



Newsletter

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

July 2022

Dear Families,



Malvern in Year 4 and a sporting festival with Astley Primary School for Year 3s.



We have made it through a full year for the first time in three years without a school closure due to COVID. It has been wonderful being able to return to some 'normal' events, albeit slightly adapted. From a visit to the Black Country Living Museum, sporting events, music events to Mark Riley artist in residence work, it has been a busy year. We have even been able to invite you into school for end of year parent meetings. At the end of the year, we reflect on the last twelve months in school and consider 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, particularly during a further COVID disrupted year. We are grateful for the support of you as parents, our collaborative schools in Bromsgrove and to the Governing Body for their contribution to the leadership of the school. We are particularly grateful to Dr Evans, Chair of Governors, and Mrs Wilson, Vice Chair, and thank them for their superb dedication to the school.

Thanks also to the PFTA for amazing fundraising efforts during this difficult 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. I say it each year, but without the PFTA funds the school would not offer what it does. Particular mention must be made to our Year 4s and their families for their support to the school over the years.

Our results show that the children have again made strong progress, which has been supported by year long on site provision, rather than remote learning. The vast majority of children are working well towards national expectations and given a second year of 'normality' next year, this progress will be maintained, supporting children's return to expected levels and beyond for their age. When they leave us in Year 4, they have developed into individuals who are mostly working securely with many at above expected standards and with life skills of independence, communication and an excellent sense of moral purpose. This group has been a class of resilience and it has been rewarding to watch them develop over the years and the progress that they have made from Red Class to Blue Class has been tremendous.

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 Collective worship themes on values. Our community work this year on 'Tea and Toast', development of the front playground and the Summer Fair have all served to unite us.

Finally, I would like to 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 7th September when we welcome our new Nursery and Reception intakes and new staff members.

Best wishes,
Mrs Moss

As a school that was judged as outstanding by Ofsted in 2011, we have not been the focus for inspections for many years, although we do expect to receive an Ofsted during the next couple of years. In order to ensure that we continue to offer 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 Worcestershire Children First and an external consultant. Both of these experiences have been very positive and some comments from the reports provide a flavour of the comments in the reports.

Talented, dedicated staff continue to ...provide the best provision for all groups of children.

The school places high importance on gender equality, developing cultural awareness which links closely to the school's vision.

Pupil voice and choice is strong in the school. Very high levels of pupil engagement.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed at all levels. The strong vision for learning and the development of the whole child is evident in all areas of the school. During lockdowns it is clear that the leaders have continued with their relentless drive for raising standards, having high expectations and focus on a bespoke curriculum which meets the needs of all learners. As a result, children achieve highly. This is a unique, outstanding place of learning where children thrive. There is a wealth of evidence to support its self-evaluation as an outstanding school.

All of this information is used to support the development of next year's School Development Plan.



Mark Riley has worked with all classes, thanks to funding from the PFTA, to create art to display on the front playground. We can't wait to show you!

Reports

Last week, you received your child's report and there was a covering letter to help you understand how your child is achieving in line with the 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 standard. Some children are not, and this is not unexpected as learning has been disrupted during the previous two years. 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 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.

Summer Holiday 'Keeping up!'

Over the summer, the children need a good rest and break from school. Due to the disruption over the past two years, however, it is important to keep the children reading. Please keep them reading their ebooks (Red, Green and Purple Classes), reading books of their choice (Yellow and Blue Classes) and

- Watch stories read by their teachers (on BFS YouTube) and
- Spelling and mental maths activities.

The teachers may also send some particular work home for individuals who they feel would benefit from specific work. Please support them with this learning and keep reading!

Collective Worship

During this last week, we have concentrated on 'Freedom' as a theme and discussed 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.

Arts and Sport Congratulations to BFS for achieving the Sportsmark Platinum for continued work towards Sport. Thank you Mrs Webb for leading sport so well. Thank you to our families for visiting Worcester Cathedral for the Voices and Visions exhibition during June.

Malvern and Bellboating adventure

The Year 4s had a super trip to Malvern, showing their developing resilience, teamwork and spirit. These aspects of learning behaviours have been developed during their time with us and we hope that they continue to flourish at their new schools. The children also thoroughly enjoyed bellboating. Thank you very much to the teaching staff who gave up their time to enable the Year 4s to have such a wonderful end to their time at BFS.



Our trip to the Black Country Museum was a highlight for us when learning about the Industrial Revolution.

New building

As many of you will have spotted, a new room has been built at the back of the school site. We have used the area in school which is waterlogged for most of the year and therefore underused. This is for the use of children who require some small group intervention during the day when they are not able to access learning in the main classrooms. The children have been using the hall during the past few years, restricting the use of the hall for the other children and resulting in these children, who require a quiet, stable base, being disrupted by moving between available spaces around school. We are delighted to help develop provision for everyone in school.

RED CROSS FUNDRAISING

Thank you all for your Red Cross for Ukraine fundraising support. The school raised over £1700.00 in sponsorship and a further £1000.00 from the Bake Sale and pins/ hair grips. Thank you to Lauren Murdoch for organising this on behalf of the school.

PFTA We owe a huge thanks to the PFTA for their excellent summer fair and Spring Ball and for raising over £6,000. 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 £11,000 for resources including new reading books, the work of the artist in residence, the redesign of the front playground and Hetty. Thank you to all involved.

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 supports the school on its journey.

Thanks to Sally Teare as Chair, Claire Richards as Vice Chair, Alison Taylor as Secretary, Carrie Whitehouse as Marketing and Becky Myatt as treasurer and the whole committee and all those who help to organise fantastic community events throughout the year. From Storynights to Summer Fair and everything in between, the PFTA has been active all year.

Next year, Claire Richards will be Chair, Manjit and Amanjit Sandhu will become Vice Chairs, Claire Richards (existing Vice Chair) will move to secretary and Becky Myatt and Carrie Whitehouse will continue in their roles. 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)

What a year our Year 1s have had and we are proud of their learning and attitudes. They will be moving onto Year 2 with far stronger skills and attributes than previously as a result of the provision this year.

Thanks to Mrs James, Mrs Thompson and Mrs Flynn for all of their hard work during what has been an interesting, but exciting, year.

Autumn term dates

Holiday Club- please book slots asap if needed.

7.9.22 School opens- welcome back (Red Class part time for two weeks)

26.9.22 KS2 trip

17.10.22 KS1 trip

28.9.22 Open evening for current parents- opportunity to visit all classes
Further dates to be shared in September.

- Music tuition payments needed ASAP- piano, recorder and violin.
- Extra-curricular and after school club bookings needed ASAP with payment.
- Lunch orders needed ASAP with payment
- Uniform collection ASAP for those who have been notified.