



ROOTED IN GOD'S LOVE, EVERYONE GROWING TOGETHER
TO BECOME THE BEST THAT WE CAN BE

EARLY YEARS POLICY

2023 - 24

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Early Years Governor	Janet Grime
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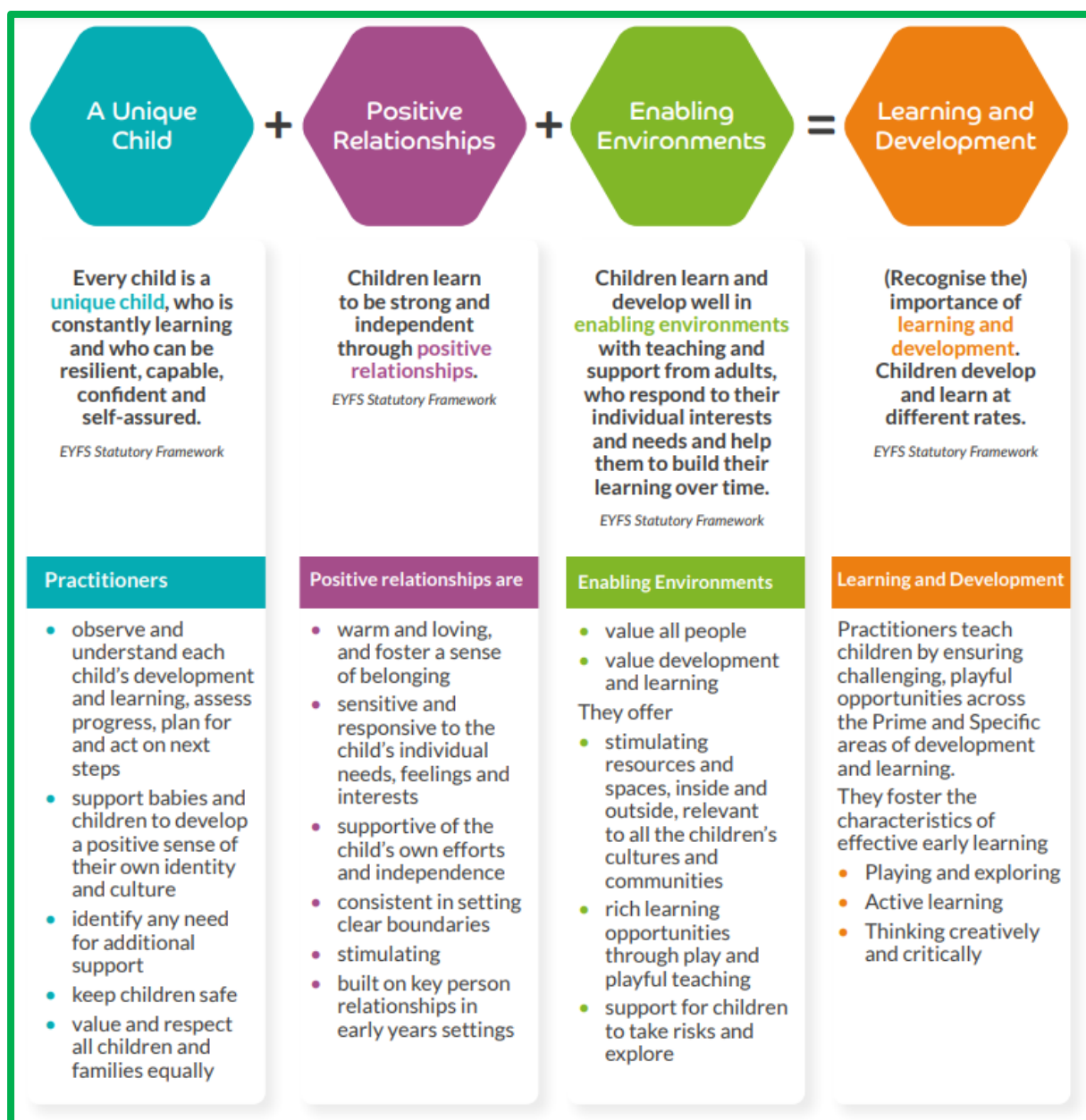
INTRODUCTION

