

FOUNDATION STAGE

STARTING SCHOOL 2026

A guide for parents and carers





Foundation Stage

Welcome to Pilton Infants' Academy

Our Vision:-

A school community of calmness, fun and positive relationships where all children reach their potential and create the building blocks for future success.

Pilton Infants' is a two-form entry school with high aspirations, a strong family ethos, and happy, motivated pupils.

Our Foundation Stage curriculum builds skills, knowledge, and confidence, fostering a lifelong love of learning.

We aim to help children settle quickly into a happy, productive school life. This booklet provides insight into our approach and how you can support your child's learning through the Home-School Partnership.

For more information, visit:

www.pilton-inf.devon.sch.uk

Details for new starters: [Link](#)

What is the Foundation Stage?

The Early Years Foundation Stage is the period of education from birth to five. It often starts with child-minders, playgroups or pre-schools and finishes in the reception year of the primary school. Children are able to start school during the term after their fourth birthday.



Why is it important?

The Foundation Stage claims its name and importance from the fact it gives children secure foundations for later learning. Early experiences affect children's attitude to learning so it is vitally important we get it right. All children learn best from experiences that are suitable for their stage of development.



Pilton Infants' Early Years Foundation Stage - Vision Statement

At Pilton Infants' School, we offer varied, exciting, and challenging experiences that nurture creativity, resilience, independence, and critical thinking. Our inclusive, fun, and stimulating environment fosters positive, happy, and nurturing relationships.

We collaborate closely with parents and carers to maintain strong communication, ensuring the best experience and provision for every child.

Key principles guiding our practice in the Foundation Stage:

Every child is unique and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured whilst constantly learning.

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time.

Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

Play is essential to the way young children learn. Through play children can develop: the confidence needed for learning; the social skills needed for personal development and the skills needed for reading and writing.

We encourage independence from an early stage to aid problem solving skills.

At Pilton Infants' Academy, children are given the opportunity to learn through a carefully planned, well-balanced, topic based curriculum.

What does the Foundation Stage involve?

There are seven areas of learning and development. All the areas of learning and development are inter-connected and important for children to lead healthy and happy lives.



Three Prime Areas

Building the foundation for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably.

Communication and Language

The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development.

The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and children throughout the day is crucial.

Through conversation, story-telling and role play, the children learn to share their ideas.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital for children’s development. **Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being.**

Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy.

Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools will develop the children’s control and confidence.

Four Specific Areas

There are four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two parts:

Language comprehension starts from birth. It develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together.

Word reading involves both using phonics to sound out and blend words and the whole word reading of familiar printed words.

Writing in the Early Years involves spelling, handwriting and composition. We practice pre-writing shapes, strengthen the children’s grip through a variety of practical tasks before moving on to forming the letter shapes with the correct formation.

Mathematics

Developing a strong understanding in number is essential so to working mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently and develop a good understanding of the numbers to 10. The children will have rich opportunities to also develop their understanding of shape, space and measures.

It is important that children develop positive ‘have a go’ attitudes and interests in maths, look for patterns and relationships, spot Connections and talk to adults and peers about what they notice.

Understanding the World

This involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. A range of personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society and the local community. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our diverse world.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children’s artistic skills supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials.

Learning and Assessment in the Foundation Stage

Children are assessed across seven areas of learning through informal observations during play and adult-led tasks. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most are expected to achieve the 'Expected' level; others may be at the 'Emerging' stage. Parents receive a report outlining their child's Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.



The Role of Parents and Early Experiences

As a child's first and most influential teachers, families play a key role in early development. Many children enter school with valuable experiences from home and pre-school, where they learn to communicate, share, and relate to others. We build on this foundation in line with national expectations for the Foundation Stage.



Settling In

To help children feel at ease starting school, we invite families to visit beforehand, meet the staff, and discuss any questions or specific needs, including medical requirements.

Working Together

Your involvement is key to your child's development. With your support, our teaching, and your child's curiosity, we can help them thrive.

The Admissions Pack includes a Home-School Agreement to support this partnership. In Reception, homework is informal, but you can help by encouraging a love of learning and positive behavior.

Build your child's confidence and independence by practicing simple skills like counting, spotting words, sharing books, and chatting together.

How to help at home

When children start school, we expect the vast majority to be able to do these things.

Can your child..?



Dress and undress themselves.



Wash and dry their hands and face.

Put on and fasten their coat.



