

NEWSLETTER

for Blackwell First School



French is our Modern Foreign Language at BFS and here are Y4s reading and speaking.

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We all hope that the children have enjoyed a good break. This half term is always one of the busiest in school as the children learn about 'Remembrance Day' and their 'Roald Dahl' reading project and also Christmas arrives before too long.

During 'Roald Dahl', the children will delve into reading with a focus on Roald Dahl. The start of the topic begins with a 'Dilemma'. 'Dilemma based Learning' is a way of learning that engages the children in teamwork and problem solving whilst learning the knowledge required in different subjects as well as applying previous learning. Yellow Class children will be reading 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' and their dilemma is to consider the big question, 'Should we build a Cadbury Factory here?' This encompasses ethical dilemmas and twists and turns along the way, that help children realise that decisions are not always black and white. For those who initially are opposed to building a factory, discovering that Blackwell First School was built on land donated by Barrow Cadbury can change minds! At the end of the topic, the children will share their learning with the rest of the school in a 'Wonderful Words' morning on December 3rd. On this day, the children may dress up as a Roald Dahl character if they wish. This can be as simple as Charlie or as tricky as a Mugglewump. There is no need to buy costumes... the children will have as much fun making a paper plate monkey face and dressing in brown!

Christmas festivities begin in December and learning is focussed around the Nativity story. Red and Green Classes will perform this story whilst the older classes will perform 'Christmas around the World', a performance based on traditions and celebrations around the world. Through our concerts, we develop the children's cultural awareness, including music, dance and literature. All of the concerts will be professionally filmed and available to stream over Christmas.

Developing learning behaviours and attitudes is a significant area of our work here at school through our work on values and key competencies. (Respectful and Responsible citizens, Competent and Confident learners and Aspirational individuals). Nationally, there is concern regarding children's mental well being and emotional resilience, particularly following the disruption of COVID. Our main focus is to develop **children's independence**. Our focus on Growth Mindset supports this 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 all 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 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 and lessons is supporting this as we share examples of famous men and women from all areas of scientific and creative fields. Finally, our third value associated with our vision is **aspirational individuals** and this is about opening children's eyes through the experiences we provide so that they have ambition and a desire to become good individuals who contribute to our community and society.

Sainsbury's
SCHOOL
GAMES

Spoken English

In order to develop children as writers, they need to be good speakers and to have a varied vocabulary and good sentence structure. As teachers and families, we are the models they learn from. Here are some 'Top Tips' for supporting spoken English:

- Encourage children to look at you as you speak to them, as they learn a lot from non verbal communication, such as facial expressions, gestures etc;
- Use and also explain new words to the children to build the bank of vocabulary they use;
- Speak in full sentences with them to help them hear the grammatical structures of language;
- Correct children's developing speech and grammar as it will not necessarily develop over time unless it is corrected. Correct it by repeating the sentence correctly. Common errors include: **We was** which should be **We were**/ incorrect use of **th and f**, children often say fink instead of think and need to learn to stick out their tongues for th/ and **past tense for irregular verbs** used incorrectly, such as caught instead of caught.

The more the children hear you talk, and talk back themselves, the more their language will develop.

SCHOOL SPORT and THE ARTS

- Wake and Shake - our half termly competition showed excellent co-operation and effort. Well done Yellow Class for being the first champions of the year.
- Afternoon clubs provide the 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.

Developing children's cultural awareness

Children who have broad experiences such as visiting museums, art galleries, the theatre and concerts as well as a knowledge of historical events, art and musical history and discussion about national events and the news will support children's cultural awareness which helps them access the content of the national curriculum as they are able to make links between their out of school experiences and the curriculum. This is why we, as a school, plan educational visits to museums, art galleries and theatre trips. This term, the children had their first visit to either Chedworth, a Roman Villa experience or Bishop's Wood. These are memorable and important experiences and more will take place later in the year.

Children in Need Day

The children may bring donations for Children in Need on Friday 19th November and wear badges, headbands or colourful socks!

Developing mental maths

At Parent Consultation meetings, mental maths targets for Reception to Year 4 were shared with families so that you are able to support your child/ren to practise these skills at home. The curriculum is taught at school, but, for most children, they need to spend time practising their learning for them to have instant recall. If you are able to spare time to support them, this will make them able to apply their facts more quickly in class. The children will all bring home reports this month and targets are shared for you to help support them at home. Numbers that total any numbers within 10 and then 20 are key for Years 1 and 2 and Times Tables are essential for Years 3 and 4. Thank you for your support.

Developing mastery

Our curriculum development work 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 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 for Red Class families

Mrs Webb is running a virtual meeting for **Reception parents on 3.11.21 at 6-7pm**. She will explain early approaches to reading, writing and maths as well as the philosophy behind outdoor learning and Forest School. This will support you in helping them at home and make a great start to school. We hope that you can come along.

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%. Thank you for your continued support.

Bits and bobs...

Poppy appeal – The children can purchase poppies before November 11th in school. Please encourage them to bring in their donations and buy them from Blackwell High Street.

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.

PFTA – Thank you to the PFTA for their support as always. The autumn term events have started well and have been supported by many of you. The PFTA has funded £4,000 of new books. This is amazing. Thank you.

Diary Dates Autumn term 2021

- 1.11.21 School opens for children
- 2.11.21 Individual school photographs- sorry we cannot take siblings who do not attend school due to COVID-19
- Family learning event for Red Class families- Letter to follow: Virtual
- 3.11.21 6pm
- 8.12.21 Christmas Concert filming morning- please order your online access codes!
- 16.12.21 Christmas Lunch – please order as part of your routine school lunch order
- 17.12.21 Panto (on site for all except Nursery) and Party Day- children may wear own clothes and remember sensible shoes and an outdoor coat are still required.
- 17.12.21 School closes for children
- 4.1.22 Training day for teachers
- 5.1.22 School opens for children

Spring/Summer dates are on the school website
www.blackwellfirstschool.com



Yellow Class children had a great time investigating and disassembling books with moveable parts before learning the skills to design and make their own images with moveable parts. Well done Yellow Class children.

Mrs A Moss (Headteacher)