class based and Picture News Assemblies and child led parent workshops, which provide children with the skills to listen and respond to other people's opinions and ideas, to contribute their own, and to develop the clarity of their explanations.

We work very hard to support parents to understand the value of talking and reading with their children at home. In Reception 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.

Being the best we can be for ourselves, each other and God's world.

Phonics Instruction

See [Appendix 1 - St Martin's Phonics Policy for more information.](#)

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, 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 practicing, applying and consolidating this learning. This teaching is informed and underpinned by continuous assessment of the children's progress and skillful 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'](#)

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- 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.

In Reception 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 have successfully completed the Little Wandle programme they progress onto Accelerated Reader for their independent reading and whole class guided reading sessions.

In year 2 guided reading is taught through the Little Wandle fluency programme which introduces children to chapter books which are still closely matched to their fluency level. This enables children to develop stamina for reading as well as build the comprehension skills needed to follow a longer text.

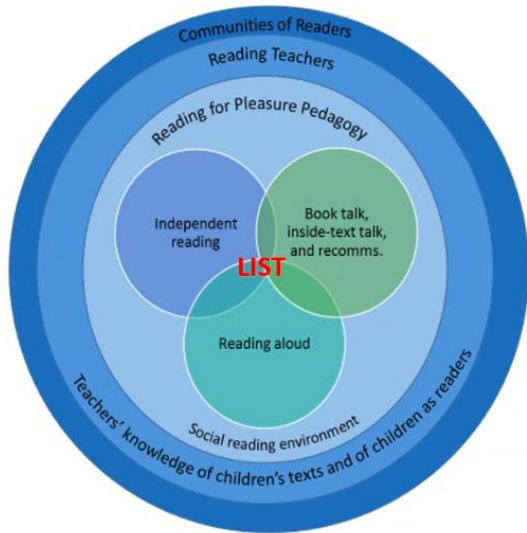
In KS2, whole class guided reading continues. This is based on a 'Talk 4 Reading' model which involves deepening children's understanding of complex texts through repeated reading and discussion, allowing children to demonstrate their understanding in a range of ways. We also recognise that it is vital to continue to develop children's fluency beyond KS1 and incorporate fluency activities into every guided reading session in KS2. Examples of this could include echo reading, choral reading or performance.

For independent reading book choices in year 2 (once Little Wandle has been completed) and across KS2, Accelerated Reader is used. These books are leveled 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. We recognise that AR levels are based on complexity of vocabulary rather than complexity of plot or theme and adults will, therefore, still take an active role in supporting children's book choices to develop their understanding of a breadth of literature.

Being the best we can be for ourselves, each other and God's world.

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.
- We strive to create a community of readers which includes staff and parents, where reading is valued and discussed regularly and book recommendations can be made.
- Every child has a daily story time where they are read aloud to. Books are chosen to be challenging, enriching and stimulating. Alongside personal choices, teachers read books mapped on our reading spine which is based on Pie Corbett's Reading Spine.
- Once children start the accelerated reader programme they have independent reading time in class.
- 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
- Children gain certificates for reading milestones. Teachers monitor engagement with AR weekly.
- The school has a reward system which promotes a love of reading - the book vending machine offers a range of books for the children to keep. They win a book token for the vending machine when they have read 1 million words and completed the 'Read a Rainbow'. At each

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certificate milestone (100,000; 250,000; 500,000 and 1,000,000), an adult meets with the child to determine how they are progressing with the Read a Rainbow tracker.

The image shows a 'Read a Rainbow' tracker form. It features a large, colorful rainbow in the background. The form consists of six colored boxes, each with a specific prompt and a space for 'Title and Author-'. The boxes are arranged in three rows. The top row has two boxes: a red one on the left and an orange one on the right. The middle row has three boxes: a yellow one on the left, a green one in the center, and a cyan one on the right. The bottom row has two boxes: a purple one on the left and a magenta one on the right. Each box contains a prompt, the text 'Title and Author-', and two slashes '/' for recording information.

A book by an author I've not read before... Title and Author- / /	A book my teacher has recommended to me... Title and Author- / /	
A book I have enjoyed and have created a review for... Title and Author- / /	A Non-Fiction/poetry book... Title and Author- / /	A book a classmate has recommended to me... Title and Author- / /
A book that isn't set in England... Title and Author- / /	An 'old and gold' classic book... Title and Author- / /	

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.

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

Walt Disney

Being the best we can be for ourselves, each other and God's world.

Assessment

- The Little Wandle and Accelerated Reader assessments are used to track children's progress on a regular basis.
- Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (for the first term) conduct phonics assessments to ensure knowledge is secured every 6 weeks.
- NFER reading comprehensions are conducted termly from year 3 to year 5, with SATs papers providing a 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.
- Children who have an identified reading difficulty have their phonic knowledge tracked and assessed throughout the school. The lowest 20% in any class are monitored closely and provided with 'Keep Up / 'Rapid Catch Up' sessions. As a school we recognise the importance of these skills for children to become successful learners across the curriculum and therefore have invested in a dedicated member of staff to implement these interventions.
- As children move onto AR, their reading progress is monitored through independent reading time, AR quizzes and Star Quizzes, which provide the AR band a child should be reading within. This is triangulated with test data from FFT to identify specific needs and next steps.

Roles and Responsibilities

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

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

The 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 struggle to read with their child.

Class teachers are responsible for modeling 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.

