

BLACKWELL FIRST SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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

Dear Families,

Here are some photographs of our Rainbow Project.



I hope that you all enjoyed listening to the children sing their 'Rainbow Song' and seeing some of the learning that the children have taken part in since half term. The link to our 'Rainbow Project 2020' film is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PBDZkpJNLc>

Thank you all for your support so far this term. We will shortly be holding virtual Parent meetings for Red Class (25.11.20 6pm) and Nursery (2.12.20 6pm) to help families develop an understanding of how we teach children basic reading, writing and maths skills. It is useful to know not only what is being taught but also how we teach it and then you are more able to support the children at home. Little and often with practise at home is best. Working with us to help the children make more progress is very helpful:

- Hear your child read as much as possible (several times each week)- help the children to point to words themselves and blend letter sounds together as well as recognise the sight words they are learning;
- Read your child bedtime stories to help develop their language and also explain vocabulary to them;
- Speak in sentences and encourage your children to do as well. At this age they will be using incorrect grammar as part of their development. It is a good idea for you to repeat their sentences modelling the correct way to speak so that they don't get into bad habits. Children at this age often add -ed to the end of verbs for past tense for verbs that don't need them, e.g. 'We runned down the road.' Repeat it correctly saying, 'You ran down the road.';
- In Maths, it is important that mummies help with maths as much as daddies (and the opposite is true in reading) as otherwise we send out messages that reading is for girls and maths for boys which causes problems for children over time;
- Help children to count both forwards and backwards in ones, and from any number, e.g. 3,4,5,6,7 etc;
- Help children to develop a real understanding of the numbers to 10, showing you how to make 5 using 4+1, 3+2, 5+0 etc. (using their fingers or counters). It is important that children use models and images to help them understand their maths all the way through to the end of Year 4;
- Year 2 onwards learn multiplication tables by heart, use the language of multiply, e.g. $6 \times 5 = 6$ multiplied by 5 (next year in Year 4 there will be a new national multiplication test made up almost entirely of 6,7,8,9,11,12 tables with 6 seconds to answer each calculation. We piloted this last year and it was extremely challenging. Please practise!))
- Play board games like 'Snakes and Ladders' to help develop their understanding of place value (the value of two digit numbers) and
- When talking about two digit numbers, make sure that you clarify that 56 is made up of the digits 5 and 6, but also explain that the 5 represents 5 tens or 50.

I hope that you enjoyed reading the children's reports last week. On the report were some targets and we hope that you will be able to support the children with practising some of these at home, as these targets are often 'gaps' in learning, particularly where the children missed learning during lockdown. We have heard from some children that they are working on the targets already which is fantastic! The more we work together to support the children's learning, the better they will learn and progress.

Thank you all.

Best wishes,
Mrs Moss



SCHOOL SPORT - Through our work with the All Active Academy (through South Bromsgrove and Chadsgrove schools), we have been fortunate to access ongoing advice and support during this time. Currently, we are not able to access competitive sporting events, but, in school, Mrs Webb is working on sporting events for this year and active PE that will support the children through this challenging time.



ARTS – Following on from our Outstanding contribution to Worcestershire's Voices and Visions Arts Celebration in Worcester Cathedral during the last few years and our last Platinum award from Artsmark, we are developing children's opportunities to experience great art experiences in school. Mrs Cutler plans excellent musical experiences during music lessons and teachers provide super art experiences, developing skills and enabling progression in these skills across the years.

Reading at Blackwell

Reading is key to ensuring that the children can access all learning and so we are working hard to ensure that the children develop their reading skills. We do this by teaching reading in English lessons, ensuring that the children read every day as a class or in groups. Children also read individually until they are fluent, when they begin to develop their ability to read publicly (performance reading). The children are also expected to read in every lesson throughout the day in order to apply their skills to other subjects. Children also receive work on learning key words, developing their phonic understanding and reading a wide range of text types (non-fiction, stories and poetry). We encourage the children to read at home as much as possible, both with you, on their own and also to listen to you reading them stories as this helps broaden their vocabulary and develop their comprehension skills of texts that are too complex for them to read themselves.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We have been focusing on our United Nations Universal Values themes for Collective Worship. Helping the children learn how to behave in order to show good manners, respect and tolerance is part of this work. As we move towards Christmas, we will consider 'Advent – a time for waiting and preparing' and encourage the children to develop patience.

esafety

Please remember to keep the children safe online by monitoring what they access on line and avoiding them using devices out of your eyesight. Social media sites should not be accessed by children of first school age.

Requesting leave in term time

The DfE and WCC policy is that family holidays should not be taken in school term time as it disrupts a child's learning, therefore we are unable to authorise **any** holiday absence. Pupils are not normally granted leave of absence except in exceptional circumstances in line with DfE guidance. These unauthorised absences may be subject to a holiday penalty notice fine by WCC. A copy of the guidance is available from the school office or it may be accessed through WCC's website.

SPELLING

For many children, spelling can be the barrier to reaching a good level of writing. Children's ability to spell accurately has appeared to decline and research is limited on why this is. One theory is that as children are required to memorise less (because there is instant access to information through technology) they are finding memorising increasingly challenging. Thinking back to our childhoods, many of us knew many people's phone numbers, whereas now they are stored in our phones rather than our brains! To help with spelling at home, please:
--practise spelling key words from lists sent home
--play with shapes, mnemonics, looking and covering up and 'hangman' style games to help

End of term

We look forward to enjoying the start of the festive season with the children soon. As we enter Advent, we will begin to discuss Advent and Christmas during Collective Worship. Children's cards are made and thank you for your orders. The originals will wend their way home to you as a special Christmas treat along with the children's 'handmade' calendars for 2021. For those ordering the school calendar, these 'handmade' ones are a bonus!

We will begin to prepare for the production of our Christmas film in December, including 'The Nativity' for Nursery and Reception and 'Letters from Father Christmas' for Year 1 and above. The recorder players, pianists and violinists will also feature. The film is available to stream or purchase as a DVD for your family to enjoy over Christmas.

Christmas lunch is Friday 11th December and Mrs Barker and Mr Wilson will prepare a traditional meal with all the trimmings and dessert for those wishing to share this special meal.

Father Christmas will visit us on Monday 14th December as part of our 'Storynight' so we hope that the children will enjoy this special time with us. Please send Yellow and Blue children to the 'top' gate and the rest of the school to the main gate between 5.30-5.40pm. Children attending After School Club may bring pyjamas to change into and will be taken to 'Storynight' if they are taking part. Everyone else may come in pyjamas and may bring a small teddy with them. For further details see ParentApp to book a place.

Friday 18th December is Party Day and children may come dressed in their own clothes as long as they have sensible shoes for playing outside and a warm coat with them. Nothing else is needed except smiles on this last day of term.