

# NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School



Blackwell First School,  
St. Catherine's Rd.,  
Blackwell,  
Near Bromsgrove,  
Worcestershire.  
B60 1BN  
February 2018

Dear Families,

Magical 'Tale' inspired artwork based on John Brunson or Georgia O'Keeffe as part of classroom illustrations in Blue Class.

It is February already! The children have thoroughly enjoyed their 'Tales' topic and from learning about Bears in Nursery, 'We're going on a bear hunt' in Red and Green Classes to the wicked tale of '101 dalmations' in the older classes, the children have certainly been inspired by the work of these famous authors. If you are stuck for ideas about which books to share at home, then look at their Home Reading cards for ideas. It is crucial that the children's language is developed by them being exposed to texts that are above their reading age. Reading stories both at home and school is the best way to develop their language. I have spent time in classes over the last few weeks monitoring the children's writing and have been pleased by the progress that the children are making in their books. When you attend Parent Consultations in a few weeks, you will be able to see for yourself the progress that your child has made. The challenges of the National Curriculum are present in each year group and we work hard to continue to make learning meaningful for the children through the use of topics and exciting projects to end topic work. Thank you to Green Class for their 'Bear Hunt' assembly as their end project and to everyone for coming along to watch. Nursery children attended the dress rehearsal and enjoyed being part of the school. They showed excellent sitting and concentration.

We work in school to develop the children's academic skills, but also value the life skills that we help to develop alongside you as parents. Developing these skills as part of the school teaching day and afternoon clubs is an important part of the children's experience and above and below are some photographs exemplifying the activities that the children are involved in in school. Some of the main skills we try to develop in the children are: independence (when it seems much quicker to do it for the children!); resilience (when often children like to be instantly gratified and struggle keep at a challenging task); co-operation (in a world where working with others is vital to success) and positive attitudes and an ability to talk about learning. Schools across the globe are finding that children are facing new challenges and have not yet developed these skills for a variety of reasons. Help us to help them by ensuring they take responsibility for themselves by carrying book bags themselves, remembering to hand in notes and also encouraging and praising them for hard work. Try to encourage concentration in the children rather than a flitting between activities. Working together will help the children achieve these skills sooner.



## HELPING AT HOME

As teachers, we know that we are only part of the children's success with learning and that children have a far greater chance of success in education if they are supported at home. We are very fortunate to have a school where children are very often well supported. Below is a list of ways you can support your child at home:

- Give your child time and talk to them (expecting eye contact and a discussion where the children speak to you in sentences – not always an easy ask!)
- Ask your child, "What did you learn today?" rather than "What did you do today?" and they **may** tell you more than the standard, "Nothing!"
- Give them time off so that they don't feel they are constantly 'working'
- Use the homework sheet as a guide to what the children are learning and this will enable you to talk more about school (even if they don't complete the homework activities)
- Read with the children at least four times a week, asking them to talk about what they are reading and not just read the words
- Read them bedtime stories as this helps to develop language and vocabulary (suggestions are on the Home Reading Cards)
- Practise mental maths as outlined on the homework sheets as these skills form the basis of the children's ability to calculate in maths
- **Children in Y2-4 need help to learn their times tables by heart out of order- please help them**

Finally, the children are children. They need time to rest and sleep, please make sure they have plenty of sleep and time away from electronic games/ toys, particularly before bedtime. (Current advice is no blue light for at least an hour before bedtime).

## SCHOOL SPORT/ HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Sport- well done to Yellow Class for efforts at the gym festival at Bromsgrove School. Miss Steele was proud of you all for your hard work. Year 2 dance festival is next on the list of fixtures. Currently, Y2 is receiving specialist dance coaching prior to the festival and Y4 is receiving cricket coaching from Worcester Cricket Club.

Arts – We are delighted to have been chosen as one of only five schools in Worcestershire that will receive a grant to work with an artist in residence through Meadow Arts and present a large scale art work at the annual 'Voices and Visions' at Worcester Cathedral later in the year.