Barrow URC Primary School fully supports the right of every child to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, enabling them to make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing. Alongside delivering a rich curriculum full of diverse learning opportunities, adults in the EYFS team consider child wellbeing as paramount and all of their interactions with children reflect this. The Early Years Foundation Stage places a great emphasis on experimental learning which unites closely with our belief that childhood should be characterised by joy, excitement and wonder, where each day provides a wealth of new experiences. The curriculum seeks to provide a base on which such experiences may build and be extended to enrich the child's growing competencies. The ethos created by the adults in Early Years aims to facilitate an environment whereby children feel safe, secure and seen, whilst also embodying our school vision of 'Rooted in God's love, everyone growing together to be the best that we can be'.

ADMISSIONS

Admission to the school follows the schools admission policy.

All children develop in different ways and development is not a linear or automatic process. Learning and development depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments that encourage their engagement and recognise their strengths. All children have agency and curiosity to learn, and will interact with other people and the world around them in different ways. Understanding these different ways of knowing about the world is central to understanding who children are and how best to support their development. It is our aim to nurture and develop a passion and desire to learn, in an environment where children feel secure. Within the Early Years, praise and encouragement are used to develop a positive attitude towards learning.



Taken from 'Birth to Five Matters'

<https://birthto5matters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Birthto5Matters-download.pdf>

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

In planning and guiding what children learn, we will reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

These characteristics are recognised and celebrated through each and every day. We take every opportunity to celebrate individual successes through verbal feedback, marking, sharing achievements during key person times, reward incentives, pupil of the week awards and wow moments.

INCLUSION OF ALL PUPILS INCLUDING THOSE WITH SEND

All children at Barrow are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. We value the diversity of individuals within our school as we believe that all our children matter in a completely equal way. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of the range of life experiences our children have when planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children by taking in to account children with special educational needs, children with disabilities, those who are more able, children of different social and cultural backgrounds, boys or girls, and those of different ethnic groups.

SEND Targeted Learning Action Plans (TLAPs) identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy. The class teacher will discuss these targets with the child's parents/guardians on a regular basis. We also ensure that the curriculum challenges and extends children's learning when appropriate.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

At Barrow we aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with children and their families, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen. Parents are the first and most important educators of their child. We encourage their involvement in all aspects of learning and encourage a partnership based on mutual trust and respect by:

- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting with the Early Years team and Head teacher during the term before their child starts school.
- Members of the EYFS team are available each day during drop off and collection. This provides the opportunity for ongoing dialogue between parents/carers and early years staff and helps to ensure that children have a calm, settled start to the school day.

- Half termly 'Pick and Mix' homework is shared with parents through SeeSaw and parents are actively encouraged to share key moments of their child's time in Reception through their WOW books, where children will have the opportunity to share these moments with their teachers and friends weekly.
- Photos are shared on to the school's website to prompt conversation at home about life in school.
- Parents/Carers are invited to two Parents Evenings during the year to discuss their child's strengths and areas for development.
- In September, a 'Reading and Phonics' workshop is held for parents/carers of Reception children during which our approach to the teaching of phonics is outlined and strategies are recommended to continue this at home.
- Encouraging parents/carers to take an active part in school life by attending events which are held throughout the year, e.g. assemblies, volunteering on class trips, Christmas productions, 'Stay and play' sessions.

Parents/carers are partners in children's learning journeys and every opportunity to develop that partnership is valued.

SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE

Termly supervision meetings take place where all members of the EYFS team and the Head teacher discuss all children in the Early Years in regard to any potential safeguarding concerns. These are documented and shared within the team to be closely monitored and actioned if necessary.

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.'

