

What does BLP - Building Learning Power - mean?

Building Learning Power (BLP) is about helping young people become better learners, both in school and out. It is about creating a climate that cultivates habits and attitudes that enable young people to face difficulty and uncertainty calmly, confidently and creatively. Pupils who are more confident of their own learning ability, learn faster and learn better. They concentrate more, think harder and find learning more enjoyable.

The BLP approach was created by Professor Guy Claxton and is based on the idea that everyone has a personal 'disposition' (habits and attitudes) towards learning and we are all capable of becoming better learners. It is not an instant programme but it takes root and develops over time. How well you learn is not a matter of how bright you are. It is a matter of experience and good coaching. Being a good real-life learner means knowing what is worth learning, what you are good (or not so good) at learning, who can help, how to face confusion without getting upset and what is the best learning tool for the job at hand.

It is a learning culture that encourages children and teachers to become better learners.

It allows children to approach difficulties in learning without fear of failure.

It allows children to take small steps within learning.

It develops confidence.

It is not additional to teaching but should be grounded within everyday teaching and learning.

It gives clear labels for the children to use to develop understanding of learning processes.

Why are we Building Learning Power?

We believe that BLP is beginning to allow us to develop a common language for learning across the school. The language is used in all classrooms, with all children. This helps everyone talk about understanding learning to learn. We hope that this understanding will begin to spill over into life outside school, where you will be able to reference the ideas by encouraging the children to use their learning language in their everyday lives.

What does BLP look like?

Professor Claxton suggests there are four main learning dispositions which are like a group of 'learning muscles'. Just as we can build our physical muscles with the right kind of exercise, learning muscles can also be developed and can grow in strength and stamina. They can be learnt, practised and improved and it is these we are aiming to develop in the children.

The four dispositions (4 R's) are:

- **Resilience** - not giving up
- **Resourcefulness** - being able to use a range of learning strategies and knowing what to do when you get stuck
- **Reflection** - being able to think about yourself as a learner and how you might be able to do this better
- **Relating** - being able to learn with and from others, as well as on your own.

These dispositions are then split into learning 'muscles' that the children are encouraged to 'stretch' within their everyday lessons and activities and apply to different aspects of their learning.

The Learning Muscle

Resilience – with Percy Penguin

Inquisitive	Persistent	Focused	Adventurous
Has a questioning and positive attitude to learning.	Stays determined, positive and patient in the face of difficulty or mistakes.	Observant, concentrates well, ignores distractions, becomes engrossed.	Willing to risk and 'have a go'; up for a new challenge.

Resourcefulness – with Clive Crow

Imaginative	Connecting	Crafting	Capitalising
Comes up with creative ideas and possibilities; visualises.	Looks for links and relationships, likes to 'hook things up'; uses metaphor.	Keen to work on improving products, practising and developing skills.	Makes good use of resources, tools and materials.

Reflectiveness – with Olive Orangutan

Methodical	Self-Evaluative	Self-Aware	Transferring
Well organised; thinks things through carefully.	Makes honest and accurate judgements about 'how it's going'.	Knows their own strength, styles and interests as a learner.	Looks for other applications and lessons for the future.

Reciprocity – with Beryl Bee

Collaborative	Open-Minded	Independent	Empathic
A good team player; helps groups to work well together.	Asks for, listens to and makes good use of information, feedback and advice.	Able to 'stand their ground'; shows initiative.	Understands others; offers helpful feedback and suggestions; receptive and imitative.

How You Can Help At Home

- Ask your children about the learning muscle they have been using at school.
- Use the language of BLP when undertaking tasks at home: e.g. 'Well done that was excellent collaboration when you helped me to tidy up the room'.
- Find particular opportunities to develop a capacity: e.g. planning can be developed by sitting with your child and planning the day trip to the beach together.
- Use questions like: 'How would you solve this?', 'What would happen if....?', 'What would you do next?', 'What skills would you need to use to be able to...?'
- If your child becomes stuck in their learning ask them to think of what they would have to do at school to get unstuck.
- Welcome and foster your child's questioning spirit as much as you can.

Involve them in your own learning activities. Try to "think aloud" as you try a new recipe or struggle with a bit of DIY. It helps children grow if they see that you too struggle with uncertainties but employ a range of strategies to cope with them.