



# Pilgrims School

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## Literacy Policy

January 2022

Next review date: January 2023



Please note: 'School' refers to Early Years Foundation Stage (Little Pilgrims, Kindergarten and Pre School) and Pilgrims Main School.

## **Aims and Values**

### **Pilgrims inspires each child to love learning**

At Pilgrims we aim to allow every child the opportunity to:

- Reach their full potential.
- Stimulate their curiosity, enjoyment, imagination and creativity.
- Encourage children to be confident, independent thinkers.
- Be supported in their individual needs.
- Have their ideas nurtured and developed.
- Open their minds to new opportunities and challenges.
- Develop a love of reading and writing.
- Develop a sound understanding of phonics to help develop the skills of reading and writing
- Read with confidence, understanding, enthusiasm and enjoyment
- Have a sound knowledge of English grammar and punctuation and apply it appropriately
- Encourage and develop their ability to give a critical response to a range of literature
- Develop a wide spelling vocabulary
- Write in a well-formed cursive style

In keeping with the School's values, staff and governors are committed to:

#### **Kindness**

- Working together to help and support each other
- Providing a safe, stimulating learning environment
- Encouraging a sense of responsibility and positive attitude to caring for the world in which we live

#### **Curiosity**

- Making learning an enjoyable and challenging experience
- Promote lively, enquiring, independent and imaginative minds and develop enthusiasm for all aspects of Literacy
- Enjoy language and become confident and independent communicators, both orally and in the written form
- Use language creatively and for a wide range of purposes
- Fostering imagination, creativity, problem solving and a willingness to take risks
- Promoting assessment for learning building on what the children already know and encouraging a greater responsibility and ability to think and learn for themselves
- Developing lively and enquiring minds and build on natural curiosity
- Providing opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively
- Developing children's capacity to learn about ways of thinking, finding information and presenting their work

## **Respect**

- Ensuring that every child succeeds by providing an inclusive education with a culture of high expectations
- Promoting respect for ideas and investigate the points of view of other pupils.
- Encouraging curiosity, perseverance, open-mindedness, critical reflection and cooperation.
- Adapt their method of communication to suit different audiences

## **Objectives: Learning**

Children will be given opportunities to:

- Use Communication, Language and Literacy in every part of the curriculum
- Become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication
- Initiate and respond to oral language and drama as a means of communication, exploration and learning
- Plan, draft and improve their work by discussing and evaluating their own and others' writing
- Co-operate with and support each other to further their learning
- Learn through many different types of structured and unstructured play
- Learn through investigation, individually, in pairs or in differentiated groups
- Take part in meaningful discussions on a range of topics or literature
- Develop their listening skills and understand that listening to others is an important part of participating in a discussion
- Learn the rules of grammar and phonics and how to apply them
- Learn to read independently for enjoyment and to retrieve information

## **Objectives: Teaching**

Teachers will use a range of strategies to ensure effective learning takes place including:

- Observing and planning for contexts for children to best develop their speaking and listening and their understanding of reading and writing
- Helping children to develop language for communication through interaction and expression
- Valuing talk and alternative forms of communication
- Use of clear learning objectives and success criteria displayed and referred to throughout lessons
- Use of mind maps
- Demonstration
- Modelling, including of thinking skills and language for reading and writing
- Scaffolding
- Explanation
- Effective questioning that accesses higher-order thinking skills
- Facilitating
- Discussion
- Listening to and responding
- Employing a wide variety of resources
- Incorporating visits and outings into the curriculum
- Planning that is flexible and informed and involves the whole team

## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

These form part of an ongoing process and include the following:

