

# A warm welcome



Dear Parents and Carers,

I am absolutely delighted to have been appointed as the new Headteacher of Barlavento International Primary School. The school is ready to move forward and I am excited to be leading the way, in partnership with the Directors of Aljezur International School, on the next stage of the school's journey to a successful future. I look forward to working with you, the staff and the local community to provide the best all-round education for your child. Together we will build on the school's strengths, recognising its achievements, history and loyalty of its local community.

We are truly in an unprecedented situation with the world Covid -19 pandemic. With schools having been closed for many months we are all now very eager to return to the school setting and inspire, motivate and teach your child in a safe, secure and happy environment. The autumn term will start on 11<sup>th</sup> September and we will be sending you a detailed breakdown of our Covid-19 protocol in the near future.

I am sure you have many questions and I hope to answer some of them in this initial welcome pack. More details will become available once we have our school website in place and I have the opportunity to meet you all in person.

## What are the vision and values of the school?

### Our Vision

At Barlavento International Primary School our vision is to provide an environment where every child really matters and parents, school and the community can work together to:

- Provide an environment where children feel happy, safe and secure in order to enable them to learn and develop self-confidence and try new experiences
- Create a vibrant and inspiring learning culture where children are encouraged to become kind, respectful, independent and reflective learners and develop a positive attitude to lifelong learning.
- Provide a rich, creative, balanced and stimulating curriculum.
- Create a positive ethos, confidence and optimism.
- Promote our values within the school and beyond to enable students to become respectful, tolerant and fully integrated members of international society.
- Acknowledge that each child is unique and has different needs, and in so doing we will provide an inclusive setting where each child feels valued and everyone can participate and develop to their full potential.

- Promote a positive approach to behaviour where children are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves so that they can become independent, thoughtful and responsible and celebrate their achievements.
- Engage in effective partnerships between home, school and the wider community so that success and achievement can be shared and celebrated by everyone in the 'Barlavento family'.

## **Our Values**

It is important that the children, staff and parents all support and understand our values. Our four school values are:

### **Respect**

When we are respectful we:

- listen to others
- are polite and considerate
- treat everybody fairly

### **Resilience**

In order to show resilience we:

- don't give up
- try our very best and welcome challenges
- are not afraid to make mistakes and we can 'bounce back!'
- learn from our mistakes

### **Empathy**

We demonstrate empathy by:

- listening to others and working together
- showing kindness and compassion to our peers, teachers and community
- caring for ourselves, others and our environment
- showing forgiveness

### **Reflection**

When we reflect we:

- stop and think
- use what we already know
- are mindful of our actions
- take responsibility for our behaviour and our learning
- learn to manage our behaviour and emotions

## **Who is the team?**

We are fortunate to have a highly experienced, enthusiastic and dedicated team including Caroline and Lurdes who have worked at the school many years and both have a solid track record for teaching and inspiring the younger year groups. The Deputy Headteacher is my daughter Hannah, who is a passionate, caring and all-inclusive teacher and has taught for 8 years in the UK, Sweden, Sri Lanka and Portugal. She enjoys creating a stimulating and engaging learning environment where children thrive. We also have a highly professional bilingual administration team as well as part-time specialist teachers and classroom assistants. Karen and Silvia, our Directors, will also make weekly visits to the school and be part of our 'Barlavento family'. We all care deeply about nurturing and encouraging your child to achieve their very best. I am looking forward to working closely with all of them to develop a strong and motivated team who will support, in partnership with you, all the children in our care to achieve their full potential.

## What is my background?

During my 38 years of teaching I have always held a strong belief in the power of education to change children's lives and the right of every child to receive an excellent education. I have taught the full age range in primary settings and have always had the child at the heart of my creative, stimulating and exciting teaching, ensuring that I know each of them well as individuals so that their unique personality, talents and interests are nurtured and developed to the full. I have taught mainly in the UK in small villages and in larger city schools and also have teaching experience in international schools in Nepal and Sri Lanka. For the last five years I have taught in Aljezur International School here in Portugal.

As well as teaching, I have also had twenty years' experience of senior leadership roles in schools, including the position of Phase Leader of Key Stage 1 and Foundation Stage, Phase Leader of Key Stage 2, Special Education Needs Coordinator and Acting Deputy Head. In addition, I have also worked for an English regional education authority as an Advisor for Pupil Assessment and as a Consultant for Teaching and Learning. Whilst holding these positions, I have always held in high regard the importance of working collaboratively to ensure an effective working relationship within a team.

I grew up as an expat living in Aden (South Yemen) and therefore have a real insight from a child's point of view of life abroad and school life in an international setting. I first visited Lagos and the western Algarve thirty-two years ago before I had my two daughters and have been in love with the area ever since.