Use a knife and fork.



Take shoes and wellies on and off.



Tidy up their toys.

Use the toilet properly and flush it.



Use a tissue.



How to help at home

The Power of Play

Enjoy this special time at home—play is more than fun; it's essential for learning. In Reception and beyond, play supports speech, number skills, creativity, and social growth.

For example:

- Playdough and painting build finger strength.
 - Sorting buttons or small items supports early Maths and coordination.
- Play lays the foundation for lifelong learning.



Routines

Establish a consistent daily routine—like morning prep and a regular bedtime—before school starts.

Please plan holidays during school breaks. Term-time holidays can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and may result in fines or legal action from Devon County Council.



Number Awareness

Reciting numbers isn't the same as understanding them. Help your child explore numbers through:

- 1:1 counting: "Can you find four spoons?"
- Comparing quantities: "I've got 5, you've got 2—who has more?"
- Games like dominoes or snakes and ladders.
- Spotting numbers on houses or counting red cars on a trip.

Maths is everywhere—turn daily moments into fun learning opportunities!

How to help at home

Get Ready to Read

Help your child become a confident reader by making reading part of everyday life:

- Share stories, comics, recipes—anything with words!
- Point out words on signs, TV, and packaging.
- Talk and listen—spoken language builds reading skills.
- Play games like dot-to-dot, matching, puzzles, and spot the difference.
- Sing songs and rhymes to build memory.
- Make it fun—short, enjoyable sessions work best.
- Show how books work: hold them properly, turn pages, follow words left to right.
- Explore pictures together and ask, “What happens next?”

Get Ready to Write

Support your child’s early writing by making it fun and hands-on:

- Let them “write” shopping lists with squiggles or pictures—it's all part of learning.
- Encourage name tracing with a capital first letter and lowercase after.
- Build fine motor skills with playdough, drawing, dot-to-dots, or chalkboards.
- Boost observation and memory with jigsaws, shape sorting, or snap cards.

Health and Wellbeing

If your child has any medical conditions or allergies, please let us know before they start so we can support them properly.

In case of sickness or diarrhoea, keep your child home for 48 hours after symptoms stop to help prevent it spreading to others.

A phased start to school

On Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th September your child will be invited to start school on our Welcome Mornings from 9.00am -11.45am.

On Wednesday 9th, Thursday 10th and Friday 11th September, we invite children to start at the normal time (between 8.45am - 8.55am), stay in school for lunch and be collected at 1.30pm.

From Monday 14th September, children will stay in school full time with a 3.30pm finish.

If you wish for your child to attend full time from Monday 7th, please let the school know before Tuesday 21st July.

Collection

Children must be collected on time. If someone other than yourself is collecting your child, please inform the teacher at the start of the day. If your plans change during the day, contact the school office, and they will relay the message to the teacher.

For safety reasons, if someone we do not recognize arrives to collect your child, we will not release them until we have confirmed with you.

Fruit, Milk, and Lunches

All children are entitled to a free Universal Infants' school meal, with a milk entitlement for those under five. Each infant child can receive one piece of fruit daily, free of charge. If your child has specific fruit preferences, you may wish to send in their own fruit for snack time.

Crisps, biscuits, and sweets are **not allowed**.

The school offers a choice of four hot meals daily, including a vegetarian option, jacket potato (with cheese, beans, or tuna), and tomato pasta. A copy of the menu will be provided before your child starts school.



Keeping Children Safe (Safeguarding)

Ensuring your children's safety is paramount. All of our staff and volunteers are DBS checked and we rigorously adhere to stringent safeguarding policies and procedures.

EVERYONE has responsibility for keeping children safe so if you see or hear anything that gives you a cause for concern, either in or out of school PLEASE let us know by speaking to either Mr Mortimer or one of the Safeguarding team.

PILTON INFANTS' SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS:

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL):

IAN THOMAS – Chief Executive Officer

JOHN MORTIMER – Head of School

Deputy DSL:

EBON DAUNTON

Please visit our website www.pilton-inf.devon.sch.uk to read our Safeguarding Policy and other related documents related to keeping children safe.



Mobile Phones

Please refrain from using mobile phones on the school site. Visitors to the school are not permitted to use mobile phones around children, whilst on site. Thank you.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to provide the best possible start for your children's education.

If you have any further questions or queries, please do not hesitate to ask. You are welcome to ask at the school office at any time or phone school on 01271 342579.

Thank you