- Children's work will be marked according to the Pilgrims' Feedback and Marking Policy
- Summative assessment will take place through a variety of methods including:
  - Regular end of phase phonic tests - including assessment of letter sounds, and high frequency words
  - Regular spelling tests where appropriate
  - Progress Tests in English (PTE) - Spring term in Year 2 and summer term in Year 1
  - Salford Reading assessment in the autumn and summer terms for Year 2 and spring term for Year 1
  - EYFS Profiles
  - Unaided writing - termly for Year 2, spring term for Year 1 and monthly in Reception
- Formative assessment includes:
  - Reading records and group reading records
  - Group reading skills list
  - Two Parent Consultations each year (SMART targets set will often include English targets)
  - Parents receive an end of year report that can be discussed with the class teacher and children receive 'next step' targets for literacy within their report.
  - Children's achievements are valued and displayed around the school
  - Specific pieces of work may be shown to the Head, Deputy Head or other teachers in accordance with the Pilgrims' Assertive Discipline Policy

## **Planning**

We recognise the importance of making learning fun, interesting, meaningful and memorable. Therefore, we teach through a themed contextual approach enabling each child to connect ideas, build on prior knowledge and deepen understanding.

Planning is based on the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum' and the 'National Curriculum'.

Phonics and some grammar and comprehension work is taught discretely. Where possible most of the Literacy curriculum is taught as part of the creative curriculum through the year group topics. Topics run on a four year rolling programme. All year groups complete long, medium and short term plans. Pre School to Year 2 have a Literacy Skills List which is highlighted during planning meetings through the year to ensure all areas of literacy are being planned for and taught.

Year groups identify the term's main teaching from the Literacy Skills List and the Development Matters document. As the topic progresses teachers take account of the children's interests and learning and planning is adapted and modified. Pre School and Reception classes plan for teacher led and independent, investigative literacy activities.

Planning includes identification of resources and the adult's role in supporting and extending children's learning. Differentiation is identified by task, outcome or organisation and is written onto the planning for the main literacy activities.

The planning is monitored by the Literacy Co-ordinator during termly staff meetings. Feedback is given to staff and the findings help inform the co-ordinators action plan and year group planning. The Literacy co-ordinator liaises with the EYFS Co-ordinator, Year Leaders, Assessment Co-ordinator and SEN co-ordinator.

### **Organisation**

Literacy lessons are organised in a variety of ways to suit the needs of the children and the skills being taught and may include the following:

- Ability groups to meet the children's specific needs e.g. for reading or phonics
- Whole class and group teaching, as well as individual support
- Group investigative work, paired or individual activities
- Differentiation by input or outcome is used to ensure that all children have full curriculum access including those with special educational needs and those identified as more able or gifted
- Early Year Practitioners, TAs and HLTAs will support the teaching staff where appropriate
- Teachers, EYPs, TAs and HLTAs and volunteer helpers hear the children read daily
- English is taught daily either as a discrete subject or as part of the current topic

### **Management and Co-ordination**

Overall management of the subject is the responsibility of the Literacy Co-ordinator. The roles of management and co-ordination are undertaken by:

- Classroom observation to monitor teaching and learning and feedback shared with staff members
- Support, help and guidance for colleagues in specific areas as and when required
- Provision of a wide range of resources
- Information evening on phonics, reading and handwriting for parents in Reception and for any new starters in Year 1 and 2
- Information evening on phonics and handwriting for Pre School parents
- Liaison with Head of EYFS, Year Leaders, Assessment, SEN Co-ordinator, Deputy and Headteacher
- INSET
- Budget planning and monitoring

### **Resources**

A wide range of resources are available throughout the school. The following resources are also used to support the curriculum:

- School library is available for use by all classes
- A range of fiction and non-fiction Big Books is available in the library
- Class book corners can be stocked with books from the school library
- A wide range of reading scheme books are stored around the library area
- Teacher resource books to accompany the scheme books are located in the staff room
- Clever LCD screens allow access to a wide range of literacy programs and the school subscribes to Phonics Play to support the phonics teaching
- Word walls are provided in classrooms from Reception up
- Educational visits

