

NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School



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

Dear Families,

Exploring in the stream in
Nursery- a great way to learn.

We are all very pleased with how well the children are beginning to settle into the new school year. Red Class children are starting to learn routines and it has been a delight to watch them start to build confidence! The reality has now hit that they are here every day and they are quite tired as a result of so much new learning and many new routines. Thanks to Mrs Webb, Mrs Reid and Mrs Cain for their hard work with Red Class at this busy time of year for them. Well done to Nursery children and families also for supporting with the drop off and settling in and as they begin to feel safe and secure they will also grow in confidence. Well done to Mrs Mander, Mrs Allen, Mrs Franklin, Mrs Barrett, Mrs Flynn and Mrs Lewis for their amazing patience at this time of year. Thank you to all parents and staff for all their hard work in helping everyone settle in. **We would like Red Class parents to begin a gradual retreat!** Please judge your child and decide whether to leave them at the classroom door, bottom of the steps, side of the playground or school entrance over the next few weeks. Remember all children are different and need different things at the start of the day. This may take many weeks. If your child continues to find the start of the day separation difficult, speak to Mrs Webb and she will create a personalised plan!

During the first few weeks in Reception, the teachers are playing with the children and getting to know them really well. This helps the teachers plan their next steps in learning to ensure it matches their needs. We are also piloting the national baseline assessment for Reception which is designed to help inform teacher's planning. This will be part of their daily routine in school.

High attendance has a direct link to high attainment and progress in schools and we strive to improve attendance rates in our school. Last year our attendance figure was above 97%, which is high. This is thanks to parents supporting school attendance. Term time holidays is the main reason for poor attendance by children at Blackwell. Whilst we appreciate the financial benefits of taking children out of school during term time and also know that some work situations do not enable holidays to coincide with school holidays, we ask that you consider taking holidays during school holidays where possible as a holiday in term time can significantly impact a child's progress. Imagine if they miss the first ever lesson on addition, using a full stop or fractions whilst they are away, this can definitely impact on their future learning. The children are also often disappointed when they have to miss either the start or end of a topic of work and they miss either the big introduction or the finale where all their hard work comes to fruition!

Late to school – We know that almost everyone is on time. Well done! Unless you have a specific arrangement with school, if your child arrives late to school (after the main gate is closed at 8.30am), they must be signed in at the office by you and will appear as late on the register. If they arrive after 9am, they will be marked as absent for the morning session, following national guidance. This will impact on their attendance figure. If there are specific issues impacting on punctuality, please speak to me and we will discuss options for your circumstances. Thank you for your continued support.

Parent Governor Election

You will receive a pink voting slip in your child's bookbag in order to vote for one of the three parents standing for the position of Parent Governor in our election next week. Please return slips to the office by Friday 27th September. Thank you so much to parents standing in this election. We very much appreciate the support.

Please come along to our open evening (no appointments) on Wednesday 25th September 6-7.30pm. This is an opportunity for children, parents and the wider community to come into school together and visit all classrooms, look at work and informally speak with class teachers. The children are working towards this and their work will be on display. We hope you will take this opportunity to look around all classes and see for yourselves what goes on in school. We would love to see you all. The School Book Fair will be on site this week and you are invited to find a few books to buy, maybe for a Christmas present? We receive some free books dependent on the amount we sell, so this also benefits the children in school. We look forward to seeing you at the open evening or book fair or both!

October 2019

I will be absent from school for a few weeks in October whilst I undergo some routine surgery. Miss Townsend will deputise in my absence whilst I am recovering and we have worked together to plan for my absence. I have a superb team and my only fear is that they manage so well without me that I am redundant on my return!

Children's Parish Council Christmas Competition 2019

Once again the Parish Council will be organising the children's Christmas competition. This year's topic will be **I'm Dreaming of a Green Christmas**. We look forward to receiving entries – which could be paintings, photographs, drawings, collages or Christmas decorations - made from something that would otherwise be thrown away, or stories and poems on the topic. Entries should be handed in at school or at our Parish Office, Trinity Centre (Wednesdays and Fridays) by Friday 15 November. Prizes will be awarded for the winners plus all entrants will receive a small gift at the prize giving events. Entries should ideally be no larger than A4 size and must include your name, age, school and class, and either home address, telephone number or email. Prize winners will be notified by 22 November. The prize-giving will be taking place during December's Christmas Tree Lighting events at the Wheel - before the Blackwell First School Christmas Fair on Friday 6th December and at the Holy Trinity Church, Lickey on December 1st. Councillors Jill Harvey and Anna Boehm will be working with the schools.

End of day- At the end of the school day, please leave the school site promptly so that After School Club is able to use the playground and trail. We ask children to stay away from the trail and EYs play areas after school as these areas are for learning and play during the day.

