

NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School

Blackwell First School,
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Blackwell,
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B60 1BN

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Dear Families,



Look at these interesting inventions, not quite the equal of ones in Bagdad in AD 900!

Peggy Blackwell, the Guinea Pig, doesn't move quite as quickly as Red Class, but did pay a visit to Coffee Morning.



Action shots from Easter Coffee Morning- Red Class moved so quickly during their country dance it was hard to find a good shot!



Our violinists performed beautifully at their concert at the end of term, helped by Mrs Grainger. Well done for keeping up with that practise.

What a wide variety of learning happens at Blackwell. Next term is a busy one too so have a good rest over Easter.

Mark Riley, artist in residence, explored Baghdad with Year 4 and helped them discover amazing facts about a city that led the world at the time. Art skills were developed through work on pop up books, clay, charcoal drawings and paper making. The work based on the 'House of Wisdom' will be displayed at 'Voices and Visions' at Worcester Cathedral during June. Thanks to families for coming along to view the children's work.



Green Class children are using the laptops funded by the PFTA to find out about Hinduism. Thank you PFTA!



NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENTS FOR PRIMARY AND FIRST SCHOOLS

As you can see from the photographs above, we work hard to ensure that our curriculum offer is a broad one and whilst we teach the National Curriculum during our school day between 8.30am-1.40pm, we also offer clubs that develop some of the essential life skills of communication, resilience and teamwork. After reading newsletters during the past few years, many of you will be aware that a new National Curriculum was introduced in September 2014. All maintained (non academy schools) have followed this curriculum since this time. Although academies do not have to follow this curriculum, most do as children will be assessed and tested on the content of this curriculum. The content of this curriculum is challenging for most children and set at levels not previously expected of children.

Children are now assessed on the content of this curriculum in different ways. Schools will assess children internally day to day to help them move on with their learning, for example, a teacher will spot a child struggling to solve a maths problem and will help them to understand how to solve it by explaining the steps to help them. This is day to day assessment. At the end of each term, teachers make judgements, using an internal assessment system, on how much progress the children are making and what they need to work on to help them make progress the next term. At the end of the year teachers use the same internal assessment systems to assess the overall achievement for each child this year. This will make a judgement regarding whether the child has met the nationally expected level or not.

Schools also have to administer national 'tests' for children. This happens at the start of Reception, at the end of Year 1 for reading and at the end of Year 2 for reading, writing and maths. Rest assured, we do not focus on teaching the children to 'pass the test' and there is no need to complete 'practise test papers' at home. We teach a broad and balanced curriculum that motivates and engages and helps children learn the skills of being a good learner. The tests are administered with little fuss for the children and although we have to administer them under certain conditions in Year 2, they are not in any way used to create anxiety for the children. We do not call them tests. The best thing you can do is make sure that they have plenty of sleep and are in school. The judgements that are made at the end of each year will be reported to parents in order that you are aware of whether your child has reached national expectations or not. It is important to remember that these tests have a narrow national assessment focus and do not measure many of the children's areas of strength. Research also indicates that there is no correlation between achievement at the age of 6 and future success. Whilst maintaining a sensible perspective, it is still important that the children learn their basic skills and learning attitudes that will support them as they move through school and with this in mind...

Please do not pass on messages to your children that they are not reaching where they should be for their age because we need to remember that the children are working hard and making progress, learning new skills and knowledge all of the time. We will tell you if we have concerns about their progress.

Esafety

Thanks to our representative Daddy who attended the esafety evening for parents at Charford First School. We are increasingly concerned about the dangers of children's internet use and the activities that they are engaged in, with or without your knowledge.

Please take the time to investigate www.thinkyouknow.co.uk and find out how best to keep your children safe online. There are some helpful videos to watch with your children to help them understand how they need to keep themselves safe online. We operate filters in school and rules to help them make sensible choices, but at home this is not always the case so please help them to develop healthy internet use at home.

We are also aware that some children are accessing computer games (some are online gaming) that are aimed at over 12s and are graphic and violent. The games are resulting in aggressive play where the children act out the games on the playground. Please take time to find out what your children are engaged in when accessing computers/ipads/PSPs at home.

