

NEWSLETTER

for Blackwell First School



Blackwell First School,
St. Catherine's Rd.,
Blackwell,
Near Bromsgrove,
Worcestershire.
B60 1BN
December 2017

Dear Families,

Children in Need- Year 4 stall- thank you all!
November 2017

Thank you all for your support this term. It is good to see how well the children are progressing. During meetings each half term, I discuss all of the children individually with their teachers and look at their work books and it is rewarding to see the progress that they are making. It is a bit like learning to drive or to play the piano. The lessons are very important, but it is the practise in between that makes the biggest difference. 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;
- 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;
- 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.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP During Advent we discuss patience with the children and the skill of waiting. Rev Paul came at the start of Advent to share his stories about waiting. The advent calendars in school and at home teach the value of waiting and patience. During the final weeks of advent, we share the messages of Christmas as part of the curriculum work on Christianity.

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 everyday 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.

Children in Need

Thank you all for your donations for Children in Need. We now have 162 children in school and raised £162.00! Not everyone was in school that day and the extra money raised by the work of our splendid Year 4s helped to boost the amount we raised this year. Thank you Year 4s for organising and to Miss Townsend for facilitating the children's ideas, enabling them to develop their entrepreneurial skills.



SCHOOL SPORT - Through our work with the All Active Academy (through South Bromsgrove and Chadsgrove schools), we have been fortunate to run a Change for Life fitness club as part of our After School Club. The children were delighted to share their 108 skips with us! Well done to those taking part to help them develop that important healthy lifestyle.

ARTS - Miss Steele has been working with our colleagues at Charford and Millfields on developing the children's art skills and their understanding of art history, providing the children with a chronology of artists to draw inspiration from. Well done to our pianists and recorder players who are performing this week. We are proud of their work and practice.



School Festival - Buddhism

Last Friday, the children came together to share their Buddhism learning and enjoyed watching Blue Class perform their Family Assembly. From their amazing storytelling to their beautiful artwork, it was a real treat to see the oldest children perform so well.

Well done to Nursery children who joined the rest of the school to watch Blue Class. The rest of the school clapped Nursery for being such a good audience. It was lovely for everyone to come together. The children were so proud of each other.

Christmas Fair

Thanks to the PFTA for the superb Christmas Fair. It was a busy night and we thank you all for your support.

Parent Consultations

Thank you for such high attendance at Parent Consultation meetings. These meetings are so useful for sharing information, targets and showing the children's work. The reports should now have arrived at home in your child's bookbag so please let the classteachers know if your child's has not made it home yet. We have a final couple of children's parents who have not been seen so please arrange a time to come in.

Dates for Spring term

3.1.18 Teacher training day – focus on staff developing their skills when teaching subjects such as Geography, Music, PE
4.1.18 Welcome back everyone- schools opens and welcome to our new Y3 friend, Abigail!
5.1.18 All classes (not Nursery) school theatre trips
8.1.18 7.30pm Blackwell Club- PFTA meeting
24.1.18 Y3s gym festival
25.1.18 Green Class – family assembly (8.45am)
19-23.2.18 – Half term

Governor Open Morning

Governors attended an open morning last week, in order to monitor the progress of children's learning in school. Their focus was on learners mastering the new National Standard and the work that we are carrying out in school to support the mastering of basic skills in writing. They were pleased with the following areas:

- Continuity of teaching of writing across the school and the use of resources;
- Questioning by all staff to develop thinking skills;
- Development of activities to develop children's independence and
- Behaviour and behaviours for learning across the school.

The Governors will return in the Spring term to monitor the progress of all children, in particular the children working towards mastery and whole school writing.

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.

Exploring in Nursery – in the water, sand, mud and forest!



End of term

Only this week of rehearsals and then our Christmas festivities begin. Please come along to our 'Nativity' or 'The Snowman' and if you wish to buy a programme and enjoy a mince pie and drink afterwards, please bring £2.00. We don't issue tickets, but ask that you are sensible about numbers. At the adult only productions, we request only two adults per child. (If there are additional adults who wish to attend the toddlers' production, that is possible). **Also, please remember that filming and photography is allowed but that NO IMAGES OR FILMS must be placed on the internet of social media. This is for child protection reasons.** There are children in both productions whose images must not be on the internet. Remember that the DVD is available to purchase from school which then allows you to watch the productions 'in the moment'.

Christmas Lunch is on December 15th and on the final days, December 18th we welcome Nursery families to 'Cake and coffee' at 2.30pm, and on December 19th, we will have the travelling pantomime in school and it is party afternoon. The children may come to school in party clothes but please ensure an outdoor coat and sensible shoes are in school.

We all wish you a very Happy Christmas and thank you for all of your support. We look forward to seeing everyone on Thursday 4th January for the first day of term.

Mrs A Moss (Headteacher)