

NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School



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

Red Class learning to tie knots at Forest School in order to build shelters.

Dear Families,

March 2017



Working together in the outdoors at Forest School.



Exploring rocks and minerals as part of Science in Yellow Class. The children worked well in teams, showing skills of sharing, communicating and being tolerant and patient with each other.



Science in Purple Class has involved observing the properties of different materials and testing absorbency. Here they are recording their findings and using their mathematical measuring skills too.



Green Class children were Wake and Shake Champions for last half term. Who will be the winners this half term?

The whole school enjoyed a story swap with 20 different staff reading stories around school. This was organised by the School Council and supported our work on reading and fostering a love of reading.



Blue Class at the High 5 festival at St John's Middle School.



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 really important to remember that children who have previously been described as working above national expectation are now most likely to be described as working at national expectation and that children previously described as working at national expectation are now likely to be described as working below national expectation. Of course the children have not changed! The children are not suddenly 'not working hard or not making progress'. It is simply that the expectations are so high that for many children, they will not **yet** reach national expectation. The narrow national assessment focus is also not measuring many of the children's areas of strength.

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.

Staffing

Thinking ahead to September, we are making plans for any new staff that we need and have advertised the following vacancies:

- Club teaching assistant (as we need an extra club with more children in school!)
- Job share teacher (afternoons until Mrs James returns full time)
- Nursery Manager for our new Nursery
- Cleaner

If you are interested in any of these vacancies, please look online. We are particularly interested in anyone who may want a cleaning job (2 ½ hours each day after school) as this is a particularly challenging role to fill in school.

Payments

The office will now only be taking payments of cash up to £20.00. Any other payments must be made by cheque or via Payment4 Schools. Letters will state this when paying for items/ trips etc.

Blackwell Adventure event- PFTA event

Please book for this event as the PFTA has worked hard to plan and would appreciate some bookings!

The PFTA has just donated £3,500 to school to fund new books which will be sent home as part of home reading so their funds are very well used. Please support the event if you can.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

This week, we have focussed on 'Thoughtfulness' each day and have considered how little acts of kindness and thought can make a big difference to others. We have also thought about what happens when people are thoughtless and how this can impact on people.

We looked at the work of Maria Montessori and Marie Curie and their thoughtful work. We are particularly looking at the lives of successful women in Science and education at the moment to provide aspirational role models for girls, in a world where 'princesses' dominate!

We also explained how following the rules (and British law) makes our country a better place to live and work. All of these values discussed in Collective Worship centre around developing children as rounded citizens. I have seen so many acts of thoughtfulness this week in school from the children, towards their teachers and friends. Well done children.



SCHOOL SPORT/ HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Extra curricular clubs- Mrs Edney has been 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. Improvements are being made.

Art club- the children have worked on some beautiful art with Mrs Marks in afternoon clubs. Look at the detail, care and attention that has been paid to these paintings.



Blackwell First School Nursery and Forest School

We are pleased to announce that we will be opening a Nursery and Forest School from September 2017.

During the Autumn term, we will take a small number of children and then we will open to more Nursery aged children in January 2018 once we have completed accommodation. The building will be located at the back of the field behind Red Class. Red Class and the Nursery will share the outdoor area.

We aim to provide a Nursery that supports the development of children from the term following their third birthday. We will offer core sessions between 8.30-11.30am and 12-3pm and will also provide wrap around care between 7.30am and 6pm. With the introduction of 30 hours of funded hours through the Department for Education, these will be provided through the core sessions and the wrap around care will be charged separately.

The provision will enable children to develop their skills in a purpose built indoor provision, but spending a significant amount of time in the carefully designed outdoor areas and Forest School. Mrs Webb, as Early Years Leader, will oversee the Nursery and will spend time with them in the outdoor areas.

For further information, please contact the school office on 0121 445 1622 or email office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk



Dates

7.4.17 – Recorder and Choir concert- 8.45am

7.4.17 – Easter Coffee Morning – times below:

Recorder and Choir children to perform between 8.45-9.15am in addition to the times below.

	<u>9.30-10</u>	<u>10-10.30</u>	<u>10.30-11</u>
<u>Red</u>	Heidi Shay Joe Leo Dominic Alexandra Catey Rohan Emerson Anna Maddison	Jasper Rosie Harrison Elizabeth Arabella Mia Alfie Kevon Jakub Alex Y	Faren Blake Alex S Oliver F Evie P Jessica Ethan Freddie Beatrice Summer
<u>Green</u>	Amelia Evie M Harry B Hayden Annabelle Archie Elsie David Elliott Fraser	Ethan Florence Bobby Madison Lily H Henry Jack Theo Libby Mason	Jamaal Lizzy Olivia Finley Lily R Harry S Evie S Eva Jessica Bethany
<u>Purple</u>	Oliver W Imogen Aiden Maddie Sam D Oliver G Isabelle Harris Charlie Bobby	Kristian Samson Alice Laura Jack Oliver N Henry Ethan Josh Sam W	William Camilla Kassidy Lewis Zach George Jackson Fraser Oscar Jan
<u>Yellow</u>	Seth Charles Isabel Charlie Gracie Freddie Lily Mia	Rishi Musa Oliver George Felix Raph Ollie Kaitlyn	William Lilia Drew Tom Thomas Maryam Jake
<u>Blue</u>	Ella Alice James Charlie Toby Amelia	Eavie Olivia Fin Dylan Ha Joe G Mili	Maaria Dylan He Freddy Freddie Harry Jack