## What is the teaching and learning framework?

### The Curriculum:

Our curriculum is based on the National Curriculum of England and is adapted for our international community and our lives here in Portugal. We aim to enable children to think broadly and creatively, and to consider the wide variety of options available to them. The 'thematic' approach will be used through topics, which will interlink our children's learning of History, Geography, Science, Art, Design and Technology, Music and Drama. Alongside these topics, and often interlinked with them, are the core skills of Reading, Writing and Maths. We will also include lessons in Portuguese, Physical Education, PSHE, Mindfulness and Wellbeing. In the coming months we hope to establish a vegetable garden and food forest in the school grounds which will include small farm livestock.

### The Learning Environment:

We are privileged that the school is set in the beautiful Algarvian countryside with extensive outdoor space including two large shaded play areas with a climbing frame and swings, a recreation orchard and an all-weather sports pitch for outdoor learning opportunities. The school grounds include areas for storytelling, forest schools, wildlife areas and fruit and vegetable gardens and we are committed to outdoor learning and using the environment as a stimulus for learning opportunities.

The four large, brightly coloured, well equipped classrooms are organised to accommodate Foundation Stage, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two children. We aim to have small class numbers to ensure we accommodate each child's individual needs. Each learning space has been carefully organised to display material to aid the children's learning, celebrate their work and create an inspiring and stimulating classroom culture. All classrooms are fully air conditioned and have been constructed to make learning comfortable in the heat of the summer and the cooler winter months. There is also a library area, a large IT room, a huge sports hall, with a fully-equipped stage and a separate dining area for children and teachers. This fantastic learning environment will help foster the love of learning and provide the children with the opportunity to ask questions, explore and flourish within and beyond the classroom.

As part of our broad and balanced curriculum, we will regularly visit our rich and diverse local environment and will welcome visitors into our school to share their interests, expertise and talents. We will also encourage communication with many of our link-schools which are located around the world, in order to develop our international global community.

### **Home Learning:**

Educating a child is most successful when families and schools work together in the best interest of the child. We welcome your input and assistance in educating your child and we hope that you enjoy participating in the activities and research which your child will be encouraged to do at home.

### **Positive Behaviour for Learning:**

We aim to provide positive everyday experiences so that our children are self-confident and secure in our school family, with a strong sense of belonging, and so are more likely to reach their full potential. We aim to develop a more positive focus on improving children's engagement, motivation and well-being where children are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves wherever possible. We will reward and celebrate positive behaviour and support and guide every child, as we believe that this will motivate children to aim high in their achievements and develop an ethos of kindness and cooperation. We will use a range of positive behaviour management strategies such as Class Dojo, 'Gem of the Week', tokens in the jar and celebration assemblies so that they can become independent, thoughtful and responsible children.

### **A Typical School Day:**

09.15 ~ Registration and lessons

10.50 ~ Break & snack time

11.15 ~ Lessons

12.50 ~ Lunch break

1.55 ~ Afternoon lessons

15.30 ~ End of the day

However, please note that initially we will have staggered starting and leaving times to accommodate the Covid-19 situation. Details will follow

### **What your child will need to bring to school?**

We will send separate information regarding:

Uniform

Equipment

School meals

## How will the community be involved?

From my experience, I know that a successful and happy school depends on all of us working together. Parents make an extremely important contribution to children's achievements at school, and I want to develop the relationship between the school and parents for everyone's benefit. We would also like to continue with the various traditional events that have been in the school calendar for many years and we will of course be heavily involved with our secondary school and will carry out joint events visiting their wonderful rural campus near Aljezur. We will also be linking with local charities and environmental organisations and will apply to become a member of UNESCO. Sustainability is at the heart of our philosophy and we are currently researching opportunities for our school family to take part in local, national and international projects.

## How will the school accommodate the new restrictions due to Covid -19?

We are in the process of compiling our procedures under the guidance of the Portuguese Education Department and also in partnership with our Directors at Aljezur International School.

## What are the important dates of the school year?

School will start on Friday 11th September 2020. Please see our school calendar which is attached.

## A message to the children

*We are very excited and can't wait to meet you all as part of our 'Barlavento family'. We know you may have had a rather unusual and strange time over the last few months and have missed school life and seeing your friends every day. We hope you are ready to return to school; excited to meet your new teachers, make new friends and get stuck into the fun of learning.*

I very much look forward to meeting you and your children in the near future. A strong partnership between parents and school is vital in enabling children to achieve success and so I ask for your full support of our school values and policies and for your proactive involvement in your child's education.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any inquiries, either by emailing me at:

[amanda@barlavento-international.org](mailto:amanda@barlavento-international.org)

Alternatively you can email admin: [admin@barlavento-international.org](mailto:admin@barlavento-international.org)

Or contact my Deputy: [\\_hannah@barlavento-international.org](mailto:_hannah@barlavento-international.org)

Warmest regards,

Amanda Turner