A few helpful tips from the evening:

- To set up a Youtube account you need to be 18 or 13 with parental consent but some children at Blackwell have their own accounts and are videoing themselves in school uniform (identifying how to locate them). These children are also sharing usernames and passwords.
- CEOP is a reporting facility for children and parents with online concerns www.ceop.police.uk
- www.whois.com – can help you find out who owns the web address and therefore whether a site is safe for children to access without links to extremists (who are targeting children's websites/apps)
- ourpact is an app which can help parents control all devices in the home www.pair.ourpact.com
- all social media accounts are restricted until age 13 but if your children access this earlier you should set up the account for them

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Last week, we focussed on 'Easter' during Collective Worship and the important messages that the Easter story conveys. Rev Paul visited and shared his Easter message with the children.

When we return after Easter, we will be focusing on 'Appreciation' and will find out about the Commonwealth as part of celebrating the 'Commonwealth Games'. We will appreciate the wider world, celebrate diversity of religious belief, countries, cultures and people.

'BBC Ten Pieces 3' will also help the children appreciate classical music and bring classical music to a young audience. Through the films and performances that we share with the children, a range of classical music will be shared with them.



Respecting St Catherine's Church and grounds

There have been reports of children after school behaving in an inappropriate way on the church grounds. St Catherine's kindly allows the children into the grounds as part of their work to engage the community and work in a community minded way. It is important that the children are taught to respect the land around the church as well as the church itself. In school, we will talk to the children about respectful behaviour but also ask that you are mindful of what they do when you are supervising them after school.

SCHOOL SPORT/ HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Extra curricular clubs- Mrs Edney has been continuing to working hard on stamina with sport's club and the children have risen to the challenge with some encouragement! It is about more than a quick sprint...and the children's ability to run more than one or two laps of the playground has been tested. Year 3 has enjoyed cricket sessions and we have discovered some budding cricketers. Maybe joining a cricket team for some of those children in Year 3 would further help their sportsmanship?

Blackwell First School external review

Our annual external review took place in March and was carried out by three other local headteachers alongside the external reviewer from an educational consultancy company called DRB ignite.

The findings indicated that Blackwell First School continues to provide an outstanding education for its pupils and the following statements taken from the report show clearly the high standards at the school. Well done everyone, children, staff and families for working together.

**Leaders provide very effective support which promotes good and outstanding teaching and motivates staff well.*

**Standards are high because teachers have consistently high expectations. Work in pupils' books is of a consistently high quality.*

**The curriculum is outstanding and promotes very good outcomes.*

**Very effective questioning, good promotion of learning behaviours and strategies, a wide range of resources and effective support for pupils' learning promote a 'can do' attitude which ensures pupils sustain concentration in lessons and make very good progress across the school.*

**Good routines have been established so no learning time is lost.*

**Teaching assistants are highly effective in supporting pupils' learning and also promoting their independence.*

**The new spelling scheme has improved spelling, particularly of the younger pupils. Spelling books, which include year group expectations, topic-related words and 'have-a-go' pages are used well across the school.*

**The school provides a caring, family environment because staff know pupils well.*

**Low key behaviour management ensures a calm, supportive learning environment where learning is not interrupted.*

**Governance is outstanding. Governors have an exceptionally clear view of the strengths and next steps for the school.*

Areas identified for further development are:

**Ensure there is clear evidence to support the school's evaluations of attainment on entry.*

- Sustain a focus on improving spelling, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

The school has already focused significant work on judging attainment on entry to Nursery in light of this new baseline in 2017 and the Early Years team will continue to ensure work continues for both Nursery and Reception.

A new spelling programme has supported spelling across the school and Years 3 and 4 are currently focussing their work on spelling as they did not access the programme in Year 1 and 2.

Dates

16.4.18 Term starts
16.4.18- Year 4s bellboating
18.4.18- Student teachers start in Y2 and 4
30.4.18- Whole school trip to castle (not Nursery)
8.5.18 – Y3s outdoor event (BCM schools)
16.5.18- Yellow Class assembly
17.5.18- Medieval Fayre- family event- morning times TBC (not Nursery)
24.5.18 – Purple Class cake sale
25.5.18- Sporting Morning (school)/ afternoon (Nursery)
28.5.18-1.6.18 Half term