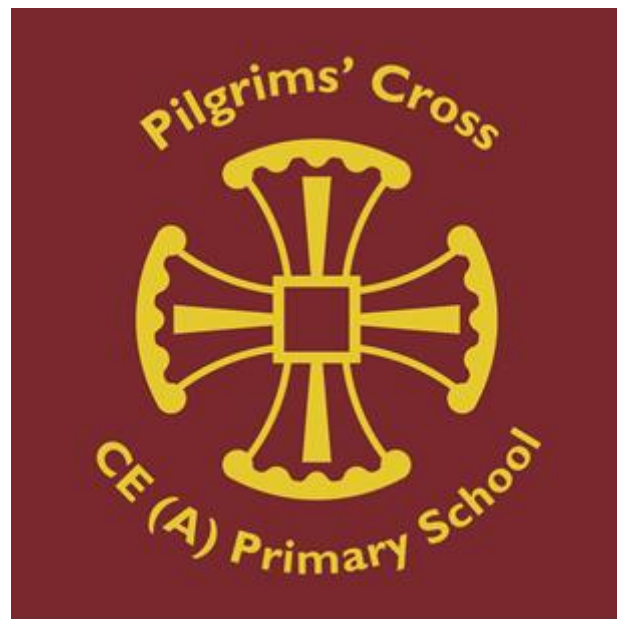


*Learning, to make a difference,
in God's world*

Pilgrims' Cross CE Aided Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Revision No.	Date Issued	Prepared By	Approved	Comments
1	April 2026	JC	FGB	Re-written to match new EYFS framework and school approach to teaching and learning.

PILGRIMS' CROSS CE AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Policy

Introduction

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. At Pilgrims' Cross we guide our children's learning through our aspirational curriculum underpinned by our core values of Love, Courage and Trust. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of how we guide our children through the Early Years Foundation Stage (the Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to five years) at our school.

Admissions and Attendance

The school follows Hampshire County Council Guidance which states:
Children are entitled to 38 weeks of school in their first (reception) year of school. Parents are entitled to request that their child attend part-time sessions (mornings and/or afternoons) or to defer their child's entry until later in the year. After talking with you about your child's age, experience in early years settings, how ready your child is for school and the arrangements put in place by the school for the new intake, the headteacher will agree with you the timetable for your child's entry. In Hampshire, all children holding places for a reception place are expected to be attending full-time by the start of the summer term.

You must discuss any plans to delay your child's start with the headteacher to ensure the school is aware of your request.

By law, children have to be in full-time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday. Parents of summer-born children wishing to defer their child's entry to school until the start of Year 1 cannot hold a place offered for Year R (Reception); a new application for a place in Year 1 will be required

At Pilgrims' Cross Primary School, 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.

The Early Years education we offer our children is inclusive; we are committed to provide the opportunities that will enable every child, regardless of gender, race, ability, or disability to gain in knowledge and understanding.

Aims:

- To provide a safe and caring environment, which is sensitive to the needs of all children, including children with additional needs.
- To provide a broad, balanced and creative learning opportunities that will set in place the skills that underpin all future learning and development.
- Value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Foster independence and self-confidence through choice and decision making.
- To have high expectations to enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of hands-on experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and guardians and value their contributions

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 4-5. We recognise that children joining our school have already learnt a great deal.

Parents are their first educators, and many have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our community. We work in conjunction with families and previous settings, to build upon prior learning to reach their potential.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- The Unique Child;
- Positive Relationships;
- Enabling Environments;
- Learning and Development.

The Unique Child

At Pilgrims' Cross Primary School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. We meet the needs of all of our children by:

- Using specific praise and encouragement, to enable children to develop a positive attitude to learning.
- Using individualised learning plans where appropriate.
- Recognising the unique experience of each of our children before they join us, and planning steps of progress to follow this.
- Providing a secure and supportive environment where every child feels respected and a sense of belonging, to explore their spirituality and beliefs.
- Seeking advice from specialist agencies where appropriate.
- Ensuring that every child is challenged to develop and be their best possible self.

Positive Relationships

At Pilgrims' Cross Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be independent confident learners from secure relationships with their peers and adults. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. In our EYFS classes, the class teacher takes on the role of keyworker to ensure that every child feels supported in school. We do this by:

- Developing positive relationships with our families from the off, through our transition schedule into school. This includes a home visit, 1:1 parent/carer meetings with the class teacher, a teddy bears picnic and *Stay & Play* visits to the school.
- Planning in celebrations each half term so that families can share their child's successes in school.
- Holding workshops to share with carers the latest research and approaches in school.
- Helping parents to understand and support their child's learning through the weekly newsletter.

- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our EYFS classes. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which discussions about the child's progress can be made in private with the teacher

Enabling Environments

Additionally, we believe that the environment (inside & outside) plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. We recognise the importance of learning outside and the positive effect on children's sense of well-being and how it helps all aspects of children's development. We provide daily opportunities for children to learn in the outside area. Learning outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in a range of ways and on a larger scale. It enables children to experience first-hand changes in the weather, seasons and natural world. As practitioners we recognise that some children would rather be outside and excel when learning in the natural environment and it is our responsibility to enable this to happen. We meet the needs of our children by:

- Developing children's independence and decision making by providing an environment where children can freely access resources and select, following their interests.
- Setting out resources and activities in provision are closely linked to the aspirational curriculum and the skills and knowledge that children need to learn next.
- Recognising children's interests within provision, to inspire and engage them in high quality play and learning.
- Creating spaces where children can interact with the natural world and experience awe and wonder.
- Providing loose parts and open-ended opportunities to stimulate problem solving and creativity.
- Assessing how the environment is being used by the children and making adaptations to promote engagement and move learning forward.

Learning and Development

The EYFS recognises the importance of the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These characteristics highlight the importance of a child's ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. We support them with their self-regulation so that they are able to demonstrate these characteristics.

The three characteristics are:

Playing and Exploring – Engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Active Learning – Motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and Thinking Critically – Thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links in learning
- Choosing ways to do things

The Early Years Foundation Stage is divided into **Prime** and **Specific** areas of learning.

Prime areas of Learning:

Communication and Language -

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

Physical Development -

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills

Personal, Social and Emotional Development -

- Building Relationships
- Managing Self
- Self-regulation

Specific Areas of Learning:

Literacy -

- Comprehension
- Word Reading
- Writing

Mathematics -

- Number
- 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

At Pilgrims' Cross, we underpin all practice with the Prime areas of learning. Communication and Language is vital for all development and learning, and this is something that has a strong emphasis in our classrooms. Children are supported to be a loving, courageous and trustworthy members of our Pilgrims' Cross community and beyond, supporting them in their personal and social development. They are also given ample opportunity to explore their physical skills in order to facilitate the specific areas of learning.

Throughout the Reception Year, our children experience a balance of adult-led teaching and time for high-quality play. At Pilgrims' Cross we value play. Through play, children develop language skills, creativity, their emotions, and social and intellectual skills. It is at play that children practise new ideas and skills; they take risks, show imagination and solve problems on their own or with others. Within the classroom, we ensure that we provide a range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences either through adult guided and directed sessions or through interactions with children during free flow play sessions, where the children are free to choose how they plan to use the resources available to them. Through high-quality observations, interactions and questioning during these sessions, adults are able to identify the children's progress, move children's learning on and plan for future learning and needs.

We use the following schemes to support our daily Phonics, Maths and Literacy lessons:

- *Little Wandle Phonics*
- *Ready, Steady, Write*
- *White Rose Mathematics*
- *Kinetic Letters* handwriting programme

The programmes above are taught discreetly through teacher-led sessions. However, they are also interweaved through our classroom provision and planning. The wider curriculum areas are supported with our Aspirations. At the start of each school year, we write our Aspirational Curriculum based on the cohort, community and context to ensure that it is well-matched to the needs of the children and plans experiences to provide challenge. We map out milestones towards these Aspirations, assess against these throughout the year to ensure that children are making secure progress in reaching their goals. For more information on this year's Aspirations, see our school website here:

<https://www.pilgrimscross.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=420&type=pdf>

It is important to us that all children are safe. We educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and help them to understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

We make frequent and regular assessments of children's learning, and we use the information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, discussions, formal assessments and work sampling.

On entry each child will be assessed using the Reception Assessment Baseline which is completed during the first half term in school. Parents meet with teachers to discuss their children in the Autumn and Spring term and a Report will be sent to Parents in July. We will assess the children against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the end of the school year, and this information will be used to inform detailed transition conversations with Year 1 teachers.

Staffing, Organisation and The Learning Environment

At Pilgrims' Cross Primary School, we have two EYFS classes that have the use of a dedicated outdoor area. The classrooms are organised to enable the children to learn and explore safely and securely. Our aim is to develop independence and self-management through continuous provision. Each classroom has defined learning areas where resources are well-organised and labelled, enabling children to locate equipment and resources independently. The classrooms have a carpet area, and the rest of the space is organised into learning zones for the children to access. There is a full-time teacher in each class, supported by one full-time teaching assistant. Other teaching assistants may be deployed in EYFS, based on the needs of the children.

Induction to EYFS

During the summer term, children who will be starting school in September are invited to a range of transition events including *Stay and Play* sessions, a teddy bears picnic and visits to their

classroom. Parents/guardians are given a pack which outlines the EYFS reception curriculum and school routines, along with other necessary documentation. Transfer records from pre-school settings inform reception practitioners about the new intake. Where possible, visits to other local pre-school settings are made in order to aid the induction process further. In July, children are also visited in their home setting by two members of the team and a 1:1 parent/carer appointment is offered for the transfer of important information about the child to school. This is followed by a staggered intake, usually splitting the children into two groups. All parents are given the option of starting their children full time earlier than this if they choose. The aims of this transition are to:

- Allow the children to adjust and feel secure in their new environment;
- Allow the practitioners to get to know the children individually and establish good relationships with both children's and parents/carers;
- Ensure high-quality information transfer, including any safeguarding concerns;
- Allow the class teachers to carry out initial assessments.