

NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School



Blackwell First School,
St. Catherine's Rd.,
Blackwell,
Near Bromsgrove,
Worcestershire.
B60 1BN
December 2021

Welcome Fluff, our new Guinea Pig, courtesy of Edward's family.

Dear Families,

As part of Roald Dahl project work, we enjoyed a Storyswap organised by the School Council and shared a 'Wonderful Words' whole school celebration.



The start of Christmas at BFS...



snowflakes dancing and being filmed!



Sancta Lucia Procession celebrated in Sweden.

We have reached the end of a whole term. Where has the time gone from when our Nursery and Reception children started school in September to now when they performed for their Christmas Film? The 'normal' Christmas concerts give the children the opportunity to take part in 'large' performances that develop their confidence and resilience. The filming has enabled the development of other skills such as public speaking, performing their singing and dances.

Our vision at BFS is to support the development of the 'whole child' and in order to do this, we develop the following Values and Key Competencies.

VALUES

*Respectful and responsible citizens *Competent and confident learners *Aspirational individuals

KEY COMPETENCIES

*Co-operation *Communication *Independence *Resilience *Problem solving

Everything that we do in school is designed to support the development of these values and competencies. Whether it is Learning Partner work in or setting challenges that prove tricky and require an ability to persist, all that we do contributes towards these aims.

At home, you could (and many of you do thank you) support the development of these areas by:

- **RESPECT**- Supporting good manners, including pleases and thank yous as well as making good eye contact when the children are spoken to;
- **RESPONSIBLE**- Giving the children responsibilities such as making their bed, clearing away from the table;
- **COMPETENT**- Supporting them with their reading and practising of basic mental maths;
- **CONFIDENT** – Supporting them in having a positive growth mindset when tackling and overcoming challenges;
- **ASPIRATION** – Talking about their place and contribution to society and the possibilities open to them, without gender stereotype;
- **CO-OPERATION** – Learning to share, wait for a turn, speak to others;
- **COMMUNICATION** – Expecting the children to talk and engage with you, giving eye contact and responding to your questions politely;
- **INDEPENDENCE** – Carrying their own bookbags and remembering to change books at school. If they say, 'I don't have a pencil,' rather than giving them one, say 'How are you going to solve that problem?'
- **RESILIENCE** – Children need to face disappointment and boredom in order to learn to deal with life's knocks. Give them time to be bored and learn to entertain themselves and
- **PROBLEM SOLVING** – Playing with bits and bobs in the garden will promote problem solving, so get them outside!

CHRISTMAS FILM

Keith Woolford filmed the children's plays this week and you can still order a version to stream. Please let the office know office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk

CHRISTMAS storynight

13th December is the night to be here 5.30/40-7pm. Please send the children in pyjamas and arrive between 5.30-40pm. Blue and Yellow use the top gate and everyone else the main gate. Collection as normal on the front playground.

WONDERFUL WORDS DAY

Our curriculum is designed to make learning meaningful to the children and to help them develop both knowledge and skills, needed for the rest of their lives. At the end of the Roald Dahl topic, the children celebrated their topic work with a 'Wonderful Words' presentation enabling them to present their learning to the whole school and adding meaning to their learning.

PFTA Thanks to the PFTA for the superb events which have kept us resourced in school this term. From Storynight to festive meat, Sponsored Mile or changing the rules, every little helps. Thank you to those who have kindly donated to school, helping to keep things ticking along without major change. This is great for the children. Thank you to you all and the PFTA. Children in Need also raised over one hundred and fifty pounds. Thank you.

HOW YOUR CHILD IS PROGRESSING

The children are at the end of their first term and you have spoken with classteachers to determine how well they are progressing at this point in the year. This is based on internal assessments that are moderated. After Christmas, teachers will work with them again based on the last assessments before then assessing their progress and meeting with you in the Spring Term to help inform you of their progress half way through the year. Teachers will always talk to you if they have concerns about a child's progress or if children are working below national expectations and require additional support. Please do come and speak to staff if you have any queries. Until we know how current COVID restrictions develop, we are not certain of plans for after Christmas but our intention is to invite you into school to view your children's work and speak to their teacher informally.

