



NEWSLETTER

for Blackwell First School- Blue Class



Welcome back after the half term break. We are now half way through this academic year and the children are working extremely hard and developing excellent attitudes towards their learning. The last half term was certainly a busy one... a theatre trip, the children creating their own magical learning journeys, the start of employment and earning Blackwell pounds, being crowned Wake 'n' Shake champions and the creation of a beautiful class display of clay divas (please take a look in the entrance area) are just some of the highlights. I look forward to meeting with you during this term's parent consultations (week beginning 12th March) and sharing with you both your child's academic progress but also their social and personal development too.

TOPIC

'A Land Far Away' is our new topic where the children will be investigating the 'Golden Age of Baghdad' which was introduced to the National Curriculum in 2014. We have a very exciting project linked to this and we are very lucky to have received a grant to enable Mark Riley, artist in residence, to work with us on a large scale art project to be exhibited at Worcester Cathedral in June. A celebration of our work will take place with you on March 26th. During this project, the children will be encouraged to develop their creativity not only with their art skills but in their ideas across the curriculum and have the confidence to take risks.

History and Geography are the other subjects taught during this topic. Through Geography, the children will be given the opportunity to enquire and ask questions about countries in the Middle East, use globes and maps to find out locations of land features and make their own maps using co-ordinates, the 8 point compass points and keys. We will investigate the impact of water on human lives and the environment, exploring the significance of the River Euphrates and the River Tigris.

In History, we will help the children develop their understanding of chronology, investigate some of the main people during the Golden Age such as scientists and mathematicians alongside what everyday life would have been like. Testing hypotheses and recognising causes and consequences will also be a focus.

PSHE, Music, Computing, French, P.E and Philosophy for Children are taught each week throughout the year. See our 'Curriculum' page on the school website for more information.

BITS AND PIECES

During PSHE and Computing lessons, we continually talk to the children about online safety and healthy living including healthy minds. Please support us at home by following the recommended guidelines: keep technology out of bedrooms so that everything that is going on is shared as a family (nothing should be hidden), children must always ask parents before downloading APPS, requesting friends etc., teach children about online stranger danger just as you do with strangers on the street, have clear time limits on screen time, avoid any blue lights one hour before bed and encourage them to have other interests and plenty of time in the fresh air.

Daily reading and **times table practice** at home makes a significant difference to your child's progress. Thank you for your continued support.

If there is anything you wish to ask about, please come and speak to me at the end of the school day or if you just want to say hello! I am usually available to speak informally after 3.15p.m. Thank you.
Miss Townsend

LITERACY

During this topic, we will be reading and writing stories based on tales from Arabian Nights such as Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves and Aladdin. When reading, they will be given opportunities to ask questions and make predictions as well as discussing the impact on the reader of the use of vocabulary which they then use to develop their writing skills. We will also develop their sentence writing skills further by using noun phrases with modifying adjectives i.e. the sneaky thief with the curly hair, consolidating their use of subordinating conjunctions, fronted adverbials and correctly punctuated dialogue.

In phonics, the children will be taught how to use a range of prefixes such as in-, re-, sub-, inter-, super- anti and -auto... and how they change the meaning of the root word and suffixes such as -ation and -ly.

During parent consultations in the autumn term, you were given a list of key words to spell. This half term, the words of focus will be: **knowledge, learn, length, library, material, mention, medicine, minute, natural, naughty, notice, occasion, occasionally, often, opposite, ordinary, particular, peculiar, perhaps and popular**. It would be great if the children could practise these tricky words at home too.

NUMERACY

During Numeracy, the children will continue to develop their understanding of number and place value. We will be counting on and back beyond zero, exploring negative numbers and continue to develop our understanding of decimal numbers involving tenths and hundredths. Calculation work will focus on multiplication and division. Time will be our final focus. This can be quite a challenge to some children and the expectation by the end of Year 4 is for the children to be **able to read, write and convert any time between analogue and digital 12- and 24-hours clocks**. Please support your child at home with this, particularly if they find this life skill difficult.

Mental maths will be focusing on the 8 times table (please check your child can recall the 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 by heart too), deriving sums and differences of pairs of multiples of 10, 100 and 1000 and recognising and using factor pairs.

Take a look at some of our villainous character paintings...

