



GILNAHIRK PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Development Plan 2025-2028

A short parents' summary of progress in Year 1 (2025-2026) and priorities for Year 2 (2026-2027)

Our purpose

"Today's Learning for Tomorrow's World" reflects our commitment to providing a happy, caring and stimulating environment in which every child can learn, grow in confidence and prepare for the future.

What is the School Development Plan?

The School Development Plan sets out how the school will build on its strengths and improve further between 2025 and 2028. It is a working plan, reviewed regularly by staff and governors and informed by the views of pupils, parents, staff and the wider school community.

Our school at a glance

14 primary classes	419 pupils in 2026/27	21 Teachers (full time and part time)
23 Classroom Assistants	96% attendance in 2025/26	7.45am-5.30pm breakfast and wraparound provision

What families told us

- 98% said their child is generally happy and engaged in school.
- 99% said they feel welcome at Gilnahirk Primary School.
- 100% rated teaching as good or better.
- 96% said the school communicates effectively with parents.

Our main priorities for 2025-2028

The plan focuses on four connected priorities that will strengthen learning, wellbeing and leadership across the school.

1

Stronger writing across the curriculum

We will improve the quality, consistency and enjoyment of writing from P1 to P7.

- Continue Big Write Week and strengthen teacher modelling.
- Link writing more clearly with World Around Us topics.
- Include regular digital writing and clearer progression across year groups.

2

Digital learning through Just2Easy

Digital tools will support creativity, collaboration and independent learning.

- Embed Just2Easy in every year group.
- Develop stronger links with Literacy and World Around Us.
- Explore effective use on iPads and improve progression in digital skills.

3

Gilly's Gilnahirk Values and wellbeing

Our ten school values will provide a shared language for positive relationships, behaviour and emotional wellbeing.

- Continue a monthly focus on values.
- Celebrate pupils who demonstrate the values.
- Build resources and opportunities for pupils to reflect on their wellbeing.

4

Developing leadership at every level

Staff leadership will be strengthened so that improvement is shared, sustainable and focused on pupils.

- Support middle leaders to lead improvement projects.
- Develop coaching, data confidence and peer learning.
- Evaluate impact and plan for future leadership needs.

Other important work

The school will also continue to develop mental maths and problem-solving, SEN provision, curriculum planning, homework consistency, pupil leadership, staff training, learning spaces and links with other schools.

Learning, support and wellbeing

High-quality learning and teaching

Planning follows the Northern Ireland Curriculum and uses assessment information to identify pupils' strengths and next steps. Children experience practical, written, individual, paired and group learning, with opportunities to build independence, creativity and problem-solving skills.

- Standardised and classroom assessments are used alongside teacher judgement to track progress and plan support.
- May 2026 information shows that most pupils were working at or above expected levels in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Parents receive two consultation opportunities each year and an annual pupil profile.

Support for additional needs

- Teaching is adapted to pupils' needs, with individual plans and focused learning-support cycles where appropriate.
- Parents and pupils contribute to individual targets and reviews.
- The SENCo, Learning Support Teacher, classroom assistants and external agencies work together to support children.
- The school has completed its whole-school SEN provision map and will move towards Personal Learning Plans as guidance develops.

Safeguarding, wellbeing and behaviour

Safe	Supported	Positive
97% of pupils said they feel safe in school. Safeguarding roles, policies and annual staff training are firmly established.	Counselling, themed weeks, Five Ways Fridays, sporting opportunities and values-based work promote wellbeing.	Clear expectations, rewards and whole-school celebrations encourage good behaviour and responsible choices.

Working with families and the community

- Weekly updates, the school website, digital platforms, parent-teacher meetings and pupil profiles keep families informed.
- The Parents' Association, volunteers, churches, charities, sports clubs and local businesses enrich pupils' experiences.
- The Connect and Inspire partnership with Stranmillis Primary School will expand to involve all Key Stage 2 pupils.

How parents can help

Read regularly with your child, encourage good attendance and punctuality, engage with school communications and digital learning, attend consultations and events, and share feedback when opportunities arise.

Progress, resources and accountability

Evidence of progress

The school reports strong progress across ICT, Literacy and Personal Development and Mutual Understanding. Staff confidence has increased, pupil engagement is high and there are clearer whole-school expectations. Priorities for 2026-2027 include greater consistency between year groups, stronger progression and continued use of pupil voice.

Previous plan	23 of 28 targets were achieved, two were partially achieved and three were not achieved.
ICT 2025-2026	Just2Easy strengthened digital learning, confidence and pupil engagement; consistency and progression remain priorities.
Literacy 2025-2026	Writing improved through audit, training, success criteria and Big Write Week; modelling and consistency will be strengthened.
Wellbeing 2025-2026	School values are taught and reinforced across lessons, assemblies, rewards and pastoral care.

Financial position

The three-year financial plan projects a growing cumulative deficit, from £215,950 at the end of Plan Year 1 to £366,837 at the end of Plan Year 3. The school identifies underfunding and increased staffing and overhead costs as the main pressures. These figures may come as a surprise to parents, but they reflect the growing reality for the vast majority of schools. The Primary Sector, particularly, is seriously underfunded. However, Gilnahirk Primary continues to spend wisely, with one of the lowest spends per pupil in Northern Ireland in the last financial year. 93% of our overall spend in the last financial year was spent on staffing. This leaves very little to do everything else. Governors will monitor finances monthly, liaise with the relevant authority and review spending carefully.

Our commitment

The school will continue to protect the quality of learning and support for pupils while using resources responsibly and making the case for adequate funding.

How the plan is monitored

- Autumn: priorities are checked, action plans are prepared and the updated plan is reviewed by governors.
- February: leaders and governors review progress, pupil data, challenges and any necessary amendments.
- June: action plans are evaluated, next steps are agreed and the plan is updated for the following year.

The key message for parents

Gilnahirk Primary School is building from a strong base. Children report feeling safe and happy, families value the quality of teaching and communication, and the school has clear priorities for improving writing, digital learning, wellbeing and leadership. Regular review, partnership with parents and careful use of evidence will keep the plan focused on better outcomes for every child.

Today's Learning for Tomorrow's World