



Time flies when you are having fun! At the end of this year, it seems that so much has happened, from trips to Kenilworth and Bishop's Wood to topic events in school, such as the Tudors and Stuarts Festival and Sport's Festivals. At the end of the year, we reflect on the last twelve months and consider the school and the progress the children, staff and school have made. I wish to thank all of the school staff for their excellent contribution to the children's welfare, development and learning this year. We are grateful for the support of you as parents, our collaborative schools Charford and Millfields and to the Governing Body for their contribution to the leadership of the school. We are particularly grateful to Mrs Wilson, Chair of Governors, and Dr Evans, Vice Chair, and thank them for their superb dedication to the school. Sadly we bid farewell to Leanne Gwilliam, Dean Brady and Darren Cormack as Governors each of them giving so generously of their time and expertise over 8 or more years each. We will miss them. Debbie Wilson has decided to remain as a governor but will step down as Chair as she will be taking on a strategic role as Teaching School Manager for our new venture alongside Charford and Millfields First Schools. Thanks also to the PFTA for tremendous fundraising efforts this year, so essential to ensure that we can continue to offer the rich and varied educational opportunities currently available whilst the budgetary demands are increasingly challenging. Particular mention must be made to our Year 4s and their families for their support to the school over the years. Please see the attached reviewed school development plan that shares with you the progress that we have made this year.

This year, our results show that the children have again made very strong progress with more working at levels expected for their age than across Worcestershire and nationally. When they leave us in Year 4, they have developed into individuals who are often working securely at or above expected standards and who have life skills of independence, communication and an excellent sense of moral purpose. This group has been a fantastic group to watch develop over the years and the progress that they have made from Red Class to Blue Class has been excellent.

The school works hard to fulfil its role as a real community school and remains at the heart of the village. The work we do supports children in developing that sense of community and their own role within a community and as part of the UK. Developing the children as local and global citizens is an important aspect of our work as could be seen during our work on Baghdad, Hinduism and Buddhism and our Collective worship themes on values. We look forward to developing this further next year. Please see next year's topics on the website over the holidays, which we know will inspire the children on their return in September.

Can I finally say, on behalf of everyone at school, thank you for your support and your kind words throughout the year. Good luck to adults and children who are moving on, we wish you well and hope that you come back to see us. Have a good summer break and we will all meet again on 5<sup>th</sup> September when we welcome our new Nursery and Reception intake and new staff members.

As a school that was judged as outstanding by Ofsted in 2011, we are not the focus for routine Ofsted inspections, although we could be inspected anytime as part of Ofsted's sample of schools. In order to ensure that we continue to offer a high quality education, we commission external validation which forms an integral part of the self-evaluation of the school.

This year, we have been inspected by The Basic Skills Quality Mark for Early Years and have also commissioned reviews on Safeguarding, Governance and the overall effectiveness of the school. All of these experiences have been very positive and some comments from the reports provide a flavour of the comments in the reports.

***This is a hardworking and well organised governing body that supports the development of this outstanding school well.***

***High calibre of governors with a balanced skill set.***

***High quality self-evaluation of their own work.***

***Governor work focused on improving outcomes for children and in educating the whole child.***

***Governors support and challenge in equal measure.***

***Good relationships exist between the Headteacher, staff and governors.***

***Governors know their school well.***

(Governor Review- July 2018)

***Pupils know to report anything that concerns them. Pupils said that all staff would listen to them and take them seriously.***

***All children and staff interviewed gave a consistent message about the importance of safety within the school. Children referred to posters that help you to know who to ask for help. A recent survey demonstrated 96% of children felt safe at Blackwell First School.***

***Children reported that they talk to their teacher or parent. "Teachers could help you sort it out." "Teachers comfort you and share the worries."***

(Safeguarding Review – January 2018)

We have recently fed back on the positive feedback from both the External School Review and also the Early Years Quality Mark. All of this information is used to support the development of next year's School Development Plan.

**Reports** This week, you will receive your child's report and there will be a covering letter to help you understand how your child is achieving in line with the relatively newly introduced higher national standards. It is most important that you look at the children's progress comment as this indicates whether they are working well. Whilst some children do reach this high national standard, it is important that you do not feel that your child is unsuccessful if they are not currently working at the new standard. Many children are not, and most of these children would have previously been described as working within national expectations. It is also important to remember that children develop at different rates and that many children who may be described as not working at the new expectation when they are very young, will go on to reach expectations later on during their primary school years. It is also important to note the general comments and skills development sections as these indicate your child's development in areas that are crucial to their future as learners. If you have any concerns or have any questions about your child's report, please come and see me. If you need to discuss any aspect of it with your child's class teacher, please ask for an appointment.

