

# NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School



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

Dear Families,

Fire lighting at Forest School and appreciating the awe and wonder in our world -Spring 2017

**So many opportunities...** Our day at Blackwell First School has been organised in order to provide the children with a rich and varied educational experience that extends beyond the conventional school curriculum. The children work on their national curriculum learning from 8.30am-1.40pm with a short break for lunch and then move into clubs during the afternoon session. Mrs Edney has been leading the development of afternoon clubs this year as well as the exciting new style extra curricular clubs. The Governors of the school recently attended an open afternoon to monitor the provision of the afternoon clubs, extra curricular clubs and the Blackwell Before and After School care provision. Below are some of the comments and observations made during the visit.

At this school, we value not only the learning of traditional subjects and learning skills, but also the most important life skills that are so important for the children's whole lives. It is crucial that we support them in their ability to be resilient; hard working; good communicators and good citizens who play a positive role in the lives of others. These are skills that we work towards during the whole day on offer at school. It is important to give children the time and space to develop some of these skills, and our wider curriculum does this. Perhaps at home families could provide less? Sometimes less is more. Less time needs to be planned for entertainment, on screen time and scheduled activities. More times needs to be spent helping children to occupy themselves within less structured play. Children who are constantly 'entertained' are often ones who say they are bored because they have not developed the ability to occupy themselves. It is important, and research shows, that children need time and space for themselves to learn these skills. Remember the no blue light for an hour before bed rule too, it will really help their sleep patterns.

**...in all cases behaviour was exemplary and children moved smoothly between activities...**

**...staff consistently developed children's independence and, through skilful questioning, were encouraging children to develop self-evaluation of their own ideas and their work and perseverance to improve the outcome of the work...**

**...in the after school fitness club children from the After School Club were invited to provide an audience for a dance performance. This was a further indication of the 'across school' approach...**

We feel pleased that in the current national climate of cuts to school budgets, we continue to be able to offer this provision and hugely thankful that we have such a dedicated staff team that provides above and beyond for the benefit of the children.

## **Developing well rounded children and adults**

Following our recent parent questionnaire, the results regarding whether 'Blackwell First School expects its pupils to behave well' speak for themselves, 100% of parents agree. Here are some points of interest around how we create such an inclusive and nurturing environment. We operate a behaviour policy at Blackwell based on a restorative approach to behaviour, well researched and evidenced (see our school website). The behaviour of the children in school is strong and it is expected to be so. The children are given levels of trust and responsibility and rise to the challenge.

- High expectations are expected and rules are clear and simple: Be kind; Follow instructions; Look after things; Listen and Move and act safely.
- The result of following the rules is trust from staff which leads to access to everything that the school offers.
- Children are helped when they don't follow rules rather than punished and adults spend considerable amounts of time talking to the children about their behaviour and the impact on others.
- Sanctions for children who repeatedly break rules are based on supporting them, for example if they break a ruler intentionally, then they mend it and work with it to begin to understand the consequence of their actions.
- Communication between children and adults is kind and firm. I will not forget the comments made by the staff at Malvern Outdoor centre last year about the positive relationships, communication and behaviours exhibited by our children and staff.

Everyone who visits, comments on the happy, calm atmosphere that exists in school. This comes from the consistency of approach from the strong staff team and their commitment to the children and their best interests. (I have attached an interesting article on behaviour which you may find useful).

## **A fitting tribute to a supportive neighbour of the school who is on the move**

Mrs Chris Allcott, who lives behind the school, is moving on to a new home. She has kindly offered to fund the creation of a beautiful stained glass window at the front of the school (to replace the old main entrance doors). It will reflect the nature of the school as a vibrant, thriving rural school filled with happy, active children and images of both the children and staff.

Mrs Allcott has been a very supportive neighbour and has contributed in many ways over the years since I have been at the school. She has watered pot plants over the long summer holidays, held a key to the school in case of emergencies, attended most school events and contributed to the fitting of a new kitchen and towards the gargoyles fund. She will be sadly missed and we wish her well in her new home.

Fortunately for us, she will not be moving quite yet and should be here to see the installation of the new doors and artwork. We are very grateful and are looking forward to seeing it all in place.

## **15.3.17- Parent consultations**

### **16.3.17 – Parent consultations**

**4.4.17 – Some Y2s to Charford for Science event**

**6.4.17 – Some Y1s to Charford for Drama event**

**7.4.17 – Recorder and Choir concert- 8.45am**

**7.4.17 – Easter Coffee Morning – times TBC**

**HEALTHY EATING** - All of the children in Reception to Year 2 receive school dinners free of charge through the government scheme to encourage children to learn to eat healthy food, develop table manners and social skills. We are working on their knife and fork skills with them and it is taking time! If you have the opportunity to help us with this at home that would be great.

