



**The Barlow RC High School
& Specialist Science College**

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Headteacher:

Claire McCarron BSc (Hons) MA, NPQH

15th December 2011

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we near the end of the Autumn Term, I enclose a copy of our December newsletter which will keep you up-to-date with our recent developments and the activities that are taking place at the school. I hope you enjoy reading it.

School Values

As a Catholic school, our mission clearly identifies our values as Service, Prayer, Achievement and Respect. All members of our school community are expected to subscribe to these values and uphold them at all times. During Advent, parents, governors, our associated primary schools and members of the local community joined us for a wonderful evening of Christmas carols, prayer and celebration. All our pupils have been working hard with staff to raise money for our chosen charities, provide food parcels for the most needy in our community, and collect baby clothes for Marillac House.

Relay of Prayer

In the accompanying newsletter, you will read about the school's participation in the Diocese of Salford Relay of Prayer. This special event in the lead up to the Olympics 2012, celebrates how sport and religion share the ability to bring people together. You will also find enclosed our very own message from Pope Benedict, congratulating our pupils on their involvement in this initiative.

Standards and Priorities

Our vision is that over the next few years The Barlow will be recognised locally and nationally as an outstanding school. We are continuing to raise standards and have very high expectations of all pupils in relation to uniform, attendance, behaviour and work. I would like to thank you for supporting us in the Autumn term and ask that you continue to support us in promoting these expectations to help ensure your child's success in school. Our priorities for this year are:

- Developing our support provision for pupils.
- Raising the standards of achievement even higher than the excellent standards reached in 2010-11.
- Continuing to strengthen leadership to an outstanding level.
- Continuing to develop our learning and teaching provision to an outstanding level.



Attendance

Thank you to all parents and carers in supporting your child's attendance at school. This term we have seen a big improvement in pupils arriving on time every day. Good attendance enables pupils to achieve their very best. To support and encourage good attendance, The Barlow is organising the '100 Day Challenge Event'. This will commence for pupils in Years 7-10 on Monday 9th January. The Year 11's Challenge began on Monday 28th November and so far, they are doing well.

Uniform

Again we have seen a great improvement in uniform standards this term. As winter weather becomes more severe, pupils are allowed to wear a plain, dark coat to and from school and during break and at lunchtime as part of their uniform. Hoodies, brightly coloured scarves, caps and boots are not part of our dress code and must not be worn; make-up and jewellery are not allowed. Please help us ensure your child is clear about our expectations and complies with them. We will continue to provide blazers and appropriate footwear for pupils not conforming to our school dress code.

Parents' Evenings and Parent Forum

Parents of Year 7 and Year 10 pupils were invited to their annual parent/subject teacher meetings this term. We were delighted that over 85% of you came along to discuss your child's progress and welfare with us. Education is always more successful when we work together. Here are some of the comments we received from the parents who joined us:

- *What impresses me is the co-operation and connection between pupils, parents and teachers.*
- *The staff all seem interested, not only in academic achievements but also in ensuring all pupils are happy.*
- *I am very impressed with the obvious strong leadership and attention to detail regarding lesson structure and learning objectives.*
- *The staff have a genuine interest in the pupils. Lessons are fun as well as educational.*
- *The teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and are very approachable.*

Some parents told us that they felt the school could respond more quickly to parental concerns. This is an issue we have now investigated. We have put in place a set of protocols for all staff, to ensure that your concerns are responded to promptly, and certainly within a maximum 48 hour period. Thank you to those parents who brought this to our attention. We are always very keen to hear the views of parents and hold a Parents' Forum meeting at school every half-term, where you can discuss your views with us over a cup of coffee. The next meeting will take place on Monday January 16th at 6.30pm.



Behaviour Policy

All schools must review their behaviour policy annually and inform parents of any changes. Please note that we have made some amendments to our policy. These will take effect from January 9th 2012. This document and amendments can be viewed on the school website.

Safety in the Community

As the evenings are getting darker, I would ask that you support us in our health and safety drive in encouraging your child to go directly home at the end of each school day, not loiter in the local area with their friends and to take great care when crossing the very busy roads near the school. Pupils who have to wait for siblings should wait in the courtyard inside school and not out on the pavement. Staff will continue to supervise the pupils' exit from school and endeavour to encourage them to go home in a safe, orderly manner.

Farewell to Staff leaving The Barlow

Mrs Steele has been a member of the teaching staff at The Barlow for 28 years, during which time she has been an outstanding teacher, Head of Year and Assistant Head Teacher, supporting thousands of children. She will be leaving us this term to start a well-deserved retirement. I am sure that you join with me in thanking her for her hard work in ensuring the success of our children and her loyalty to The Barlow RC High. We wish her a long and happy retirement.

Mr Hargreaves and Mr Roberts who joined the Humanities Faculty on a temporary basis will be moving to new posts in January, as will Mr Sharp, Science Faculty Leader. We wish them every success in their career and thank them for their support.

We would like to welcome to the school, Mr Hardy, Deputy Faculty Leader for Humanities, Mr Murphy, Deputy Faculty Leader for Science, Miss Livingstone, Teacher of Humanities, SENCO Mrs Beswick, Teaching Assistants Miss Khaliq and Mr Hornby, and Miss Wood, Administration and Finance Officer.

End of Term

Please note that school will close on Wednesday 21st 2011 at noon. Pupils will be allowed to remain in school to eat lunch if required. Limited bus services will run from school on that day. **School will re-open on Monday 9th January at 8.20am.**

Thank you once again for working with us to create a happy, successful and safe school environment. May I join with the governors, staff and pupils in wishing you a relaxing and enjoyable holiday and a Happy and Holy Christmas.

Yours Sincerely,

CP McCarron

Mrs CP McCarron
Head Teacher

