



Sir John Barrow School **Curriculum and Early Years Policy**

(This policy should be read in conjunction with the Feedback and Assessment, Homework and SEN/Inclusion policies)

Rationale

Our school's curriculum is all the planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning, and personal growth and development. It includes not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum, but also the various extra-curricular activities that the school organises in order to enrich the children's experience. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum' – what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. We want children to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and cooperate with others while at the same time developing their knowledge and skills, attitudes and aspirations, in order to achieve their true potential.

We seek the highest standards of attainment for all our children. We also value the breadth of the curriculum that we provide. We aim to foster creativity in our children, and to help them become independent learners. We also try to make learning fun.

Values

Our school curriculum is underpinned by our school values and our Mission Statement. The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives.

We value children's uniqueness, we listen to the views of individual children, and we promote respect for diverse cultures.

We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.

We value the importance of each person in our community, and we organise our curriculum to promote inclusion, cooperation and understanding among all members of our community. We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our society. We respect each child in our school for who they are, and we treat them with fairness and honesty, encouraging them to treat both adults and their peers with equal respect. We want to enable each person to be successful, and we provide equal opportunities for all our pupils.

We will strive to meet the needs of all our children, and to ensure that we meet all statutory requirements regarding inclusion.

We value our environment, and we want to teach our pupils, through our curriculum, how we should take care of the world, not only for ourselves, but also for future generations. Our school curriculum promotes British Values and supports our Safeguarding Policy and principles.

Aims

The aims of our school curriculum are:

- to enable all children to become curious, inquisitive learners and develop their skills to the best of their ability;
- to promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning;

- to teach children the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT);
- to teach children to have an active healthy lifestyle
- to enable children to be creative and to develop their own thinking;
- to raise children's aspirations for life;
- to teach children about the developing world, including how their environment and society have changed over time;
- to foster interest in other languages and cultures
- to help children understand Britain's cultural heritage and [British Values](#);
- to appreciate and value the contribution made by all ethnic groups in our multicultural society;
- to enable children to be positive citizens;
- to fulfil all the requirements of the National Curriculum and Cumbria's Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education;
- to teach children to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to distinguish right from wrong;
- to help children understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all;
- to enable children to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem; ● to recognise that everyone is different - to live and work inclusively and cooperatively with others. ● To keep children safe, supporting our safeguarding policy and the Prevent agenda

Curriculum and the Early Years

The early years of education (or Foundation Stage) refers to children under the age of 5 and to all children in the Reception year.

The children usually enter the Nursery at the start of the term after their third birthday. For example a child born in November would start Nursery in the spring term. However, pupils can attend nursery any time from the age of three years on a pay as you go basis. The sessions run Monday to Friday, mornings or afternoons for 3 hours per day totalling 15 hours per week or 30 hours if both parents go out to work. Parents/carers can also pay for additional nursery sessions.

Children start in the Reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. Attending the Sir John Barrow Nursery class does not guarantee a place in the Reception Class. Parents and Carers must apply through the Cumbria County Council admission scheme if they wish their child to attend the primary school.

The curriculum is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Development Matters non-statutory guidance (September 2021) and is concerned with the physical, social, emotional, aesthetic and intellectual development of the individual child, with no one area standing in isolation from the others.

Early Years Philosophy

In the Foundation Stage children learn best through play based activities and first hand experience. In the Foundation Stage we aim to give this by looking at what the children can do and supporting them to fulfill their potential, regardless of their background, race, religion, gender or disability or medical need.

We use the child's own interests, where ever possible, as a starting point for planning activities and experiences. Children become independent learners through the provision of a balance of child initiated and adult led experiences.

In the Early Years we strive to:

- provide a happy, caring, safe and secure environment for learning, which meets the individual

needs and interests of the children.

- develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults.
- provide a high quality curriculum in line with the Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage document. [Statutory Framework for the EYFS](#)
- help the children to become aware of moral and social values.
- encourage active learning through first hand experiences both in indoor and outdoor play, and through both verbal and non-verbal communication.
- encourage children to become self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline.
- value the cultural diversity within our school and community.
- foster positive home school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents.

