

# NEWSLETTER

## for Blackwell First School



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

Year 4s completed their own board games based on their sustainability theme – an excellent project!

Dear Families,

The children have come back with smiles on their faces and ready to learn! This half term is always one of the busiest in school as the children learn about 'Remembrance Day' and their 'Special Places around the world' project and also Christmas arrives before we know it.

'Special Places around the world' is our topic for most of this half term with a focus on multiculturalism ending with a 'Celebration' in school (children only event) as our project on 30.11.18. Each class is focussing on a different part of the world and this will develop their **wider cultural awareness** and support work on religious tolerance and developing a sense of global diversity. During this topic, the children will learn about the wider world through RE and Geography. On the last day, they will visit each classroom and discover what their friends in other classes have been learning.

Christmas festivities begin in December and learning is focussed around the Nativity story. Red and Green Classes will perform this story at the church whilst the older classes will perform 'Polar Express', a performance based on the story and film.

Developing learning behaviours and attitudes is a significant area of our work here at school. Nationally, there is a concern regarding children's mental well being and emotional resilience. Our main focus is to develop **children's independence**. Encouraging the children to be resilient and face a challenge with a positive attitude is part of this work. As part of the focus on growth mindset this year, all classes will take part in sessions led by or planned for by Mrs Evans. These sessions take place this half term and the children may well come home and talk to you about learning from mistakes, being resilient, working hard, facing a challenge or trying something new.

As a staff, we have received training in **emotion coaching** to support children's varied emotional needs. The key messages, that may be useful for you as parents to know, are that distraction and hiding emotions is not always a healthy approach. Expressing the correct emotion to the children with an explanation is helpful to them in developing their understanding of the emotions they experience. When the children themselves are displaying an emotion, it helps when you verbalise the emotion, 'I can see that you are angry and I understand why, but it is important that when you are angry that you.....'

As you can imagine, friendships are the main area requiring emotional support. Bullying is not tolerated and we react swiftly when any bullying starts to be displayed. Most friendship issues, however, need time and patience from adults to support children in resolving issues themselves. It is important to help children identify strategies for solving their own issues, as adults will not always be around to help.

Finally, we continue our work on trying to undo the work of the media, advertising and social pressures with regard to **gender stereotyping**. It is interesting to talk to the children and realise how many of them have fixed ideas about the roles of men/women. Our work in Collective Worship is supporting this as we share examples of famous men and women from all areas of scientific and creative fields. Even creating our 'Operation Christmas child' boxes has made staff aware of the way shops separate boys/girls toys and clothes. We have attempted to create gender neutral boxes!



Play leader training for Year 4s.

After a half term in school, it is a good time to reflect on the successes of the last half term

- Nursery – our very youngest little learners have settled in well and we welcome new children as the term moves on.
- Red Class – Well done for settling in so well and for learning lots of new routines. Mrs Webb, Mrs Reid, Mrs Thompson and Mrs Cain in Red Class are enjoying helping you discover what school is all about.
- Year 4s – You have matured over the last half term and many of you have greater responsibilities now. Well done!
- Year 3s – You are settling into the new higher expectations. It has been lovely seeing the quality of some of your work.
- Year 2s – Miss Kuriger and Mrs Moran are very pleased with your hard work. Well done.
- Year 1s – You have had a super start to Year 1 and Mrs James and Miss Turner have enjoyed helping you to settle into our new style Year 1.

One of the most rewarding parts of teaching is seeing children progress with their learning, for example reading a sentence for the first time, discovering how their learning connects or developing a new approach to solving a problem.

### SCHOOL SPORT and THE ARTS

- Congratulations Blue Class – Wake and Shake champions.
- Sport competitions continue and our last group to take part was Green Class. Well done for superb teamwork.
- Art club with Mrs Marks and Sewing Club with Mrs Moran is providing children with the opportunity to explore and apply their art skills to a wider range of artworks. The children really enjoy this close link between the curriculum and their clubs.



### Writing and Maths

The expectations for the National Curriculum writing curriculum are very demanding and one of the tricky aspects for the children is spelling criteria for each year group. This relates to both phonic application and spelling of 'tricky' words. We are using a programme called 'No nonsense' spelling from Year 2 upwards and are also using spelling journals with the children. Any work at home that you do on spelling (see word lists provided by teachers) will support the children further. In Maths, although teachers constantly teach and practise mental maths facts with the children, any help at home on number bonds within 10 (Year 1 and 2) and Times Tables (Years 2-4) is really helpful. Thank you.

### Children in Need

The children may come to school wearing non uniform on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November for Children in Need in exchange for £1.00.