SPORT and THE ARTS

Sport- congratulations Mrs Webb who submitted our application based on sport in school last year and was awarded a Platinum Mark. This validates the work we do to teach skills, include all children in extra curricular sport (afternoon clubs) and enable all children to participate in cross school competitive sporting events.

ARTS- all children take part in a variety of extra curricular arts clubs, from sewing to art, dance to drama. Thanks to Mrs Dyson, Mrs Marks, Miss Burgess, Mrs Reid, Mrs Moran, Mrs Cain and all of our staff and music staff for their contributions to the arts.

Afternoon club sewing developing fine motor skills as well as design during cross stitch.



Developing co-operation on the trail.

Independently using maths resources in Year 1.



LAST YEAR, A FOCUS ON OUR SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN WAS DEVELOPING GROWTH MINDSET. WE CONTINUE TO WORK ON THIS AND THE NOTES BELOW MAY HELP NEW FAMILIES SUPPORT A GROWTH MINDSET WITH THEIR CHILDREN AT HOME.

children have been learning about growth mindset and how it could help them in their learning.

What is a growth mindset?

A growth mindset is believing in the power of yourself and your brain. We know our intellect and abilities develop when we try hard things, use the right strategies, and don't give up. A growth mindset is when we understand that, with practice, we can get better at something.

Some children give up on challenging tasks easily, or avoid tasks they've failed at before. They tend to believe that being 'good' at a particular activity is a fixed state, and is something they can't control. In psychology, this way of thinking is called a '**fixed mindset**'.

Others might bounce back quickly from failure and be more likely to explore how they can get better at doing something. They tend to be children who believe that you can improve your abilities by practising, or by finding a different way to achieve your goal. This way of thinking is called a '**growth mindset**', and developing it can help make children more resilient for life.

Is ability something innate?

Professor Carol Dweck, an American psychologist, found that we all have different beliefs about the underlying nature of ability.

Children (and adults!) with a growth mindset believe that intelligence and abilities can be developed through effort, persistence, trying different strategies and learning from mistakes. Although no one likes failing, children with a growth mindset do not let failure define them; instead, they use setbacks to motivate them. Children encouraged to adopt a growth mindset enjoy challenges and the sense of achievement they get when they succeed.

On the other hand, people with a fixed mindset believe that our intelligence and abilities are fixed traits; something that you are born with and that you can't really do anything about. According to someone with a fixed mindset, if you fail at something, make a mistake, or even have to put effort in, it must be because 'you're just not good enough'. Because of that belief, children begin to avoid challenges and choose activities that they find easy.

Researchers have found that building a growth mindset helps children at school; making them more motivated, more engaged in the classroom and likely to receive higher marks and greater rewards from their work. But it's not all about educational outcomes. Research also suggests that having a growth mindset increases children's ability to try all sorts of different challenges and problems that they might not have otherwise tackled.

Developing a growth mindset also appears to improve behaviour, increase life satisfaction, and help children to control their emotions.

How can I help my child to develop a Growth Mindset?

Research has shown that Mindsets can be changed relatively quickly and there are plenty of things that parents and families can do to help. Below are a few tips and ideas that can help promote a growth mindset in children.

1. Reward effort – if your child tried really hard at something and didn't give up – tell them. They have used a growth mindset and have persevered.
2. Encourage children not to give up, being resilient and embracing a challenge is brilliant and will help them when tackling tricky work.
3. Celebrate mistakes - We all make mistakes! Use them as a learning opportunity rather than feeling embarrassed by them. If we don't make mistakes we are not challenging ourselves.
4. Use role models- Think about athletes or musicians. They were not born being able to run quickly or play an instrument. They achieved through practising over and over again.

How can the way I praise my child help develop a Growth Mindset?

It's natural to want to praise children when they do something well, but we need to do this carefully. Research suggests that the type of praise that we use can have a big impact. It's all a matter of context in fact and even positive praise can encourage a fixed mindset.

Praising our children by saying things like "you're a natural!" or "you seem to be able to turn your hand to anything!" without clarity of the process by which they got to that point can lead to the belief that being good at something is out of their control. In other words understanding how they got there is the key.

Instead the grown-ups around the child can focus praise on the effort they've made to get to that point of triumph, the strategy they used or the outcome itself, saying things like "you've worked so hard on this, well done!" or "you get better every time because of all the practise you've been doing" or "you have found a great way to do that, it worked out really well".

This kind of feedback helps to develop children's resilience to failure as it teaches them what to do when they are challenged or fail – try again, try harder or try a different way, all things that are within their own control.

This type of praise is sometimes called 'process praise' and Dweck's research found that children were more motivated when their parents used more of this kind of praise. Give it a go!