

NEWSLETTER

for Blackwell First School



Blackwell First School,
St. Catherine's Rd.,
Blackwell,
Near Bromsgrove,
Worcestershire.
B60 1BN
December 2019

Dear Families,

Mrs Grainger gave all Year 1 and 2 children a violin taster to see whether they would like to start lessons. Music lessons are a great discipline.

I can hardly believe it is the end of term. Where has the time gone from when our Nursery and Reception children started school in September to now when they performed in front of you at Christmas events? The Christmas concerts give the children the opportunity to take part in 'large' performances that develop their confidence and resilience. Our vision at BFS is to support the development of the 'whole child' and in order to do this, we develop the following Values and Key Competencies.

VALUES

*Respectful and responsible citizens *Competent and confident learners *Aspirational individuals

KEY COMPETENCIES

*Co-operation *Communication *Independence *Resilience *Problem solving

Everything that we do in school is designed to support the development of these values and competencies. Whether it is Learning Partner work or setting challenges that prove tricky and require an ability to persist, all that we do contributes towards these aims.

At home, you could (and many of you do thank you) support the development of these areas by:

- RESPECT- Supporting good manners, including using please and thank you as well as making good eye contact when the children are spoken to;
- RESPONSIBLE- Giving the children responsibilities such as making their bed, clearing away from the table;
- COMPETENT- Supporting them with their reading and practising basic mental maths;
- CONFIDENT – Supporting them in having a positive growth mindset when tackling and overcoming challenges;
- ASPIRATION – Talking about their place and contribution to society and the possibilities open to them, without gender stereotype;
- CO-OPERATION – Learning to share, wait for a turn, speak to others;
- COMMUNICATION – Expecting the children to talk and engage with you, giving eye contact and responding to your questions politely;
- INDEPENDENCE – Carrying their own bookbags and remembering to change books at school. If they say, 'I don't have a pencil,' rather than giving them one, say 'How are you going to solve that problem?'
- RESILIENCE – Children need to face disappointment and boredom in order to learn to deal with life's knocks. Give them time to be bored and learn to entertain themselves and
- PROBLEM SOLVING – Playing with bits and bobs in the garden will promote problem solving, so get them outside!

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP During Advent we discussed patience with the children and the skill of waiting. The advent calendars in school and at home teach the value of waiting and patience. During the final weeks of advent, we share the messages of Christmas as part of the curriculum work on Christianity.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CURRICULUM

This year we offered 'New to Year 1...2...3...4' meetings to support your understanding of how expectations change and also information on newsletters and at Parent Consultation meetings about the taught curriculum. Further information is available on Homework sheets (Y1-4) and the website. Please ask classteachers if you wish further information.



BROAD CURRICULUM AND AFTERNOON CLUBS

For many years, we have offered free extra curricular clubs each afternoon to enable 100% of our children to take part in wider curriculum activities that support their 'whole child' development. In these clubs they can practise and apply skills taught through the National Curriculum but also develop new skills that the conventional curriculum doesn't offer.

Our after school clubs continue this offer, with an emphasis on creative and sporting activities to enable children to receive the broad offer to which they are entitled.

Our school day curriculum also ensures that all children have a strong foundation in a wide curriculum, including the arts, technology, humanities and sport. Through providing children with these broad opportunities, we open their minds and eyes and support them in seeing possibilities beyond their known world. This is how we bring aspiration to them. Our Teacher Day in January is entitled 'Opening their eyes' and has a focus of using art to develop both their curriculum understanding and their values and key competencies.

SCHOOL SPORT – Teachers are working hard in PE lessons to ensure that they not only teach skills but also enable the children to be physically active for much of the time. The Government has set targets for children to advise schools and families to keep children active to reverse the increase in obesity in children. Our afternoon sports clubs also enable children at BFS to take part in more sport.

ARTS – We are planning a joint arts and sports event for 2020 to coincide with the Olympics and to link together arts and sports at such a huge sporting celebration. This will be planned in collaboration with our partner schools and we look forward to hosting events at BFS.

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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

If your child has an identified Special Educational Need or Disability, you will be aware of this and Miss Townsend and outside agencies support the children in school alongside all staff.

Our school has been highlighted as a 'highly inclusive' school by Worcestershire County Council due to the excellent provision from Miss Townsend and all staff and a determination to offer the best. The SEND Information Report on our website outlines our offer and the provision includes: detailed tracking to inform staff of next steps; multiagency meetings and team meetings to determine the best approach; tailored lesson provision, including resources and adaptations; highly attuned staff who skilfully support and a personal approach for each individual. We work with families to tailor provision and thank you for your support.

Christmas Fair

Thanks to the PFTA for the superb Christmas Fair. It was a busy night and we thank you all for your support.

HOW YOUR CHILD IS PROGRESSING

The children are at the end of their first term and you have spoken with classteachers to determine how well they are progressing at this point in the year. This is based on internal assessments that are moderated across local schools. After Christmas, teachers will work with them again based on the last assessments before then assessing their progress and preparing a report for you in the Spring Term to help inform you of their progress half way through the year. Teachers will always talk to you if they have concerns about a child's progress or if children are working below national expectations and require additional support. Please do come and speak to staff if you have any queries.

Dates for Spring term

- 7.1.20 School opens for children**
- 9.1.20 Theatre trip**
- 13.1.20 7pm PFTA meeting at Blackwell Club**
- 18.1.20 Bake Off and cake sale- PFTA**
- 30.1.20 Blue Class assembly**
- 31.1.20 Green Class assembly**
- 17-21.2.20 Half term**
- 4.3.20 High 5 competition Y4s**
- 4/5.3.20 Parent Consultations**
- 25.3.20 Y2 Dance Festival**
- 3.4.20 Easter Coffee Morning/ Nursery afternoon**
- 3.4.20 Term ends**

Children enjoyed testing out the violin and so many children here have music lessons. It's great to see!

PUPIL SAFETY AND ANTI BULLYING

As part of PSHE work in school and whole school work in Collective Worship, we focus on how to keep children safe and how they keep themselves safe. The emphasis is on them being safe themselves and how they do this. The children risk assess their classrooms and activities with the classteachers and also risk assess situations on school trips and at Forest School in order to support their own developing understanding of how to keep safe.

We teach them about water, rail, road and esafety as well as 'stranger danger' but esafety is by far the most prevalent stranger danger in the world we now live in. For this reason, each half term the teachers highlight the need to stay safe online by not sharing personal information and helping children understand what this is (full name, school, address, phone numbers etc) and knowing that people that are online may not be who they say they are. Children are naturally trusting and that is wonderful but not always safe, so please help us share this message at home.

Bullying happens in every environment, workplaces, clubs and schools and the key to preventing it from escalating is being vigilant and helping children know what it is. We explain that bullying is not children falling out, but persistent and repeated unkindness targeted at one person or a small group by another group. We tell the children to tell adults if it happens to them and also tell their friends who see it to tell us. We give children strategies for standing up to bullies and know that when it happens at Blackwell we are usually quick to respond and stop it from becoming a significant issue. If the children talk to you at home, it is often hard to determine what is normal falling out and what could be the start of bullying. It is always better to be cautious and talk to school staff who will investigate rather than let issues drag on and become more serious. Thank you for your support with this.



Our friends from 'Open the Book' at St Catherine's church will visit us each month to share stories and messages that align with our values and vision. Here they are talking to us about looking after our precious planet earth.