Equal Opportunities

In Early Years education we need to be aware that children are young and still forming their ideas about the world. Therefore opportunities will be given to promote a positive view of gender differences and similarities and an appreciation of the multi-cultural society within which we live.

All children will have full access to all of our equipment, whenever possible.

The Foundation Stage

The content of the curriculum within the early years unit is set out within the EYFS non-statutory document (September 2021). Guidance is given on effective learning and teaching through the seven areas.

These are divided into the **Prime Areas**:

Personal, Social, and Emotional Development
Communication and Language
Physical Development

(These are the key focus when children first enter Nursery and provide a foundation on which to build additional learning.)

And the **Specific Areas**:

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design

Within each of these areas there are stages of development which show the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need to learn during the Foundation stage in order to achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) by the end of their Reception Year.

Staff also encourage the children to develop the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning (Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically) that provide a base for lifelong learning.

Starting out

The children joining our school come from a variety of backgrounds. For some, this may be their first experience of a formal setting, while others have been in pre-school for some time. Our aim is to establish a smooth and successful transition into the school.

We do this through:

Nursery:

- Home Visits by members of the Early Years staff
- A play session with a parent/carer prior to starting
- A staggered intake

Reception:

- Staff visits to partnership pre-school establishments or home visits for non-SJB Nursery children.
- Play sessions that are held at the school in the summer for all children prior to starting Reception class.
- Liaison with outside agencies.
- A staggered intake.

Organisation

The Early Years unit is split into two areas, Nursery and Reception. A qualified teacher leads the team of staff, which also includes EYFS Teachers, and STAs.

The unit is purpose built with a toilet block and small kitchen area. The children are able to access Nursery and Reception areas for different types of activities and can also go outdoors into the Foundation Stage playground, should they wish.

Staff plan, through the children's own interests and play based activities as well as more direct adult led teaching. The Early Years curriculum always makes room for spontaneous learning—a caterpillar on a leaf or icicles on a window for example. Play is fundamental to a young child's learning and is used positively to develop children's abilities across a wide range of activities. See [school website](#) and school blog.

Reception class planning compliments, extends and builds upon the Nursery curriculum. Planning in the Reception class dove-tails into the National Curriculum of the children's transfer to Year One. Children also become involved in their own learning; discussing what they already know, what they would like to know and then expressing what they have learnt during each topic.

Key Stages 1 & 2

Organisation

The curriculum leader and SLT are responsible for ensuring that all curriculum subjects have the necessary time to be taught in the timetable over the academic year. This is monitored termly through the Sequence of Learning plans and pupil book study.

Classes are taught in single year groups. We plan our curriculum in three phases (long term, medium term and short term planning). We agree on a long-term plan and a block plan for each year group. This indicates what subject content is to be taught in each term, to which groups of children and at what point in the term. We review this long-term plan on an annual basis.

Through our medium-term plans we give clear guidance on the objectives and teaching strategies for each foundation subject. As we have adopted the primary curriculum, Unity and [Big Maths](#) for our school, we take our medium-term planning for these directly from the guidance documents and/or LA guidance. Reading and writing are planned around the teaching of Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) and high-quality texts. We plan our foundation subjects discretely but make links between subjects where appropriate.

Our short-term plans are those that our teachers write on a unit or weekly basis. We use these to set out the learning objectives for each session, and to identify what resources and activities we are going to use in the lesson. Where medium plans contain enough detail, these may also be used as short term plans.

Teaching and learning style

We use a variety of teaching and learning styles to enable the children to think in different ways, such as, as a historian, a scientist or a geographer. Our principal aim is to develop the children's knowledge, skills and understanding, and we do this through a mixture of whole-class teaching and individual or group activities. Children may work in pairs, as individuals or in a small group as with ICT where pupils may be of mixed ability to enable more competent children to assist those less able. Or, they may be involved in teaching one another through a rolling programme, such as when introducing a new piece of software. Teachers draw attention to good examples of individual work as models for the other children, and we encourage the children to evaluate their own work as well as the work of other children. Within lessons we give the children the opportunity both to collaborate and to compete with each other, and they have the opportunity to use a wide range of resources. We place an emphasis on active learning by including the children in discussion, investigations and problem-solving activities. We encourage the children to take part in a range of practical activities that promote, for example active citizenship, as with charity fundraising or musicianship, as with singing assembly. We also make use of our locality to broaden children's knowledge and invite speakers into school to stimulate interest.