- Apps on the i-pads and programs on the PC's including Purple Mash

## **Presentation**

Work is presented in a variety of ways:

- Making their own or class books, both fiction and non-fiction
- Displaying a high standard of written work in exercise books and on sheets
- Written work for displays
- Role play and drama in classrooms or for class assemblies or productions
- Class discussions and presentations
- Word processed or hand-written poetry or stories
- Presentation of plays in reading

## **Cross-Curricular Links**

- Through speaking, listening, reading and writing Literacy links to all areas of the curriculum.
- Year group planning records links to other areas of curriculum
- Multicultural perspective is achieved through fiction, non-fiction and dual language books together with related blocks of work
- ICT is used for word processing of a range of work including bookmaking; it is also used in a variety of programs to develop reading and writing skills
- Music, choir and orchestra practices develop the ability to read music and the lyrics for songs
- PSHCEE and RE provide opportunities to develop listening and speaking skills

## **Phonics**

At Pilgrims we base our teaching on the Government's phonics programme Letters and Sounds and use the Jolly Phonics scheme to support it. The children are taught phonics through a mixture of songs, actions, games and activities during short daily lessons. The children are taught to recognise the phoneme (sound), then the grapheme (how to write it) and how to merge phonemes together to read (**blending**) and to separate the sounds to spell (**segmenting**).

Letters and Sounds is divided into six phases with each phase following closely from the last. It teaches the children phonics in a very well-structured systematic way.

### **Phase One**

Phase 1 lays the foundations for the phonic work which starts in phase 2. It concentrates on developing children's speaking and listening skills. Children explore and experiment with sounds, differentiate between sounds and become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. Children develop these skills through the following seven aspects:

- Environmental sound
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting

During this phase the children will be introduced to **sound talking**. They are encouraged to listen to the sounds and merge them together to make a word for example **c-a-t** = cat. This is the first step in teaching the children the skill of 'blending' in preparation for reading. Children will also learn to do this the other way around. The whole word is spoken aloud 'tap', and then broken up into its sounds (phonemes) in order **t-a-p**. This is called segmenting and it is a vital skill for spelling.

## Phase Two

During Phase 2, letters and their sounds are introduced one at a time in Pre School and the sounds are taught in the following order:

**Set 1:** s, a, t, p

**Set 2:** i, n, m, d

**Set 3:** g, o, c, k

**Set 4:** ck, e, u, r

**Set 5:** h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss

As soon as each set of letters is introduced, children will be encouraged to use their knowledge of the letter sounds to blend and sound out **consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC)** words. For example, they will learn to blend the sounds **s-a-t** to make the word **sat**. They will also start learning to segment words. For example, they might be asked to find the letter sounds that make the word **tap** from a small selection of magnetic letters.

## Phase Three

By the time they reach Phase 3, children will already be able to blend and segment words containing the 19 letters taught in Phase 2. Phase 3 teaches the children one grapheme for each of the remaining 44 phonemes in order to read and spell simple regular words. The children generally work on two sounds a week.

**Set 6:** j, v, w, x

**Set 7:** y, z, zz, qu

**Consonant digraphs:** ch, sh, th, ng

**Vowel digraphs:** ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er

During Phase 3, children will also learn the letter names using an alphabet song, although they will continue to use the sounds when decoding words.

## Phase Four

In Phase 4, no new graphemes are introduced. The main aim of this phase is to consolidate the children's knowledge and to help them learn to read and spell words which have adjacent consonants, such as trap, string and milk.

## Phase Five

Phase 5 teaches the children to recognise and use alternative ways of spelling the phonemes already taught. For example, they already know **ai** as in rain, but now they will be introduced to **ay** as in day and **a-e** as in make.

Children will use alternative ways of pronouncing the graphemes for example the 'c' in **coat** and **city**.

Word and spelling knowledge are worked on extensively during this phase.

