

NEWSLETTER

for Blackwell First School - Blue Class



Welcome back after the half term break and what a good first half term we have had in Blue Class. The children have settled in happily and quickly, are working hard and are stepping up to the higher Year 4 expectations and setting a good example to the rest of the school. Our Britain at War topic was an inspirational start to the year where the children were fascinated to learn how the children of our school were affected during both wars. We certainly were surprised to hear that the government requested the school playing field was turned into a potato field and how the children spent many afternoons potato picking! The children particularly enjoyed setting up and running the Memory Café where they listened and communicated well and showed great sensitivity towards our visitors. Our more recent topic, Autumn, was enjoyable where science and art was at the heart of their learning. The children produced some great autumn board games applying all of their knowledge and skills learned. As well as lots of hard work in the classroom, it has been great to see a number of children developing other skills by taking part in after school clubs, music lessons and wanting additional responsibilities around school. All of that in only one half term and there's plenty more exciting learning opportunities in this half term too!

TOPIC

Blackwell Bear Travels is our new topic. Africa will be the continent of study with a specific focus on Tanzania. The children will develop their Geography, D.T. and R.E. skills during this topic and the children will be planning and preparing an 'Our World Celebration Day' in school where they will spend a day sharing their learning with the rest of the school.



In Geography, the children will develop their understanding of the world, naming and finding the location of continents and oceans, various countries in Africa and significant landmarks in and around Tanzania and will become more aware of time zones and climates. They will develop their investigation skills and make comparisons between Blackwell and Mtwara, a village in Tanzania. They will explore the importance of water in Tanzania and its effect on the landscape and its people.

Through R.E., the children will investigate the religion of Islam, the second most popular religion in Tanzania. They will explore beliefs and practices, festivals and interpret religious stories. They will be given the opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs and values.

In D.T. the children will be designing and making fruit bread. They will learn new cooking skills and learn how to bake safely and important of following hygiene rules. Their tasty treats will be shared with the rest of the school during Our World Celebration Day.

PSHE, Music, Computing, French, P.E and Philosophy for Children are taught each week throughout the year. See our 'Curriculum' page on the school website for more information.

As well as the above, our key competence of **independence** will be the focus during this half term where we will encourage the children to make their own decisions, select learning resources and know what can help them with the learning apart from an adult!

BITS AND PIECES

As part of teaching children about healthy lifestyles, we encourage all children and adults in school to eat a healthy snack during morning playtime such as fruit and avoid items such as biscuits and cake. Your child can bring in something from home or buy something from our [school tuck shop](#). Honey popcorn and fruit bags were last month's most popular purchases!

This half term, the children will learn about the importance of money and jobs during PSHE. At Blackwell, children are given the opportunity to take part in an optional Year 4 Job Scheme. This involves applying for a job and earning Blackwell pounds! Over the next few weeks, they may come home with some application forms and ask you for a reference! This scheme encourages responsibility and enterprise in the children and gives them a head start towards adulthood.

Please check that your child has a pair of thick socks in their P.E. bags so that their feet are nice and toasty at Forest School.

LITERACY

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters will be our stimulus in Literacy. Asking questions about the text, making predictions and analysing characters will develop their reading skills. The children will learn how to add more detail to their sentences with adverbs i.e. happily, nervously..., develop ways of starting sentences in interesting ways and consolidate their use of correctly punctuated dialogue. The children continually work towards their personal writing targets and it has been great to see many children achieving their first couple of targets already.

In phonics the children will be taught how to spell a range of vowel sounds such as 'or' in work, world, worse... and other spelling conventions such as the use of apostrophes for contraction. This half term, the words of focus will be: **complete, consider, continue, decide, describe, difficult, different, disappear, early, earth, eight, eighth, enough, exercise, experience, experiment, extreme, famous, favourite, February, forward, fruit, grammar, group, guard, guide**

NUMERACY

During Numeracy children will be consolidating and developing their use of mental and written calculations for addition and subtraction and the application of these skills when problem solving.

Mental maths will focus on the 3 and 4 times tables, recalling number bonds to 100 and 1,000 (multiples of 50 only for the latter), doubling and halving numbers to 100 fluently (even numbers only for halving) and counting on and back from zero in steps of 25, 50, 100 and 1000.

TIMES TABLES

Oh no you might say! We had to learn them and so do children of today! Learning times tables is a very important part of children's mathematical development. We help the children learn them at school in a variety of ways from old fashioned chanting to games such as bingo and Bing, Bong, Zong! However, to help the children **learn them by heart** we need you to help us too! Please encourage your child to practise their times tables at home. Like daily reading practice, **daily times table practice** has a significant impact on their learning. We spent last half term revisiting our 2 and 5 times tables and over the next few weeks we are focusing on the 3 times table before we move onto the 4s. Thank you for your continued support. It makes such a difference.

Take a look back at last half term...



Our visit to Rosa Lodge



Blackberry picking to make jam for our scones



Enjoying an autumn walk



Sharing autumn board games with friends

If there is anything you wish to ask about, please come and speak to me at the end of the school day or if you just want to say hello! I am usually available to speak informally after 3.15p.m. Thank you.

Miss Townsend

