

NEWSLETTER

for Blackwell First School



Blackwell First School,
St. Catherine's Rd.,
Blackwell,
Near Bromsgrove,
Worcestershire.
B60 1BN
November 2019

Dear Families,

Extra curricular clubs offer children different opportunities to explore new interests and apply their learning.

The children have come back refreshed and with smiles on their faces ready to learn! This half term is always one of the busiest in school as the children learn about 'Remembrance Day' and their 'Blackwell Bear Travels' project and also Christmas arrives before too long.

During 'Blackwell Bear Travels' the children will learn about the wider world through Geography, R.E. and D.T and at the end of the topic will share their learning with the rest of the school in an 'Our World Celebration' morning.

Christmas festivities begin in December and learning is focussed around the Nativity story. Red and Green Classes will perform this story at the church whilst the older classes will perform 'Little Fir Tree', a performance based on the story by Hans Christian Andersen. Through our concerts we develop the children cultural awareness, including music, dance and literature.

Developing learning behaviours and attitudes is a significant area of our work here at school through our work on values and key competencies. (Respectful and Responsible citizens, Competent and Confident learners and Aspirational individuals). Nationally, there is a concern regarding children's mental well being and emotional resilience. Our main focus is to develop **children's independence**. Our focus on Growth Mindset supports this and the children may well come home and talk to you about learning from mistakes, being resilient, working hard, facing a challenge or trying something new.

As a staff, we have received training in **emotion coaching** (and our new staff have recently too) to support children's varied emotional needs. The key messages, that may be useful for you as parents to know, are that distraction and hiding emotions is not always a healthy approach. Expressing the correct emotion to the children with an explanation is helpful to them in developing their understanding of the emotions they experience. When the children themselves are displaying an emotion, it helps when you verbalise the emotion, 'I can see that you are angry and I understand why, but it is important that when you are angry that you.....'

As you can imagine, friendships are the main area requiring emotional support. Bullying is not tolerated and we react swiftly when any bullying starts to be displayed. Most friendship issues, however, need time and patience from adults to support children in resolving issues themselves. It is important to help children identify strategies for solving their own issues, as adults will not always be around to help.

Finally, we continue our work on trying to undo the work of the media, advertising and social pressures with regard to **gender stereotyping**. It is interesting to talk to the children and realise how many of them have fixed ideas about the roles of men/women. Our work in Collective Worship and lessons is supporting this as we share examples of famous men and women from all areas of scientific and creative fields. Finally, our third value associated with our vision is **aspirational individuals** and this is about opening children's eyes through the experiences we provide so that they have ambition and a desire to become good individuals who contribute to our community and society.



Using my fabacus abacus in Maths!

Spoken English

In order to develop children as writers, they need to be good speakers and to have a varied vocabulary and good sentence structure. As teachers and families, we are the models they learn from. Here are some 'Top Tips' for supporting spoken English:

- Encourage children to look at you as you speak to them, as they learn a lot from non verbal communication, such as facial expressions, gestures etc;
- Use and also explain new words to the children to build the bank of vocabulary they use;
- Speak in full sentences with them to help them hear the grammatical structures of language;
- Correct children's developing speech and grammar as it will not necessarily develop over time unless it is corrected. Correct it by repeating the sentence correctly. Common errors include: We was which should be We were/ incorrect use of th and f, children often say fink instead of think and need to learn to stick out their tongues for th/ and past tense for irregular verbs used incorrectly, such as catched instead of caught.

The more the children hear you talk, and talk back themselves, the more their language will develop.

SCHOOL SPORT and THE ARTS

- Wake and Shake - our half termly competition showed excellent co-operation and effort. Well done Blue Class for being the first champions of the year.
- Craft club with Mrs Dyson and Sewing Club with Mrs Moran is providing children with the opportunity to explore and apply their art skills to a wider range of artworks. The children really enjoy this close link between the curriculum and their clubs.



Developing children's cultural awareness

Children who have broad experiences such as visiting museums, art galleries, the theatre and concerts as well as a knowledge of historical events, art and musical history and discussion about national events and the news will support children's cultural awareness which helps them access the content of the national curriculum as they are able to make links between their out of school experiences and the curriculum. This is why we, as a school, plan educational visits to museums, art galleries and theatre trips. In the Spring term, the children in Reception to Year 4 will visit an art gallery to focus on paintings they have learned about in school as well as a theatre trip to provide them with this important experience.

Children in Need Day

The children may come to school wearing non uniform for Children in Need in exchange for £1.00 on Friday 15th November.