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## Phase Six

At this stage children should be able to spell words phonemically although not always correctly. In Phase Six the main aim is for children to become more fluent readers and more accurate spellers. Their knowledge of reading will be developed through **comprehension** activities and spelling will be developed through a focus on **root words**, **compound words**, **pre-fixes** and **suffixes**.

## Jolly Phonics

We use Jolly Phonics to support the teaching of Letters and Sounds.

*Jolly Phonics* teaches the children phonics in a multi-sensory way. Each sound has an action which helps children remember the letter(s) that represent it. As a child progresses you can point to the letters and see how quickly they can do the action and say the sound. As a child becomes more confident, the actions are no longer necessary.

Children will learn each letter by its sound, not its name. For example, the letter *a* will be called *a* (as in *ant*) not *ai* (as in *aim*). Similarly, the letter *n* should be *nn* (as in *net*), not *en*. This helps with blending.

## High Frequency Words and Tricky Words

During phases two to six the children are also taught to read and spell **High Frequency Words (HFW)**. HFW are words which occur most frequently in day to day reading and spelling. The children need to build up quick recognition of these words and from time to time will bring home the words on flashcards to help develop this skill.

Many of the HFW are decodable and the children are able to blend and segment the words using their phonic knowledge. However, some words in English have an irregular spelling and cannot be read by blending, such as *said*, *was* and *one*. The irregular parts have to be remembered. These are called the 'tricky words'.

## Organisation of phonics teaching

Children experience the Phase 1 activities through the latter part of Kindergarten and the first part of the autumn term in Pre School. This teaches the children the essential skills of identifying sounds aurally and verbally and initial segmenting and blending. From October half term Pre School begin to work on Phase 2 using Jolly Phonics to teach the sounds in a multisensory way (following the order of the sounds in the Jolly Phonics scheme). The Pre School Teacher introduces the sounds at the rate of one a week. The teaching is reinforced on different days to ensure all children have access to the teaching. Children follow up the sound of the week in their key worker groups and in a sound book which is taken home. Children are encouraged to write the grapheme for the sound when it is appropriate to do so.

Reception build on the foundations of Pre School and generally start at Phase 3. However, provision is made for children who are not ready to move on or are new to the school and have not experienced phonic teaching and these children will begin at Phase 2. A third group concentrates on blending with phase 2 sounds. Reception classes have two phonic sessions a week and work on two sounds and weekly 'tricky words'. The children work on both the reading and writing of the sounds being taught.

In Year 1 the children continue to work through the phases at the appropriate level. At this stage the children might be organised into different groups across the class or year group to allow them to work on different phases and at different paces. The children have daily phonic sessions including a phonic/spelling test on one day of the week. Most children work on two sounds a week (although less able children may focus on just one) and weekly tricky words.



In Year 2 the children continue to work through the phases. As they move into phase six and beyond spelling becomes more of a focus and will be developed through root words, compound words, pre-fixes and suffixes.

## **Spellings**

### **General spelling strategies:**

- The children are encouraged to apply their phonic knowledge as the primary strategy for spelling words independently.
- Sound mats and HFW cards are used in class to help support independent writing
- The children are encouraged to 'have a go' with spellings before being given the correct spelling
- The children are taught initial dictionary skills to encourage children to locate words independently in dictionaries
- The children are given opportunities to experiment and attempt spellings independently, particularly complex words
- The children are taught the importance of spelling strategies and word families, root words, prefixes and suffixes

### **Weekly Spelling Tests:**

Children from Year 1 upwards take spellings home weekly to practise and learn. Weekly spellings are made up of two parts, a set of phonic based words and a set of High Frequency Words.