PUPIL SAFETY AND ANTI BULLYING

As part of PSHE work in school and whole school work in Collective Worship, we focus on how to keep children safe and how they keep themselves safe. The emphasis is on them being safe themselves and how they do this. The children risk assess their classrooms and activities with the classteachers and also risk assess situations and Forest School in order to support their own developing understanding of how to keep safe.

We teach them about water, rail, road and esafety as well as 'stranger danger' but esafety is by far the most prevalent stranger danger in the world we now live in. For this reason, each half term the teachers highlight the need to stay safe online by not sharing personal information and helping children understand what this is (full name, school, address, phone numbers etc) and knowing that people that are online may not be who they say they are. Children are naturally trusting and that is wonderful but not always safe so please help us share this message at home.

Bullying happens in every environment, workplaces, clubs and schools and the key to preventing it from escalating is being vigilant and helping children know what it is. We explain that bullying is not children falling out, but persistent and repeated unkindness targeted at one person or a small group by another group. We tell the children to tell adults if it happens to them and also tell their friend, who may witness it, to tell us. We give children strategies for standing up to bullies and know that when it happens at Blackwell we are usually quick to respond and stop it from becoming a significant issue. If the children talk to you at home, it is often hard to determine what is normal falling out and what could be the start of bullying. It is always better to be cautious and talk to school staff who will investigate rather than let issues drag on and become more serious. Thank you for your support with this.

Parking issues Some parents have recently voiced concerns regarding parking and turning on St Catherine's Rd. and well as speeding. Please use the Bromsgrove Council website to direct your concerns in order to request action from Highways.

SCHOOL SPORT – Teachers are working hard in PE lessons to ensure that they not only teach skills but also enable the children to be physically active for much of the time. The Government has set targets for children to advise schools and families to keep children active to reverse the increase in obesity in children.

ARTS – The School Council is working with the PFTA to consider the development of our front playground area. We will meet with Mark Riley, artist in residence, to develop the front of school and the children across the school will be involved in artwork to feature as part of this work. Thanks, as always to our PFTA for their ongoing support, with all your help, in making school such a great experience for all of the children.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP During Advent we discussed patience with the children and the skill of waiting. The advent calendars in school and at home teach the value of waiting and patience. During the final weeks of advent, we share the messages of Christmas as part of the curriculum work on Christianity.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

If your child has an identified Special Educational Need or Disability, you will be aware of this and Miss Townsend and outside agencies support the children in school alongside all staff.

Our school has been highlighted as a 'highly inclusive' school by Worcestershire County Council due to the excellent provision from Miss Townsend and all staff and a determination to offer the best. The SEND Information Report on our website outlines our offer and the provision includes: detailed tracking to inform staff of next steps; multiagency meetings and team meetings to determine the best approach; tailored lesson provision, including resources and adaptations; highly attuned staff who skilfully support and a personal approach for each individual. We work with families to tailor provision and thank you for your support.

BROAD CURRICULUM AND AFTERNOON CLUBS

For many years, we have offered free extra curricular clubs each afternoon to enable 100% of our children to take part in wider curriculum activities that support their 'whole child' development. In these clubs they can practise and apply skills taught through the National Curriculum but also develop new skills that the conventional curriculum doesn't offer. See the children's giraffe, pelican and monkey sculptures as examples of what they achieve during these sessions.

Our after school clubs continue this offer, with an emphasis on creative and sporting activities to enable children to receive the broad offer to which they are entitled.

Our school day curriculum also ensures that all children have a strong foundation in a wide curriculum, including the arts, technology, humanities and sport. Through providing children with these broad opportunities, we open their minds and eyes and support them in seeing possibilities beyond their known world. This is how we bring aspiration to them.

