

NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School

...developing the whole child...

February 2020

Dear Families,



February 2020 Storyswap- we had a visit from Eden Francis in January as part of aspirational sporting stars work and we filmed her reading a story which we played at the start of our giant Storyswap!



We had many visitors to read stories to everyone. The School Council selected their favourite books and then the children chose which story they wanted to listen to. Thank you visitors!



This group enjoyed the new library chairs and our new story tree shelving. During 'Afternoon Clubs' children are spending time with Mrs Marks learning about the library and reading books.

After a somewhat wet and windy half term, we welcome everyone back for the second half of this academic year.

This half term, we start a new topic of 'Long ago, far away' with a focus on Ancient Greece. The class newsletters will share the children's learning with you and explain how this topic is adapted for the different age groups.

As a motivation to support writing, we are holding a Blackwell First School Writing competition this half term with many categories and age brackets and winners will be announced later in the term. The children will be introduced to the competition altogether this week and teachers will work with them on their entries. Reading and thinking about their stories, poems or non fiction entries at home will add to their ideas. The teachers will introduce the Greek Myths and Legends as well as non-fiction texts about Greece to support the children's learning.

On the final day of last half term, a Governor Open afternoon was held and four governors monitored the work of the school with a focus on the broad curriculum and quality of Afternoon Clubs. They were impressed by what they saw, including the children's engagement, standards of behaviour and the expectations of all staff and children. The Governors have discussed providing a one page summary report combining highlights of all of their visits each term for families so that you can all share some of this information. This will be trialed at the end of this term.

We welcome two new staff this half term. Miss Bailey will be working in Nursery and Year one to cover some additional needs as well as at Forest School. She has worked on placement with us previously and we look forward to welcoming her to the teaching team. Mr Wilson will support a vacancy in the kitchen over the coming months and we look forward to him working with Mrs Barker to continue to supply such high quality meals for everyone.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support of both your children and the school, and we look forward to working with you over the coming months. Special thanks to everyone on the PFTA and those supporting events who have enabled us to purchase fifteen new laptops and 12 new ipad minis for use across the school. This will make classes able to use technology more flexibly across the curriculum and without the need for set timetabling of these resources. Hetty remains a valued member of the school community and thank you to everyone for supporting her role in school. The children have now been introduced to her each day and at times during the week. She has also enabled us to support some of our more vulnerable children, where a dog provides a calming and reassuring influence and distraction.

Thank you for returning parent questionnaires. We have had a much greater number of returns than over the past two years and are very grateful for that. There is feedback on these questionnaires overleaf. Thank you for your ongoing positive comments and support.

Finally, please do get in touch with either myself or the classteachers after school if you would like to ask any questions about your child's learning or any other aspect of school life. We are always here to help.

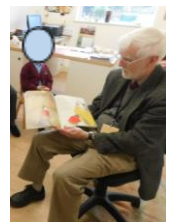
Best wishes, Mrs Moss



The School Council had organised the Storyswap and here are three councillors starting off the afternoon for us all.



We are working hard to promote reading and have recently purchased new books as class texts for each year group. Please remember to read at home as well as listen to your children read as practice. Reading is the key to all other learning so it is vital that we all support the children in developing fluency, an understanding of what they read, including the vocabulary. Happy Reading!



This group visited Mrs Moss's office and were read to by Dr Evans and Paddington was watching as well.

In Collective Worship this week, we are thinking about CARING and on Monday are considering books and how they teach us about caring. Each class will receive a wrapped present of a book as an introduction to their new topic.

SCHOOL SPORT/ HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Sport- Our new Wake and Shake Champions are Red Class. The whole school competition took place during the last week and Red Class excelled. Arts – Please contact the school office if you are interested in your child learning a musical instrument. We currently offer violin, recorder, flute and piano lessons and they are taught by peripatetic instrumental teachers through Severn Arts or by Mrs Cutler or Mrs Hipkiss, two employed music teachers.



Sainsbury's
SCHOOL GAMES

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We start the term with the theme of 'CARING' and will consider caring for others, our community and the planet we live on. We start the week considering our school and will be sharing new books that we have purchased to support our curriculum work and teaching the children how to care for them.

Next week, we will learn about how to be a good friend during 'FRIENDSHIP' and find out what bullying is. We will discuss how to help others if they are being bullied and the approach that everyone should take if they are feeling bullied or think someone else is. The message is, 'always tell the teachers and also your families and together we can help.'