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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

Review Term:	Annual
Lead Member of Staff responsible for review:	Headteacher
Lead Governor responsible for review:	Not applicable – staff review only
Policy created:	20th November 2012
Dates Policy Reviewed:	November 2013
	January 2015
	15th November 2016
	6th November 2017
	12th November 2018
	3rd February 2020 (amended to reflect new curriculum)
	20th February 2021 (amended)
	January 2023 (Appendices added)
	May 2024

Appendix 1



Phonics and early reading policy

The context of our school

St Martin's serves the new town of Cranbrook. The school has grown over 10 years from 32 children to approximately 470 which includes a nursery provision. Our attendance is roughly in line with the national average. St Martin's has above average levels of SEND support and over double the national average of children with EHCPs. Our cohort is slightly lower than the national average for children classed as disadvantaged and entitled to free school meals. As a school in a new town, mobility remains high, as new children join regularly from schools within Devon and from further afield. We also have a high number of military families. It is essential that our approach to teaching phonics and reading is accessible to all learners, regardless of background.

Intent

Phonics (reading and spelling)

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.

As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. At St Martin's, we also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

Comprehension

At St Martin's, we value reading as a crucial life skill. By the time children leave us, they read confidently for meaning and regularly enjoy reading for pleasure. Our readers are equipped with the tools to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary. We encourage our children to see themselves as readers for both pleasure and purpose.

Because we believe teaching every child to read is so important, we have a Reading Leader who drives the early reading programme in our school. This person is highly skilled at teaching phonics and reading, and they monitor and support our reading team, so everyone teaches with fidelity to the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* programme.

Implementation

Foundations for phonics in Nursery

- We provide a balance of child-led and adult-led experiences for all children that meet the curriculum expectations for ‘Communication and language’ and ‘Literacy’. These include:
 - sharing high-quality stories and poems
 - learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
 - activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
 - attention to high-quality language.
- We ensure Nursery children are well prepared to begin learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) and blending in Reception.

Daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1

- We teach phonics for 30 minutes a day. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons, with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible. Each Friday, we review the week’s teaching to help children become fluent readers.
- Children make a strong start in Reception: teaching begins in Week 2 of the Autumn term.
- We follow the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised expectations of progress](#):
 - Children in Reception are taught to read and spell words using Phase 2 and 3 GPCs, and words with adjacent consonants (Phase 4) with fluency and accuracy.
 - Children in Year 1 review Phase 3 and 4 and are taught to read and spell words using Phase 5 GPCs with fluency and accuracy.

Daily Keep-up lessons ensure every child learns to read

- Any child who needs additional practice has daily Keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.
- We timetable interventions for any child in Year 2 who is not fully fluent at reading or has not passed the Phonics Screening Check. These children urgently need to catch up, so the gap between themselves and their peers does not widen. We use the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessments to identify the gaps in their phonic knowledge and teach them using Rapid Catch Up – at pace.
- If any child in Year 3 to 6 has gaps in their phonic knowledge when reading or writing, we plan phonics ‘Rapid catch-up’ lessons to address specific reading/writing gaps. These short, sharp lessons last 10 minutes and take place at least three times a week.

Teaching reading: Reading practice sessions three times a week

- 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.

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- 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.
- 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.
- In Year 2 and 3, we continue to teach reading in this way for any children who still need to practise reading with decodable books.

Home reading

- The decodable reading practice book is taken home to ensure success is shared with the family.
 - Reading for pleasure books also go home for parents to share and read to children.
 - We use the [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised parents' resources](#) to engage our families and share information about phonics, the benefits of sharing books, how children learn to blend and other aspects of our provision, both online and through workshops.

Ensuring consistency and pace of progress

- Every teacher in our school has been trained to teach reading, so we have the same expectations of progress. We all use the same language, routines and resources to teach children to read so that we lower children's cognitive load.
- Weekly content grids map each element of new learning to each day, week and term for the duration of the programme.
- Lesson templates, Prompt cards and How to videos ensure teachers all have a consistent approach and structure for each lesson.
- The Reading Leader and SLT use the Audit and Prompt cards to regularly monitor and observe teaching; they use the summative data to identify children who need additional support and gaps in learning.

Ensuring reading for pleasure

'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's success.' (OECD 2002)

'The will influences the skill and vice versa.' (OECD 2010)

We value reading for pleasure highly and work hard as a school to grow our Reading for Pleasure pedagogy.

- We read to children every day. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including books that reflect the children at St Martin's and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.
- Every classroom has an inviting book corner that encourages a love for reading. We curate these books and talk about them to entice children to read a wide range of books.
- In Nursery/Reception, children have access to the reading corner every day in their free flow time and the books are continually refreshed.

Being the best we can be for ourselves, each other and God's world.

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- Children from Nursery/Reception onwards have a home reading record. The parent/carer records comments to share with the adults in school and the adults will write in this on a regular basis to ensure communication between home and school.
- As the children progress through the school, they are encouraged to write their own comments and keep a list of the books/authors that they have read.
- The school library is made available for classes to use at protected times. It must be booked via the school booking system.

Impact

Assessment

Assessment is used to monitor progress and to identify any child needing additional support as soon as they need it.

- **Assessment for learning** is used:
 - daily within class to identify children needing Keep-up support
 - weekly in the Review lesson to assess gaps, address these immediately and secure fluency of GPCs, words and spellings.
- **Summative assessment** is used:
 - every six weeks to assess progress, to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed, to identify any children needing additional support and to plan the Keep-up support that they need.
 - by SLT and scrutinised through the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* assessment tracker, to narrow attainment gaps between different groups of children and so that any additional support for teachers can be put into place.

Statutory assessment

- Children in Year 1 sit the Phonics Screening Check. Any child not passing the check re-sits it in Year 2.

Ongoing assessment for catch-up

- Children in Year 2 to 6 are assessed through their teacher's ongoing formative assessment as well as through the half-termly *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* summative assessments.