'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'

At Barrow URC Primary School, the health and safety of children is paramount and ensured by following guidelines laid down in the Statutory Framework and the school's Health and Safety policies. It is important that all children are and feel 'safe' both in the classroom and the larger school community. We provide opportunities for pupils to learn about safety and rules and help them to understand why these exist e.g. class and school rules, road safety, stranger danger and e-safety. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We use the Coram SCARF curriculum to deliver focused weekly PSED lessons and follow up within the other areas of the EYFS curriculum. We aim to protect the physical, emotional and mental well-being of all children in the Foundation Stage through 'Wellbeing Wednesdays' where we have focused sessions on 'My Happy Mind' which helps contribute towards our culture of a positive mental wellbeing for all.

At Barrow URC Primary School we:

- Promote the welfare of all children at all times.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children are suitable to do so.

- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

STARTING RECEPTION IMPLEMENTATION

Children begin the Reception class in the September of the school year in which they will be 5 years old. Our admission arrangements are carefully organised and regularly reviewed to ensure that all parties are happy, confident and fully informed about all aspects of induction. For young children change and transition can sometimes be bewildering and overwhelming. For this reason we have sensitively planned our induction programme to ease the child's transition from home to school, with the following steps:

- Children join Barrow often having attended one of the pre-schools and nurseries within our local area. Children will be invited to 'Stay and Play' sessions at school prior to starting school, to begin the transition process.
- We begin to meet new pupils and welcome families to our school during the summer term of the school year prior to entry, when children will have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and experience both the indoor and outdoor environment provided for them.
- The Reception class teacher will visit or make contact with all pre-school settings to speak to key workers regarding the new children and their readiness for school, providing the opportunity for any concerns to be shared by the settings.
- Parents/carers will also have the opportunity to attend a meeting with the Foundation Stage staff and Head teacher. At this meeting the school's admission arrangements and the general organisation of the Early Years department are outlined for parents/carers and there is an opportunity to begin discussions and to share any relevant information concerning their child (e.g. health matters, preschool experience).
- During the first week of school in September, children will attend for half day sessions to settle them in to school life in a smaller group situation.

Parent and carer involvement is essential to the success of the induction programme.

EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'

At Barrow a carefully structured curriculum based on the Development Matters document and Early Learning Goals offers provision that builds on the children's individual learning needs. Through play, children have the opportunity to explore, investigate, discover, repeat, revise and consolidate their knowledge, skills and understanding. The content of the Early Years curriculum will reflect the needs of the individual child. Accounts will be taken of learning experiences prior to school. Activities and resources are planned to ensure a balance between child initiated learning and teacher led activities. We recognise the value of outdoor learning to run alongside and enhance what goes on in the indoor classroom. By the end of their Reception year children will be familiar with a range of structures in readiness for Year 1 work.

Planning

The Early Years Long Term planning document can be found on the school's website.

Work is planned in a thematic way and covers all areas of learning. We provide a curriculum that is appropriate to our children and the community to which they belong. The curriculum is delivered through a combination of adult-led focused learning and child-chosen/child-initiated activities. The learning may be delivered through a wide variety of activities aimed at the whole class, groups, pairs or individuals that take place both indoors and outdoors.

We are guided by a Long Term Planning overview, half termly cross curricular Medium Term Plans for topics and weekly plans for literacy, phonics and maths. Where appropriate, the learning opportunities are child-initiated and led. Systematic planning ensures continuity and progression in the introduction and development of specific skills and concepts.

Weekly plans show clear learning objectives, activities and opportunities for assessment. A mixture of directed and free choice activities are planned each week for children to engage in. Enhancements are added to continuous provision to challenge the children's thinking and reinforce/consolidate previous learning. Phonics is taught daily following the Lancashire Red Rose Phonics scheme. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and incorporate these in their practice.

The class teacher will follow planned outcomes to a certain extent, whilst also allowing for opportunities to follow children's interests and natural deviations, e.g. exploring the outdoor environment on a snowy day.