Developing mental maths

At Parent Consultation meetings, mental maths targets for Reception to Year 4 are shared with families so that you are able to support your child/ren to practise these skills at home. The curriculum is taught at school but for most children, they need to spend time practising their learning for them to have instant recall. If you are able to spare time to support them, this will make them able to apply their facts more quickly in class. The sheets you are given will help you know what they need to practise. Numbers that total any numbers within 10 and then 20 are key for Years 1 and 2 and Times Tables are essential for Years 3 and 4. Thank you for your support.

Developing mastery

Our curriculum development work centres on mastery. The essence of this is that children should master the curriculum at whatever level that they are working, without being pushed onto new content before they are secure in the current level. In practice, this means teachers need to ask searching, open ended questions, set problems and puzzles for children to solve and set tasks that enable children to apply their learning in different subject areas. When you look through the children's books, you will see examples of this. In maths, we are using concrete resources such as the abacus or counting beads and blocks at all levels to engage children in explaining their maths clearly, showing that they have genuinely understood the concepts that they are learning. Explanation of learning is a key way of assessing children's mastery of their learning.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Here at Blackwell, we use the daily act of worship to support children's development as tolerant, kind and understanding individuals. Each week, there is a theme and these times often include information about famous people, places, artists or scientists in order to broaden the children's horizons. We base all of our worship on the 'UN Convention - Rights of the Child' and the children are increasingly able to understand their own place in society and their responsibility as they mature in school. This month our themes include: Co-operation; Our Wonderful World; Trust and Democracy. As global citizens it is important that we make a difference to their views of the world.

Early Years Meeting

Mrs Webb is running a meeting for Reception parents on 6.11.19 at 6-7pm. She will explain early approaches to reading, writing and maths in order to support you in helping them at home and make a great start to school. We hope that you can come along.

ATTENDANCE

Good attendance is linked to success. Children learn and develop:

- Good social skills
- Safe lifestyles
- A good work ethic

This leads to becoming qualified for the workplace.

We want children to have the best attendance they can in order to develop their learning. Please help us to improve our attendance rates by encouraging your child to attend unless they are particularly ill. **We are also grateful for the reduction in holiday absences.** We are currently required by law to class all holiday absence as unauthorised. It does matter when your child misses learning.

Last year our attendance rate was 97%, thank you. We are striving to maintain this and hope that your child's attendance is higher than 97%. Thank you for your continued support.

Bits and bobs...

Poppy appeal – The children can purchase poppies before November 11th in school. Please encourage them to bring in their donations.

Neurofen – As part of our administration of medication, we do administer both prescription medication and non prescription medication. Following dosage guidance, when we administer neurofen, we need a new form completing each day letting us know of the last dosage due to the frequency of administration guidance. Thank you.

PFTA – Thank you to the PFTA for their support as always. The autumn term events have started well and have been supported by many of you. Thank you.

5.11.19 Individual school photographs

6.11.19 Family learning evening - 6-7pm- Red Class families welcome

11.11.19 Influenza vaccinations

19/20/21.11.19 Parent consultation meetings

6.12.19 Christmas Fair - 6pm

10.12.19 Piano concert for Mrs Cutler's pianists- 2.30pm

11.12.19 Piano concert for Mrs Grew's pianists - 3.30pm

13.12.19 Christmas Concert filming morning- please order your DVDs!

13.12.19 Christmas Lunch

17.12.19 Christmas Concert- Red and Green Classes- 9.30am St Catherine's Church- 2/3 adults per child welcome

17.12.19 Christmas Concert- Purple, Yellow and Blue Classes- 1.30pm St Catherine's Church- 2 adults per child welcome

19.12.19 Christmas Concert - Purple, Yellow and Blue Classes- 9.30am St Catherine's Church- 2 adults per child welcome

19.12.19 Christmas Concert- Red and Green Classes - 1.30pm St Catherine's Church- 2/3 adults per child

(If toddlers attend concerts, please sit them on an adult's lap and take them into 'The Wheel' at the side of the church if they become restless. Photographs and filming is welcomed but no images/ films are to be uploaded onto social media for child protection reasons).

20.12.19 Party Day- children may wear own clothes and remember sensible shoes and an outdoor coat are still required. Pantomime day.

20.12.19 Christmas Coffee sing song- 2.30pm- Nursery families

20.12.19 School closes for children

Spring/Summer dates are on the school website

www.blackwellfirstschool.com

Heel Toe, Heel Toe, Gallop Gallop,
Off we go!
Miss Burgess is developing country dancing across the school and the children love this afternoon club that develops co-operation and co-ordination!

