

NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School

...developing the whole child...

March 2020

Dear Families,

Who would have thought that we would be in this position when I wrote my last newsletter? A global pandemic resulting in school closure was not on the cards for many of us.

Thankfully, the staff team has worked incredibly hard to prepare for Home Learning and has pulled together an extraordinary amount of work in order that the learning in the images you see on this newsletter are taking place.

As staff are busy adapting to managing their workloads from home, where possible, and juggling it with their own families, you are all adapting to life working from home and juggling your own 'Stay at home superheroes'. Well done everyone and thank you.

The sense of community during these last few days has been phenomenal and many of you have emailed or called to let us know how the children are working on their learning, enjoying the routine of work and that you as families are corresponding regarding some of the trickier aspects of phonemes and fractions! Keeping the children's learning going is not just a way of keeping them entertained but a real help to us when they return and hopefully have not forgotten everything they had been taught!

Telephone calls home commence next week and they are another way of keeping in touch during these few weeks. Mrs Hipkiss will be emailing to try to set up recorder lessons remotely and Mrs Cutler is too with piano lessons for some children.

Do keep sending me a photo or two every so often to add onto newsletters to add interest and share some of the learning you have been involved in at home.



I have been enjoying the activities sent through from Mrs Webb and am enjoying the daily craft challenges from red class children... today's is a mermaid.
Ethan, Red Class

Eva led 3 wake and shakes in the garden this morning and Amber offered us a wake and shake chaser...
Eva and Amber, Yellow and Red Classes

Charlie is busy on his Writedance patterns set by Mrs James and Jess is busy with her books, spellings and 3 minute dashes from Miss Phipps. Glad to see they both have their school water bottles to hand!



I have also been busy helping Daddy in the garden and doing my ballet lessons through live streaming. I miss my friends and teachers and hope that you are all keeping well.
Koa, Nursery

Lilly in Yellow Class sent us a video of her reciting her Easter poem- great performing Lilly!
Theo from Blue Class is enjoying his Home Learning and completed his tasks from Miss Townsend.



The Reids used Mrs Barker's recipe book 'The Blackwell Kitchen' to create some tasty snacks. They are also looking studious at the bottom of this page, long may that last!



Parker from Nursery is actively enjoying Dough Disco, a challenge set by Mrs Mander and was a tired boy! The Garner family are engaged in crafts, I wonder who picked up the bits?



SCHOOL SPORT/ HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Sport- All sporting fixtures have been cancelled for the moment and even the Olympics have been postponed so have a go at being a 'Stay at home superhero sporting champion' yourself at home. You could build an obstacle course in the garden, go for a walk, bike ride or run or even carry out 'Wake and Shake' marathons!
Arts – Red Class children are enjoying a shared creative challenge each day. Maybe you could share some famous artists with them that we have looked at together in school.



Afternoon Club- Mrs Moran is missing from Chess Club but William will do for Edith, in between Miss Kuriger's challenges.
Taylor's Hot Dog shop- a popular destination for Daddy. Prices are high, thinks Mummy!



Staffing

Thinking ahead to September, we are making plans for any new staff that we need and will advertise the following vacancies:

- One to one teaching assistant for a child with additional needs (full school day hours);
- Part time kitchen assistant (school hours) and
- Cleaners- this would be ideal for more VI form students as some are leaving us soon...

If you are interested in any of these vacancies, please email office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk

SCHOOL DIRECT – TRAIN TO TEACH

If you know someone who would like to train to teach, please let them know that they can train with us through Bromsgrove Primary Teaching School Alliance and can email office@bptsa.worcs.sch.uk

This option of School Direct training is only available to candidates who already hold a degree and is a one year full time programme.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

During these next two weeks, we would have focussed on 'Friendship' each day and have considered how little acts of kindness and thought can make a big difference to others. We would also have thought about what happens when people are thoughtless and how this can impact on people.
Next week we would have considered 'Caring' and found out about a Polish social worker called Irena Sendler, who saved 2,500 children from the Warsaw ghettos during World War 2 through incredible acts of caring and courage.
Finding out about these real life 'super' people, really opens the children's eyes to the wider world and our place in it. Perhaps you could spend a little time thinking about these themes as part of your day. I will upload a powerpoint in case you would like to share it with the children at home. They are used to seeing these in Collective Worship so can guide you through them!



We are very much enjoying the update messages. Please also thank Mrs Webb for the very helpful lesson plans!
Charlotte's mummy, Red Class



ASSESSMENTS

At this point in the year, I normally share with you the assessment arrangements used in school and nationally to help us, as teachers, focus on next steps for learning and ensure that you, as parents, understand how your child is performing both academically and socially across the curriculum.

Under normal circumstances, all of the children are assessed by their teacher and these assessments form the basis of our judgements and help us plan for their learning. The national testing includes: phonic check for Y1, SATs for Y2, Times Tables check for Y4. The government has announced that none of these will take place this year. This is of no significance to your child's learning or the teacher's ability to plan for them when they return. Miss Townsend is secretly disappointed that the children who have worked so hard on their Times Tables won't get to prove their skills in a test!

If this period of school closure lasts into most of the summer term, it is likely that we use the spring term assessments to make a judgement on where they were at that point and then project targets for next year based on those. The children's end of year reports would be due in July and for now we have no information from DfE regarding these, but it is likely that this will be based on the Spring term teacher assessments and rather than telling you whether they are 'national expectation' it will tell you whether they were 'on track to be national expectation'.

Things will go back to normal before too long and this small period of uncertainty regarding assessment at primary level is not of any concern for the children's ongoing long term education. Supporting them with the learning set by teachers whilst they are learning from home will help their smooth return to school and hopefully help the children be at a similar level without too many gaps. We will wait to see! Whatever happens, we will address anything that needs support once they return. Thank you for your continued support during this time.



Red Class children are busy learning with Rosie, Evie, Alex and Emmeline on task! Amelia and Jamaal are spending time with their families in between lots of learning – great job Year 4s!