### Collective Worship

During this last week, we will be concentrating on 'Freedom' as a theme and discussing the freedom that comes from living in the UK and the associated rights that we have. With such rights come responsibilities, and we talk (as part of British Values) about the need to follow the law and what this means.

As part of this work, we discuss the lack of freedom for some people across the world and discuss this in terms that the children understand, such as a lack of freedom to go to school, have friends, wear what they want, choose a job and have beliefs that are different from others.

### School Council

Thank you to the School Council for supporting school this year. The councillors have shared their work load and as well attending meetings, have worked on themes and planned work across the school to monitor the effectiveness of the school and offer ideas for developments. Thank you all!

### Arts and Sport

Red Class enjoyed a super Athletics trip to the Ryland Centre, learning about the skills and sportsmanship involved in taking part in athletics events.

Year 4 excelled in the bell boating regatta and came 10<sup>th</sup> out of 40 this year. A super effort. They also attended a full day of competitive sport at Charford First School along with Millfields. It was a tiring day.

Pianists, violinists, recorder players, dance club, circus skills club and performing arts club have all performed over the last week or will this week. What a rich experience the children have!



### Red Class Assembly

It was a treat to watch the Red Class assembly and find out about their super 'Build a Business' learning. Watching them sing, perform in front of others and proudly show their art skills was a delight. They have come so far in a year. We look forward to seeing how they develop next year.

- Music tuition payments needed ASAP- piano, recorder, flute and violin.
- Extra-curricular and after school club bookings needed ASAP with payment.
- Lunch orders needed ASAP with payment- NB last two days on autumn term order are Teacher training days- no children in school.
- Uniform collection ASAP for those who have been notified.

Thanks for using P4S online payment. It is really helpful to us!

Congratulations to Katie Chamberlain and Liz Hipkiss who are both expecting babies, but, along with Emma Dudek will be with us during part of the autumn term.

**TESTS!** – The Year 1 children took a national reading test in June and the Year 2 children sat SATs tests in May. We do not call these tests 'tests' with the children and we make them as much a part of everyday classroom practice as we can. The children have all worked well and showed great resilience when taking part in these tests. It is thanks to their teachers that they have not found them too challenging. They performed well and you will receive the outcomes reported to you with the children's reports. It will indicate whether the children have met the standard for Year 1 in reading or not and whether the children in Year 2 are working securely at national expectation or not. If you are unsure of the documents explaining the national tests for Year 2, please ask me.

**PFTA** We owe a huge thanks to the PFTA for their excellent summer fair and for raising over £2,200. All of the people involved have worked extremely hard to ensure that they raise as much for the children as possible. This year, the PFTA has donated over £10,000 for resources including playground equipment, laptops and books. Thank you to all involved.

With a very kind and generous donation from an anonymous supporter of the school, we have been able to sustain the quality of education at the school. At a time of ever decreasing budgets, this support is invaluable and the funds that school is able to raise through our Before and After School and Holiday Club provision as well as Nursery, School Kitchen, and fundraising events, supports the school on its journey.

Thanks to Jenny Price as outgoing Chair and welcome to Claire Evans as incoming Chair.

Thank you for supporting PFTA events as without you attending, the PFTA would not be able to contribute as much as they do.

### Supporting transition into Year 1

*A class of children is not a homogeneous group of learners. The learning of young children is neither linear nor predictable. Developmentally, there is very little difference between a Reception child and a Year 1 child. **Key changes come around the age of 7.***

*(Julie Fisher, Moving into KS1)*

For this reason, and considerable international evidence showing that formal learning in Year 1 is not suited to children's development, we are changing the way we operate Year 1 to allow the children to continue learning in the way that they have in Reception, whilst focussing on the challenges of the National Curriculum as set out in law.

#### Things that will stay the same:

- Children will be taught Maths, English, Phonics and all other subjects as in Reception
- Children will work with the teacher/TA in small focus groups to support maximum progress

#### Key changes:

- Children will not work as a whole class on formal, independent learning, but will instead experience more small group work
- Children will learn indoors and outdoors and will spend a third of the day engaged in 'Exploring and Playing' in the classroom in themed areas, such as 'Perform', 'Experiment', 'Design', 'Write' and 'Calculate', covering all curriculum areas in a playful and engaging way

A considerable amount of professional development, planning and creation of resources has taken place and this will be an area of focus on next year's School Development Plan. We are very much looking forward to sharing this new experience with our new Year 1s.

### Autumn term dates

Holiday Club- 28.8 – 31.8.18

5.9.18 School opens- welcome back

24.9.18 School trip with later return- Years 1-4

26.9.18 Open evening current parents 6-7.30pm

28.9.18 School trip – Red Class

3.10.18 Open night for prospective parents – 6.30-7.30pm (Book fair this week)

**15.10.18 esafety meeting for parents- 6pm**

24.10.18 Purple Class family assembly- 8.45am

25.10-2.11.18 Half term