### **Phonic Based Spellings**

For the phonic set the children are given a set of sound button cards with some example words. Most children will be working on the two sounds covered that week but less able children might focus on just one sound. The children are encouraged to read the word first using the sound buttons, counting out how many sounds they can hear. They can then have a go at writing that word down using the knowledge of the number of sounds to help them. The children should then try and think of other words using that sound and practise saying the words out loud, counting the sounds and then having a go at spelling them. At the weekly spelling test the children will be given words using their sound, these will not be the words on their sound button cards but other words using the same sound. The children will be asked to listen carefully to the word, to identify how many sounds they can hear and then to write it down.

### **High Frequency Word Spellings**

The HFW spellings are written onto a Look Say Cover Write Check (LSCWC) sheet. Before the children take the words home the teacher will go through the words with them to highlight the 'tricky' element of the word and give tips and strategies on ways to help remember the spelling. The children are expected to learn these spellings using the LSCWC technique and will be tested on the words at the weekly spelling test.

### **Monitoring and Assessment of Phonics and Spelling**

- In Reception the reading and writing of phonic sounds will be assessed at the end of each phase
- In Year 1 onwards spellings will be monitored through the weekly spelling tests and the end of phase assessments which will help inform future planning
- The children's spelling ability and use of strategies will also be monitored through regular unaided writing tasks

## Handwriting

- We follow Hemisphere's Thinkwrite Handwriting scheme which is a fully cursive handwriting script.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children participate in a wide range of pre-writing skills to help prepare them for holding and writing with a pencil. When letter formation is introduced the children are provided with multi-sensory activities to help develop the feel and shape of the letters (for example writing letters on a large chalk/white board, making 'feely' letters to trace over, writing letters in the sand/shaving foam, writing letters on a partner's back). Letter formation is encouraged as and when children are ready and is taught as part of the Pre School phonics teaching which focuses on a weekly sound and letter. The correct starting point for lower case letters and capitals will be emphasised as they are taught. In Pre School children will be provided with name cards with cursive letters on to encourage children's awareness of joined writing in the Pre School and Reception classes.
- Correct pencil grip should be encouraged from the outset: hold pencils lightly between the thumb and the forefinger, about 3cm from the point, with the middle finger underneath providing extra support for the pencil. Pencil rests on the end joint of the middle finger. This position can be described as 'pinch and tuck' (pinching the pencil between the thumb and forefinger and tucking the other fingers underneath)
- Triangular pencils and grips may be provided for children having difficulty with their pencil grip.
- In Pre School the children are introduced to the Hemisphere characters and letters and are taught the cognitive framework (the story, action and starting shapes). Letter formation is taught alongside the phonic teaching and is **not** taught at this stage in animal families. The children are shown the printed and cursive symbol for the letter they are working on. A link is made to the pattern it uses and the animal it belongs to. The cursive letter is put into their sound book which is worked on at home so that any child who is ready to write is able to practise the letter using the cursive script.
- In Reception the children are taught letter formation formally using the Letter and Sound Workbook. The children work through each animal family of letters starting with Harriet the cow. At the beginning of each family the children recap the story and action and are shown all the letters belonging to that animal. They then practise the cursive formation of one letter a week. Joining will be introduced on the second page of the workbook if the children are ready. From September, each Reception classroom will display all of the animal posters with the associated letters and starting shapes so this can be accessed by the children if they are trying to work on the other letters that have not yet been 'taught'.
- As the children move into Year 1 they finish off any remaining letters in the Letter and Sound Workbook. They then move on to practising the joining of the letters following stage 2 from the Ginn Handwriting pattern book which teaches the three main joins: base line joins, top joins and joining to anti-clockwise letters and also alternative joins. The children practise their joins using a handwriting book with a four-line handwriting guideline.
- In Year 2 the children complete the phase 2 joins and then work on developing fluency and the correct letter size, position and placement on both handwriting guidelines and single lined paper.
- Parents may be asked to support a child with daily practise if they are really struggling to develop the correct letter formation and where extra practise would be helpful.