**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP** Our themes for the next few weeks are **Sustainability, Tolerance and Wonderful World**. We will think about Tolerance in the context of sharing and playing out on the playground and also in the wider world context of tolerating other viewpoints from our own, both cultural and religious.

After almost twenty years of service to the school, Mrs Thornton will be retiring at the beginning of March. We will be collecting for a retirement gift for her and if anyone wishes to make a donation, please add it to the collection in the office. Mrs Thornton's retirement will leave a vacancy for a cleaner in charge which we will be advertising later this term. If anyone is interested, please speak to me.

We thank Mrs Thornton for her hard work and wish her all the very best for the future (and no more very early get ups!)

### **New furry friends arriving soon...**

Thanks to the fundraising in Purple Class as part of their project during their 'Tales' topic, we will soon have two new friends in school...guinea pigs. Purple Class children raised money through their cake baking and sponsored story reading to Red Class.



A cage and equipment have been purchased by fundraising and Miss Kuriger plans to bring our new friends into school after half term.

If anyone knows that their child has an allergy to fur/ guinea pigs, then please let the school office know so that we can make a note on medical records.



### **Playground developments**

Thanks to fund raising by the PFTA, we are developing the playground at the back of the school so that playtimes will be more varied and encourage children to develop skills of co-operation and encourage problem solving and resilience. The children will have the following areas to play: den building; construction; skipping; sand pit; playground games; story reading and art area. The large playground will still enable the children to run around, but offer other activities for those who prefer. We are very grateful to the PFTA for making this possible.

### **RESPECTING OUR NEIGHBOURS- Parking**

A neighbour of the school has reported that driveways are still being blocked. This is a different neighbour from the last report. Although the road is busy at the start/end of the day, please make good use of the whole length of St Catherine's and onto Linthurst and Linthurst Newtown/ Station Rd. Please avoid parking in front of the Village Shop as the shop relies on people being able to park outside in order to stop and shop. A final request is that people avoid 3-point turns at the start/end of day as this causes congestion. Thank you for your co-operation and respect.

Mrs A Moss (Headteacher)

### **Request for donations...**

Mrs Moran would like any old unwanted cotton fabrics, such as cotton pillow cases for sewing club. All classes would like unwanted large shirts to use as painting aprons. Any spare pants and socks are always welcome as they are often used and not always returned!



Miss Townsend and Mrs Marks have been exploring the work of Georgia O'Keeffe and using similar techniques to create magical illustrations.

### **Severn Arts Music lessons**

Just a reminder to those children who receive music lessons through 'Severn Arts'. A term's notice has to be given as the school books and pays for the lesson slots for each term in advance. Sometimes, after the novelty of starting lessons wears off, the practice required can be off putting but it is good to 'keep at it' as long term it is a great skill to have. How many people once they reach adulthood wish they had learned an instrument?

### **Hot lunches**

Mrs Barker's fabulous homemade lunches are enjoyed by 75% of the school. Everything is made fresh each day and is a healthy, hot meal for the children at lunch time. Please encourage those eating sandwiches to choose hot meals on some days (or all) as it is such a good meal and a far healthier option than much of what is in lunchboxes.

### **Dates for Spring term**

- 16.2.18 Red Class cake sale after school
- 19-23.2.18 – Half term
- 28.2.18 Height/weight measure for Red Class
- 8/9.3.18 Mothering Sunday present sale after school
- 13.3.18 Mrs Thompson returns following maternity leave- we are looking forward to her being back with us!
- 14/15.3.18 Parent consultations
- 22.3.18 esafety meeting for parents at Charford First School 4pm – all welcome
- 27.3.18 Y1 drama event
- 29.3.18 Coffee morning (afternoon for Nursery)/Easter Egg hunt after school-PFTA

**HOLIDAY CLUB- 3-6.4.18 Booking forms available**