Many Year 4s and some Year 3s take the opportunity to continue with school meals from Mrs Barker's 'Blackwell Kitchen'. We are so pleased that the children are becoming less fussy eaters and are better at eating a wide variety of food as a result of school meals so please continue to support this initiative throughout the children's time in school. If children do bring lunch boxes, please ensure that they are healthy (avoiding crisps, and chocolate covered food).

### **School Sport and Arts**

**Sport**- The winners of the latest Wake and Shake intra school competition were Green Class! Well done.

Mrs Edney has been working hard with the younger children on their hand eye co-ordination in afternoon clubs, practising clapping games etc. You may wish to have a go yourselves at home!

**Arts**- To join the Purple Class 'Tree' which will be displayed in Worcester Cathedral in June, the Blue class Jungle art will also make an appearance. Once we have confirmation of dates, you may be able to pop along.

### **Feedback from families**

It is always helpful to receive feedback from families on what people feel that we do well and also on areas that we can improve. Staff members are obviously pleased when their hard work is appreciated and below are some of the comments that show that our partnership with you is appreciated.

- **We feel blessed to have free access to such a wonderful school.**
- **Communication between home and school has been brilliant.**
- **Staff are very welcoming and happy.**
- **Our child has settled in fantastically well and we are delighted that she is enjoying school, so much so she was ready to return on Boxing Day!**
- **As a parent I have every faith and trust that this is the best school for my daughter to be.**
- **The individual care each child gets and the close family atmosphere is what sets it above the rest and makes it a perfect start to our children's education.**
- **Teachers genuinely seem to enjoy teaching and care about the children.**
- **Excellent care provision in before and after school club**
- **Children of all ages mix and play together- my child has friends in older years and the older children look after the younger ones.**
- **Excellent care provision in before and after school club.**
- **Children are extremely happy at Blackwell.**
- **Really impressed with both the out of hours and after school clubs. They are both a credit to the school, offering a good range of both educational and entertaining development.**
- **My daughter, currently in Y3, counts down the days in the holiday until she can return to school!**
- **The teachers are so nurturing of the children.**
- **My child has become quietly confident, responsible and able to solve problems independently.**
- **The children are at the centre of the school and their well being is foremost.**
- **I will be very sad to see my child move on.**
- **They truly have given my child a great start in education and have equipped them well for their journey ahead.**

It is a privilege to be the headteacher of this school and to work with such hard working and dedicated staff and with so many supportive and appreciative families. Thank you.

### **HOLIDAY CLUB**

Mrs Moran and Holiday Club staff will be here during the Easter break so please send in booking forms as soon as possible to help us arrange staffing and resources.

### **End of day dismissal**

It was helpful to receive some feedback on the end of the day dismissal on the parent questionnaires. It appears that although the dismissal works really well for classteachers when they are sent out to families from the balconies (Red, Green and Purple), this is causing a bottleneck for Red and Green Class parents and children. We need to try to reduce the number of people along the narrow path and so **we will trial dismissing Red Class from the front playground from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March.** This may result in a congested front playground but we will give it a go! Please can Red Class families wait in front of the building but not under the canopy in front of the office. The children will be brought out to wait with staff under the canopy and then dismissed one at a time. (They need some space to be able to see parents so please leave a gap). Yellow and Blue families wait near the yellow line and Purple families wait by the garden.

### **PARKING**

Several parents have spotted the unsafe parking and driving outside school, particularly at drop off times. The community support officers have been contacted to patrol and help ease the difficulties at the start/end of the day. **It is important to note that parking on the yellow zig zag lines is illegal at any time and a parent was fined last year when parking on them outside of the school day.** Reversing onto the pavement and parking across driveways is also unsafe and discourteous. Please walk to school if you live locally and can, or park a little way away and walk. We need to work together to keep the children safe. Thank you.

### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

This week our focus for worship is 'Friendship' and we have considered the behaviours that good friends exhibit: trust; kindness; sharing; kind hands and feet and taking turns. We looked at the painting 'Boy with many friends' by Thomas Webster and how this helps us understand what good friends are.



As part of that work we have considered bullying. We have discussed with the children what constitutes bullying and what does not and the children are clearer about this. The link below shows a video clip that may help you and your child discuss what bullying is. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/z8pxpv4> Our next themes for Collective Worship are 'Humility' and 'Thoughtfulness'.



Forest School fun- house building and 'cooking'!