

Circus art from Blue Class – look at these wonderful pictures of the Circus using collage skills learned during their art lessons.



NEWSLETTER for Blackwell First School

...developing the whole child...



January 2022

Dear Families,

What a great start we have had to 2022 with our Circus topic! The children have been learning about the history of the circus, developing wonderful skills to create circus pictures and reading their magical books. Lafcadio The Lion who shot back has been a real favourite in Yellow Class and Green Class children have enjoyed the Madeline at the Circus book (Mrs James' favourite). I am looking forward to judging all of the entries for the Writing Competition next week. I will have a busy week! The Award Ceremony is on January 28th and the children are invited to wear their own 'special' clothes on this day.

It is so important that the children read both their phonic linked reading books (Red and Green classes using the ebooks) and 'real' books (phonic linked) and that you share their library books, designed to develop vocabulary and comprehension skills later in school. Reading stories at bedtime (or any other time) at home is also important and helps the children's language development. Did you know that children need to learn 8 new words each day to develop an age appropriate vocabulary by the age of 11? 5 of these are learned in school and usually around 3 at home and reading books is a good way in. If you are short of ideas about which books to share at home, then look at the children's Home Reading cards or look at links on 'Carnegie Greenaway' awards for ideas. It is crucial that the children's language is developed by them being exposed to texts that are above their reading age.

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. We are really looking forward to Green and Blue Classes family assemblies next half term and hope that these will be on site, either indoors or outside! These are ways for the children to demonstrate their learning to you all.

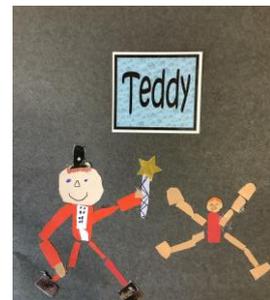
We work in school to develop the children's academic skills, but also value the life skills that we help to develop alongside you as parents. Developing these skills as part of the school teaching day and afternoon clubs is an important part of the children's experience. Some of the main skills we try to develop in the children are our key competencies: co-operation; communication; independence; resilience and problem solving.

These competencies support our work to develop the core values linked to our vision. These are:

- Respectful and responsible citizens;
- Competent and confident learners and
- Aspirational individuals.

Help us to help them by ensuring they take responsibility for themselves wherever possible. Try to encourage concentration in the children rather than a flitting between activities. The more support you can give by talking to the children about their learning, sharing books, practising mental maths and focussing on practising skills shared on class newsletters will only benefit them as they move through the school. Working together will help the children achieve these skills sooner. The teachers are really looking forward to welcoming you into school later this half term to enjoy sharing the children's work books with them. Thank you as always for your support.

Best wishes, Mrs Moss



Local Authority and Partnership Annual Review

As a school designated as 'Outstanding' in 2011, we have not received inspections from Ofsted since then, but are expecting one in the near future. During the past ten years, we have commissioned external reviews annually. Our annual review took place last week in two halves, carried out by our external partners in Bromsgrove Learning Network and separately by an inspector from Worcestershire County Council. Some activity took place on site and some remotely and lessons were visited, staff interviewed, children talked to and children's books scrutinised. The external reviewers were pleased with their observations and have agreed with the school's self evaluation and focus priorities. Once the report is issued to us we will share details of it with you.

The parent questionnaire has been sent home and we value your contributions. Feedback on these will be provided in a future newsletter and we will highlight an area for development as a result of your feedback and make any changes as needed.

SCHOOL SPORT/ HEALTH AND THE ARTS

Sport- All Sporting Fixtures at other schools have been postponed but we continue to develop sport in PE lessons and to have our Sport's Club on a Tuesday as part of After School Club (sign up for ASC if you wish to join in)

Arts – We are excited to work with Mark Riley on developing the front of school with some whole school art works. They will represent the school and the community that is at its heart.



School Uniform

We are revising our school uniform policy and will have a Second Hand uniform shop fully operational by September. We will send out a request for good quality used uniform later in the year so please do save some for us.

Before September, please do email the school office with any requests for second hand options and we will do our best to provide you with anything you require.

If you wish to read the draft policy or contribute to its development, please do email office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk

Congratulations Mrs Moran

We wish to congratulate Mrs Moran on a promotion to a school in Birmingham. We wish her all the very best and send her our thanks after 15 years of service to the school. She will be missed as she has been a large part of the community for all of these years.

We will be advertising for a replacement for Mrs Moran (impossible we know!) and anyone interested in finding out more should email office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk

Hot lunches Mrs Barker, Mrs Miles and Miss Shepherd prepare freshly cooked homemade lunches which are enjoyed by 75% of the school, including most staff. 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. Thank you.

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;
- 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 and
- **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).

For children who find learning at home tricky, speak to your child's class teacher to find out ideas to engage them.

Professional development

Our staff have the most up to date professional development, in line with research and during the autumn term, some highlights have been:

- Reading/ Phonics – for all staff to ensure consistency of provision;
- Reasoning in maths and subtraction– for most staff to share good practice and
- Middle Leader training through coaching.

New staff always have a detailed plan of induction CPD to ensure that they are quickly up to speed.

This ensures that the children have the best possible teaching with highly skilled staff.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP Our themes for the next few weeks are **Honesty, 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. We will consider works of art and stories that support our understanding of these complex themes.

Please remember that we are here to support you all. We are a telephone call or email away. We continue to be grateful for the work of our NHS staff who are working in such challenging times.

Best wishes to you all,
Mrs Moss