## Writing

Definition:

- *Emergent writing* is used in Pre School and Reception classes to describe the initial stages of writing
- *Unaided writing* is used to describe writing completed independently, a 'have a go' piece making a best guess at spellings the children do not know
- *Supported writing* is used to describe specific writing opportunities that have guidance and input from the teacher

We aim for:

- All children to be able to write in a variety of styles and formats for different audiences
- All children to be given the opportunity to write independently and apply their phonic and spelling knowledge
- All children to have the opportunity to use their own creativity
- Writing to be used for diagnostic purposes to assess the quality and the content
- Children to be positive about redrafting their work as a means of improving the content
- All children to develop confidence and freedom in their writing through encouraging them to use their knowledge of the known word
- All children to write independently and to encourage them to read carefully through their work before presenting it to the teacher
- Opportunities to be provided for emergent and unaided writing to take place through setting up writing centres and role play areas

Monitoring and Assessment

- The use of 'three stars and a wish' marking is used in Year 1 and 2 to identify a successful element of writing (the stars) and a point for development (a 'wish')
- In Reception children are given verbal feedback as they write. In addition, a Target is set for subsequent work. This is also shared with the child.
- Unaided writing is levelled within Year 1 and 2. Reception and below work is discussed and moderated by teaching staff and Practitioners.
- Samples of unaided and emergent writing are kept for children's individual files

## Reading

Reading will take a variety of forms including:

- In Pre School, reading activities take place during teaching sessions and planned Key Person activities. Reading books are introduced on an individual basis when a child is ready and able to read simple words.
- Class reading of a 'big book'
- Guided group reading from Reception up
- Individual/paired reading
- Reading in the library or book corner
- Reading captions, signs or labels around the school
- Reading phonic sounds and high frequency words
- Reading aloud written work
- Reading instructions and activities in computer programs, as well as from the interactive whiteboard

These guidelines will help to ensure that the children's reading experiences are positive, enjoyable and developmental:

- We encourage children to read a wide range of books, including poetry, plays, rhymes, songs, fairy tales, stories from other cultures and non-fiction texts
- Reading books act as a means of reinforcement of, and extension to, the Literacy activities in the classroom
- Reading Record Books are sent home with the reading books to record books read and act as a means of communication between parents and teachers
- Group reading record sheets are used to inform reading helpers about learning objectives and record children's progress
- Reading scheme books are located in the library, grouped in rubber bands. Books should be taken and returned as a whole set when all books have been returned to the teacher
- High frequency Words in Reception are attached to Reading Record Books to reinforce/practise at home. In Years 1 and 2, words are sometimes sent home as flashcards to help develop sight vocabulary
- Reading journals and book reviews may be used to encourage children to reflect on books read, as well as develop an awareness of the styles of different authors and illustrators.
- The English Co-ordinator is always available to help and advise

### **Speaking and Listening**

Speaking and listening is taught through:

- Class and group discussion both in literacy lessons and across the whole curriculum
- Drama, role play and circle time activities
- The use of the clever LCD board and audio CDs
- Presentations of work to the rest of the class
- Reading and telling stories to the class
- The use of collaborative learning activities and games in all areas of the curriculum

### **SEN Provision**

Planning will be differentiated to accommodate individual children's needs where relevant. Teaching and learning will consider the current policy for children with special educational needs.

### **Able, Gifted and Talented**

Children who show particular talents in literacy activities are identified and put on the Able, Gifted & Talented register. They are then given opportunities to further develop their skills within lessons and through the opportunity to participate in outside events or activities (See A, G & T policy).

### **Inclusion**

All children regardless of gender, ethnic group, culture, ability and EAL are entitled to full access to the Literacy curriculum (see Equal opportunities policy)

### **Health and safety**

Lessons are taught considering the health and safety of all. Safe practice is essential and must be promoted, discussed and modelled at all times. Where necessary, risk

assessments are carried out to ensure safety issues have been identified and managed effectively.

**Links with other policies:**

Teaching and Learning

Assessment

Feedback and marking