Areas of Learning

*Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. **These are the prime areas:***

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

*We will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. **The specific areas are:***

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

We appreciate that these seven areas of learning depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. Children learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to provide opportunities that allow children to learn in the ways that best suit them ~ playing, talking, observing, investigating and problem solving, questioning, experimenting, testing, repeating, reflecting and responding to adults and each other.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

The Early Years staff will create a secure and stimulating environment where first hand learning experiences will encourage the development of imagination, creativity, and the enjoyment of learning. Our Early Years space provides a calm and inviting indoor and outdoor environment for Reception children, offering experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable, giving children the confidence to explore and learn in secure, safe spaces.

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. The learning environment is divided into clearly defined areas including: home corner, reading area, writing area, maths area, digital area, creative table, playdough/malleable area, sand, water, construction area, small world area, RE/reflection/worship area and the outdoor area.

Children have access to the outdoor classroom throughout the school day, as the opportunity to move between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children's development. We recognise the importance of spending time outdoors and the opportunities that the outdoors offers for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All children have access to the outdoor classroom on a daily basis and take part in regular sessions in our outdoor environment.

The Indoor Classroom

We aim to ensure that the indoor environment is:

- calm, uncluttered and welcoming
- organised to encourage children to take pride and responsibility for their environment and to develop independence in the selection, care and use of resources and equipment
- has areas suitable for quiet learning, focused individual or paired/group learning, comfortable relaxation, investigation, creativity and construction

The Outdoor Classroom

We aim to ensure that our outdoor environment:

- offers opportunities for exercise and exploration in a secure environment
- promotes physical development, health and general well being
- provides some covered and shaded areas
- has a variety of features, different surfaces, texture and levels
- offers a range of learning opportunities and challenges for independent and supervised exploration and experiences

Children are encouraged to bring wellies to school as well as waterproof coats to ensure they are dressed appropriately for all weathers.

On entry to school, the class teacher will make a baseline assessment of the children using the Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment. They also complete their own in-school baseline assessments to understand development across the different areas of learning. This baseline assessment is informed by ongoing observations of the child within the first few weeks of starting school. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal assessments undertaken by all EYFS practitioners, including observation, probing questions and discussions with the child.

Progress is formally tracked at 4 stages through the year; the Baseline assessment (September), then at the end of the Autumn term (December), at the end of the Spring term (April) and June where we report on the child's progress towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Judgements are made using the terms "on track" or "not on track."

Throughout the year, staff will track children using our Observational Checkpoints, which have been adapted from the Development Matters document to support teacher assessment. We use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Phonics assessments are carried out at various points throughout the year, and are used to ensure that extra support is provided for children who need it.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS (the end of the Reception Year). It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in the three prime and four specific areas of learning, and the three learning characteristics (outlined above). The EYFS Profile is submitted to the local authority and is shared with parents.

The class teacher provides a written report to parents based upon their child's attainment and characteristics of effective learning at the end of the Summer Term. We hold parents evenings in the autumn and spring terms and parents are made aware of our 'open door' approach whereby they are encouraged to contact us to discuss any concerns that they may have at any time.

At the end of the Reception Year outcomes are analysed and discussed by members of SLT and Early Years staff. This information is then shared with Key Stage 1 staff as part of the end of year transition process as children move from the Foundation Stage to Year 1. This discussion contributes to the development of a relevant and consistent curriculum for children entering Year 1 and ensures that support and challenge is provided for different groups of children.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Miss Amilia Crossley is the lead professional for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The role of lead professional is to ensure high standards and academic success within the EYFS. We respond appropriately to local and national initiatives. Regular self-evaluation of our practice helps inform our School Evaluation Form (SEF) and informs the continuous professional development (CPD) of all practitioners.

The link Governor for EYFS is Mrs Janet Grime. She has the responsibility of meeting with the EYFS lead to discuss data, development of the action plan and any other issues. The link Governor will then provide a report to feedback to the Full Governing Body.

This policy document will be regularly reviewed to assess its value as a working document. Any amendments will be presented to the Governing Body.