We recognise that in all classes there are children of widely-different abilities and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this by:

- Setting common tasks which may be open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- Setting tasks of increasing difficulty;
- Grouping children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- Providing resources of different complexity depending on the ability of the child; ● Using classroom assistants to support children individually or in groups.

In English, teaching is consistent with the National curriculum in England: English programmes of study. At least five English lessons are taught per week. We ensure that an appropriate balance of whole-class, group and individual teaching is retained. Some more time in the week maybe set aside for independent reading, spelling and writing when this is appropriate:

To develop our pupils as speakers and listeners we:-

- give them opportunities to express their ideas to a range of audiences;
- give them opportunities to take part in group discussion and drama activities, performing and as an audience;
- encourage them to listen and respond appropriately to others;
- help them to understand the need to adapt their speech to different situations;
- give them opportunities to evaluate and reflect on their own speech;
- encourage them to use the vocabulary and grammar of Standard English whenever appropriate.
- have taken advantage of the county Speaking and Listening package and the Inset training provided.

To develop our pupils as readers we:-

- teach them to read accurately using [Systematic Synthetic Phonics](#);
- help them to understand and respond to what they read using inference and deduction where appropriate;
- teach reading fluency using a range of strategies such as echo reading;
- encourage them to read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books;
- encourage them to read independently and with enjoyment;
- teach them how to seek information and learn from the written word.

To develop our pupils as writers we:-

- base our writing on high-quality texts
- teach them to write effectively for a range of purposes and a range of readers, adapting their vocabulary and style as appropriate;
- encourage them to write with interest, commitment and enjoyment;
- show them how to write in a variety of forms such as stories, poems, reports and letters, accounts and reviews;
- show them how to evaluate and improve their own writing;
- show them how to use punctuation to make meaning clear to the reader/audience; • give them the knowledge and the strategies to become confident and accurate spellers • teach them a fluent and legible style of handwriting, promoting an understanding of how to present work appropriately.

We use a graduated assessment framework to identify progress and next steps in writing.

The English Handbook gives more detailed information on how we teach English at SJB.

Maths is planned from the National curriculum in England: mathematics programmes of study., which is based on the following key principles:

- A dedicated mathematics lesson everyday
- Direct teaching and interactive oral work with the whole class and groups
- An emphasis on mental calculation
- Controlled differentiation, with all pupils engaged in mathematics relating to a common theme
- Assessment for Learning to allow both children and teachers to monitor pupil progress.
- Maths across school is delivered through the 'Big Maths' approach and methodology

The Curriculum and Inclusion – see also SEN/Inclusion Policy

The curriculum in our school is designed to be accessed by all children who attend the school. If we think it necessary to modify some children's access to the curriculum, in order to meet their needs, this is done where appropriate.

Key skills

The following skills have been deemed 'key skills' in the revised National Curriculum:

- communication;
- application of number;
- information technology;
- working with others;
- improving one's own learning and performance;
- problem-solving.

In our curriculum planning we emphasise these skills, so that the children's progress in all of these areas can be identified and monitored. Teachers in all subject areas seek to contribute to a child's progress in these skills, because we believe that all children need to make good progress in these areas if they are to develop their true potential.

Assessment

Teachers assess children's work through observation during lessons and through more formal written methods. Teachers assess the progress made by children against the learning objectives of the lesson and use this in order to plan future work. Teachers may give oral or written feedback to the pupil to inform future progress. Older pupils are encouraged to make judgements about how they can

improve their own work. Formal assessments are recorded on the school's tracking system which is regularly reviewed by the assessment coordinator and Headteacher. Records are used to enable the teacher to make an annual report to parents and information is passed on to the next teacher at the end of each year.