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Thank you for your returned questionnaires. We have analysed them and share the responses with you below.

Areas families see as strengths (100% agree or strongly agree):

- My child is happy
- My child feels safe
- Blackwell makes sure its pupils are well behaved
- Blackwell deals with bullying effectively
- Concerns are dealt with properly
- My child has SEND and they are well supported
- Blackwell lets me know how my child is doing
- There is a good range of subjects available
- My child can take part in clubs and activities
- Blackwell supports my child's wider personal development
- I would recommend this school to another parent

Areas with less than 100% agree or strongly agree (but still 97% or above agree or strongly agree):

- Blackwell makes me aware of what my child learns during the year
- Blackwell has high expectations
- My child does well

If you wish to discuss any of these areas, please do come into school to make an appointment. Here is a selection of comments, thank you:

*...we feel truly privileged to send our child to an **amazing** school...*

...I remain really impressed with the support we, as parents, are given on the journey...

...staff are incredibly approachable and truly care about the welfare of the children...

...Blackwell is incredibly nurturing and 'child focused'...

...we can't speak highly enough of Blackwell...

...the after school club is amazing and very flexible and gives huge peace of mind for working parents...

...my child moans when I pick him up...I think that says it all!...

...amazing support, amazing team...

...we love the school, the staff, the ethos and the environment...

...each teacher puts so much effort into knowing each child...

...amazing teachers who inspire the children and instil in them the values we find important as a family...

...we will be very sad to say goodbye...after nine years... this school is exceptional...an amazing start to their journey into the real world...

...choosing Blackwell has been one of the best parental decisions...

Improving the site

Kitchen works- Over half term a new ventilation system has been fitted in the main kitchen. Thanks to Mr Pointon for his advice and support with this.

Forest School site number three- We have also planted new hedging for a third Forest School site on the main school field. This is future proofing the Forest School here at Blackwell and won't be used for many years. Please help us to care for these new plants by keeping children away from them and the area. Archive storage- A new archive store has been constructed to keep records in accordance with GDPR (data protection laws) and to help the administration team operate smoothly.

Flooding- There has been significant flooding on the site (not inside the building) and we are currently investigating options for drainage at the field and Nursery end of the site. Works to improve this will take place over the summer holiday.

Trim trail- New bark has been delivered and spread across the trim trail to ensure that the trail is well covered. A REMINDER TO KEEP CHILDREN OFF THE TRAIL AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY.

Parking- A near miss with a child leaving After School Club took place just before half term. This was a result of another parent pulling up to park on the kerb on the zig zag lines as the child exited the gate. It is illegal to park on the zig zag lines and in order to keep children safe please park away from these areas. This includes during school drop off.

Emailing the school – If you wish to pass on messages to teachers and are not able to speak with them directly, please use the office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk email and not their individual school emails. This ensures that messages are monitored promptly, even when teachers are teaching. Thank you.

Get Smart about Play

<https://www.askaboutgames.com/get-smart-about-play/>

Rio Ferdinand is supporting a new online awareness campaign for parents. The campaign follows a recent report from Europe's video game industry body which found that only one in five parents of children who spend money on video games use the family controls available on gaming devices. This is backed up by a 2019 NSPCC study that revealed just 19% of parents of children aged 5-15 use family controls on internet-connected devices.

A YouGov poll carried out for Ukie also found that more than half of parents and carers in the UK are concerned about how much time their children spend playing games.

Rio Ferdinand, a parent and keen game player, has joined the campaign which provides step by step guides on how to use the controls and the benefits that they provide. His children "love playing video games but as a parent it is important for me to be able to manage the amount of time they play," said Rio Ferdinand. "Family controls can help achieve a balance at home between screen time and other activities. They're easy to use and save a lot of arguments in the long run."

We suggest looking at this site for further information.

4.3.20 Phonics day with external trainer delivering to the children

4.3.20 High 5 competition- Year 4s

4/5.3.20 Parent Consultation meetings and written reports

25.3.20 Dance Festival- Y2s

3.4.20 Easter Coffee Morning and Nursery Coffee Afternoon 'Sing Song'/ Term ends

6-9.4.20 Holiday Club

6-17.4.20 Easter holiday

20.4.20 School opens for Summer term