### Complaints procedure

At this time of year, we outline the procedures schools nationally have in place to deal with complaints. Any complaints should be addressed to the Headteacher. In the event of formal complaints being necessary, schools require a letter of formal complaint to be written and addressed to the Headteacher. If the matter remains unresolved, a further complaint should be addressed to the Governors. In the event of the complaint not being resolved, the County Council no longer deals with complaints and any further complaints should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Education. (For a copy of the Complaints procedure ask at school)

### Developing mastery

Our curriculum development work this year centres on mastery. The essence of this is that children should master the curriculum at whatever level that they are working, without being pushed onto new content before they are secure in the current level. In practice, this means teachers need to ask searching, open ended questions, set problems and puzzles for children to solve and set tasks that enable children to apply their learning in different subject areas. When you look through the children's books, you will see examples of this. In maths, we are using concrete resources such as the abacus or counting beads and blocks at all levels to engage children in explaining their maths clearly, showing that they have genuinely understood the concepts that they are learning. Explanation of learning is a key way of assessing children's mastery of their learning.

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Here at Blackwell, we use the daily act of worship to support children's development as tolerant, kind and understanding individuals. Each week, there is a theme and these times often include information about famous people, places, artists or scientists in order to broaden the children's horizons. We base all of our worship on the 'UN Convention - Rights of the Child' and the children are increasingly able to understand their own place in society and their responsibility as they mature in school. This month our themes include: Co-operation; Our Wonderful World; Trust and Democracy. As global citizens it is important that we make a difference to their views of the world.

### Early Years Meeting

Mrs Webb is running a meeting for Reception parents on 21.11.18 at 6-7pm. She will explain early approaches to reading, writing and maths in order to support you in helping them at home and make a great start to school. We hope that you can come along.

Members of the School Council visited the 'Lodge' at Burcot grange and are involved in naming the four wings and creating artwork for the Lodge.



Mrs A Moss (Headteacher)

### ATTENDANCE

Good attendance is linked to success. Children learn and develop:

- Good social skills
- Safe lifestyles
- A good work ethic

This leads to becoming qualified for the workplace.

We want children to have the best attendance they can in order to develop their learning. Please help us to improve our attendance rates by encouraging your child to attend unless they are particularly ill. **We are also grateful for the reduction in holiday absences.** We are currently required by law to class all holiday absence as unauthorised. It does matter when your child misses learning. Last year our attendance rate was 97%, thank you. We are striving to maintain this and hope that your child's attendance is higher than 97%. It will be listed on their termly report. Thank you for your continued support.

### Christmas news...

**Operation Christmas Child** – please send in your boxes along with the £5.00 delivery this Friday morning as they will be collected on Friday.

**Music concerts** – The children receiving piano lessons will perform in small concerts on:

29<sup>th</sup> November- Mrs Cutler 4.30pm

12<sup>th</sup> December – Mrs Grew 2.30pm

Choir will also perform some of their pieces on December 17<sup>th</sup> at 3.50pm.

We hope that you can come along.

### Bits and bobs...

**Poppy appeal** – The children can purchase poppies this week in school. Please encourage them to bring in their donations. Other remembrance items can be purchased after school each day.

**Influenza immunisation** – This will take place on January 8<sup>th</sup> 2019.

**Neurofen** – As part of our administration of medication, we do administer both prescription medication and non prescription medication. Following dosage guidance, when we administer neurofen, we need a new form completing each day letting us know of the last dosage due to the frequency of administration guidance. Thank you.

**Parking** – Please avoid leaving engines running as you wait for children. Several parents have commented that walking to school along St Catherine's has become more unpleasant with the number of cars parked with engines left running.

**PFTA** – It may have been a snowy October day for a Scarecrow Festival, but thanks to the PFTA for their organisation and to families and villagers who set up their scarecrows for the day. Every little helps and the PFTA efforts are certainly appreciated in school by staff and children. Thank you everyone.

### DIARY DATES

6.11.18 Individual school photographs

**21.11.18 6pm Red Class Parent meeting**

7.12.18 Christmas Fair new time- evening

12.12.18 Parent consultations

13.12.18 Parent consultations

14.12.18 Filming of Christmas plays

14.12.18 Christmas lunch

18.12.18 Christmas plays YR and Year 1 - 9.30am and 1.30pm

19.12.18 Christmas plays Year 2 - Year 4 1.30pm

20.12.18 Christmas plays Year 2 - Year 4 9.30am

20.12.18 Nursery coffee/sing 2.30pm

21.12.18 Pantomime - The Adventures of Treasure Island- in school 9.30am

21.12.18 School closes for children

Spring/Summer dates are on the school website

[www.blackwellfirstschool.com](http://www.blackwellfirstschool.com)