The role of the subject leader

The role of the subject leader in general is to:

- provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject;
- support and advise colleagues on issues related to the subject;
- monitor subject planning and ensure curriculum entitlement;
- monitor and evaluate pupils' progress in that subject area;
- liaise with governors and keep them up to date with current practice;
- provide efficient resource management for the subject.

Some subject leaders have responsibilities which are unique to their role.

Information and Communication subject leader

- supervise the use of Intranet/Internet on the networked system
- liaise with System IT, providers of hardware in the management of the server and networked system.
- liaise with System IT to ensure the use of anti-virus software on the network in order to limit the possibility of damage to data, programs and the machines.
- liaise with GBM, providers of Apple iPad management.

The school gives subject leaders non-contact time each week as part of their PPA time, plus additional time where required, so that they can carry out their duties. It is the role of each subject leader to keep up to date with developments in their subject, at both national and local level. They monitor the curriculum plans for the subject, ensure that there is full coverage of the National Curriculum, and see that progression is planned into medium term and weekly plans.

Health and Safety

At all times, children are encouraged to consider their own safety and the safety of others but there are specific subjects where health and safety issues are key. A rolling programme of Risk Assessments is implemented to ensure teachers are kept aware of potential issues. In addition the following apply:

In ICT it is important that care is taken with:

- establishing appropriate working conditions
- checking the lighting in the room
- providing alternative activities in long sessions
- being aware of any SEND problems which may be triggered by the monitors
- encouraging good posture and positioning
- general electrical safety

In accordance with our Health and Safety Policy, staff carry out a Visual Display assessment, annually.

In PE we expect children to change into the agreed clothing for each activity area. The governing body expects the teachers to set a good example by wearing appropriate clothing when teaching PE. No jewellery is to be worn for any physical activity.

Extra Curricular Activities

The school provides a range of activities outside the normal provision of the school day. Children are encouraged to further develop their skills in a range of areas. Details of current club activities are sent out at the beginning of each term to parents then published on a weekly basis on the What's On list. Such activities include:

- Multi-Sports Club
- Performing Arts Club and
- Choir
- Athletics Club
- Environmental Club
- Chess/Draughts Club

Resources

There is a wide range of resources to support the teaching of all curriculum areas across the school. Staff are given a yearly classroom budget to buy specific stock for their year group such as art materials. Other stock is stored centrally. Additional equipment is provided via the subject leaders and is available in various locations in the school including the staffroom and The Gap. iPads and laptops are available for use around school.

We keep P.E. equipment in either the Outside or Inside P.E. storeroom. The hall contains a range of large apparatus, and we expect the children to help set up and put away this equipment as part of their work, so enabling the children to learn to handle equipment safely. The children use the school playground for games and athletics activities, and the local swimming pool for swimming lessons.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of the teaching is the responsibility of the subject leaders. They examine long-term and medium-term planning, and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used. Subject leaders also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

Our governing body's Provision Committee is responsible for monitoring the way the school curriculum is implemented. Termly meetings enable feedback from the headteacher and subject leaders about the development of the curriculum and the progress of pupils.

There is also a named governor assigned to special needs, who liaises with the SEND coordinator, and monitors the ways in which special needs are addressed.

The headteacher and the Curriculum Lead are responsible for the day-to-day organisation of the curriculum. Curriculum provision is monitored to ensure that all classes are taught the full requirements of the National Curriculum, and that all lessons have appropriate learning objectives. The Curriculum Lead reviews the whole school curriculum provision, providing support for subject leads and ensures staff receive adequate training.

This policy has been equality impact assessed. This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Complaints about the Curriculum

Any complaint about the curriculum should be addressed to the Headteacher in the first instance, as per the school complaints procedure. If the issue continues to a formal complaint involving the appeals process, this will be heard by the Evaluation and Curriculum Committee (not the Complaints Appeals Committee).

Signed: *Nancy Fletcher*, Acting Headteacher

Review date: June 2025

Date for next review: June 2026