

NEWSLETTER

for Blackwell First School



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

Dear Families,

Year 4s picked blackberries during their World War topic this term, just as the children of Blackwell did during the wars as described in log books.

Thank you all for your support this term. At the start of November, we had a Parent Meeting for Red Class parents to help families develop an understanding of how we teach children basic reading, writing and maths skills. It is useful to know not only what is being taught but also how we teach it and then you are able to support the children at home. Little and often with practise at home is best. Working with us to help the children make more progress is very helpful:

- Hear your child read as much as possible (several times each week)- help the children to point to words themselves and blend letter sounds together as well as recognise the sight words they are learning;
- Read your child bedtime stories to help develop their language and also explain vocabulary to them;
- Speak in sentences and encourage your children to do as well. At this age they will be using incorrect grammar as part of their development. It is a good idea for you to repeat their sentences modelling the correct way to speak so that they don't get into bad habits. Children at this age often add -ed to the end of verbs for past tense for verbs that don't need them, e.g. 'We runned down the road.' Repeat it correctly saying, 'You ran down the road.';
- In Maths it is important that mummies help with maths as much as daddies (and the opposite is true in reading) as otherwise we send out messages that reading is for girls and maths for boys which causes problems for children over time;
- Help children to count both forwards and backwards in ones, and from any number, e.g. 3,4,5,6,7 etc;
- Help children to develop a real understanding of the numbers to 10, showing you how to make 5 using 4+1, 3+2, 5+0 etc. (using their fingers or counters). It is important that children use models and images to help them understand their maths all the way through to the end of Year 4;
- Year 2 onwards learn multiplication tables by heart, use the language of multiply, e.g. $6 \times 5 = 6$ multiplied by 5 (next year in Year 4 there will be a new national multiplication test made up almost entirely of 6,7,8,9,11,12 tables with 6 seconds to answer each calculation. We piloted this last year and it was extremely challenging. Please practise!)
- Play board games like 'Snakes and Ladders' to help develop their understanding of place value (the value of two digit numbers) and
- When talking about two digit numbers, make sure that you clarify that 56 is made up of the digits 5 and 6, but also explain that the 5 represents 5 tens or 50.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We have been focusing on our United Nations Universal Values themes for Collective Worship. Helping the children learn how to behave in order to show good manners, respect and tolerance is part of this work. As we move towards Christmas, we will consider 'Advent – a time for waiting and preparing' and encourage the children to develop patience.

Reading at Blackwell

Reading is key to ensuring that the children can access all learning and so we are working hard to ensure that the children develop their reading skills. We do this by teaching reading in English lessons, ensuring that the children read everyday as a class or in groups. Children also read individually until they are fluent, when they begin to develop their ability to read publicly (performance reading). The children are also expected to read in every lesson throughout the day in order to apply their skills to other subjects. Children also receive work on learning key words, developing their phonic understanding and reading a wide range of text types (non-fiction, stories and poetry). We encourage the children to read at home as much as possible, both with you, on their own and also to listen to you reading them stories as this helps broaden their vocabulary and develop their comprehension skills of texts that are too complex for them to read themselves.

esafety

Please remember to keep the children safe online by monitoring what they access on line and avoiding them using devices out of your eyesight. Social media sites should not be accessed by children of first school age.



SCHOOL SPORT - Through our work with the All Active Academy (through South Bromsgrove and Chadsgrove schools), we have been fortunate to access Change for Life clubs and competitive events for all year groups. The Government strategy to increase the hours children spend being physically active has been embraced by these clubs and events.

ARTS – Following on from our Outstanding contribution to Worcestershire's Voices and Visions Arts Celebration in Worcester Cathedral during the Summer and our last Platinum award from Artsmark, we are developing children's opportunities to experience great art experiences in school. Mrs Cutler plans excellent musical experiences during music lessons and teachers provide super art experiences, developing skills and enabling progression in these skills across the years.

SPELLING

For many children, spelling can be the barrier to reaching a good level of writing. Children's ability to spell accurately has appeared to decline and research is limited on why this is. One theory is that as children are required to memorise less (because there is instant access to information through technology) they are finding memorising increasingly challenging. Thinking back to our childhoods, many of us knew many people's phone numbers, whereas now they are stored in our phones rather than our brains!

To help with spelling at home, please:

- practice spelling key words from lists sent home
- play with shapes, mnemonics, looking and covering up and 'hangman' style games to help

6.12.19 Christmas Fair - 6pm
 10.12.19 Piano concert for Mrs Cutler's pianists- 2.30pm
 11.12.19 Piano concert for Mrs Grew's pianists - 3.30pm
 13.12.19 Christmas Concert filming morning- please order your DVDs!
 13.12.19 Christmas Lunch
 17.12.19 Christmas Concert- Red and Green Classes- 9.30am St Catherine's Church- 2/3 adults per child welcome
 17.12.19 Christmas Concert- Purple, Yellow and Blue Classes- 1.30pm St Catherine's Church- 2 adults per child welcome
 19.12.19 Christmas Concert - Purple, Yellow and Blue Classes- 9.30am St Catherine's Church- 2 adults per child welcome
 19.12.19 Christmas Concert- Red and Green Classes - 1.30pm St Catherine's Church- 2/3 adults per child
 (If toddlers attend concerts, please sit them on an adult's lap and take them into 'The Wheel' at the side of the church if they become restless. Photographs and filming is welcomed but no images/ films are to be uploaded onto social media for child protection reasons).
 20.12.19 Party Day- children may wear own clothes and remember sensible shoes and an outdoor coat are still required. Pantomime day.
 20.12.19 Christmas Coffee sing song- 2.30pm- Nursery families
 20.12.19 School closes for children

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

Requesting leave in term time

The DfE and WCC policy is that family holidays should not be taken in school term time as it disrupts a child's learning, therefore we are unable to authorise **any** holiday absence. Pupils are not normally granted leave of absence except in exceptional circumstances in line with DfE guidance. These unauthorised absences may be subject to a holiday penalty notice fine by WCC. A copy of the guidance is available from the school office or it may be accessed through WCC's website.



During the Blackwell at War project work this term, children used the school log books as historical sources finding out what life was like for children in Blackwell during the world wars. During WW2, the whole of our world was used for growing potatoes! Blue Class also walked up to the old Sanatorium Lodge to find out where the soldiers convalesced.

End of term

Before too long, our Christmas festivities begin. Please come along to our 'Nativity' or 'Little Fir Tree' and if you wish to buy a programme and enjoy a mince pie and drink afterwards, please bring £2.00. We don't issue tickets, but ask that you are sensible about numbers. We request only two (and for Red/Green classes three) adults per child. If toddlers become restless, please do take them out of the church so that the children's hard work isn't interrupted. **Also, please remember that filming and photography is allowed but that NO IMAGES OR FILMS must be placed on the internet of social media. This is for child protection reasons.** There are children in both productions whose images must not be on the internet. Remember that the DVD is available to purchase from school which then allows you to watch the productions 'in the moment'.

Christmas Lunch is on December 13th and on the final day, December 20th we welcome Nursery families to 'Cake and coffee' at 2.30pm, and on this same day, we will have the travelling pantomime in school for all except Nursery (it's a bit too noisy for Nursery!) and it is party afternoon. The children may come to school in party clothes but please ensure an outdoor coat and sensible shoes are in school.

We look forward to enjoying the start of the festive season with you all.

Mrs A Moss (Headteacher)