

NEWSLETTER

for Blackwell First School

Blackwell First School,
St. Catherine's Rd.,
Blackwell,
Near Bromsgrove,
Worcestershire.
B60 1BN
November 2020

Dear Families,

Yellow Class children are the Wake and Shake Champions for last half term- well done!



Red Class and Nursery walked and ran well.



Ensuring children take enough exercise and encouraging them to participate in sport is a vital part of growing up. Helping them to enjoy it and see it as part of life will help them in the future. Both the Woodland Walk and the sponsored mile, alongside our Wake and Shake, helped them join in events that were both competitive and non competitive, making sport accessible for everyone.

...We are the rainbow children, staying together when the world was apart...

Following a further government announcement at the weekend and a national lockdown from Thursday this week, there is no more important mission for schools than to remain a unifying public organisation that supports our community at this challenging time.

Our 'Rainbow Project' is progressing well and the children have all completed the artwork which is being collated by Mark Riley. The children will now begin to learn their class dances and the song that has been composed by Christianne Cutler, our virtual 'resident' musician. The teachers listened to it during the last week of term and there were a few tears shed. Here are some of the lyrics to our BFS 'Rainbow Children' song as a taster for you all.

*The sun was shining every day,
It could have been a holiday.
Walking, baking happily,
Loving time with our families.*

*Rainbows all around us.
Filling us with hope.
Life was very different now,
But we were sure to cope.*

**We are the rainbow children
Staying together when the world was apart.
We are the rainbow children
Carrying each other with love in our hearts.**

*Home schooling was a lot of fun,
Our families were great!
Our teachers phoned us all at home,
We would never be alone.*

*Back in school our lives have changed.
Lots of time with our favourite friends.
'Bubbles', 'Zooming' all day long,
The love we feel is very strong.*

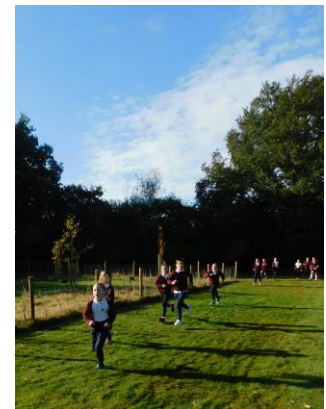
**We are the rainbow children
Staying together when the world was apart.
We are the rainbow children
Carrying each other with love in our hearts.**

The children will learn and record this for the BFS DVD available at Christmas and you'll be in for a treat.

Best wishes,
Mrs Moss



Sponsored mile-
What a beautiful day for a walk! Everyone raised money for the school too to help us buy resources for the children.



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

This week, we will focus on co-operation, a real skill for life and introduce the children to some famous people who contributed to the world with their co-operative work.

Next week, Trust is the focus and we plan to discuss the importance of this in life through listening to stories.

SPORT and THE ARTS

Sport- Our first Wake and Shake Champions of the year are the children of **YELLOW CLASS**. Well done, you were co-ordinated, energetic and had worked hard on all moves.

The sponsored mile was a success on the last day of term and the children were a little pink cheeked at the end.

Arts – Watch our 'Rainbow Project' by ordering the BFS DVD. We are investigating downloads for those unable to play DVDs. Please just state **DOWNLOAD VERSION** when ordering.

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Teachers are missing the daily contact they have with you as a result of the necessary socially distanced drop offs and pick ups.

Having the chance to speak with you during telephone consultations was useful and reports will shortly be sent home to help you find out how to help your child at home in order to help close any gaps in their learning.

FAMILY LEARNING

Nursery and Red Class families will shortly receive an invitation to a remote 'Family Learning' session. We usually hold these in school once the children have settled in in order to explain how we teach aspects of reading, writing and maths and to help you find out how to support your child at home. We hope that you are able to join us.

It is a good job that the children come back refreshed and with smiles on their faces ready to learn after half term as this half term is always one of the busiest in school as the children learn about 'Remembrance Day' and their 'Tell me a story' project and also Christmas arrives before too long. Our 'Rainbow Project' is also a unifying longer piece of work aimed at supporting a sense of community amongst children, staff and families. During 'Tell me a story,' the classes will all receive a new book, wrapped and delivered, which will inspire their learning. The books chosen are listed below:

- Nursery- traditional tales with a focus on bears
- Red- There is a tribe of kids
- Green- The baby who wouldn't go to bed
- Purple- Hairy Maclary series
- Yellow- The Black Dog
- Blue- The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Each class will focus on a separate project, bringing purpose to the learning. From creating storybooks in Red Class to share with Nursery to making a class scrapbook to send home in Blue Class, everyone will be learning a lot.

Christmas festivities begin in December and learning is focussed around the Nativity story. Red and Nursery Classes will perform this story whilst the older classes will perform 'Letters from Father Christmas', a performance based on JRR Tolkien's letters to his children. Through our concerts, we develop the children's 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, particularly during Covid-19. 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 act 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.

PSHE Curriculum changes

As part of the children's PSHE work, we will be teaching some classes how to call 999 for emergencies. This is not always as easy as it once was as many families do not have landlines and mobile phones are sometimes locked. Please find a way of sharing this information for your family at home. We also inform the children through Collective Worship and PSHE about the work of Childline and this may be something you also wish to discuss with your children at home if they mention it to you. Thank you.

Lunch boxes and snacks- please pack healthy items. Crisps, chocolate and sweets are not allowed as part of the national school food standards. School tuck shop snacks are 30p per day and anyone is able to purchase items.

Nut allergies- there are children in school with severe nut allergies and we ask that you carefully check cereal bars to ensure they do not contain nuts and also ensure peanut butter is not a sandwich filling in school. Thank you.

Village Advent Calendar – St Catherine's Church has organised a village advent calendar for this year as a community focus when walking around the village. Please do send in your artwork this week if you'd like to be included.

Planning for Christmas – Plans may change according to government guidance but the PFTA is working hard with staff, behind the scenes, to ensure that the children will enjoy some special festive cheer in the weeks leading up to Christmas. We have managed to organise a special 'socially distanced' visitor to our BFS grotto and will send home information shortly in order for families to book ahead. It may be worth not mentioning this to the children in case of cancellation.

PFTA – Thanks as always to the PFTA for their hard work. The scarecrow festival was a huge success and enjoyed by the school community, local community and people from far and wide. Thank you for your support. Funds will be welcomed more than ever in order to continue to offer the strong provision this year as costs to the school as a result of Covid-19 are high.

Class emails – The class emails are only used when children are self isolating in order for families to share work and ask questions about the learning. For all other correspondence with the school, use office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk to ensure that your messages reach school.

Children in Need Day - The children may come to school wearing non uniform for Children in Need in exchange for £1.00 on Friday 13th November. We are filming for our Rainbow Project this day, so a colourful T-shirt/ top and plain trousers would be super! Please also send them in these clothes on Thursday 19th November for filming.

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